THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD
2 Timothy 4:6-8

The year we stand in now is 2010, or for many Jews, it is the year 5770. But whatever the actual year may be…the fact is we have walked through better than 2000 new years. Societies have lived, from one new year into another new year…but many of those societies are now gone from the face of the earth, and are now in eternity.

The truth is, time passes ever so fast, and in another 100 years, there will be another society on the face of the earth. Just like ours, if time stands, they will live and do the things we do…and will pass from one year to another, just as we have.

As the apostle Paul was reaching the end of his life, probably just a very short time before His death, he pens some very poignant, heart rendering words to young Timothy about that life that brings honor and glory to the Lord God. Paul etches these words in 2 Timothy 4:7. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith…” Irregardless of everything else that happened in the life of Paul, there was one thing that Paul wanted to make clear before he left his physical body…it was the fact that he had honored God with his life, with his talents, with his energies, and with the gifts that God entrusted to him.

At a time in the not too distant future, each of us that are saved by the grace of God, will stand in the presence of the Lord, and He will evaluate our lives, and discern how we lived out this one earthly life that he gave us…but then it will be too late to make any changes. At that time, it will be a call for complete evaluation of our lives. God yearns that each of us live that type of life that is honoring to Him, and pleasing Him. But exactly what does that life look like?

1. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD IS TRANSFORMED BY HIS GRACE. There is no way of living our lives to honor and please the Lord God, if we have never come to know Him by grace through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. One of God’s greatest expressions of grace toward our lives was that of saving our souls. Paul declared that our salvation was accomplished by the “grace of God”. (See Eph. 2:8-10)

   God’s grace is best defined this way…it is an unconditional, reaching out toward us…to give us (who deserve nothing) the very best that He has (namely a relationship with Himself) through His Son, Jesus Christ. The truth is, there are many acts of grace that God showers on us…all because of His love for us.

   Paul was so transformed by the love of God, that he could not help but go wherever God sent Him and reach out to people that he would have otherwise had no dealings with…all because of God’s grace. The very grace of God causes Him to reach out to us (sinful man) with His desire…to bring us into a living eternal relationship with Him.

   God is not forced to save us, love us, care for us…but He does so all out of His abiding love and grace toward us. Paul, who called himself the chief sinner was transformed by the very fact that the God of the universe saved him, and used him, in spite of his life. When we are transformed by the grace of God…there are demonstrations of acts of kindness toward people that do not deserve it…simply because we have been gripped by His grace.

   Consider what God’s grace does for you. His grace moved Him to save you. His grace took us out of the domain of death and hell. His grace always causes Him to have the best in store for our lives. When we claim to be God’s people and refuse to show grace to others who harm us, hurt us, we reveal at that moment that we have not been transformed by His grace. We may be saved…but we do not realize what grace is all about. Grace that honors God leads us to return good for evil, love for unkindness…not because it is easy…but because we have been transformed (changed) by the grace of God.

2. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD IS TRANSFORMED BY HIS LOVE. It is the very nature of Almighty God to love us unconditionally. That is His nature and that is His way. He will never operate any other way toward our lives than demonstrating “genuine, caring, perfect love”. It was His love for man that caused Him to give His “only begotten Son”, in order that we could have a relationship with Him, both in this life and for all eternity. Yet, the sad reality is, there are many people who name the name of Christ that are not gripped by His unwavering love for us.

   Consider if you can for a moment the love of God toward us. He chose to release His Son from heaven to take on the form of a human body and become human flesh. He chose to allow His Son to die for sinful wicked man
in order that He could give wicked, sinful man a new nature, and remove him from an eternity of torment in an abyss of hell…to a wonderful eternity of heaven. Not only is our location altered, but in His love He forgives us of all sins, cleanses us of all unrighteousness, and restores us when we have gone backward in our Christian life.

How can we, who name the name of Christ withhold love, care, and kindness from others, when the God of the universe demonstrates His love toward us daily? Yet, that is sadly the case in some lives. In the life of Paul, he was moved by the love of God. “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” (2 Cor. 5:14)

How can we withhold love from others, when the God of the universe has completely been loving toward us? How could a believer be mean, when the God of the universe has removed us from the domain of darkness in hell to an eternity of paradise. The life of Paul was gripped by the love of God…and since God loved him…he yearned to allow God to love through him to others. The same ought to be the case in our lives. Since God loves us and saved us…He wants to love through us to a world that is lost and hurting. You can discover when you have been gripped by the love of God, when you yearn to show love to those that do not respond loving toward you…because you are captivated by the love of God.

You can tell you are transformed by God’s love when you want no harm to befall a single soul…but desire God’s riches to all men. If you desire secretly to see a person hurt, or desire to get even with others…you have not been transformed by the love of God. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Lk. 6:45)

A life that honors God is transformed, changed by the love of God, and it is demonstrated out the mouth to other individuals.

If your mouth demonstrates activity that is belittling, degrading, to others, family, friends, church family…then you have not been transformed by God’s love and in the judgment…God will deal with you accordingly.

3. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD IS TURNED TOWARD OBEDIENCE. As Paul looked back at his life, there was one underlying reality in all that he sought to do….he sought to be obedient to all God had entrusted to him.

While he traveled all over the world in his day and time…all that happened came as a byproduct of obedience to the will, agenda and plan of God. Paul knew well the Old Testament, and he knew well what Samuel declared when talking about obedience before God. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken (listen) than the fat of rams.” (1 Sam. 15:22) When all is said and done regarding your life…what will the God of Scripture, the God of the universe have to say about your life of obedience?

There is absolutely no way of honoring the God who created us, apart from a life of COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Obedience involves listening, applying God’s Word to our lives in a personal way, and allowing God the full use and right to our lives. Imagine had Paul not released his life to follow the Lord on missionary journeys. Imagine if Paul had refused to be obedient to God…how different his life would have been?

When our lives are “turned” or focused on obedience, God can give us His divine assignments, accompanied with His wonderful workings and our lives are never the same. When we obey, He releases His divine joy, excitement into our souls that cannot be compared with anything on this earth. As Paul obeyed the Lord, God allowed others to see his life of obedience and the mighty things that took place as a result of one obedient life.

When our lives are given to obedience, God can advance His kingdom, His purposes, through our lives in ways we would have never realized. When God finds a life that is obedient to Him, He can move heaven an earth through that person, through that church…because obedience is paramount. In the life of Abraham in the Old Testament…God revealed to Abraham the blessings that come with acts of obedience. “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.” (Gen. 13:14-15)

When there is a single life that brings honor to God through obedience in a loving way, God can and God will move heaven to bless that life in ways that are real, deliberate, and personal. The life of Jabez is an excellent example in the Old Testament. He desired to honor God with an obedient life in so much that He prayed for the Lord to bless him…the result God blessed him, favored him, in so much that the people of his day saw his obedient life and they saw his blessed life…for God honored his prayer in a personal and a very deliberate way. Can God bless your life because He sees an obedient life? When God sees your life obedient to Him, He will bring His blessings into your life….based on His Word.