

The Link

GRACE! HOW MANY TIMES A DAY DOES GOD FORGIVE A TRUE BELIEVER?

Does God's grace continue to cover His children when they intentionally sin—or slip back into old sin habits?

In January, I spoke to a group of pastors in the remote village of Kakyuka, Uganda (over seven hours travel by vehicle to Kakyuka). As I stood before the Pastors, I asked them, "How many of you are sinners?" Reluctantly, one or two men raised their hands. Many were shocked to see my hand raised! I explained to the group that each and every day I sin—sins of omission and sins of commission. For example, I sometimes get irritated; impatient; dishonest (e.g. when someone says, "thank you for praying for me" and I say "you are welcome" when I've not prayed for that person is dishonest. OR, when I promise to meet someone at 2 PM & I show up at 3 PM); a lustful thought/look; disobedience—when I sense God directing me to do something and I refuse; speeding 35 in a 25 mph zone; and I could go on and on. I am guilty!!! Our forgiveness of others should mimic God's bountiful forgiveness/grace/mercy that He has for for us—His children. Matthew 18:21-22 states, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him (show mercy)? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (unlimited mercy and grace).

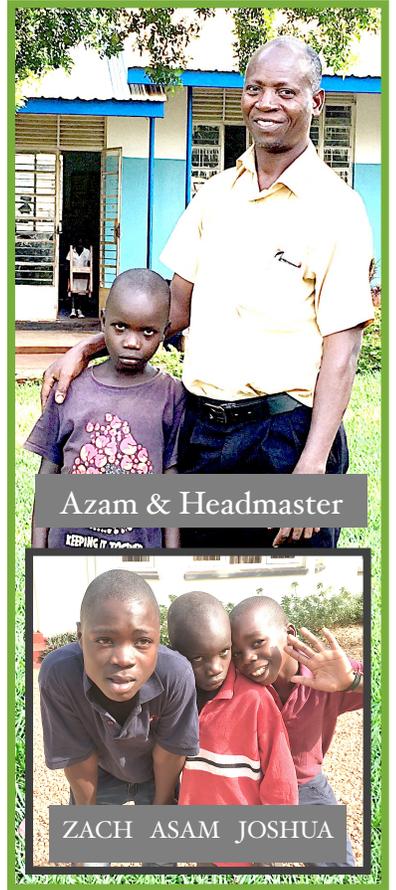
When a "true" believer fall back into an old sin pattern, they grieve the Spirit that lives within them, quenching God's power. Plus, there are consequences to one's sin that may affect others and may invoke God's correctional discipline (Hebrews 12:6ff). Without question, sin can rob true believers of their peace, joy and usefulness. Hence, when a Christian ask for forgiveness, it is NOT due to fear of being cast into hell (that was settled when converted), but forfeiting one's effectiveness as a disciple and bringing displeasure (grief) to the Lord.

Recently, Zach was given another chance to leave the "street life" and go to school to learn a trade—mechanics. (Previous to this, MLI and others have tried unsuccessfully placing Zach in primary school.) Back in the summer of 2016, Zach indicated he wanted to go to his village and learn mechanics from his grandfather. His grandfather was more than willing to help him. Zach came to me several weeks ago and said that he was serious about going back to learn a trade and wanted MLI's support. Once again, I said yes. We purchased some cloths for him and other needed items, gave him pocket funds and at 10 AM placed him on a bus to Kumuli Town to meet his grandfather. However, by 11 PM Zach had found his way back to the streets in Jinja. Without question, when I return to Uganda in May, Zach will once again ask, "Do you forgive me?" I will say YES. Why did Zach return to the streets? **I do not know**. It may be that he was fearful of failure, or simply missing his "street family." In fact, he is very capable of surviving on the street being Zach is a master at deception and manipulation.

Uganda is a land of deception—never knowing if someone is telling the truth, a half truth or telling an out-right-lie. The culture operates off of deceiving people. Yet, when my day is full of cultural challenges, and I find myself discouraged or even angry, the Spirit has a subtle way of reminding me that **I ALSO** daily/repeatedly failed HIM. YES—God forgives me for ALL my sins, yet there are times **I forget** about the limitless mercy shown to me. Joshua (pictured above) has had many opportunities to go to school. Now he dances around our staff drunk from sniffing glue/paraffin declaring: "Don't waste your money on me, a voice keeps shouting in my ear that school is not for me." Yet, many mornings I find him sleeping on the sidewalk after a night of sniffing glue. Usually, he is at the gate of our office compound saying, "I'm hungry." Asam (pictured with the headmaster) loves school. No one knows where his parents or relatives live. Many kids are on the street because dad's "new" wife **hates** his children. Some may have only one parent who cannot afford to pay school fees so they end up on the street begging. **LISTEN**: This is not our mission—dealing with street kids. We have hundreds of widows with multiple needs that we cannot even come close to meeting. Training pastors is another major focus of MLI. Nevertheless, kids come to our compound sometimes to steal, to deceive or for a handout; yet, MLI is called to be the image bearer of Christ's love/grace which is the pentacle of our mission.

One of the most important witnesses of a missionary is to display God's limitless mercy and grace. This doesn't mean we wink at sin. There are many opportunities to disciple and to shepherd. I told Zach when putting him on the bus to go back to his village to learn mechanics from his grandfather that this is your last chance for our help. **I wish I could take back those words!** I know all too well that I will once again forgive him and pray for wisdom how to help Zach to be delivered from a life on the street. I simply need to be reminded of God's limitless mercy and grace given to me each and every day. Please know that your prayers/gifts empower us to display God's love and grace to street kids, widows, pastors and to the African culture.

Rick



Azam & Headmaster

ZACH ASAM JOSHUA

MISSION LINK'S NEWS BRIEFING:

STREET KIDS: Recently, a donor funded Moses (15 years old) to go back to school. His mother is deceased and father is a drug addict. Asam is another street boy in school funded by a generous donor. However, this 10 year old only has funds for one more term. Each term is now 450,000 shillings plus supplies (about \$150-\$175 per term and there are 3 terms a year.) There are some cheaper government schools, but quality is very poor. There are several other street boys MLI has frequent contact with, who lack school fees. **This is really more than MLI can handle. If the Spirit should impress upon friends of MLI to help a street kid with school fees, we will then have the resources to pluck some from the streets.** **Note:** Derrick comes by the office often asking for school fees. He lives in the "slums" of Jinja, but mom cannot afford to send him to school. Therefore, he begs for money on the street and hangs out with street boys. Unfortunately, his grades are not the best, but sponsorship could be a motivator for him to do better.

PHASE II — MLI SCHOOL IN ELDORET, KENYA — Construction will begin when we have sufficient funds. Any amount welcomed.

DEAF SCHOOL HAS INCREASED ITS NUMBERS!: (On going needs) The ongoing monthly need for food is around \$370. **Other monthly needs:** dorm for kids \$70; salaries for 5 teachers "in total" is \$250 (minimum). The school has increased the number of students requiring additional funds. In the future, we would like to purchase land and build a school.

HELP WITH COMPUTERS: 1) **RICK MUST UPDATE HIS COMPUTER.** No doubt this may not seem like a critical need to most, yet it is the instrument that he uses both in Africa and in the states to communicate with the world, do correspondence/emails, web site building/updating, newsletters, brochures, etc. Every 3 years he updates, and it is now well beyond the time to do so. In other words, this is his main tool, and it is very expensive; your assistance is greatly appreciated; 2) A Ugandan Bible student needs a used laptop; 3) Used MAC Books & Windows laptops needed for a computer lab for Pastor Euticauls in Mwingi, Kenya for his high school.

CHURCH DESTROYED: A storm hit the small village of Walumbe and destroyed Pastor Anthony's church. They have now started to rebuild with collected village funds (mud/dung walls and floor), but help finishing the building will be much appreciated. Iron sheets are a big expense costing \$8 per sheet and \$9 for better heavier metal.

BLIND CHILD SCHOOL FEES: The blind father is grateful for \$65 donated for the first term school fees. Two more terms will be needed to finish out this year at \$65 each term

BOAT & MOTOR: MLI would like to continue evangelizing the 52 islands of Buvuma. Cost will be appx \$2875 20 horse motor & \$800 (+) to build a wooden boat. This will enable us to expand our reach to the island of Buvuma as well as other islands in Lake Victoria.

Mission Link International Christian Study Center of Tanzania: In June MLI will host a graduation ceremony in Kigoma, Tanzania. It is a costly trip as Rick must hire a vehicle and travel to a far western part of the country. They also must hire a guard to travel through the forest. Help with graduation and travel will cost MLI approximately \$500 just for the vehicle and fuel. We will also need \$350 for the graduation and hotel.

BIBLES NEEDED IN SWAHILI: Pastor Julius in Tanzania needs a Swahili Study Bible and six (6) regular Swahili Bibles —\$100. Another 6 regular Bibles will cost \$50 more.

WIDOW'S CHICKEN PROJECT: We are desiring to purchase 250 (one month old) LAYERS for EGG production — \$450 OR \$300 to purchase 350 eggs, shots and feed. Though we have an incubator, the best and sure route is to purchase chicks that are at least one month old and healthy. Once we have good layers, we can use the incubator to produce more Layers from good stock.

Thomas Kunya's Marriage to Mary: Thomas is MLI's trusted bookkeeper. Tom is now saving for the introduction and wedding ceremony to be conducted the last week of July. He will need the help of his friends. Any amount would be gratefully received.

GENERAL FUND (VERY IMPORTANT): There is LITTLE ROOM to share all the needs MLI has encountered and those needs we encounter each day. Sincerely, my two months in Africa have been a drain on our finances. Your gift to the **General Fund (GF)** gives Mission Link the flexibility to place funds where needed. Without the **General Fund**, we could do little. Since my arrival in Uganda mid-January, I have been overwhelmed by the enormous requests for assistance. For example: Caring for a converted muslim's family, food/clothing for street kids, medical bills, land rent, help planting crops,

LOOK AROUND THE HOUSE, ASK YOUR FRIENDS AND AT CHURCH

Cell Phones, Digital Cameras,
Laptops, Christian Books

Several iPhones were donated—more iPhone and common cell phones are greatly appreciated. Drop items by the MLI office OR mail them to: 1677 Avon St. Ext, C'ville, VA 22902. Christian books/Bibles also needed for next shipment to Africa. Thank you so much!

UGANDA/TANZANIA/KENYA MAY/JUNE 2017 TRIP

Rick's Return to East Africa: Rick will return to Africa the end of May for graduation ceremony in Kigoma, Tanzania, restructuring of the Leper Ministry in MagaMaga and a meeting with our engineer regarding 2nd Phase of our building in Eldoret, Kenya.

UGANDA 2018 FEBRUARY TRIP

Uganda/Kenya Mission Trip February 2018 — MLI is planning to bring together two trips in 2018. Either there will be two separate trips back-to-back OR part of the team in Uganda will extend their stay an extra 8 days to travel to Kenya (or maybe both ideas will apply). Some or all supplies will be carried by our Ugandan medical team to be transported to Kenya. Again, some of our Uganda team may also want to participate in Kenya after finishing the Uganda trip. Soon we will establish dates. This is a very important "must do" mission, and we need your help. In Kenya, MLI will put together a computer lab and minister to the kids in Mwingi. Contact Rick if interested - thelinkoffice@gmail.com

Sponsor a Widow with Monthly Support

For \$30 a month (just a dollar a day) you can make a difference in the life of a widow. Your support will help pay for school fees, medicine and much more. **So very little makes a BIG difference.... God states true religion is helping a widow! Will you bless this dear woman with a monthly gift? Thank You!**

Mbwali Mangada was born in 1946. She has 6 children. Her husband died of stomach complications in 1990. Mangada states, "I thank God for my life and for Mission Link International's piggery project. Mangada fellowships at Itukulu Baptist Church (MLI built the church in 1997). Challenges: School fees and needs for grandchildren; also, she needs monthly medical assistance as well as some basic needs.

