

HOW TO CARRY YOUR LOAD BY FAITH

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Introduction

Welcome to the Level Up podcast where we talk about our life in Christ. Our life in Christ is a life of faith.

Last time, we talked about lightening our load by faith. I explained the biblical doctrine of justification, this idea that we cannot improve on the righteousness God offers us in Christ as a gracious gift. Justification is God's declaration that we are right with him forever.

Potential Misunderstanding

So ... even as I recorded that episode, I was already thinking that it might have misled some people into thinking we should not pursue a godly life.

The misunderstanding of what I taught goes like this: Since God's grace increases as my sins increase, I can go on sinning to my heart's content. Or just do nothing. Be passive. Let go and let God sort of idea.

That is a misunderstanding of the biblical teaching. The apostle Paul was accused of teaching something similar. He reacted in Romans 6:

Romans 6:1-2 (ESV) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

The grace that covers all our sins and gives us right standing with God also kills the ruling, controlling, power of sin in our lives.

What Is Our Load?

With that in mind, I need to follow up the last episode about lightening our load with today's teaching: How to **carry** your load by faith.

Our load is godly living, a lifestyle that conforms to the character and conduct of Christ, salt and light living, Spirit-filled, with fruit of the Spirit outcomes. Good old fashioned holiness. Living for the glory of God.

There are three powerful forces we can harness to help us carry our load.

Three Powerful Forces We Can Harness to Carry Our Load

Force one: The grace of God.

This is Paul's teaching in Titus 3:

Titus 2:11-13 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age ...

- The grace (unmerited favor) of God that saves us is also the grace that sanctifies us.
- The grace that gives us right standing WITH God also produces right living FOR God. We have grace-power to say no to sin and yes to righteousness.
- We're saved by grace alone, but the grace that saves is never alone - it empowers us to fight against sin and for godliness and holiness.

Force two: Our union with the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.

This is taught in Romans 6:

Romans 6:3-4 (ESV) Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

It is wonderful to know Jesus and to have a personal relationship with him. But it's more than a friendship type of thing. It is so much more powerful than that.

Because we are united to Jesus in his death and resurrection, everything has changed. Simply put:

- We have supernatural power to fight our sins.
- We have supernatural power to strive for godliness.

Force three: Our godly decision-making.

This is taught in the Titus 2 passage we read earlier - we renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and we choose self-controlled, upright and godly lives. That's wisdom, godly decision making.

It's also taught later in Romans 6:

Romans 6:12-13 (ESV) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

A righteous lifestyle is the result of decisions we make. We decide to not give sin control. We choose - we decide - to give God control.

The Power of Decision-Making - A Personal Insight

When I was a baby Christian, I had a hard time breaking free from my godless lifestyle. I had a potty mouth. I was rude and obnoxious. I got drunk and partied hard. And much more that did not please God.

It's interesting that no one told me these things were off limits for followers of Jesus. Instead, Jesus and his sanctifying grace were working in me to create the desire to change my life. I wanted to change.

I'm a slow learner, so it took me a while to figure out that going to the bar three nights a week, and hanging out with my drunken friends was not helping. I had to make a decision to get free.

I chose to stop going to the bar and this made living a sober life a lot easier. Friday nights were rough. The smell of beer set off strong cravings. So, I chose to go to a Bible study with other students on Friday nights.

Conclusion: Choose Holiness - Choose to Carry Your Load

Every change begins with a decision. We don't fall randomly into sin or holiness, we first choose to.

Decisions are powerful. Don't under-estimate the changes you can make by choosing one way over another. Choose holiness.

Everyone in Christ has access to these three forces. So ... keep on carrying your load by faith.