



TIME TO BE BORN AGAIN, AGAIN

Nine week old Gus, our new puppy, whimpered in my lap. He and our older dog had been vigorously playing and the older dog had nipped the pup's tail a bit too hard. No bones broken, no blood, but Gus felt it. I stroked him and spoke soothingly to him while he stretched in my lap. Soon, he quit fussing and the end of his tail thumped up and down in happiness.

Gus jerked his head up when he noticed his tail moving and suddenly grabbed it and bit down hard. On his own tail. This produced a yelp. Startled, he looked at me in fear. I chuckled as I reminded him he had caused his own pain this time. I continued to speak softly to him. Soon, he relaxed and his tail wagged up and down on my leg again.

Quickly alert, though, to the motion, Gus caught his tail and bit down hard. Again. On his own tail. And again, a piercing yelp as he stared at me accusingly.

How many times have we had a wound that has healed, and then we refuse to leave it alone? We bite down on it again and again, causing needless pain. In leadership, there may be times where we get "bitten" by someone else. God is faithful to bring healing when we walk in forgiveness and allow Him, but if we continue to revisit it in our minds and replay how we've been "wronged", it will be just like nine week old Gus biting his own tail. We even look to the Father as we yelp over our hurt and ask Him why He allowed us to be wounded again.

To be present-future people, we must leave the past, including old wounds, in the past.

Graham Cooke says, "Our old mind-sets, practices, language and lifestyle cannot contain the Holy Spirit. He will break out of everything from our old lifestyle. If you are living in an old mind-set and trying to become new, you are going to become hugely stressed out, you are going to feel inadequate and insecure about the things of the Spirit. It is what is happening right now across this country in places where they do not understand the newness of Christ, they do not understand who Jesus really is, and many Christians have just stopped at a salvation experience and now they are hanging on, hoping for heaven and glory for some point in the future. That is not Jesus!"

...You can only bring that new thing into an empty space because what was in that space is no longer there. That is why it is so important that you read Romans 6 and you celebrate the fact that you are dead, so that you are raised up to newness of life, you are born again. Being born again means the old has gone and I am raised up to newness of life."

Romans 6: 5 (Amplified) *For if we have become one with Him (permanently united) in the likeness of His death, we will also certainly be (one with Him and share fully) in the likeness of His resurrection. We know that our old self (our human nature without the Holy Spirit) was nailed to the cross with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.*

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Freedom costs us. To go to where God sees us we have to exchange what we have, and what we have been, in order to receive the fullness of who God sees us to be every time He looks at us. For too long, we have allowed old things to rule our lives and to keep us bound up. We have lived in measure rather than fullness. It is time to make the exchange. Are you ready?

You will want to write down the things the Holy Spirit is going to highlight to you, so make sure you have paper and a pen. Your journal would be great!

Take a deep breath. Relax. Quiet your mind. Wait on Him. Now pray this prayer:

Holy Spirit, I am here because I want more of God. I want everything that belongs to me and I realize that I've allowed some things of the past to hold me back from the riches of my inheritance in Christ. I want that...those riches. They belong to me and I've come here to do business with You and to make an exchange. Highlight to me 3-5 old things that I've allowed to rule my life and to rob me of the blessings You want to give to me.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Take another deep breath. Relax. Trust Him to take you to a new place where you can let go of the old to receive the new He has for you. Now, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He is replacing each of the above things with that will bring you out of an old place into a new place and write them down.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Pray this: *Holy Spirit, I give You permission to bring to my remembrance every time I start down an old path. Remind me of this day where I have made the choice to let go of the old to embrace the fullness of the new. Remind me as often as necessary for I want to receive all that Heaven has stored up for me. Thank You!*