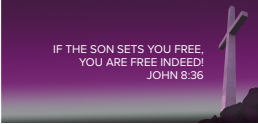


Jesus 101

“Grace Thoughts”



IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE,
YOU ARE FREE INDEED!
JOHN 8:36

A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.” –Matthew 18:15

I still remember where we were when my friend spoke to me. She wanted to talk to me about a blind spot of mine, which I didn't even know I had. What was so remarkable was that she did it with such love and care, that I was able to listen and actually hear what she was saying. I knew that she had my best interests in mind and that she was doing it out of kindness, not with an accusing spirit. And that made all the difference in the world. She truly won me over.

After telling them the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus reminded His disciples that “it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish” (Matthew 18:14). Then He gave them a process through which to reach out to a brother in sin: go privately; then go with one or two witnesses; then go through the church. What catches my attention is that little word that expresses the goal of such conversations: to win our brother; “if he listens to you, you have won [gained] your brother” (verse 15). The intention is not to accuse nor to shame; it is not to make our brother “pay” for his sins; it is not to punish and not to diminish or humiliate. The goal is to win our brother over. God doesn't want anyone to perish; His motivation is always to save and redeem. Accusations have a different source, and he is a defeated foe: “For the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10). If a sin has been committed against us, bringing the issue up with our friend or relative has the same motivation. We are not to bring it up in order to belittle them but to gain them back. Jesus wins not only on a cosmic scale, as the Savior of the world, but He wins every time that a brother is won over, redeemed, and reestablished. God's goal is always to save: “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). When we didn't want anything to do with Him, Jesus provided for our salvation. And He provided for our brother's redemption as well. May we be instruments of healing and restoration.

Talbot, Elizabeth *Jesus Wins!*, p. 272.