



# SHARING SCRIPTURE

## Discover • Jesus • Together

### The New Covenant Life

**For use:** June 20 - 26

**Texts:** 1 John 1:4; John 5:24; Romans 3:24-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 4:16; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 20:6, 14; Revelation 21:8

Retired chef Dennis Littley has eaten pretty well during the pandemic closures, but what he really misses is the joy of dining out. “It’s crazy for a chef to say that’s what he’s missing the most,” he admits. Littley also misses his trips to the barber shop.

He is not alone in wanting to rediscover the joy of the little things in life. Sergio Tristán was excited to finally go shopping for produce after months of grocery deliveries. And, the pandemic closures were especially hard on socially active people like Pat and Patricia Cook. When the Cooks received their vaccines, they immediately returned to their volunteer work packing boxes at their local food hub. [1]

Things taken for granted pre-pandemic now appear much more appealing as we’ve adjusted our outlook on life and reprioritized what is truly important.

Similarly, the new covenant life is something that we haven’t always fully appreciated because we’ve never truly experienced old covenant life. We see in the scriptural examples of groups like the Pharisees how easily old covenant living devolved into an overwhelming checklist of dos and don’ts.

Imagine the joy of people like Saul of Tarsus when, after living life as a Pharisee, faultless in legalistic righteousness, he discovered the grace offered by Jesus. Once he had his Damascus road experience, he saw life with Christ

literally through new eyes. When the scales fell off his eyes he became a new creation, living life in the new covenant. Then he could appreciate that it's by grace we're saved, through faith and not of works.

Even though we can still slip into legalistic tendencies, God's grace is always there, ready to fill us with the joy of salvation we find in Jesus. When legalism robs us of our freedom, clamping down on everything good in life, it's refreshing to once again celebrate the abundant life that Jesus offers. We can take grace for granted if we're not careful, but when we grasp the powerful simplicity of new covenant living it brings true joy.

The virus of legalism can be spiritually deadly, but God's grace inoculates us from that disease and restores us to life to the fullest.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-the-covid-vaccine-people-find-joy-in-little-things-11612198522>

## For Reflection

**Connecting:** What is one small thing that gives you great joy? What have you missed the most during the pandemic closures? Is there something that you vow you'll never take for granted again? Share your thoughts with your group, through your online connections if you aren't yet meeting in person.

**Sharing:** What comes to your mind when you hear the term "old covenant"?

1. Endless streams of blood and animal sacrifices
2. Trying to live by the myriads of Levitical codes and regulations
3. When you dig deeper into the purpose of the old sacrificial system, you can still find God's grace at work
4. I try not to think about the old covenant
5. Understanding the old covenant helps me appreciate the new covenant
6. Other:

**Applying:** Do you know someone who has suffered from the social isolation brought on by the pandemic closures? What are some things you can safely do to help them regain a sense of normalcy? What is one thing you can personally do to bring joy to someone else?

**Valuing:** What is the first big thing you plan to do once everything opens up post-pandemic? Have the shutdowns and closures made you more likely to be less social in the future? If you plan to change your social habits, how can you adjust your activities to include involvement in the life of the church and our mission? Make this a matter of prayer in the coming week.

## Other Helpful Resources

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson  
Executive Director

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