

you want, either from a moral God who rewards good behavior or from an orderly world that you effectively use. It leaves you in control of how things turn out in your life. The Old Way promises a better life filled with good things that make you happy.

But it never delivers, though it may seem to for a long time. The Old Way doesn't work for one reason: You never keep your end of the bargain, not completely. No one does.

The second path is the New Way. In this arrangement, God first plants a desire in your heart, a longing that actually values His presence over His blessings; then He invites you to live out that desire, to abandon yourself to what you most want. It takes you out of control, but it sets you free. The New Way promises a *better hope* than the good things of life. It promises nearness to God, and it delivers, though not right away and often through suffering.

Most people live the Old Way all of their lives; most people who go to church live a religious version of the Old Way. It goes something like this:

If you want good kids, raise them according to Christian principles.

If you want a good marriage, understand a biblical model for marriage and live up to it as closely as you can.

If you want God to bless your ministry, follow godly principles of leadership.

If you want to be emotionally healthy, practice spiritual disciplines and trust Jesus for your needs.

If you want close friends, learn to accept yourself and to be vulnerable, authentic, and forgiving.

People who live the Old Way believe the Law of Linearity, a law that states there is an *A* that leads to the *B* you want. Figure out what *A* is, do it, and you'll have the life you most desire. The pressure's on.

People who live the New Way believe the Law of Liberty. They come as they are. They do not bathe before they approach God. They come to God for the bath. They feel no pressure to change either their inner life or their

outer life, but they *desire* change in both spheres. And they are eager to do whatever will create the opportunity for change, even if it means dipping themselves seven times in a muddy river or marching around an enemy's wall for seven days and blowing trumpets. They live for the truest desire of their hearts: to know God and to enjoy Him. They do not live for a better life in this world. And when their life here is hard, when things fall apart, they most clearly reveal who they are. They're citizens of another world who most want what this world can never provide. So they wisely indulge their deepest desire and trust God to reveal Himself to them. That's the Law of Liberty.

Most of us are living the Old Way. Some of us can feel the emptiness it never fills. We're working hard to make life work so we can feel good. The pressure's on.

There's a new way to live that takes the pressure off. Join me as together we search for it.

The Pressure's Off - Larry Crabb  
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