

## SPIRITUAL DANGER AND SEPARATION

Tonight I want to ask you all some questions. The main question has to do with doctrinal error. How much doctrinal error or Scripture twisting will you allow from a “ministry” before you view that ministry as *dangerous*? You see, spiritual danger is relative in the minds of God’s people. Did you ever hear the saying: “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure”? Well, it’s kind of like that when it comes to people’s view of what constitutes a doctrinal error, and how dangerous they think that error is. Everyone seems to have a *different* yardstick when it comes to deciding what is truth and what is a dangerous error.

Of course, everyone *says* the Bible is their yard stick. I don’t know very many Christians who come right out and say they don’t care what the Bible says about this or that issue; they only care about what they think about it. The *Baptists* claim their doctrines and their views are based on the Scripture. The *Methodists* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *Lutherans* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *United Church of Christ* claims its doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *Episcopalians* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *Assemblies of God* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *Presbyterians* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. The *Brethren In Christ* claim their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. Indeed, every independent or non-denominational church or group in existence claims their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture.

Then there are the groups out here, outside the Church System. Whether it’s a little home fellowship of 10 or 20 people, or a family walking with the Lord by themselves, or a web-based ministry run by one person, or a Pal Talk chat room—everyone claims their doctrines and views are based on the Scripture. It doesn’t take a college degree to understand that all these different interpretations of Scripture can’t possibly be correct. Somebody is *wrong*. Even though they are all convinced their views are Scriptural, somebody’s wrong; somebody’s deceived. Somebody thinks they have the truth, and that truth is based on the Bible, when in fact they have error which is opposed to what the Scripture teaches.

For instance; there are all kinds of views regarding when the Lord will return. Some say it will be before the Great Tribulation; some say it will be in the middle of the Great Tribulation; some say it will be at the end of the Great Tribulation; and a few groups don’t think He will return till after the Millennium. Now, *one* of these views is right, but the *rest* of them are dead wrong. Yet every one who holds these various views believes 100% that they are solidly based on the Scripture, and they can quote the relevant passages upon which each view is based.

There used to be an old saying in the days of the Reformation that went like this: “*In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity*”. The idea is, when it comes to the “essential” doctrines of the Christian faith, there must be complete unity. There can’t be various opinions, each one being seen as just as valid as the others. In the essentials, one view is correct and the rest are wrong. If someone does not hold the correct view on the essentials, then we must *separate* from them.

However, on non-essentials, we are to allow each other the liberty to have our own interpretations and views. On non-essentials, each man’s opinion is just as valid as the next guy’s opinion. There is no “correct” view. There are only various, equally valid, views. Therefore, we are *forbidden to separate* from someone who holds a different view than we do when it comes to non-essential issues of the faith.

In other words, in the minds of the people who came up with that philosophy, some views are *dangerous* to our eternal welfare and as such, we must separate from *the people* who propagate those views. Other views are not dangerous to our eternal welfare and as such, we must not separate from the people who are propagating those views. The problem with this whole philosophy is, *who* determines what is essential and what is non-essential? Who determines what is dangerous and what is not dangerous?

Most doctrinal errors are based on some verse or passage of Scripture. Everyone, including those who are preaching and teaching error, *say* the standard by which they judge everything is the Bible. Everyone *says* they won't teach or accept anything that is not based in the Word. Yet we have all these conflicting theologies and doctrines inside and outside the Church System. Depending on who you talk too, some of these doctrines are dangerous, while others are not.

But again, danger is largely an issue of individual perception. What one person sees as dangerous, another person might not see as dangerous. It's all *relative*. The person who sees something as dangerous will avoid that thing. But if he tries to tell his friend about the danger, and his friend doesn't see that thing as being dangerous, then the guy's friend is going to think there is something *wrong* with him—and nine chances out of ten, the one who *doesn't* see any danger will mis-judge the motives of the one who does.

Now, supposing the one who sees the danger is *correct*. If this be the case, then the one who sees the danger has wisdom and understanding that his friend doesn't have. The one who sees the danger has a better grasp on the reality of the situation. The friend, who is walking in ignorance regarding the issue, has no idea that the other guy has more wisdom than he does. He thinks they are both *equal* in spiritual wisdom and discernment. Therefore, he thinks his *opinion* on the matter is *just as valid* as the other guy's opinion. After many discussions about the issue, the one who sees the danger decides that he has no choice but to separate from his friend because the danger is real, but the friend just can't see it.

Now, if you were to talk to these two people, what kind of story would you get from them?

Well, the one who saw the danger and who tried to warn his friend would give you *his perspective* of the situation. He would say: "I tried to warn my friend over and over again about the danger he was in as a result of believing that wrong doctrine, but he just couldn't see it. He didn't think it was wrong; and even if he would have seen it was wrong, he would not view it as being dangerous. And he would certainly never view it as being *so* dangerous you have to separate from other people who believe it. So, there came a point when, in order to protect myself spiritually, I had to separate from him."

The guy who saw no danger would then give you *his perspective* of the situation, and his perspective would be very different. He would say: "Well, poor brother so and so is a little *too paranoid* about certain doctrinal issues, and this one in particular. But I see these issues as "non-essentials" and as such, I don't think we should divide over them. I think we should leave each other free to form our own views and opinions regarding the matter—as long as they are Scriptural, of course. The fact that he has chosen to separate from me over a non-essential doctrine of the faith, over something that is *not a danger* to anyone, shows me he is too legalistic (and maybe even a bit elitist). He thinks he's better than other people and that he has to maintain some kind of spiritual cleanliness or he will be defiled by them. He doesn't have enough *faith* in God to walk with brethren who disagree with him. He has way too much fear of the enemy. He's afraid a certain doctrine I hold is going to poison him and send him to Hell. How childish!"

You see, our *perception* of spiritual danger will determine a lot of important issues in our life. If you don't perceive a danger in a relationship you have with someone, but that relationship is in fact dangerous, then there is a good possibility you will end up hurt or destroyed by it. If you don't perceive a danger in a doctrine you hold, but that doctrine is a false doctrine and it's dangerous, there is a good possibility you will end up hurt or destroyed by it. If you don't perceive a danger in some ministry you are sitting under, but that ministry is in fact dangerous, there is a good possibility you will end up hurt or destroyed by that ministry. Our perception of spiritual danger is very important—and people who walk around thinking they are *invincible* because they belong to God are fools. People who don't worry about who they fellowship with, or what kind of teachings they listen to, will surely perish in these days.

*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

*1 John 4:4-5*

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*

*1 Timothy 4:1*

The apostle John said the Spirit of God in the believer is greater than the spirit of Satan in the world. He said we “have overcome” (past tense) them (people) who are in the world. Yet Paul said a time would come when believers would “depart from the faith” as a result of listening to seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils. Well, if “he that is in you” is greater than “he that is in the world”, then why are so many Christians being deceived and overtaken by seducing spirits in these days?

Try telling the millions of people who follow someone like Benny Hinn that this man's doctrines are dangerous, and that they have been deceived by him, and see what their reaction is. Right away, it will be YOU who come under suspicion. It will be YOUR motives that are mis-judged. Even if you can get them to sit down long enough to listen to what you have to say, even if you show them the doctrinal error you feel is so dangerous, from the Scripture, do you know what they will say? First of all, they will quote I John 4:4-5—or some other such passage that promises God's people spiritual protection. They will also quote verses like Romans 8:35-39:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

They may even throw in John 10:27-29 and Philippians 1:6 for good measure: “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*” . . . “*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*”.

Next, they will say: “That’s just your interpretation, or your opinion, of that particular passage of Scripture. Benny Hinn’s interpretation is just as valid as yours—and even if his interpretation turns out to be wrong, it’s certainly not dangerous”. These people are incapable of *perceiving the danger* they are in. They are incapable of perceiving the danger of the errors Benny Hinn teaches.

Try telling the millions and of today’s Christians who believe the Eternal Security error that this teaching is not only wrong and unscriptural, but spiritually dangerous because it could cause them to end up in Hell. Do you know what they will say? First, they will quote you the same passages of Scripture, and maybe others along those lines, and then they will say: “You have your interpretation of this issue, based on your verses; and we have our interpretation of this issue, based on the verses we think supports OSAS. Since this is not a central issue of the faith, since this is a non-essential theological point, we shouldn’t let our different views divide us. We should continue to be one in the spirit.”

These people do not realize the danger they are in is as a result of believing this false doctrine. To them, it’s just a matter of opinion. You have your opinion of the issue and they have their opinion of the issue. Each one’s opinion is just as valid as the other. In their minds, it’s not a life or death issue; so we should just *agree to disagree* and continue to be one in the spirit.

But what if it *is* a life or death issue? What if that particular doctrine is a “doctrine of demons”? What if that particular doctrine originally came from a “seducing spirit”? What if the teaching of Eternal Security is one of those doctrines that will cause many of God’s people to “depart from the faith” in the last days? Would you still view it as a “non-essential” issue? Would you continue to view a doctrine that has the potential to damn millions of souls as a point not worth separating over?

Once again, our *perception* of spiritual danger is very important. That perception will determine many things in our lives. It will determine our relationships. It will determine our doctrinal views. In the end, it may even determine our eternal destiny. The fact is, those who do *not* view Eternal Security as a dangerous error may very well end up lost in the coming days.

Because of a *wrong perception* of spiritual danger, many people are being deceived right now. Because people think dangerous doctrines, and dangerous religious experiences, and dangerous relationships, and dangerous ministries are *not* really that dangerous, many of them are being deceived.

Do you realize that nobody who is being deceived in this hour *realizes* they are being deceived? They read the same verses of Scripture you do, and they *believe* that based on those scriptures, God is protecting them. As far as they know, they are praying to the same God you are, and they are getting their prayers answered. The ones who are being deceived right now believe 100% in the sovereignty of God. They are convinced that because God is sovereign, He will never let *them* end up in Hell.

They read and quote the same Psalms you do—especially the ones which tell us to *trust* God in everything; and give God praise for everything—yet they are following another Jesus. These people are trusting that God will *not* let them get deceived, just like you and I are trusting that God will not let *us* get deceived—yet they are walking in total deception!

So again, my question is: how *dangerous* does a particular teaching have to be before you consider *the one* who is teaching it to be dangerous as well? Or doesn't that kind of thinking go on in your minds any more, now that you have left the Church System?

Okay. Well, I'm going to read some long passages of Scripture now. So if you have your Bible handy, I would really like you to follow along with me because I'm going to be asking you some questions regarding these passages, and it's best that your answers come from what you yourself have just read, and not just from listening to me read it.

*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law **there shall no flesh be justified** in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and **the justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith** without the deeds of the law.*

*Romans 3:19-28*

Okay. I have a very simple question for you. What is the *subject* of this passage? I'll wait—go ahead and type the answer in if you can. If you can't, don't worry. I just want to give you a chance to participate. I want you to *see it* and *say it* for yourselves.

**ANSWER:** JUSTIFICATION. Being justified by grace and faith; rather than by the Law.

*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham **were justified by works**, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and **it was counted unto him for righteousness**. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that*

worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness**. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God **imputeth righteousness** without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord **will not impute sin**.

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision [Jews] only, or upon the uncircumcision [Gentiles] also? for we say that **faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness**. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that **righteousness might be imputed unto them also**: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through **the righteousness of faith**. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And **therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness**.

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that **it was imputed to him**; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Romans 4

Again, the questions is: what is the *subject* of Romans chapter 4?

**ANSWER:** IMPUTED RIGHTEOUS = JUSTIFICATION. The righteousness of God is *imputed* to us because we believe on Him that raised Jesus from the dead; just as the righteousness of God was *imputed* to Abraham because he believed on Him that made the promise about his seed.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, **being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath** through him. For if, when we were enemies, **we were reconciled** to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is **the free gift**. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but **the free gift** is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of **the gift of righteousness** shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one **the free gift came upon all men unto justification** of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall **many be made righteous**. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Romans 5

Once again: what is the *subject* of Romans chapter 5? I think it's important that we all see eye to eye regarding what Paul is teaching in these passages.

**ANSWER:** THE FREE GIFT OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUS = JUSTIFICATION. So far, the subject of Paul has been the imputed righteousness of Christ, which comes through faith in the Son of God. In this chapter, he also contrasts the sin of one man, which brought death and ruin upon the whole race; and the obedience of another man, which brought life and salvation to the race. Paul has been talking to his fellow Jews, who had a tendency to seek "justification" through works. He's giving a theological discourse on the difference between being justified by faith and being justified by the Law.

After agreeing that what Paul is talking about in the last part of chapter 3 and all of chapters 4 and 5 is justification by faith, what would you do if I turned around and said: "*In Romans chapter 4, when it talks about Abraham—I've used this many times to understand faith, and how faith can produce physical things for us. How faith can get our needs met; whether it be a physical healing, a material need, whatever. But really, the truth is, the context that Paul is writing here; the context in which he's writing; he's talking about the faith to overcome sin in your life.*"

**Question**—What would your reaction to that statement be? Would you just accept what I said; or would you say to yourself: "Hey, wait a minute, Daniel; the context of Paul in chapter 4 of Romans is clearly justification by faith; not overcoming sin? Would it matter to you that I **mis-represented** the Scripture?"

What if I compared Abraham believing God for the promised seed, to us believing God to walk in actual righteousness? What if I said: "*Abraham couldn't do anything in the natural to bring about life in his dead body. There is nothing he could do. See, some of you, you have some habitual sin that you still struggle with; and you're still struggling with it because you are trying in the flesh to deal with it. You're trying to deal with it with external restraints, and what you need to do is, you need to become fully convinced that what God has promised, He is able to perform. And when that happens, then that will be accounted to you for righteousness. That faith, of actually believing that what God said He would do, He would do, will be accounted to you for righteousness. And that righteousness, that's more than just a right standing with God (ie: justification); that's more than just God seeing you as righteous (ie: justification). We're talking about an actual manifestation of righteousness in you. An actual manifestation of overcoming of your wicked flesh*".

**Question**—Would you accept this statement as truth? Or would you say to yourself: "Hey, wait a minute: this comparison can't be true because the **original premise** that it's based upon—which is that Paul is talking about overcoming sin in Romans chapter 4—is wrong?"

**Question**—Do you believe that if you become **fully convinced** God will do what He has promised, that **this belief** will be accounted to you for righteousness—and that righteousness will not just be a legal state or position, but in fact, **actual** righteousness?

**Question**—Does it matter to you that I am totally mis-representing what Paul is teaching in Romans four? If so; **how much** does it matter? How **serious** do you think this mis-representation is?

What if I told you that redemption is really all about the sanctification of the soul, and that the soul is sanctified simply by believing God will eventually sanctify it for us? What if I said: *“This sanctification course is all about the saving of your soul. That’s what’s being saved. That’s what’s being sanctified. That’s what’s being made manifestly righteous. And how so? By simply believing that what God promised, He is able to bring about.”*

**Question**—What is your reaction to that statement? Do you accept it as truth? Do you believe all we have to do in order to have our souls sanctified and be made righteous in truth, is **believe** God will sanctify our souls and make us manifestly righteous?

**Question**—If you don’t accept this idea as truth, does it matter to you that I am mis-representing the Scripture? And if so, **how much** does it matter? How **serious** do you think this mis-representation is? Do you see this as an “essential” issue of the faith, or a “non-essential” issue? Do you see it as just a harmless opinion or individual interpretation of the Scripture—one that is just as valid as anyone’s else’s opinion or interpretation—or do you think this whole idea is spiritually dangerous?

How about if said that based on the story of Abraham’s faith—because he *believed* God would fulfill His promise, God did fulfill the promise—I think the Scripture is teaching us that the only thing we are responsible to do in order to come forth in actual righteousness is believe God will somehow, someday, bring us forth in that actual righteousness. In other words, what if I said: *“Now this is where most people miss it. What we are charged with is believing God; believing that promise to the exclusion of everything else, and believing that what God promised, He is able to do—just like Abraham did.”*

**Question**—What is your reaction? Do you accept that statement as truth? Do you believe all we have to do in order to walk in actual righteousness is **believe** God will one day **cause us** to walk in righteousness?

**Question**—If you think this idea is false, does it matter to you that I am trying to teach you a false doctrine? If it matters; **how much** does it matter? How **serious** do you think this error is? Do you see it as an “essential” issue of the faith, or a “non-essential” one? Do you see it as a harmless opinion; or do you see it as something a that might be spiritually dangerous?

What if I told you that based on the account of Abraham believing God for a son, the Lord has shown me the “key” to overcoming sin is very simple. The key is to do what Abraham did—“believe” God will keep His promise; believe God is working in you to overcome sin? In other words: *“He [Abraham] became fully convinced that what God had promised, He was able to perform. Are you convinced that what God promised concerning you and righteousness, that He’s able to perform. Even though I know, there’s still some sins—maybe some habitual sins—that you’re still struggling with. Are you willing to set that aside and believe God that His grace is working in you to overcome that? That’s the key. That’s the key to overcoming is actually believing it, even before you see it manifest.”*

**Question**—What do you think of my revelation? Do you accept it as truth? Do you believe the “key” to overcoming sin is to simply **believe** God is working in you to **cause you** to overcome it?

**Question**—If you think this idea is false, does it matter to you that I am giving you a **false revelation** regarding how to overcome sin? If it matters; **how much** does it matter? How **serious** an error do you think it is to tell people the key to overcoming sin is to simply believe God is working in them, and that He will eventually **cause them** to overcome it? Do you see this mis-interpretation of Abraham's faith as an "essential" issue or a "non-essential" one? Do you see it as just another harmless opinion or interpretation of someone; or can you see this whole line of reasoning is not only wrong but dangerous?

What if I said that based on what's said about being justified by faith in Romans chapter four, the Holy Spirit has shown me that if we try to bring forth actual righteousness in our lives, we are frustrating the grace of God and we are standing in the way of His ability to bring that righteousness forth in us? In other words: *"If you try to bring forth righteousness in your life by you own will, you own will power, you are frustrating the grace of God. You're standing in the way of God's grace—His ability to do it for you. See, we frustrate the grace of God when we try in our own ability, in our own will power, to make ourselves righteous.*

**Question**—Do you believe that statement? Do you believe that if we **exercise our wills** to do what is right, or if we **exercise our wills** to restrain wicked desires that may rise up in us, we are frustrating the grace of God; we are standing in the way of His ability to **make us** righteous?

**Question**—If you can see that this reasoning is a lie, does it matter to you that I am trying to give you a **false view** of righteousness? If it matters, **how much** does it matter? How **serious** do you think this mis-representation of righteousness is? Do you view this whole line of reasoning as an opinion or an interpretation that's just as valid as anyone else's opinion or interpretation; or can you see it's not only wrong and unscriptural, but spiritually dangerous?

Okay. Now as a staunch purveyor of this idea that all we have to do to overcome sin is rest and believe God's promises, I'm going to prove to you from the Scripture that my view is correct.

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath **ceased from his own works**, as God did from his. **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

*Hebrews 4:9-12*

What do you think the writer of Hebrew saying here? What if I told you I believe: *"He's saying, let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest. What rest? Resting in the promise of God. Ceasing from our own works. See, when you enter into that rest, you are ceasing from your own works; your own attempts to make yourself righteous. And in verse eleven it says let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Unbelief. See it's unbelief not to rest in the promise of God. See Abraham finally figured out that there was nothing he could do to bring that promise to pass, and he decided to rest in God's promise; and believe that God would bring it to pass in his life.*

**Question**—How do you view my interpretation of that passage? Do you believe it's true? Do you believe "ceasing from our own works" **means** that we should no longer attempt to live righteously? Does God really want us to be like Abraham regarding the sins that so easily beset us—just decide that since there's nothing we can do to bring about the promise (*ie; deliverance from that sin*), we should just rest in the promise of God and believe that one day—who knows when—but one day, He will eventually deliver us?

**Question**—If you can see that this is a gross mis-representation of the Scripture, **how much** does it matter to you? How **serious** do you think this distortion of the truth is? Is it dangerous enough in your eyes to make you think **the one who is teaching it** may also be dangerous; or is this whole line of reasoning just a matter of opinion and interpretation in your eyes—and you don't see it as being that dangerous?

What if I said: *“So what’s the answer then? The answer is to simply rest in the promise of God. Realize that you can’t do it by your efforts, no matter how much you try. You cannot make yourself righteous. You cannot make yourself walk in righteousness. You have to rest in His promise. . .But when you understand that you can’t do it; that you are unable to do it yourself, then you can enter into that rest and simply believe God. Simply believe that what God promised He’s able to bring about; that what He promised will manifest itself in your life. It’s God’s faith working in you. His power working in you, His grace working in you. It’s all by Him; it’s none of you. Your only job is to rest. Yield to that. Rest in it and believe it. That’s all you have to do. That’s all you can do.”*

**Question**—Do you believe what I just said is true? Does God really want us to be like Abraham regarding the sins that so easily beset us—decide that since there's nothing we can do to bring about the promise (*ie; deliverance from that sin*), we should just rest in the promise of God and believe that one day—who knows when—but one day, He will eventually deliver us?

**Question**—Do you believe that overcoming sin is **all by God and none of you**? Do you believe that our **only** job, that our **only** responsibility in the battle against sin, or the sanctification process, is to rest and believe that sooner or later God will **make us** righteous indeed?

**Question**—If you can see that this is a false doctrine, **how much** does it matter to you? How **serious** do you think this kind of error is? Is it dangerous enough to make you think **the one who is teaching it** may also be dangerous; or is this teaching just a matter of opinion and interpretation in your eyes? Do you understand this kind of garbage is dangerous; or do you think it's basically harmless?

Okay. I have a couple more statements to make, then I'll be finished with this part of the message. What would you think if I said the Lord showed me very clearly that when we stop trying to be good and just believe God is going to make us good by grace, the Lord counts that as righteousness.

In other words: *“When you stop laboring to be good and simply rest and know that God’s grace, His power, His ability is bringing these things to pass in your life; then you know what happens? God counts that as righteousness. That is imputed to you as righteousness. And you will begin to see the results of that manifest in your life. . .In order to see the power of God, you have to put yourself in a position where you have no ability to help yourself. See, that’s what Paul said: I glory in my infirmities, my weaknesses, for when I am weak, He is strong. When I’m in that wilderness, where I don’t have any way to get food and water—then I’ll see the power of God deliver food and water*

*to me supernaturally. And most people don't see the supernatural because they never allow themselves to be put in that position. Why? Because they're always leaning to the arm of the flesh. They're always working by their own will, their own ability to get things done. And it's the same thing when it comes to righteousness and manifesting righteousness in our lives. It's their own will power; it's their own human restraint. And they think they're working the works of the Lord and they're not."*

**Question**—Do you believe what I just said? Is it true that if we stop trying to live a righteous life and just believe God will somehow make us righteous by grace, that **this faith** will cause God to impute **actual** righteousness to us so that we live a righteous life? Does anyone in this room believe this is true?

**Question**—Do you believe that when Paul said: "I glory in my infirmities, for when I am weak, He is strong"—he **meant** that he didn't ever strive against sin or try to exercise any restraint over any wrong desires he may have had, so that God could come and **do all that for him**?

**Question**—If you can see that this kind of teaching is wrong, **how much** does it matter to you? How serious do you think it is? Is it dangerous enough to make you think **the one who is teaching it** may also be dangerous; or do you think this kind of teaching is just religious opinion and basically harmless?

Alright, two more quick questions—you can answer with a simple 1 or 2.

~ *How many of you see the views I have been stating tonight as spiritually dangerous?*

~ *How many of you would view a person who was teaching this kind of stuff as dangerous?*

Well, before we move on, I'd like to play a little audio clip for you. It's only 6½ minutes long.

**NOTE:** *The audio clip is no longer available because Mr. Lumbley has demanded that I remove it. Apparently his chat room messages are **copyrighted**, and playing **short clips** of them is a violation of his "Intellectual Property Rights". In the clip, he actually said all the previous statements I have been making in this message.*

Okay. Those of you in the room—and maybe some of you who are listening to the audio from the web site—will recognize that as the voice of Steve Lumbley, owner of the "Apostasy Watch" web site. The statements you heard were taken from a two-part message called "*The Works of the Flesh Are These*". For the benefit of those who can't recognize how he was mis-representing the Scripture, and for those who don't understand why his statements are dangerous, I'll explain.

First of all, throughout this whole message, he confuses and *mixes* imputed righteousness and actual righteousness—which he calls "manifest righteousness"—in a way that is totally unscriptural. Imputed righteousness is an *invisible* legal position. Imputed righteousness is when God declares a person righteous *judicially*, as a result of that person truly repenting and seeking forgiveness for their sins. They receive atonement for those sins through the shed blood of Jesus and the righteousness of Jesus is credited to their account.

However, there is a vast difference between imputed righteousness and actual righteousness. Actual righteousness is FRUIT—the “fruit of the Spirit” (*Eph. 5:9*). Actual righteousness can NEVER be “imputed” to a person. Actual righteousness is the *kind of person* we are. Imputed righteousness is a legal position. A person can have the righteousness of Christ imputed to him and yet be very *unrighteous* in fact and in deed. This is usually the situation when it comes to “carnal” Christians. Carnal Christians have received the “imputed” righteousness of Christ, but they are still very unrighteous in many areas.

Actual righteousness is really “sanctification”. Most scholars, theologians, Pastors and Bible teachers use the term *sanctification* when they are talking about *what kind of person* someone is. The term “imputed righteousness” is universally recognized as an invisible legal position which is granted to people who, many times are very *unsanctified*. Actual righteousness—or manifest righteousness, as Steve calls it—must be worked into a person’s life. It’s something that is *produced* as we interact with God.

Steve claims that the person who becomes fully convinced that God will do what He has promised, gets the righteousness of God accounted to him because of that, and that this righteousness is actual righteousness. This is error. When he says imputed righteousness is more than just a right standing with God (ie: justification); more than just God seeing you as righteous (ie: justification); that it’s an “actual manifestation of righteousness in you”, or that it’s an “actual manifestation of overcoming of your wicked flesh”—he’s preaching doctrinal error. He’s preaching something that is utterly impossible. It’s as religious fantasy. God cannot impute an “actual manifestation of righteousness” to anyone. He cannot impute “an actual manifestation of overcoming your wicked flesh” to anyone.

When he says that as soon as we stop trying to be good and rest in the knowledge that God’s grace is bringing these things to pass in our lives, God counts that as righteousness and imputes that righteousness to us; and that the *result* of this is that “actual righteousness begins to manifest in our lives”—he is preaching error. The *result* of imputed righteousness is not spiritual fruit. The production of spiritual fruit (ie: actual righteousness) requires time, growth and change; and that change entails many things that we are *responsible* to do and not do. It entails pain and suffering. Steve is offering people a way to have fruit (sanctification; actual righteousness) *without any real effort* (except to “believe” it will happen).

I really don’t think anyone who listens to Steve perceives or discerns the fact that he is constantly double-talking and speaking out of both sides of his mouth. In one breath he will say that you can’t have spiritual life (ie: salvation) without dying. Then he turns around and says that all you have to do in order to overcome sin, be conformed to the image of Christ, have your soul saved, and walk in “manifest righteousness” is BELIEVE that someday God will bring all this to pass in you life. Listen my friends, those two messages may seem perfectly compatible to him, and to all those who follow him, but they are *not* compatible in truth. They are confusion and contradiction.

You can see the same kind of contradiction and confusion between what he says in this message on the flesh and what he say at other times. Here he says: “It’s God’s faith working in you. His power working in you, His grace working in you. *It’s all Him; it’s none of you.* Your only job is to rest. Yield to that. Rest in it and believe it. *That’s all you have to do.* That’s all you can do.”

It’s all of God and none of you. You can’t do anything. You have no responsibility except to rest and believe that somehow, someday, God will *cause you* to walk in actual righteousness by grace.

Anyone recognize where this idea comes from. It's Calvinism. It comes from John Calvin. Yet, in other messages, he will say we all have choices to make. He will tell his congregation they have to "die to self" and "put their flesh under" and "choose righteousness" and "walk away from temptation" and many other things that require people to do much *more* than simply rest and believe.

Again, I have no doubt that in his mind—and in the minds of those who listen to him week in and week out—these two kinds of statements are totally compatible. But in truth, they are contradictory. Either it is ALL of God and NONE of you; or it is SOME of God and SOME of you. These two ideas are mutually exclusive. They are not even remotely compatible. They cannot possibly be integrated. One statement is Scriptural and correct; the other one is unscriptural and wrong.

Next, the comparison between Abraham believing that God would fulfill the promise He made to him concerning Isaac, and us overcoming sin simply by believing like Abraham did, is like comparing apples and oranges. It's a mis-representation of the message of Paul in Romans four. The issue for Abraham was not overcoming sin. In addition, God brought the promise He made to Abraham to pass just as much because Abraham *obeyed* Him as He did because Abraham believed Him.

*Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, **that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.***

*Genesis 18:18-19*

Look carefully at what is said in these verses of Scripture and you will see that Steve is using a *half truth* out of Romans chapter four to advance his Calvinistic view of sanctification. In Genesis chapter eighteen, God said Abraham would become a great nation and that he would bless all the nations of the earth. Was it only Abraham's "faith" that would bring this about? Would God's promise eventually be fulfilled just simply because Abraham "rested and believed" it would come to pass? No!

God said: "*I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; [so] that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*" In other words, it wasn't just Abraham's "faith" that produced the promise. It was also Abraham's *obedience*, and the obedience he would instill into his children, that would allow God to give him what He had promised.

Faith without works is dead. Abraham had faith in God; and that faith *produced* obedience; and that obedience is *also* what brought about the fulfillment of the promise. No obedience—no fulfillment. Believing isn't enough! Becoming fully convinced isn't enough! Steve is preaching faith *without* works in this particular message. The basic idea is, we exercise faith (which also has to come from God); we become fully convinced that God will cause us to walk in righteousness and eventually He will cause us to walk in righteousness. Unless "believing" is considered by him to be the "works" that *result* from faith, there are no works. We simply believe—*God* does all the work. Just in case we didn't get the message about how important obedience is the first time, God repeats it for us a few chapters later, even more explicitly.

*And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.***

*Genesis 26:4-5*

God told Abraham He was going to multiply his seed as the stars of the heaven BECAUSE Abraham: “obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Again, you can see the *direct correlation* between obedience to God’s commandments, laws, statutes, and voice, and the fulfillment of the promise. To say that Abraham received the promise simply because he finally became fully convinced that God would fulfill it, is only a *half* truth. Obedience to God was just as important and just as necessary to the fulfillment of that promise as was believing God would eventually do it.

Hello? Obedience is something *we* do. Obedience is not something God does *for* us. We are responsible to obey the Lord’s commandments. We are responsible to obey the Lord’s charge. We are responsible to obey the Lord’s statutes. We are responsible to obey the Lord’s laws. We are responsible to obey the Lord’s voice. All this entails a lot more than “simply believing that what God promised, He is able to do”.

Saying that Abraham couldn’t do anything in the natural to bring about the promise *means* we can’t do anything to overcome sin is insane! I find it hard to believe that people sat through those messages and didn’t discern that anything was wrong with them. Abraham received the promise because he believed AND obeyed God.

In Romans four, Paul was simply using Abraham’s faith to show us how *we* are justified. Abraham was justified because he believed God’s word about Isaac. In the same way, we are justified if we believe God’s word about Jesus. The issue is justification by faith in God’s word; *not* overcoming sin by faith in God’s word. We are justified by faith in what God has spoken. When it comes to justification, it is by faith, not by works. We can’t *earn* justification by being good.

However, sanctification is a whole different story. Abraham wasn’t *sanctified* by believing God’s promise about Isaac; he was sanctified by his obedience to God. I challenge Steve, or anyone else who believes this kind of nonsense, to show me from the New Testament where sanctification comes simply by believing God will sanctify us. Sanctification is a *process* that requires our co-operation on every level. We have to obey God in order to be sanctified. Steve is teaching people that the only responsibility they have in *both* justification and sanctification is to believe. That’s an unscriptural lie.

Let me point out a few more things that the people who heard that message obviously missed. He quoted Hebrews 4:9-12 and said that ceasing from our own works means that we stop struggling against sin. In other words, those who strive against a besetting sin are not “ceasing from their own works”

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet **resisted** unto blood, **striving against sin.***

*Hebrews 12:3-4*

I mentioned this last week. The writer of Hebrews stated that Jesus not only “resisted” and strove against sin, but He resisted and strove against sin with *all* the strength He could muster; so much so, He ended up sweating drops of blood. Should we believe that Jesus was *failing* to “cease from His own works” because he was striving against sin at that point? Should we believe Jesus was *failing* to “cease from His own works” because he wasn’t simply “resting and believing” the Father would keep Him from sinning at that crucial moment? Well, if Steve’s doctrine is correct, that’s *exactly* what you will have to believe because Jesus certainly wasn’t “resting” in the promises of God at that moment. He wasn’t just “believing” God would keep Him from sin at that point. He was doing *His part* in that battle.

Jesus’ *will* was fully engaged in that battle. He was resisting the temptation to sin with all His *human* strength. That’s why an angel had to come and “strengthen” Him—He was wearing Himself out resisting the temptation to *not* do the will of the Father. He was wearing Himself out striving against sin. Jesus’ whole mind, will and heart was engaged in that battle. Every cell, every atom, was engaged in that battle and that’s *the reason* He won. That’s *the reason* He did not sin at that decisive moment in history.

I want to say this very clearly—if Jesus would have done what Steve is telling people to do, we would *all* be on our way to Hell right now because He would have *lost* that battle. He would have ended up sinning. Everyone who listens to Steve needs to know that he is preaching the exact opposite of what the Scripture teaches regarding the issue of overcoming sin. If you follow his advise; if you follow his council; you will *never* overcome the sin that is besetting you. You must do the *exact opposite* of what he is telling you to do! You must fully engage you whole being in the struggle against sin.

No, we can’t overcome sin in our own strength and God is not asking us to try to overcome sin alone. He is only asking us to do our part. There is a reason God will not do it all for us. There is a reason He wants us to struggle against some of these sins. The reason is very simple: it’s *the struggle* that produces “spiritual iron” in us. It’s *the struggle* that makes you an overcomer!

Do you remember when you first came to the Lord? How He supernaturally, instantly, took away many of the desires you had for sinful things, or for worldly things? I know many people who, when they were born again, instantly lost the desire to smoke and drink and gamble and do many other things they were doing on daily basis for years. In a split second, all of those desires were gone. Well, if God can do that with *some* of our sinful and worldly desires, don’t you think He could do it for *all* of them if He wanted too? Don’t you think God has the power to instantly take away *every* wrong desire we have? I do.

Well then, *why* doesn’t he take them all away. Why does He only take some of them away and leave others there for us to struggle with? Because it’s the struggle that makes our wills strong. It’s the struggle that produces determination in us. It’s the struggle that produces iron. God doesn’t want our wills to be like wet noodles. He want them to be strong as iron—but strong *for Him*, not strong for sin.

Your will is like the natural muscles of your body. The only way to make it strong in the Lord and for the Lord’s purposes is *through resistance*. That’s what natural weight lifting is all about. It’s the resistance of the weights that makes the muscles grow and become stronger. The more *resistance* you apply to the muscles—100 lbs, 150 lbs, 200 lbs, 250 lbs—the stronger the muscles become. Well, it’s the same way with our wills. God wants to strengthen your will in holiness. He wants to strengthen your will in righteousness. He wants to take that will that has always been strong in rebellion against Him, and turn it

into a will that is strong in obedience to Him. He want's to turn it into a will that is dedicated and consecrated to Him. He wants to put iron in it so it becomes a formidable enemy against sin. God wants to *empower* our wills and use them to defeat sin. This is what makes you and me an overcomer. That's what all this is about. The Spirit of God is trying to produce iron in us so we will eventually be able to resist and overcome *all* sin—not in our own strength, but with a human will that has been empowered and made strong by the Spirit of God.

This is a truth that Steve doesn't understand because of the influence of Calvinism in his life. He doesn't understand that even though the strength to overcome sin must come from God, it must come *through* a human will that's being empowered by the Spirit. If God comes and does everything for you directly, like John Calvin taught, your will—will never be made strong for Christ. It will remain either a weak will, or a strong will towards rebellion and sin. The human will has been made *iron* by the Holy Spirit because this is the only *permanent answer* to the problem of sin. The only real answer to sin is a will that has been filled with the Spirit and made like iron in it's ability to resist and overcome sin.

One of the most disturbing statements Steve made in that message was when he said: "*I know, there's still some sins—maybe some habitual sins—that you're still struggling with. Are you willing to set that aside and believe God that His grace is working in you to overcome that?*" Apparently neither he or any of his followers see anything wrong with telling a person who is struggling with an habitual sin to just forget about it (set that aside) and "believe" that God's "grace" is working in them to overcome that sin. Does anybody in this room understand what's wrong with that kind of advise? It's the same as saying we can *continue* in sin that *grace* may abound. Not abound forever; but abound till God delivers you.

It's like saying: "Don't you worry about that sin, brother. You just keep giving in to it; you just keep yielding to it because we all know that if *you* try to overcome it with *your own* will or *your own* determination, you are just moving in the flesh and leaning to the arm of the flesh. And you sure don't want to add trusting in the flesh to that sin you are already committing every day, now do you?"

So you just keep practicing that sin every day like you usually do. Only instead of worrying yourself about it and being condemned over it, from now on, just start believing that God's *grace* is going to eventually deliver you from it. That's the key. While you are practicing your sin every day, you must become fully convinced that God will eventually deliver you from that sin—*without* you resisting it, *without* you striving against it—and eventually He will deliver you simply because you have become convinced He will.

Another place where Steve mis-represents the Scripture is his interpretation of what Paul *meant* when said he glories in his infirmities because when he is weak, Christ is made manifest through him.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: **for when I am weak, then am I strong.***

*II. Corinthians 12:9-10*

Just like the false spin he puts on the “rest of God” in Hebrews chapter four, he does the same thing here. He spins this passage to mean that Paul finally realized resisting sin and striving against sin was useless. He realized that you just have to “believe and rest”—and that is what Paul is talking about when he talks about being “weak”. Once you realize that you can’t overcome sin in your own strength, you’ll just start believing that God will eventually deliver you “by grace”. He’ll eventually cause you to bear fruit by grace and sanctify you by grace. God will do it *for* you. It will be “all of Him and none of you”.

Is this the same Paul who said we must **attain** the first resurrection (*Phil. 3:11-12*), and the prize (*I. Cor. 9:24*) and salvation (*I. Thess. 5:9; II. Tim. 2:10*)? Is this the same Paul who said we have to **lay hold of** eternal life (*I. Tim. 6:12*), and that we must **win** Christ (*Phil. 3:8*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **walk worthy** of our calling (*Eph. 4:1*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (*II. Cor. 7:1*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **abstain** from fornication (*I. Thess. 4:3*), and from all appearance of evil (*I. Thess. 5:22*)? Is this the same Paul who told us we are responsible to **flee** youthful lusts (*II. Tim. 2:22*), and **flee** idolatry (*I. Cor. 10:14*), and **flee** the love of money (*I. Tim. 6:11*).

Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **put on** the whole armor of God (*Eph. 6:11*) so we can **stand against** the devil’s temptations and assaults (*Eph. 6:11*), **wrestle against** his power (*Eph. 6:12*), **war** as a good soldier of Jesus (*I. Tim. 1:18*), and **fight** the good fight of faith (*I. Tim. 6:10*)? Is this the same Paul who said we must **awake** to righteousness (*I. Cor. 15:34*), and **yield** to righteousness (*Rom. 6:19*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **come out** from among those who will not serve God (*II. Cor. 6:17*)? Is this the same Paul who said we must **endure** hardness (*II. Tim. 2:3*), afflictions (*II. Tim. 4:5*), persecution and tribulation (*II. Thess. 1:4*), and all things (*II. Tim. 2:10*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **be sober** (*I. Thess. 5:6*) and to **be holy** (*Eph. 1:4*)? Is this the same Paul who said we are responsible to **sow to the Spirit** in order to reap eternal life (*Gal. 6:8*)?

The man who said we are responsible to do all these things—things which constitute being sanctified—sure doesn’t sound like the kind of man who would turn around and say: “*This sanctification course is all about the saving of your soul. That’s what’s being saved. . . That’s what’s being made manifestly righteous. And how so? By simply believing that what God promised, He is able to bring about*”.

When Paul said we must flee, abstain, obtain, attain, run, win, fight, endure, cleanse, lay hold of, awake, wrestle, stand, etc—does that sound to you like what Steve Lumbley is teaching? Was the message of Paul, regarding our sanctification, the same message Steve is preaching? Where did Paul say that if you will “simply believe” that God is going to sanctify your soul, if you’ll just “become convinced” that He’s going to do it, then He will eventually do it *because* you are believing he will do it? Anyone who thinks Paul and Steve are preaching the same message regarding sanctification doesn’t really understand what either of them are teaching.

Now, before Steve’s defenders start accusing me of taking his statements out of context, or of not being fair about what he was trying to say; let me say that part of what he was saying was true. He was saying that *external* restraints—whether they be the laws of the state or the laws of the Church—cannot really deliver people from sin. Many Christians confuse obedience to all these external laws (using sheer human strength and will power) with actually being *set free* from the *desires* that make them want to break these laws. He was saying that only the Spirit of God can set people free. Only the *internal life* of God replace

those old desires with new ones. Only then will people be set free from sin instead of just *restraining* sin with their own human will power. All this is true. The problem lies in *how* he thinks God is going to do all this. He's saying that because we can't do it in our own human strength, that means we don't even have to *engage* our own human strength. We just have to wait for God to come on the scene and do it all for us. This is not only unscriptural, it's dangerous because it's a form of *passivity*. Also, it negates the very reason God wants us to struggle against sin—which is to produce spiritual iron.

Of course, I realize that Steve sneers whenever the terms “spiritual iron” or “a rod of iron” are used because he now believes that anyone who talks about these things are nothing but proud elitists who are only concerned with telling others what to do (*thank you David Elles*). His congregation also mocks and sneers at the whole idea of God training His people to rule over others. But they will be ashamed one of these days because that is *precisely* what God is doing—and they are mocking the Spirit's work.

The Lord is bringing forth *iron* in His people. He's teaching them how to overcome sin—not simply by “believing” they will overcome it in the future *by grace*, but by resisting it and striving against it now, until they have gained the victory over it through their own determination *and* a supernaturally empowered will. God is teaching those who have ears to hear, how to RULE over their own vessels in holiness and righteousness—and He gives us little opportunities here and there to exercise that iron in various ways. When Jesus returns, only those who have that iron will rule and reign with Him.

My position is very simple: it doesn't do much good to tell people they can overcome sin, and then turn around and teach them things which will ensure that they *never* overcome that sin. It doesn't do much good to tell them they can be overcomers, and then turn around and teach them things which will ensure that they *never* become an overcomer! *That's* the problem with Steve's doctrine as I see it. In my view, the people who follow that kind of teaching will never overcome sin or be an overcomer.

Some of those who hear this message will probably be wondering why I have chosen to speak out against one of Steve's teachings at this time. Well, the fact is, I think it's time to state *publicly* that Steve Lumbley and Dan Mace are *not* presenting the same spiritual vision to people. I'm not calling him a false teacher. I believe Steve is very sincere in his beliefs and his work for the Lord. However, this does not change the fact that we are preaching two different messages. Also, sincerity is not enough. Many people are sincerely *wrong* in this hour. Still others are sincerely *deceived*.

This is why I stopped attending Steve's Bible studies. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed and our messages do not agree. I believe some of his teachings are not only a *mixture* of truth and error, but are very dangerous—and this is one of them.

Most of those who have come to realize over the past year that Steve and I are preaching different messages, have come to the *opposite* conclusion. They view *my* teachings as dangerous and they no longer listen to them. That's fine. But those of you who are still listening to both of us need to realize that we stand for vastly different things in God's kingdom. Not only are they different, they are utterly opposed. If you can listen to both of us and see no real difference between our messages, then you need to ask God for more discernment and wisdom.