

## Crossway website, 5/13/18 blog entry on "The Exchanged Life":

I, as a believer, can relate to his circumstances. Can you? To be free from the pressure to perform is a freedom that is hard to describe, but a reality that I had and continue to battle. Some of this pressure was programmed in me through well intentioned believers. They were looking out for my interest and spiritual growth, and I do not fault them. However, deep down I knew, trying as hard as I could, I could not live up to the "standards" I was being taught. I kept this to myself, and began to believe the lie: that something must be wrong with me. Frustrated, I began, so to speak, to "redouble" my efforts. Still, more sense of failure. My failure to "live the Christian life" resulted in a very weary and suspect Christian. This condition was overwhelming me and I began to question not only my relationship with Jesus, but my calling as a pastor.

How was this condition addressed? By God Himself, to put it bluntly. He allowed me to fail in what I thought I could "do". Notice, the use of the words, "me" & "I"? Come to find out, I was the problem. The journey from trusting myself to live the Christian life in whatever circumstance I found myself, to trusting Him to live His life not only in me but through me, was quite long and difficult. I cannot remember all the twists, turns, detours, the starts and stops. However, I can tell you how I arrived at the destination: When I realized that I could do nothing apart from Jesus. That He not only saved me from my sins, but had saved me from myself. At that point, I began to live in a love relationship with Jesus, not by a list. And as a result of this love relationship with Him, He began to set me free from depending on myself to keep a list, and allow Him to manifest through me the "sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place".

What is the exchanged life? Here is the outline so to speak. For me it began with preparation. Did I prepare? No. God allowed me to fail at something where I really wanted success. Further, I was keenly aware that the Christian life and my brand of Christianity, was frustrating and exhausting at the least. It seemed to me to be all about "doing" instead of "being". Frustration, weariness, and discouragement PREPARED me for wanting to "be" instead of "do". The next thing I learned about the exchanged life was the PERSON I would be exchanging my life with... Jesus. He became my life vs. people, principles, platform, pastoring, or any endeavor that would steal my joy and put expectations on me that I could never meet. He lives inside of me and wants to express His life through me in all my situations and circumstances. And His PROMISE appealed to me more than any other promises made to me by humans.

Basically, The Exchanged Life is His life for mine, His strength for my weariness, His wisdom for my stupidity, His peace for my frustration, and His power for my weakness. Are you there yet?