

CO-WORKERS WITH CHRIST

Last week I discussed the confusion that comes from accepting the false grace which is seducing so many people in this hour. False grace is usually taught a little differently outside the Religious System than it is *inside* that system. There's usually a much more subtle *spin* on it out here. But whether you are dealing with false grace inside the system or out here, it's all based on the same mis-understanding (or out-right denial) of one simple truth—we are “co-workers” with Christ in Redemption.

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ezekiel 3:17-21

Some of you may know that the above passage is used by most of today's “Discernment Ministries” to validate their ministry of exposing error and heresies in the Church. Yet, the fact is, the majority of these ministries can't possibly believe what this passage says because Ezekiel is talking about *God's* people. The “wickedness” (and the wicked men), as well as the “righteousness” (and the righteous men), were all part of the house of Israel. In New Testament lingo, the house of Israel is equivalent to the Church. So if you're going to use this passage to support your New Testament ministry of being a “watchmen”, then understand that you are supposed to be functioning as a watchmen for *Christians*—not pseudo Christians; not wanna-be Christians; not cultural Christians; not fake Christians; not religious people who only *think* they are Christians—but actual, regenerated, blood-washed Christians.

So if you apply this passage to your watchman ministry, don't think Ezekiel is talking about “sheep” and “goats” sitting together in the pews of the same church. He's talking about sheep who do wickedly and sheep who do righteously. It's the job of the watchman to warn *Christians* who are doing wickedly that if they continue to do wickedly, they will die in that iniquity. They will die in a state of having their sins unforgiven. Likewise, it's the job of the watchman to warn *Christians* who are doing righteously that if they “turn” from their righteousness, they too will die in a state of having their sins unforgiven.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of today's Discernment Ministries can't really believe the passage they use to validate their ministry for several reasons. One reason is because the “grace” they have embraced tells them *wicked Christians* can indeed continue to do wickedly and still go to heaven. The grace they have

embraced teaches them that “believing” in Jesus puts us into an “environment of grace” that is totally “secure”, and there is nothing we can do once we have entered that secure environment to get ourselves cast out of it. It teaches them that all who “believe” in Jesus receive the gift of salvation, which cannot be lost. So in their minds, the possibility of a righteous man (ie: believer) turning from his righteousness doesn’t even exist. A genuine believer will not (and cannot) ever turn from his righteousness.

Another reason they cannot believe what Ezekiel said is because they believe another very prominent error—which is that all our past, present and future sins were forgiven at the Cross. Therefore, there is no possibility in their minds that a believer could ever die with any sins *unforgiven*. All these false doctrines have been woven together so the average Christian will never be able to see the truth.

Another reason these ministries can’t believe what Ezekiel said is because the only kind of righteousness they understand is *imputed* righteousness. In their minds, we cannot possibly have any righteousness of our own. That’s heresy! Even if you are one of the few people on this planet who is manifesting *actual* righteousness, even if you are living a righteous life, in their minds, that righteousness is not yours. In their minds, nobody can ever possibly be righteous. Only “Christ in you” will *ever* be righteous. So whenever you start talking about “his” righteousness or “my” righteousness, or “your” righteousness or “their” righteousness, you are immediately accused of stealing the glory from God. Thus, when Ezekiel talks about a righteous man turning from “his” righteousness, his words go right over their heads because of all the error that has become the foundation of their faith.

You see, what Ezekiel said makes no sense unless we can turn away from our own righteousness. It’s really not possible to turn away from imputed righteousness because after all, you didn’t do anything to receive imputed righteousness and you can’t do anything to lose it (according to them). How can YOU turn away from ANOTHER PERSON’S righteousness? How can you turn away from something that isn’t yours? How can you turn away from something that will always belong to someone else, but which has been freely (ie: nothing to do with how you live or what you do) credited to your account?

The confusion that reigns in the minds of those who preach false grace, and all the error that go with it, would be humorous if it weren’t such a deadly serious issue. Here you have hundreds of ministries putting up web sites, writing articles and books, traveling around the country, and even around the world, exposing and naming all of today’s false apostles, prophets, preachers and teachers. They are busy, busy, busy, warning people of the apostasy, but they don’t really believe it’s possible for a Christian to apostatize! So, *who* are they warning not to apostatize?

After they have given their warnings, they always find a way to assure the people they are ministering to that since *they* are genuine Christians, they aren’t in any *real* danger of being deceived and ending up lost. The only people who are actually in danger of being deceived are *phony* Christians. True Christians won’t ever fall away, regardless of how bad it gets, because God is responsible to keep them saved. It’s like a 3-ring circus and these ministers are the clowns.

“Beware of the great end-time apostasy”, they say. “Stay away from Rick Joyner; stay away from C. Peter Wagner; stay away from Mike Bickle; stay away from Todd Bentley; stay away from Joel Osteen; stay away from Rick Warren, or else”. My question is: or else what? Is God going to let you get deceived? Is God going to let you lose your rewards (which you have been given “by grace”)? Is God

going to let you be drawn away from the faith? Not if you're a *real* Christian. Not if you're under God's grace. Real Christians need not fear of any of these men or the deceiving powers that move through them. Real Christians can attend the meetings of these false prophets and apostles and healing evangelists and not get deceived. The only ones who will get deceived when they go to those kinds of meetings are *phony* Christians. The only ones who will end up staying and following people like Benny Hinn, Todd Bentley, and all the rest of them, are *unregenerated* religious people.

The false security that's such a part of today's Christianity is THE problem I always run up against when trying to expose this false grace. Christians are used to hearing *watered-down* warnings about the great end-time apostasy. They've been warned over and over again—and with every warning comes a subtle assurance that *they* are different. With every warning comes an exception clause which they understand applies to them. So when someone comes along and gives them warning with teeth; when they are told that they are no different than the ones who are being deceived, and that what's happening to so many believers right now can happen to them; they react a quite differently. When they hear a *real* warning, their false security starts getting a little shaky and they begin to get scared because they have never learned to how to live in spiritual *reality*. They only world they have ever lived in is a religious fantasy world—and they have lived in that world so long, they can't bear to hear the truth.

In the end, most of them reject a real warning and start babbling all the false doctrine they have been taught—God loves them too much to ever let Satan destroy them; God is faithful, so He will always protect them; God is sovereign, so He won't let anything really bad happen to them; Jesus overcame Satan so they don't have to, etc., etc. By far, one of the hardest things you will ever do is get God's people to realize they are *not* eternally secure, and that they have an enemy who is extremely dangerous and is capable of destroying them, not just physically, but eternally.

The Scripture tells us that before he fell, Lucifer was called “the anointed cherub” and the “covering cherub”. In *Ezekiel 28:12-17* we are told that Lucifer sealed up the sum of wisdom, perfection and beauty. The phrase “sealeth up the sum” means that nothing could have been added to him. He was the apex of God's angelic creation. We are then given a short synopsis of what happened to him. His heart was “lifted up” (or became proud) “because of his beauty”. The result was, he became corrupted and evil.

What we need to understand is that when Lucifer fell, he didn't lose all that wisdom. Listen to what the Holy Spirit says, as He speaks directly to Satan through the lips of the prophet Ezekiel. He says: “*thou hast corrupted thy wisdom*”. Lucifer's wisdom wasn't lost or diminished—it was corrupted. It became wicked. It was transformed into an *evil genius*. That same wisdom is being used to continually corrupt and distort the Scripture. It's continually being used against us in his effort to destroy us. However, God has been holding back or restraining the full power or potential of Satan's wisdom.

*And now ye know **what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.**
For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth
[restraineth] will let [restrain], **until** he be taken out of the way. And **then**
shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit
of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

II Thessalonians 2:6-8

It's very clear that in Paul's day, something was holding back the full revelation of Antichrist, so that it might be revealed in its proper time—which is the last days. Paul said something is restraining the full revelation of this entity, and it will continue to restrain it until a certain point—which again, is the last days. So the fact is, even though Satan has always been a very dangerous creature, God has had him on a leash. God has been restraining the full potential of this fallen cherub's wisdom and power. However, it has always been God's plan to *stop* restraining him at the close of this present age. So in our day, Satan has been unleashed. He has been granted permission by God to do everything he is *capable* of doing.

The other week, I mentioned one outcome of this very unpleasant reality. The prophet Daniel saw the little horn (ie: Antichrist) pull many of the stars (ie: saints) out of their heavenly place—that is, out of their spiritual walk in Christ. He not only watched the little horn cast these saints to the ground, he watched the little horn *stomp* on them. Daniel also saw the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice being turned over to the little horn. He said Antichrist will *prosper* in everything that it does—and much of what it does will be in order to destroy the saints (*Dan. 8:10 & 12 & 24*).

The apostle John said that in the last days, God would give power to the Beast and it would use that power to make war with the saints and overcome them (*Rev. 13:4*). As a matter of fact, if you go through the book of Revelation, you will find that all the “power” that's being exercised by Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet in their bid to overcome the saints, actually comes from God. The phrase: “he was given power”, and “power was given to it”, appears over and over again and it's very clear that God is the one who is giving power to these entities. That's right. God is the one who is giving this false trinity the power it will use to overcome the saints.

So just because God is sovereign, just because He is ultimately in control of everything that's happening in the final hours of this age, that doesn't mean we will necessarily be protected from the power he has given Satan. If we want to remain under God's protection, we *still* have to do the things Jesus and the apostles commanded. We still have to be sober. We still have to be vigilant. We still have to put on the whole armor of God (so we can stand, resist, and wrestle against the enemy's power). We still have to deny our flesh and our self wills. We still have to separate ourselves from the world. We still have to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and we still have to draw near unto to God. If we do our part, then we will be protected spiritually, *regardless* of how much power God grants Satan. But if we don't do our part, then we will not be protected from that power.

*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;***

I. Timothy 4:1

I've mentioned this passage many times because it is one of the most important verses in the Scripture when it comes to the last days. This is *how* Antichrist is overcoming the saints right now. He is doing it through religious deception. He is doing it by twisting and perverting the *fundamental* doctrines of the Bible, and also by impersonating the Holy Spirit. We must realize that when it comes to doctrine and teaching, we are not simply dealing with the opinions of men. In the last days, another element is added to the situation—and that element is the work of seducing spirits.

Doctrines of devils are *different* than doctrines of men. The mind of man is *human*. It has no supernatural power. When a theologian or a scholar develops an unscriptural teaching or doctrine as a result of twisting the Scripture, this remains in the realm of the *natural* man. When a religious demon does so, you are dealing with a completely different situation because the mind you are dealing with is a *supernatural* mind. It's a mind that is getting its wisdom from a fallen cherub. It's a mind that is getting its wisdom from a creature who was *the sum of all wisdom*. When you deal with the doctrines of demons, you are dealing with something that's a hundred times more powerful and seductive than the doctrines of men.

It's the doctrines and teachings and spiritual experiences which are coming from these *religious seducing spirits* that is the root of the current apostasy. These spirits went for the leadership of the Church System first. Once they had the leadership deceived the rest was a piece of cake because the vast majority of the *sheeple* will always blindly follow the leadership, wherever it goes.

What we need to realize is that people like Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, Rick Joyner, C. Peter Wagner, and all the rest of them, are only *vessels* through whom these deceiving powers are moving. It's the seductive power these leaders walk under that is deceiving Christians right now. Tens of thousands of them are departing from faith because they have accepted (given heed to) the doctrines of demons. They have accepted a counterfeit gospel of grace which has been conceived in the mind of supernatural creatures who are drawing upon the wisdom of a fallen cherub.

This is why they are called "seducing" spirits. They are specifically trained to seduce us with phrases and words and theological terms that we are already familiar with, but which they have applied new and unscriptural meanings to. These spirits not only twist the Scripture in people's minds so they start believing a counterfeit of the truth, they also *teach people* how to present or phrase these errors in such a way as to make it very hard to answer.

Most of you have seen something similar to what I'm talking about in the natural. As a joke, someone will come up to you and ask you if you *still* beat your wife. The question: Do you still beat your wife?—is one of those questions that are designed to make you look like a jerk, regardless of how you respond. If you answer *No*, you are acknowledging that you have beat your wife in the past, but that you are no longer beating her. If you answer *Yes*, you are acknowledging that you still beat her. What you have to say is, I have never beat my wife, so your question is irrelevant.

That's sort of what people who are under these seducing spirits do. They phrase their statements with *supernatural* wisdom so that it's very hard to answer. If you *deny* what they say, you look like someone who is supporting unscriptural ideas. If you *agree* with what they say, you will be submitting to the influence seducing spirits. Below is an example of these kinds of loaded statements.

"I believe that **Jesus will keep me saved and I trust Him**. I can't keep myself saved. How **ludicrous** for anyone who calls himself a Christian to think that **he can keep himself saved**".

These kinds of statements are short and simple, and they sound so right it's hard to give a short and simple answer. When someone says: "*I believe that Jesus will keep me saved and I trust Him*"?—what are you

going to say? I don't believe Jesus will keep me saved because I don't trust Him? The only answer is: I believe Jesus will keep me saved too—as long as I continue in his goodness (Rom. 11:22), continue in his word (John 8:31), abide in him (John 15:4-6), and do all the other things He instructed me to do.

When they say: “*You can't keep yourself saved*”—what are you going to say? Yes, I can keep myself saved? The answer to this kind of thing is: Well, the apostle John basically told us to keep ourselves saved when he said: ‘keep yourselves from idols’ (I. John 5:21). He didn't say, *ask God* to keep you from idols. He said you keep yourselves from idols.

If we don't keep ourselves from idols, we will become idolaters—and what happens to idolaters? They will never inherit the kingdom (I. Cor. 6:9); they will be shut out of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:15); and they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). So if you don't keep yourself from idolatry, you will end up lost. If you do keep yourself from idolatry, you will remain saved. In other words, to keep yourself from idols is to keep yourself from ending up lost—which is the same as keeping yourself saved!

Of course, we cannot keep ourselves from idols *by ourselves*. That is, we cannot keep ourselves from idols by our own will power and determination *alone*. We need God's help. We must have God's help. But just because we can't do it on our own, that doesn't mean the Lord doesn't require any effort on our part to keep ourselves from idols. He certainly does—and the truth that He does is revealed by the fact that *we* are held accountable for whether or not we obey that commandment. He holds *us* responsible for whether or not we keep ourselves from idols.

The thing those who are walking in false grace hate more than anything else in this world, is the idea that we are “co-workers” with Christ. They would rather drink poison than admit that the Scripture says Salvation and spiritual protection are shared responsibilities between you and your Savior. They have swallowed the lie that it's all of God and none of you, so they spit and fume at any idea or teaching that says it's some of God and some of you.

No, we can't keep ourselves saved *by ourselves*; but we can sure *do our part* to keep ourselves saved! And if we don't do our part, we won't be kept saved. This is *one* of the many differences between the gospel of Christ and the gospel of Antichrist.

Those who have been deceived by false grace say it's “ludicrous” to think we can keep ourselves saved. But they certainly don't think it's ludicrous to reject the obvious meaning of Paul when he said, some shall “*depart from the faith*” in the latter days. They don't think it's ludicrous to reject his obvious meaning when he said: “*...that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first* (II. Thess. 2:3). They don't think it's ludicrous to insist that the people who are being deceived right now, and who are departing from the faith and falling away, aren't genuine believers; but are just unregenerated religionists and pagans. No—the only thing these kinds of people find ludicrous is the idea that we share the responsibility of our own salvation and spiritual protection with God.

You see, there's a line being drawn by the Holy Spirit in these days—and sooner or later, everyone will choose one side or the other. Either they will choose the true gospel, which teaches that we are responsible to do certain things in order to remain in Christ and remain under the protection of Christ; or they will choose a false gospel that says we aren't responsible to do anything to remain in Christ or remain under

the protection of Christ. God is responsible to save us and keep us saved. The false gospel is—*it's all of God and none of you*. The true gospel is—*it's some of God and some of you*. Unfortunately, most of today's believers don't really understand the issue, nor do they understand how important it is.

*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God **keepeth himself**, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

I. John 5:18

John said he that is begotten (or born) of God keeps himself—that is, he keeps himself under the protection of God by obeying the things God tells him to obey. He keeps himself in a place where the enemy can't get a firm grasp or stronghold on him. The term “keepeth himself” in this passage is meant to convey the reality that we share the responsibility of spiritual protection with God.

This is one of those passages that reveals the stark contrast between the text the King James Bible was translated from, and the text all these modern versions have been translated from. You will find that every version that was translated from the Textus Receptus has “keepeth himself” in I. John 5:18. Every version that was translated from the United Bible Societies text has changed the entire meaning of what John said. Below is a partial list of the versions which use the UBS Greek text:

(The Bible In Basic English) We are certain that one who is a child of God will do no sin, but the Son of God keeps him so that he is not touched by the Evil One.

(Contemporary English Version) We are sure that God's children do not keep on sinning. God's own Son protects them, and the devil cannot harm them.

(English Standard Version) We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

(Good News Bible) We know that no children of God keep on sinning, for the Son of God keeps them safe, and the Evil One cannot harm them.

(International Standard Version) We know that the person who has been born from God does not go on sinning. Rather, the Son of God protects them, and the evil one cannot harm them.

(New Living Translation) We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.

(21st Century King James Version) We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them

(New American Standard Version) We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

(New International Version) We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

What John clearly meant when he said the one who is born of God keeps himself, is that the believer is enabled by God to guard himself. There is a co-working that takes place. We can't guard ourselves *without* God's help; but God absolutely will not guard us *without* our co-operation and effort. Wherever you turn, you will find that you are being drawn back to this same question, over and over again.

It's not a case where brother Dan got a wild hair up his nose about some irrelevant doctrinal issue and he won't stop talking about it. We're talking about a *counterfeit* grace that leads people into a relationship with a false Jesus. We're talking about a grace that leads people into a state of passivity, worldliness, false security and self delusion. We're talking about a grace that will cause those who accept it to *miss the goal* of salvation, and in some cases, to miss salvation altogether!

This is no small matter. If Scriptural grace is God enabling *your efforts* to obey Him and resist the enemy, then there are a lot of Christians who have been deluded in this hour because their understanding of grace is exactly the opposite. If Scriptural grace is God enabling you to obey Him and resist the enemy *without any effort on your part*, then a lot of other Christians have been deluded. Either way, a lot of Christians are headed for a very rude awakening when they stand before the Lord.

Albert Barns, a famous Bible commentator, said this about I. John 5:18:

"It is not said that he does it [keeps himself] by his own strength, but **he will put forth his best efforts to keep himself** from sin, and **by divine assistance** he will be able to accomplish it."

Barn's says the believer who is walking under true grace will "*put forth his best efforts to keep himself from sin, and by divine assistance, he will be able to accomplish it*". That's exactly what John is saying in that passage. However, this view will be rejected by those who are walking under the influence of false grace because that grace tells them any "effort" on their part is an attempt to establish their own righteousness and is actually a hindrance to the working of God's grace in their lives. I'm afraid Mr. Barns would be labeled a false teacher by these kinds of people. A couple of other famous Bible commentators, named Jamieson, Facet and Brown, had this to say about I. John 5:18:

"Still, in the English Version reading, God's working by His Spirit inwardly, **and man's working under the power of that Spirit as a responsible agent**, is what often occurs elsewhere".

Here is more heresy (according to the false grace crowd). These commentators say we are "responsible agents" and as such, we must work—meaning, we must put forth an effort. We don't work alone; we work under (or with) the power of the Holy Spirit. But it's still *we* who are working. It's still *we* who are putting

forth an effort. Our effort is insufficient in and of itself, that is true; but our effort is no pointless or useless. That effort is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the kind of *co-operation* between God and the individual that is taught throughout the New Testament.

I'm not quoting these Bible commentators to prove that I'm right. Bearing witness to the things I share is the work of the Holy Spirit. I'm merely quoting them to show that I'm not *alone* in my understanding of Scriptural grace.

John Wesley is another one who would be considered a heretic by these false grace people. In his commentary, he said the term "keepeth himself" in that passage means the believer: "...*is enabled [by God] to guard himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not*". God enables us to GUARD OURSELVES. He enables us to do what He has told us to do, and what we are responsible to do.

There is no way this truth is compatible with the idea represented by the phrase, "it's all of God and none of you". The phrase, "*it's all of God and none of you*" represents one kind of grace and the phrase, "*it's some of God and some of you*" represents a totally different kind of grace. The grace these two phrases represent are not only different, they are utterly opposed. Only one is the true gospel.

*We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these **necessary** things: that **you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.***

Acts 15:27-29 NKJV

Here we have the same situation regarding fornication that we did with John regarding idolatry. Only this time the Holy Spirit is involved by name. It wasn't just the man John, or the apostles, who instructed these believers to keep themselves from sin—it was also God. "*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit*"—said the apostles. It seemed good to tell the new converts to keep themselves from certain things, one of which was sexual immorality (the KJV says "fornication"; the Greek is "*porneia*"). Well, what happens to those who don't do what the Holy Spirit instructed? What will happen to those who don't keep themselves from fornication? Will they inherit the kingdom anyway because they are under grace? Paul said those who practice fornication ("*porneia*") will not inherit the kingdom of God (*1 Cor. 6:9 & Gal. 5:19-21*).

So if we don't keep ourselves from fornication we will never enter the kingdom—we will be lost. If we do keep ourselves from fornication, we will remain under the grace of God—we will remain saved. In other words, to keep yourself from fornication is to keep yourself from ending up lost. To keep yourself from fornication is to keep yourself saved! Those who want to accuse the *Holy Spirit* of preaching a false gospel because *He* instructed new believers to keep themselves from sin—be my guest. Again, I'm not suggesting that we can keep ourselves from fornication by our own determination *alone*. We need God's help. We must have God's help. Anyone who thinks they can keep themselves from sin without the help of God is crazy. We can't keep ourselves saved *by* ourselves. But as I said, we can sure do our part to keep ourselves saved—and if we don't do our part, we won't be kept saved!

*But you, beloved, **building yourselves up** on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Jude 1:20-21 NKJ

Here, the apostle Jude tells the brethren to keep themselves in the love of God. Hmm. How are we supposed to keep ourselves in the love of God? Well, one way to keep yourself in the love of God is by building yourself up on your most holy faith. That is, keep growing spiritually. Please notice that Jude said we are to build ourselves up. We aren't to walk through life believing that God will mature us spiritually in His own good time, and in His own good way, just because we "believe" he will.

Jude's statement reveals that we share the responsible for our own spiritual growth. That's right. The idea that we can't possibly make ourselves grow spiritually, or that we are helpless to do anything to cause spiritual growth in our lives, is just more religious delusion. The idea that *only* God causes spiritual growth is a doctrine of demons and it's part of the gospel of Antichrist.

Are you waiting for spiritual growth to just happen? If so, you are *not* in the grace of God. God's grace enables us to build ourselves up. One of the ways we build ourselves up is through prayer. Jude said, build yourselves up, praying in the Holy Spirit. So prayer builds us up spiritually. We build ourselves up by speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, by singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and by giving thanks for all things (*Eph. 5:19-20*). We build ourselves up by reading and studying the Scripture. We build ourselves up (or "edify" ourselves) by speaking in tongues (*I. Cor. 14:4*). We can also build ourselves by fighting the Lord's battles.

Jude also talked about "looking for the mercy of Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life". This is another way to build ourselves up on our most holy faith—by keeping the blessed hope of Jesus' soon return alive in our hearts. There are many ways in which we can build ourselves up—and we are responsible to do them. Building ourselves up in the faith is one of the ways we keep ourselves in the love of God.

Another way to keep ourselves in the love of God is by obeying His commandments. Jesus said: "If ye keep my commandments, *ye shall abide in my love*; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (*John 15:10*). We are responsible agents in the redemption process and as such, God expects us to put forth our best efforts, not only to submit to Him and resist the enemy, but also to keep ourselves under His protection and to keep ourselves in His love.

*When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to **remain true to the Lord** with all their hearts.*

Acts 11:23 NIV

The concept of *shared* responsibility is taught throughout the New Testament. When the Church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to the new Gentile congregation in Antioch, it says that Barnabas was glad when he saw the evidence of God's grace working in the lives of the people and he "encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their heart". Well, that kind of advise certainly doesn't mesh with the "*it's all of God and none of you*" gospel. If Barnabas had only understood today's teaching on grace, he

would have never said such a foolish thing. Instead, he would have encouraged them to *ask God* to keep them true, or at the very least, *ask God* to help them remain true! Telling them to remain true with all their hearts, without any qualifiers like—you can't possibly do this yourself, or, this can only be done by Christ in you—must have left those people with the impression that *they had the ability* to remain true.

And why would he mention the “heart”? Didn't Barnabas know the heart is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (*Jer. 17:9*). Is it even possible for a heart *like that* to remain true to the Lord? How is a person supposed to remain true to Jesus with a heart that *hates* everything Jesus stands for? How can a desperately wicked heart—which hates righteousness, justice, humility and truth—remain true to Jesus? Such an idea is a logical absurdity!

*For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.***

Romans 11:21-22

This is a very interesting passage. Paul tells Roman believers that they must “continue” in the goodness of God if they don't want to be cut out of the Olive Tree. Being cut out of the Olive Tree is the same as being cut out of the Vine, which is Christ. Here is another statement that doesn't mesh with the “*it's all of God and none of you*” gospel. If it's really all of God and none of you, then how can there be any question of continuing or not continuing in the goodness of God? Since it's “*all of God*”, He will make sure you continue in His goodness. And since it's “*none of you*”, there isn't anything you could possibly do to not continue in His goodness.

Listen, my friends—it's very important that we become skilled at *detecting* this false grace, especially when it's being taught by scholars, theologians, preachers or Bible teachers. Sometimes it's fairly easy to detect because the ideas which come from it are so clearly unscriptural, even a babe in Christ can catch it. But other times it's very subtle and extremely hard to detect.

For example, one particular person I have mentioned in this chat room, who propagate this false grace, has a definition for grace that sounds very Biblical. His definition is: “God doing for you what you could never do for yourself”. The only problem is, that statement can be understood two completely different ways. People like me (if they didn't know any better) would hear that definition and think this guy believes the same thing we do—that God strengthens our efforts to serve Him and resist the enemy. However, that's not what this guy means. He means God must do EVERYTHING because in his mind, we can't, and we must not even try, to do anything ourselves.

So you see, what people really mean when they say—God does for you what you cannot do for yourself—depends on their view of what we are capable of doing, or what we are responsible to do. If you think we are not responsible to do anything ourselves; if you think all our personal effort is not only useless but frustrates the grace of God; then that phrase means God is responsible to do everything *for* us. It's no different than saying it's all of God and none of you and no amount of denial or double-talk will ever change that fact. The false grace crowd can say whatever they like—that's what it means.

However, if you think we are responsible to do certain things and God strengthens *our efforts* so we can do them—then that phrase means just the opposite. God doesn't do all things for us; He enables us to do all things. Big difference. Another example of how subtle this false grace can be presented will be seen in the following paragraph. This comes from the blogger I have been mentioning the last few weeks. It's from an article she posted, called, "*Childlike Obedience*". She says:

"You cannot hope to render obedience by forcing your conduct into a certain groove or by using unaided, determined effort. The road to obedience is a free-grace road, and that is receiving, by faith, the Lord Jesus, who is the gift of God and who "of God is made unto us...sanctification" (1 Corinthians 1:30). We accept the Lord Jesus by faith, and **He teaches us obedience, creating it in us.**"

Everything she said in that paragraph is basically true, except for the last three words. Those last three words reveal that she is walking under a false grace. Jesus certainly does teach us obedience, but the idea that He must also "create" that obedience in us is a lie that comes from her believing it's all of God and none of you. God doesn't "create" obedience in us. He empowers *our desire* to obey Him and *our determination* to obey Him. Without His grace, our determination and desire will not suffice—but that desire and that determination *must be there* so God can strengthen and empower it.

Of course, this woman would say that since *God* is the one who put that desire in us to obey Him in the first place, that means it is *all* of God and *none* of you. That's just more half truth. Yes, it is God who originally puts the desire in us to obey Him, once we have been regenerated. But it is *we* who must choose to give ourselves to that desire. It is *we* who must keep that desire alive by building ourselves up in the faith, by submitting ourselves to God, by resisting the enemy, and by seeking God's kingdom first. It is *we* who are held accountable for what we do with that desire and the choices we make.

Something this woman and all her deceived friends will never understand is that as we yield to the desire God originally put there day in and day out, it becomes *OUR* desire. It's the same as when we yield to the Spirit's sanctifying work in us day in and day out. Eventually that righteousness becomes *OUR* righteousness. We—not just "Christ in us" but *WE*—become righteous.

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Philippians 4:12-13

Paul describes true Scriptural grace in this passage. Christ *strengthened* him to do what he was required to do. God didn't do all things for Paul; He enabled Paul to do all things. It's wasn't all of God and none of Paul. God strengthened *Paul's efforts*; God strengthened *Paul's resolve*; God strengthened *Paul's ability* to endure suffering and temptation. It was some of God and some of Paul, just as it is some of God and some of you!