

## PERVERTING THE “FIRST PRINCIPLES”

### *Conclusion*

I’m going to finish this series on the perversion of the first principles tonight. The last few weeks I have tried to show how the Scriptural teaching of justification has been perverted, and some of the ramifications of that perversion. Basically, in order to be justified, we must repent and believe. But our belief must be more than mental assent to the truth. We must repent and believe with a faith that produces fruit or works. What has happened is, beginning back in the Reformation, religious leaders have *re-defined* faith—at least when it comes to justification—to mean simply believing the gospel with the mind. This set the stage for much of the error that would come into the church over the next 500 years.

Let me explain something about the Reformation. The teachings of the Reformation are nothing more or less than *Calvinism*. This wasn’t always the case. The Reformation became Calvinism because of a man named Jacob Hermansz, a Dutch theologian of the late sixteenth century, who is better known by his Latin name, Jacobus Arminius. Arminius and the early Dutch reformers were *not* Calvinists when they overthrew Catholicism (in 1566).

Arminius eventually moved to Geneva to study under Calvin's son-in-law and successor, Theodore Beza. He was installed as pastor in Amsterdam in 1587 and he pastored there for 15 years. During that time he had the reputation of being a brilliant preacher and a humble, dedicated Christian. His expositional preaching drew large crowds. During that time, he also formulated his own ideas and teachings from his study of the Bible and some of those ideas came into conflict with the teachings of Calvin.

Eventually he found himself in a situation where he was forced to publicly reject some of Calvin’s teachings, especially one called “*supralapsarianism*”, which is the idea that God decreed in Eternity past exactly who would be saved and who would be lost. Arminius concluded that supralapsarianism made God the author of sin. No one could refute his scholarship regarding the subject, but preachers began to openly attack him from the pulpit. His words were twisted out of context and his enemies tried to destroy his influence. In 1603, he moved to Leiden, which is a city and municipality in the province of South Holland, and he became a professor of theology at the university there. He was considered by many as the greatest scholar of his day. But even at Leiden he was under attack from a Calvinist professor. Finally, he asked for a public hearing or debate. However, he died before the synod could convene.

After his death, 42 of his followers wrote their manifesto, which they called the *Remonstrance*. In 1618, the *Synod of Dort* was convened. The Synod was supposed to be an open forum to debate the ideas of Calvin and the ideas of Arminius. But because Calvinism has become so strong politically, it was conducted more like a trial. There were 130 Calvinists present and 13 Remonstrants, who were actually prisoners of the state. The Remonstrants were at a disadvantage from the beginning.

The successor of Arminius was a man named Simon Episcopius. He delivered a speech of two hours length that day, which historians say was so logical and magnificent, it moved many of the hearers to tears. Yet the Synod of Dort *condemned* Arminianism as heresy and as a result, around 200 Remonstrant ministers were ousted from their pulpits. The synod officially adopted Calvin’s theology, including supralapsarianism, and formulated *five* specific theological points which contradicted the five main points of Arminism. This is when the T.U.L.I.P. acronym was created.

From that point on, the Reformation officially became Calvinism. So whenever you hear anyone talking about the Reformation or the doctrines of the Reformation, you need to understand they are talking the theology of John Calvin. Reformation theology *is* Calvinism.

I'm not saying that nobody has ever been saved as a result of accepting the Reformation gospel. Anybody who truly repents of their sin and places their trust in Jesus for salvation is saved—as long as they bear fruit and *continue* to follow Him. What people don't realize is that there's a difference between the *theology* of the Reformation, and what the actual sermons that were preached to the people by the evangelists who were spreading the gospel. Evangelists didn't run around telling the people to “simply believe” like Abraham did. When they preached, they told the people they were sinners, they told them they were God's enemies, they told them they *deserved* to burn in Hell forever, and they told them they would burn in Hell forever unless they repent of their sins and ask Jesus to save them. If the Holy Spirit was present to convict the people, then the reality of these truths would produce true repentance.

Moreover, the message most pastors have preached to the Christians in their churches, ever since the Reformation, is that they should love, serve and seek to please God. So many of those who have believed, have gone on to bear fruit. However, whatever has been accomplished through the preaching of the gospel all these centuries, it has been accomplished *in spite of* the theology of the reformers, not because of it, for that theology does not require repentance before salvation, nor does it require works after salvation. It only requires belief.

If you want to see the effect preaching the *actual theology* of the Reformation has on people, just look at what has happened since the mid-1900's. It was during this period that the theology of *belief alone* took center stage. Telling people that they are sinners and enemies of God who deserved to burn in Hell, and that they need to repent of their sins, became passé. These things began to be seen as too negative, too harsh, and too judgmental. The “Hell, Fire and Damnation” preaching vanished, the need to repent was cast aside, and the only thing that was emphasized was belief.

That changed the whole situation. The result has been the emergence of many false gospels—Robert Schuller's *self esteem is salvation* gospel; Kenneth Copeland's *God wants you healthy and wealthy* gospel; Joel Osteen's *your best life now* gospel; and Rick Warren's *God has purpose for you, social* gospel—being just a few of them. This is what happens when you replace the true gospel of repent and believe, with a false gospel of believe and accept.

When you neglect the absolute necessity of repentance and emphasize the idea of “simply believing”, the chances of people ending up in a *dead* faith becomes much greater. Also, when you emphasize the idea of “simply believing”, even the *reality* that people can end up in a dead faith is lost because if belief is the *only* requirement for justification, then why would anyone suspect they might end up with anything *other* than a living faith when they believe? If belief is the only requirement for justification, then *why* would anyone suspect they *didn't* meet the necessary requirement? There would be absolutely no reason for them to suspect that anything other than genuine conversion would follow their belief!

This is why some people can't even understand what you are saying when you talk about “dead” faith. Having a dead faith isn't really a possibility for them because they think belief *equals* a living faith. In their minds, if you believe, you have a living faith; you will have works; you will produce fruit. The possibility that

belief may *not* equal a living faith, that it may *not* have works or produce fruit, isn't even on their radar screen. And when you mention such a possibility, it still does not compute because you are talking about something that directly contradicts the very foundation of their belief system. If it's *not* possible to believe the gospel and end up with a dead faith, then most of the stuff James said in his letter was false teaching. If it's not possible to believe the gospel and end up with a dead faith, then James was certainly deceived when he said faith without works is dead because it's not possible to have faith without works, right? If you "believe", then works will *automatically* follow, right? Not necessarily.

*Thou **believest** that there is one God; thou doest well: **the devils also believe, and tremble.** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

*James 2:19-20*

James said the devils believe. Are they saved? Why doesn't the belief of the devils help them? It doesn't do them any good because they don't obey God. The Scripture says the purpose of faith is obedience. The writer of Hebrews said Jesus is the author of salvation for all who *obey* him (*Heb. 5:9*). A living faith requires obedience, and obedience is something we *do*. What we believe must produce action on our part. We have to do *more* than believe in order to have a *living* faith. We have to *obey* in order to have a living faith. Obedience is the "work" which validates our faith. This is revealed throughout the New Testament. For instance, consider what Paul wrote at the end of the book of Romans.

*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:***

*Romans 16:25-26*

He said there was a mystery that had been hid from previous generations, but that mystery was to be made known to the nations in his day. For what purpose was this mystery to be made known? It was to be made known for the "obedience of faith". Another way to put it would be that the revelation of the mystery that was hid in Christ from past generations, which was now to be made known to the nations, was in order that those nations would obey God through faith. The object is not to just believe. The object is to obey. We are given faith *so* we can obey.

*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them **that obey him.***

*Acts 5:29-32*

Here, Peter states that we should be obedient to God over any man. He also said the Holy Spirit is given to “them that obey him”—that is, to them who obey Jesus. He didn’t say it was given to all who “believe” on Him. The works that are a vital part of genuine faith is obedience to God. That this is the case can be seen by what the writer of Hebrews said. He said: “*For ye have need of patience, that, **after** ye have done the will of God [obeyed], ye might receive the promise*” (Heb. 10:36). Notice that the writer said after we have done the will of God (that’s obedience), we will receive the promise. This verse *alone* shows that what’s being preached about justification today is a lie. Belief alone doesn’t secure us the promise of eternal life—obedience secures it!

Of course our obedience must spring from our faith. We can’t obey God as unregenerated *religious* people and secure eternal life. My point is, belief alone won’t do it. After we have been justified, after our (past) sins have been forgiven, after we have received the imputed righteousness of Jesus, we must *do* the will of God. Doing God’s will is the “work” that accompanies genuine faith. When our obedience is *complete* (not when our “belief” is complete), we shall receive the promise and without obedience, we won’t receive the promise. If you want to call that a “works-righteousness” salvation, then go right ahead.

*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

*Romans 6:16*

This is an important passage because the same guy who just got done telling us we receive *imputed* righteousness by believing, turns around and tells us do *not* receive *actual* righteousness by believing. Actual righteousness comes as a result of obeying. Actual righteousness is not, and can never be, imputed because it is the result of something we *do*. It’s the result of obedience. When we disobey God, we sin, and that sin leads to (eternal) death. When we obey God, that obedience *produces* righteousness.

Justification—which is imputed righteousness—is designed to cover us while God makes us righteous in word and deed. The righteousness of Jesus that was imputed to us when we believed the gospel, must be brought forth in our character and personalities so that we are not just covered with it, but that we *possess* it and *manifest* it to the world. Imputed righteousness does *not* become actual righteousness simply by believing it will become actual righteousness! Imputed righteousness only becomes actual righteousness as a result of *our co-operation* with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The importance of obedience can be seen in many of the things Jesus said. One example is in John 15, Jesus said He is the Vine and we are the branches. He commanded us to “abide in” Him (Jn. 15:4). He said if we do not abide in Him, we will be cast forth as a branch and cast and into the fire (Jn. 15:6). Just four verses later, He tells us how we are to abide in Him: “*If ye **keep my commandments**, ye shall **abide in my love**...*” (Jn. 15:10). Keeping God’s commandments is synonymous with doing God’s will, which is what the writer of Hebrews was talking about.

Unfortunately, whenever you start talking like this, most people won’t even admit that it’s possible to believe in Jesus and *not* abide in Him because they are convinced that *belief* is the only requirement for salvation (or justification). Since this is so, and since Jesus said only those who abide in Him will remain

saved, they assume that a person who has believed *will* abide in the Vine. In their minds, it's belief (not obedience) that keeps us saved, so it must be belief (not obedience) that keeps us abiding in the Vine. When you remind them that there are branches who "believe" (ie: are part of Christ, the vine), but who can still get cut out of the Vine anyway, their response is that if branches get cut out of the Vine, all that means is that those branched didn't really believe; they just *thought* they believed.

I say, oh really? Well, how do you know they didn't really believe? By what standard are you *judging* they weren't really part of the Vine, but just appeared to be part of the Vine? The answer they will give you, the only answer they *can* give you, is that being cut out of the Vine is the *proof* they never really believed.

Well, if that's the case, then how do these people know **THEY** really believe? How do they know **THEY** won't end up being cut out of the Vine next week, or next month, or next year? They will say they know they won't ever be cut out of the Vine because they are eternally secure.

Okay, so why do they think **THEY** are eternally secure? They will say they are eternally secure because they are "justified by faith, not by works". They will say they are secure because they *believe*—and believing is the only requirement for justification, according to Romans 4:3: "*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*". Abraham believed and he was saved, so I believe and I am saved.

Excuse me? That's *circular* reasoning! And they still haven't answered the question of *why* they think they are secure but the other branches weren't. Since the only requirement for being made part of the Vine and abiding in the Vine is belief, how do they know *their* belief is genuine. Just because they are still connected to the Vine at this moment, that doesn't mean they won't be cut out of the Vine tomorrow. They can't possibly know *for sure* because there is no *objective standard* to measure the belief by—except getting cut out of the Vine! Belief is the standard. So unless you can crawl inside someone's head, nobody can be sure whether or not they really believe, or if they just *think* they believe! Not only are all the arguments these people give nonsense and circular reasoning, it flies in the face of what Jesus clearly said in John 15, which is that we abide in Him *by* obeying Him!

But what about fruit? Why don't they say we know we are secure because we are bearing fruit? Why don't they say we know we are abiding in the Vine because we are bearing fruit and you can't possibly bear fruit unless you are abiding in the Vine? Well, some people *do* say that. Some of them *also* say they are eternally secure because God is *totally* responsible to keep them secure. I'm really just focusing on *one particular argument* that comes from OSAS people. But the fact is, whenever you back them into a corner and they have no more answers, Romans 4:3 is always their final line of defense. If you want to see just how opposed the idea of "simply believing" is to what Jesus taught, consider the following parable.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore*

*whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And **every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

Matthew 7:21-27

I don't know of a clearer teaching in the New Testament that shows the error and bankruptcy of today's "simply believe" gospel. It's not belief *alone* that gets us into God's kingdom. It's *doing* the Father's will! Belief is certainly necessary. But if it doesn't produce obedience, it's worthless. Jesus starts off by talking about those who *say*, Lord, Lord. They *say* Jesus is their Lord, but they don't obey Him. They choose instead to remain the "lord" of their own lives and obey their own desires. They are connected to the Vine, but they choose to "abide in" their own life instead of the life of the Vine. Thus, they produce no fruit. Instead, they produce iniquity.

We're not talking about God-hating pagans here. We're not talking about Humanists or New Agers or Buddhists or Muslims or Hindus. We're talking about people who *profess* to be Christians, and are totally convinced they are Christians. Why do they think they are Christians? First of all, because they *believe* Jesus is Lord. They say, Lore, Lord. They believe Jesus is the Lamb of God who shed His blood for the sins of the world, including *their* sins. They believe the gospel—but they don't obey the Lord. Secondly, they are convinced they are Christians because they have "works". When God condemns them, their response will be: "...*have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name **done many wonderful works**?*"

Dead works is a subject we haven't even begun to explore yet, but this teaching shows you that it's not only possible to believe and have no works, it's also possible to believe and have *dead* works. The fact is, most of those who have a dead faith fall into the last category. They do religious works, but those works are of no value because they are not the product of a *living* faith. This is exactly what the writer of Hebrews was talking about when he said the first principle of the faith is "*repentance from dead works*" (*Heb. 6:1*). This is a specific reference to religious people who are not regenerated, but who are trying to serve God. They have works, but those works aren't the result of faith. They are dead.

Next, Jesus gave the illustration about the two men who build their houses on rock and sand. What is the rock? The rock is *doing* what the Lord said. What is the sand? The sand is *not* doing what the Lord said. The rock is obedience; the sand is disobedience. Both these men *heard* what the Lord said. Both of them *believed* what He said. They were both convinced that what He said was true. But only one *obeyed* what Jesus said. Jesus said the one who *simply* believes will fall during the coming storms, and great will be that fall! The one who believes *and* obeys will stand the coming storms.

According to the Scripture, obedience is the object of faith. That's why I keep asking a very simple question, over and over again, which nobody wants to hear. The question is: *Is obedience mandatory for salvation?*

The first thing most people will say is, what kind of question is that? If you are saved, you *will* obey God. If you are saved, you will want to obey God. Why would God *demand* something that comes with faith? Why would He demand something from you that you already have and are already freely giving Him. All Christians obey God so the point is moot. This kind of response reveals that they no longer realize you can believe the gospel and still have a *dead* faith. Of course, everyone who is *truly* saved will obey God. But the question is, are they truly saved? Is their faith alive or dead? Do they actually obey?

So I ask again: *Is obedience mandatory for salvation?*

The vast majority of today's Christians will say No. They will say that we are saved "by faith" and not "by works". Therefore, obedience cannot be mandatory. If it was, then salvation would not be by "grace alone". It would be partly by grace and partly by something we do. However, there are still some Christians around who would answer *Yes* to that question. There are still some who believe obedience is mandatory for salvation and they are always being accused of believing a "works-righteousness" salvation.

But if I asked that same question and used the term "justification" instead of the term salvation, I would get a *unanimous* response. It wouldn't be most people saying one thing and a little remnant saying the opposite. If I said: "*Is obedience mandatory for justification?*"—absolutely everyone would say *No* because every Protestant Christian on this planet has been taught that they are *justified* by what they believe, not by anything they do.

No doubt, some of those who hear this message will say to themselves: how does this guy *know* the ones who "simply believe" won't end up with a living faith? My answer is, I *don't* know that they won't end up with a living faith. I never said they definitely won't end up with a living faith. What I said was, simply believing *may or may not* result in a living faith. Simply believing *may or may not* have works and bear fruit. I'm sure there are some people who are saved when they believe. But they are saved *in spite of* that error not because of it. They are saved because they *keep* yielding to the Holy Spirit's moving in their life and they start to produce fruit.

However, this is not always the case. Some people who simply believe never produce fruit. Some people who simply believe never end up in a living faith. So my question is: why do people *always* assume simply believing automatically *equals* a living faith? Why do people assume that believing will *always* produce obedience and be accompanied by works? I'm not always assuming people who believe will never end up with a living faith. All I'm saying is there is a good chance they won't, and many they haven't. But today's Christians assume just the opposite. They assume belief will *always* result in living faith.

My question is: *Why?*

The reason people assume this is because they have been taught that belief, in and of itself, *is* Biblical faith. They have been taught that belief *alone* saves them and keeps them saved. Well, all I can say is, take a good look around you, my friend. There are *multitudes* of people in today's churches who "simply believe" and they are no more regenerated than the Osama Bin Laden. Just ask Paul Washer. He'll tell you there are many "professing" Christians in the Church System. His own wife was one of them. After years of "simply believing", after years of going to church and being married to someone like Paul Washer, she just recently got genuinely converted!

How's something like that possible? According to the "*justification-by-belief-alone*" gospel, it's not possible. According the "simply believe" gospel, Mr. Washer made a mistake. His wife was a Christian all along because she believed, and believing is the only thing that's necessary to be justified, right?

I'm sorry folks, but we have a choice to make. We can deny reality and say *all* the people who attend today's churches are genuine believers—they certainly all *believe* the gospel—or we can admit that the theology of the Reformation is error. Justification by faith (meaning belief) *alone* is a false doctrine. When you quit preaching repentance, and you stop demanding works as proof of truth faith, and you make justification by belief alone the center-piece of your message, what you get is what you are seeing all around you. The fact is, simply believing *may or may not* result in a living faith. For some it has. For many others, it *hasn't*—and the determining factor is obedience. If your faith has works, then your faith is alive. If your faith doesn't have works, then your faith is dead. And if you think faith, as it is being defined today, will automatically have works, then you are deceived.

A few months back, I mentioned a man named Bob DeWaay, who was once a flaming Charismatic, but who is now, for all practical purposes, a Fundamentalist. Now that he's a *de facto* Fundamentalist, Mr. DeWaay has fully embraced the doctrine of the Reformation, which is nothing more or less than *Calvinism*. Mr DeWaay is well known for exposing the Purpose Driving error of Rick Warren. Some of the articles he has written agasint Warren are good; but some are not. Back in March of 2006, he wrote an article in which he exposed the error of Warren, but tried to replace that error with another error, called Calvinism.. The subject of the article was engineered or man-made revivals. The name of the article was: "*Recovering Reformation Theology--Rejecting Synergism and Returning to Monergism*"

He begins the article by saying the reason people like Rick Warren are so successful is because the churches have "*for the most part left behind Reformation Theology*". He says the idea that *man* can produce or engineer revivals is an error. With this I certainly agree. Then he says the reason people have accepted this error is because they have embraced "synergism" instead of "monergism".

Synergism is the teaching that salvation is a co-laboring between God and man. It is the opposite of monergism, which is the teaching that salvation is done by God alone from start to finish. Monergism is best expressed by the mantra I have been referring to the last few months—"It's all of God and none of you". Mr. DeWaay's whole point in the article was that the reason the Church is in the state that it's in today is because much of it has abandoned monergism and has accepted the concepts of synergism.

Well, if you know anything about these two theologies, you will know that DeWaay's view is slanted and biased because *anyone* who believes the doctrine of Eternal Security is under the influence of monergism, not synergism. Under synergism, the possibility of falling away exists precisely because man has a part to play in his own salvation. Only a monergistic view can sustain the lie of Eternal Security because in order for that error to be true, man cannot have *any* part to play in his own salvation. It must be all of God and none of you, or else you might mess things up! The only people who reject the lie of Eternally Security are the ones who believe we carry a certain degree of responsibility in our own salvation and that failing to carry out that responsibility can get us cut out of the Vine. Not only do all the Reform churches hold the monergistic view of redemption, almost all churches are under the influence of monergism to some extent. If you can find a congregation that *doesn't* preach Eternal Security—either implicitly or explicitly—then, and only then, have you found a congregation that is not under the influence of monergism.

Mr. DeWaay is doing what so many of these Discernment Ministries do. He is trying to fix one error with *another* error. He's trying to root out the Seeker Friendly, Seeker Sensitive, Purpose Driven error by replacing it with Calvinism. If we would all just return to the doctrine of the Reformation, he laments, none of this stuff would be happening. Next, he says the idea that we can engineer revivals didn't start with Warren, it began with Charles Finney. He quotes both Finney and Warren to substantiate his claim and then he says people like them have "*a faulty theology of human ability*".

Both Finney and Warren believe there is something in every person that can be touched, and every person has *the ability* to respond when that thing is touched. Finney called it the "innate power" or "moral power" in man. Warren says there is a "key" to reach every person and that key is their "felt needs". DeWaay says people like Warren look for different things in a person to touch, but they are wrong in assuming that the person has any ability to respond to that touch. He says:

"Finney and Rick Warren claim that revival can be engineered by human efforts. **This belief is grounded on the idea of human ability.** It is plausible to them only because Finney and Warren believe that there is some principle, be it a "dormant moral power" or "felt need," that can be excited into action to cause people to become Christians and live godly lives. Neither Finney nor Warren would deny that the Holy Spirit's work is necessary. But in their theology, the Holy Spirit is always everywhere **doing His part**. It becomes our business to find the key to unlock something in sinners to get them to do their part. This theological perspective is **fully at odds with the doctrines of the Reformation. The Reformers taught human inability** and bondage to sin. **They taught monergism** (that salvation is fully an act of God) not synergism (that salvation is a cooperative effort between man and God). They taught that only a sovereign work of grace (grace alone) brought salvation. The ideas of Finney and Warren suggest that **man has some innate principle or ability that could be stirred up by the revivalist with the right method**, and thus anyone could be saved. In this article we will discuss this belief system and suggest a return to the doctrines of the Reformation."

Right away, the issue is framed by DeWaay as a choice between monergism (man is *incapable* of responding to God) and synergism (man *is* capable of responding to God). He certainly states Calvin's definition of monergism correctly. But the question is, is he accurately describing synergism; or is he in fact creating a "straw man" and calling it synergism? I believe he's creating a straw-man.

Now, let me say that I'm *not* defending Rick Warren or the Seeker Friendly movement in any way. Warren is an apostate. Neither am I defending Charles Finney, who created an very unscriptural theology called "Moral Government Theology". Neither am I defending Jacob Arminius—though I am certainly closer to the his view than those of Calvin or Finney. What I'm defending is the truth. And according to the Scripture, salvation is a *co-laboring* between God and the individual. So the doctrine of *synergism* is true and the doctrine of monergism is a lie, regardless of who taught it them originally.

Mr. DeWaay says that both Finney and Warren claim revival can be engineered by human efforts because they believe the error of human ability. They think it's the job of the revivalist to find the right method or the right key that triggers a response. The issue I have with Mr. DeWaay's view is that he's not just saying we shouldn't let these man-made tactics affect us or stir us up emotionally. He's saying we *don't have the ability* to respond to God Himself when He begins to convict us and move upon our hearts.

I've already done a teaching on the lie of total inability, so I won't go through all that again. Just let me make a few observations. According to Calvin, which is the same as saying according to monergism, man is so corrupt and evil in his natural state, he's not even capable of responding to the moving of the Holy Spirit. He is dead, dead, dead. Dead men can't respond to anything, not even to God, according to Calvinists. Therefore, God must actually *regenerate* people so they *can* respond. God must sovereignly regenerates them first, without their permission, without their asking, so they can then choose life. God saves us first; He offers us salvation. In this way, *the ability* to accept salvation comes directly from Him and has *nothing* to do with us. You can't take any credit for responding because you were totally incapable of responding. God had to regenerate you so you could respond.

Well, if this is true, then there is absolutely no difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenants because the saints under the Old Covenant would have had to be *born again* (just like we are) in order to *respond* to God, or walk with God, or serve God, or obey God. How can a man like Abraham, who is (supposedly) totally incapable of responding to God, walk with God, obey God, and trust God like he did without having God first regenerate him?

How can a man like Noah, who is (supposedly) totally incapable of responding to God, walk with God, obey God, and trust God like he did without having God first regenerate him? How could Noah hear God tell him to build a boat? And how could God Noah righteous? "*And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for **thee have I seen righteous before me** in this generation (Gen. 7:1).*" How can a totally depraved man, who is totally incapable of choosing righteousness, and totally incapable of producing righteousness, be called righteous by God? How was Noah righteous?

*He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me according to **my righteousness** according to **the cleanness of my hands** hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have **kept myself from mine iniquity**.*

*II. Samuel 22:20-24*

This passage is very interesting. It's part of a song of praise that King David sang when God delivered him from King Saul. Please notice what David said: "The Lord rewarded me according to *my* righteousness" and the "cleanness of *my* hands".

My righteousness? Oh my! Don't look now, but the great King David just *stole* the glory from God! What he should have said was: "The Lord has rewarded me according to *his* righteousness". But it gets worse. He has the audacity to say that he has *kept himself* from his own iniquity! There he goes again, stealing the glory from God! How can he take the credit for keeping himself pure? What's wrong with this guy? Doesn't he know he is totally depraved? What he should have said was: "God has kept me from my iniquity"; or "God has caused me not to sin"; or at the very least, "God has helped me to not give in to my iniquity". To just stand up and say I have kept myself from sin? Wow!

Did you ever read Hebrews chapter eleven and think about the fact that every one of those heroes of the faith loved and served God *without* being born again? Did it ever occur to you that none of those had Christ *dwelling* in them. Yet they walked with God, they loved God, they served God, and they heard His voice. Did it ever occur to you that when God called these people “righteous”, He wasn’t just talking about imputed righteousness; He was talking about actual righteous living and actual righteous deeds?

*Say ye to **the righteous**, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of **their doings**. Woe unto **the wicked!** it shall be ill with him: for the **reward of his hands** shall be given him.*

*Isaiah 3:10-11*

Throughout the Old Testament, God talks to the “righteous” and the “wicked” through the prophets. This is basically what He says all the time. It will go well with *the righteous* but it will go ill with the wicked. The righteous will eat the fruit of their *doings* (not the fruit of their legal position of imputed righteousness). Likewise, the wicked will eat of the fruit of their doings. When God talks about the righteousness of the righteous, He’s not talking about imputed righteousness. He’s not talking about an invisible legal position. He’s talking about *actual* righteousness. He’s talking about what people *do* and how they *live*. If they live righteously, if they do righteousness, they will be rewarded according to their righteousness

Monergism—which is the doctrine of Total Inability, which is also the “T” in the T.U.L.I.P. acronym—is a lie. Many people who were (supposedly) totally *incapable* of responding to God, *did* respond to Him. They walked with Him their whole lives. Many people who were (supposedly) totally *incapable* of choosing righteousness, or walking in righteousness, or even desiring righteousness, walked in righteousness and were called righteous by God! Listen my friends: somebody’s doctrine is whacked out and it ain’t the doctrine of the Bible! It’s the doctrine of deluded Calvinists like Mr. DeWaay that’s completely false. DeWaay then proceeds to mis-represent the teaching of synergism. He says:

“Most people, based on their own perceptions, assume synergism to be true. They assume that though God made it possible for people to be saved, it was **something in them, apart from any special work of grace**, that caused them to “accept Christ” as they say.”

This is a deliberate misrepresentation of the teaching of synergism. I don’t think DeWaay is that stupid. I think he intellectually dishonest. I believe the doctrine of synergism, but I have never taught that we are saved “*apart from any special work of grace*”.

What do you think the conviction of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life is? What do you think the drawing of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life is? Where do you think spiritual illumination comes from? All these things come from the Holy Spirit! They are the work of God’s *grace* in a person’s life! Just because people like me believe we have the ability to respond to that grace, that doesn’t mean we are trying to save ourselves by our own efforts, or that we think we can be saved “apart from any special work of grace”. These kinds of statements serve only to show what a dishonest person this “pastor” is. He goes on to say:

“[T]he synergist must admit that **the reason he or she is saved and someone else is not is found only in themselves, not in God.** Why? Because in their system, (a cooperative effort between God and man), God ALWAYS continually does His part. Some synergists claim that **fairness requires that God MUST do everything He can to save everyone.** Since they assume this as an *a priori* belief, they will not accept any Biblical evidence to the contrary. But a logical corollary to their belief is that if God is indeed always doing everything He can to save everyone, and yet some are saved and some are not, **then the reason some are saved has to be found in them, not God.**”

Being a synergist, I don't “have to admit” anything. I boldly proclaim the reason I am saved and the guy next to me isn't, is because I chose to yield to the grace of God and he chose not to yield to that grace. He *resisted* that grace. But for the Calvinist, this simply isn't possible. They are convinced that if you and I could *resist* a sovereign God, then God isn't really sovereign. So in order to maintain God's sovereignty with regards to saving the people He want saved and damning the people He wants damned, Calvin invented a secret weapon called “Irresistible Grace”, which is the “**I**” in the T.U.L.I.P. acronym.

Irresistible Grace is the false teaching that when God starts calling a person who was predestined to be saved, He won't allow *anything* to hinder that call. He will sovereignly *override* every area of unbelief and stubbornness, and basically force the person to “become willing” to respond. When non-Calvinists say this is no different than making robots out of people, ministers like DeWaay will deny that this is the case and say that the person has freely chosen to answer the call. But the fact is, they have only “freely chosen” to answer the call because they had no other choice! God decreed that person would be saved before the world was created; and in order to maintain His sovereignty, that person *must* be saved. The eternal decree must be accomplished. The guy or girl who has been elected *cannot* stop God from “making them willing”. So in the end, they are robots—they are *willing* robots.

Mr. DeWaay also said synergists “*claim that fairness requires that God must do everything he can to save everyone.*” This is just another deliberate misrepresentation of the position of those who reject Calvin's errors. This liar knows very well we don't go around claiming that God “must” do everything He can to save everyone because it's the only “fair” thing to do. He knows very well we say THE SCRIPTURE tells us it's not God's will that any one perish eternally.

*Look unto me, and **be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.***

*Isaiah 45:22*

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

*II. Peter 3:9*

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.***

*I. Timothy 2:3-4*

*Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?***

*Ezekiel 33:11*

If you can read these kinds of passages and still believe the God of the Bible has unilaterally chosen to send billions of people to Hell, then you have a sick mind and a heart of stone—and you DESERVE to be deceived! You can't possibly see the demon-god of Calvin in these passages. The God of the Bible has testified repeatedly that He is “*not willing*” that any should perish; that He would have “*all men*” to be saved; and that he calls “*all the ends of the earth*” to be saved. The God of the Bible has testified that it is *not* His will that billions of people perish. There is no way the testimony of Scripture and the testimony of Calvin can be reconciled. One of them is a liar.

Everyone who is under the influence of Calvinism needs to understand that Calvin's god *desires* to see billions of people tormented forever. It's His will and it's His desire. There is no other possible way to view the situation. DeWaay goes to great lengths to prove that salvation is *all* of God and that you and I have *nothing* to do with it. According to him, if you are saved, it's because God chose to save you in Eternity past; then He called you at the right time in your life; then He *caused* you to yield and answer that call; and now He causes you to yield to Him as He makes you the person He has pre-determine to make you; and soon He will glorify you. From start to finish, *it's all of God a none of you.*

Well, if that's true, then there's no way to avoid *result* of such a doctrine. If salvation is *all* of God, then He can save *anyone* He wants to. He can make anyone “willing” that He chooses. The fact is, He could save *every* person on the planet if he wanted to because salvation is *all* of Him and *none* of us. He does it all and we do nothing. So the bottom line is this: God doesn't want to save everyone. He only wants to save the “elect”. He *wants* the rest to be damned and he *makes sure* they end up that way!

*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

*John 12:31-32*

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that **all men** through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, **which lighteth every man that cometh into the world***

*John 1:6-9*

The Bible tells us is that God seeks to draw *all men* to Himself and that He gives *everyone* a chance to come to the Light. He genuinely offers salvation to every person who comes into this world. This is what the Scripture means when it talks about God's *grace*. No one deserves an opportunity to be saved and there is nothing we can do to *earn* such an offer. It's God's grace and mercy alone that causes Him to offer salvation to any one. But He does offer it to all of us.

I don't know exactly *how* God has made salvation available to everyone down through the ages, but the Scripture says He has, so I will accept what it says. Also, Jesus said He would draw *all men* to Himself—which means He would draw all men to God—if He was lifted up on the Cross. So everyone who comes into this world has a *real* opportunity to be saved from eternal destruction. Everyone has a real opportunity to accept and/or follow whatever “light” God has provided for them.

Since this is what the Scripture clearly teaches so clearly, Calvin had to come up with an argument that would explain why the Bible doesn't really *mean* what it says. In order to prop up his false doctrine, he came up with the idea of two different kinds of calls to salvation. One call to salvation is referred to as a “*General*” call and the other one is referred to as an “*Effectual*” call. The General call goes out to everyone, but the fact is, it's not intended to save anyone because it lacks that secret weapon, irresistible grace, which makes the General call an Effectual call.

The *General* call is an *outward* call that can be heard with the natural ear. But since it doesn't contain irresistible grace, it can be resisted. This is the call that goes forth when the evangelists preaches the gospel to all men. But the *effectual* call is an *inner* call that can *only* be heard by the one who has been predestined to salvation. This inner call contains irresistible grace and that grace overrides everything in a person's heart, mind, and will that would resist it.

This whole idea makes God a *hypocrite*. He offers salvation to people He doesn't even want to be saved and has no intention of saving. He offers salvation to people He has *already* decreed will not and *cannot* possibly be saved. He calls people to salvation who He knows not only can resist and will resist, but *must* resist in order to fulfil His plan. He offers salvation to people who's hearts He has hardened (like Pharaoh) to be sure they don't somehow *accidentally* accept the offer.

Now you tell me—what kind of “spirit” gave this kind of doctrine to Calvin. What kind of spirit would tell him God wants to see billions of people eternally destroyed? What kind of spirit would tell him God is cruel and unjust? What kind of spirit would tell him God is a hypocrite? What kind of spirit would tell him God is a liar? And what kind of *character* do all these traits portray? Who is it that's a cruel, unjust, lying, hypocrite who wants to see billions of people perish in eternal torment? It's Satan—and Satan is the god Calvin served!

The reason Calvin's doctrine is so wrong is because he started off with a faulty premise. He started out with a faulty view of God's sovereignty, and his *entire theology* was built upon, and around, that view. Moreover, his view of God's sovereignty did not come from the Bible. It came out of his own desire for power and *control*. He himself was a tyrant who ruled the city of Geneva like a Protestant Pope. He would tolerate no dissent, no disagreement of any kind. Anyone who crossed him was put to death or banished from the city—including women, children, and the elderly. He was a *control freak* with a heart of stone. Why does anyone think his doctrine would not *reflect* that reality?

Calvin's distorted view of God's sovereignty requires *absolute control* over every action of every human being who has ever lived. It also requires that God alone decides who will be saved and who will not be saved. You have nothing to do with it! If you think you chose to accept the Lord as your Savior, your deceived. He chose you and that's the *only* reason you are saved. According to Calvin, if you are saved, the decision to save you was made in eternity past and has nothing to do with you or anything you will ever

do. The decision was made in the secret council of God and nobody will ever understand why God only desired to save a few people, while desiring to send the rest into eternal torment. Listen to the words of this murder yourself. This is no “straw-man” talking. This is the real man, John Calvin:

“First, the eternal predestination of God, by which before the fall of Adam **He decreed** what should take place concerning the whole human race and every individual, **was fixed and determined**”.

*Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God,*  
p.120 - 121

“God had no doubt decreed before the foundation of the world what He would do with every one of us and **had assigned to everyone by His secret counsel his part in life**”.

*Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries;*  
p.20

“...**the reason** why God elects some and rejects others is to be found in His purpose alone...before men are born **their lot is assigned to each of them by the secret will of God**...the salvation or the destruction of men depends on His free election”.

*Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries;*  
p.203

Calvin said God “decreed what should take place” concerning the whole human race and “every individual”. According to him, the life of every individual has been “fixed and determined” by God before the fall of Adam. Before the foundation of the world, God decreed “what He would do with every one of us” and He “assigned to everyone” who would ever live, their “part in life”. Before men are even born, “their lot is assigned to each of them by the secret will of God”.

The terms “everyone”, “every individual”, and “each one of them” includes the wicked along with the elect. So God decrees and ordains *the life of the wicked* as well as the life of the elect. He assigns *the life of the wicked* to the wicked before they are born. Their lot in this life is fixed and determined by God, who pre-determines that they will *be* wicked before they are even born. Every once and a while a Calvinist will speak the truth, without realizing it, as he is analyzing the meaning of his doctrines. R.C. Sproul made one such slip on page 51 of his book, “*Chosen By God*”:

“Predestination **seems** to cast a shadow on the very heart of human freedom...If God has decided our destinies from all eternity, **that strongly suggests that our free choices are but charades**, empty exercises in predetermined play acting. It is as though **God wrote the script for us in concrete and we are merely carrying out his scenario**”

No Dr. Sproul! It doesn’t just “seem” like that’s the outcome of your doctrine; that is the outcome of your doctrine. If Calvin was right, mankind has no free will. God wrote a *divine script* in eternity past and every person who has ever lived on this earth—both good and evil—is simply following that script. What free will they think they have or seem to have is just an *illusion*. In the end, we all end up doing exactly what God *predestined* us to do. You see, in the warped little mind of John Calvin, without this kind of a “script” God would not be truly sovereign (ie: in total control). This is exactly why Jacob Arminius said Calvin’s doctrine makes God is the author of sin—it does. It turns the God of the Bible into Satan!

All Calvinists begin with the presumption that God is sovereign, but in a way that *pre-loads* the very definition of sovereignty according to what Calvin taught. They then dismiss all arguments against Calvinism on the grounds that it diminishes or destroys that sovereignty. The fact is, non-Calvinists like myself *also* believe in the sovereignty of God. It's just that we don't accept Calvin's demonic, control-freak definition of God's sovereignty. We believe what the Scripture teaches, which is that God is always control, but not necessarily *controlling* everything that everyone does. God sets the boundaries for what a man *can* choose, and He determines the consequence for what a man *will* choose.

Our God is grater than Calvin's god because our God sovereignly works out His eternal plan *without* being a control freak. He is bringing His plan to pass without acting like some kind of Pope who has to have control over every thought, deed and action of every living thing on the planet. Our God is big enough to *be* God, yet still allow each man to make his own choices. It's a small, impotent and weak god who has to have absolute control over every move everyone makes. When you apply that desire to have *absolute control* over everything to a man, it's called *tyranny*. When you apply it to the leader of a religious group, it's called a "cult". But when it's applied to God, everyone calls it holy.

*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

*Colossians 1:27-29*

Monergism is a lie and anyone who preaches it is deceived. Paul said he *labored* and he *strove* to present every man perfect in Christ. This is the case for us *individually* as well. We must labor and strive to be presented perfect. We must labor and strive to receive the inheritance. We must labor and strive to receive the prize of the High Calling. Of course we cannot and we must not strive and labor alone. Paul said he labored and strove according to the working the Holy Spirit *in* him. Without the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us, all labor will be in vain. But the fact that it must be "Christ in you" who guides your labor and enables your striving does not *remove the need* to for you to strive and labor! It does not take away the fact that it is YOU who must strive and YOU who must labor! If we do not strive, if we do not labor, we will *not* gain the destiny or the inheritance God has ordained for us!

Now, you tell me: if individual effort (ie: striving and laboring) is absolutely necessary to receive the inheritance, who would be telling you all such individual effort is evil? Who do you think it is that's using every conceivable means to convince us to *not do* the very thing God has said we *must do* in order to gain our inheritance? I'll tell you who it is, my friends. It's the spirit of Satan. The enemy is doing everything he can—including twisting and perverting the basic principles of Christ—in order to rob you and me of the inheritance God has prepared for us. And the sad fact is, he has accomplished his goal in the lives of many believers. But we don't have to be one of them. We can continue to strive and labor, according to his working in us, until we have won the victory and gained our inheritance!

Amen!