

## ***Discerning Truth and Error about God's Grace (Part 5)***

### **I. REVIEW OF FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS**

- A. We receive God's grace and are justified (receive God's righteousness, love and favor) because of what Jesus did on the cross not because of what we do (Rom. 3:21-31). However, it is necessary to have a sincere heart attitude of repentance to receive God's saving grace.
- B. Repentance is a change of the attitude of the heart that turns from sin and to God according to the light of understanding that we have at each season of our spiritual journey. We must sincerely seek to obey God according to the light that He has given us. We walk in the light in different measures which increases as we obey (i.e., turning up the power of a microscope).  
<sup>9</sup> ***In Your light we see light. (Ps. 36:9)***
- C. We are to walk in all the light we have as God dwells in the fullness of the light that He has.  
<sup>7</sup> ***If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. (1 Jn. 1:7)***
- D. There is a process in our repentance. First, God gives us light that convicts us of sin or draws our heart to Him (Jn. 6:44). Second, we respond to this by repenting or by resolving to declare war against that particular sin. Third, God responds to our response by releasing more spiritual blessing in our heart (i.e., progressive victory over that particular sin).
- E. Repentance always eventually results in a progressive change in our character.  
<sup>8</sup> ***Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance... (Lk. 3:8)***  
<sup>3</sup> ***By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar...the truth is not in him. (1 Jn. 2:3-4)***
- F. Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more of His grace. These activities do not earn us God's favor. ***Analogy***: we put our cold heart before the bonfire of God's presence.  
<sup>7</sup> ***Exercise yourself toward godliness. (1 Tim. 4:7)***  
<sup>24</sup> ***Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Lk. 13:24)***  
<sup>21</sup> ***Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save (deliver) your souls. (Jas 1:21)***
- G. God gives more to our heart but does not love us more when we live in spiritual disciplines.  
<sup>8</sup> ***For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Gal. 6:8-9)***

## II. SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY IS NOT THE SAME AS REBELLION

- A. Many confuse spiritual immaturity as being the same as rebellion. Rebellion and immaturity may at times look the same outwardly yet they have very different heart responses. God looks at the heart. Rebellion says “No” to God without any immediate plan to obey. However, the spiritually immature sincerely repents (seeks to obey God) in each area that they receive light on.
- B. Those with sincere repentance quickly renew their war against the sin they just stumbled in. Sincere repentance it is still weak and flawed yet the Lord values it. When our love for God (repentance) is weak it can still be true. Weak love for God is not false love. As genuine lovers of God we do not immediately attain to all the obedience that we seek to walk in.
- C. God does not confuse spiritual immaturity with rebellion (the OT law spoke of clean and unclean animals: sheep and swine which both become stuck in the mud). If we confuse this in our life or in the life of those we minister to, it results in condemnation that makes believers want to quit.
- D. Struggling in weakness (immaturity) is not the same thing as being a hopeless hypocrite (rebellion). A hypocrite says one thing about truth but does not seek to obey it.
- E. When David sinned his heart was wounded because he grieved God's heart. His repentance was sincere. When Saul sinned he sought to get away with it that he might continue in it. Saul's heart was rebellious with only an outward show of repentance that was not sincere (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

## III. HOW GOD FEELS TOWARD PEOPLE

- A. God loves unbelievers even when they have no regard for Him (Jn. 3:16; Mt. 5:45).  
*<sup>16</sup> God so loved the world that He gave His only...Son that whoever believes... (Jn. 3:16)*
- B. God loves unbelievers but only enjoys believers (they repent or come into agreement with God).  
*<sup>19</sup> He delivered me because He delighted in me...<sup>35</sup> Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:19, 35)*  
*<sup>3</sup> If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup> But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. (Ps. 130:3-4)*  
*<sup>4</sup> What man...having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the 99...and go after the one...? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing...<sup>6</sup> he calls together his friends...saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <sup>7</sup> There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents... (Lk. 15:4-7)*
- C. God's mercy gives us confidence or assurance that God enjoys us (even in our weakness) as we walk in sincere repentance (that seeks to obey Him). Then we run to Him instead of from Him.

- D. We are defined by God's passion for us, receiving the gift of righteousness, and by our sincere heart cry to be a wholehearted lover of God. Guilt says that our actions are wrong. Shame says we (whole person) are wrong. **Question:** are you a slave of sin who struggles to love God or a lover of God who still struggles with sin?
- E. The revelation of God's love and grace gives us confidence that we can stand boldly before God. God gives a repentant believer a new beginning as a "first class citizen" each time they repent.  
*<sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear (confidence) in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. (1 Jn. 4:17-18)*
- F. We "push delete" after we have sincerely repented. Jesus paid the price that we might stand before God with confidence of having His favor. This is very different from "pushing delete" on our need to understand why and how we sinned. It is necessary to understand the processes and mindsets that contribute to strongholds of sin in our life.
- G. We embrace spiritual disciplines and work through the unsettled issues of our heart with more consistency if we have confidence that God enjoys us during the process of maturing spiritually.
- H. We view conviction of our sin differently when we feel God's tender love. Why? Because conviction of our sin feels like God's tender love for us instead of condemnation or accusation.
- I. God gives natural blessings to evil people. Do not mistake God's blessing with God's approval.  
*<sup>45</sup> Makes His sun rise on the evil and the good...sends rain on the just and unjust. (Mt. 5:45)*
- J. God's enjoyment of a believer is not the same as His approval of what they do. The fact that God likes us does not mean He overlooks all the areas of our lives that need change.
- K. God revealed His enjoyment of the prodigal son by the father giving him the best robes (Lk. 15:22). This newly repentant yet immature prodigal son needed transformation in many areas.  
*<sup>18</sup> I will...say to him, "Father, I have sinned..." <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>22</sup> The father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet..." (Lk. 15:18-22)*
- L. God's grace gives us confidence in His love and His zeal or jealousy for our holiness. God's jealous for us requires that we live in wholehearted love and obedience before Him. He insists on that which deepens our relationship with Him and results in our greatness.  
*<sup>5</sup> Do you think the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit...in us yearns jealously"? (Jas 4:5)*  
*<sup>14</sup> For the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God (Ex. 34:14)*

- M. God can smile over our life in a general sense, while He deals with a particular sin in our life. That one issue does not define our entire relationship with God. When we neglect to honestly and thoroughly confront sin in our heart we are not loved less by God but we do suffer lost in several ways. We minimize our ability to experience the joy of our salvation, the spirit of revelation, godly fellowship and to receive eternal rewards.
- N. God corrects areas in our life that He disapproves of to remove that which hinders love in us.  
<sup>10</sup> ***He (disciplines us) for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. (Heb. 12:10)***
- O. Divine correction is not rejection. God hates the sin yet enjoys the person He disciplines. To be disciplined means God cares and has not given up on us. God delights in those He disciplines.  
<sup>12</sup> ***Whom the LORD loves He corrects, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)***  
<sup>6</sup> ***Whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives (with favor).***  
<sup>7</sup> ***If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons...***  
<sup>8</sup> ***If you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. (Heb. 12:6-8)***
- P. God understands our weaknesses far greater than we do. He does not discipline us to the degree that we deserve nor does He change the way He feels about us as our weaknesses are manifest.  
<sup>10</sup> ***He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.***  
<sup>11</sup> ***For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him...***  
<sup>14</sup> ***For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (Ps. 103:10-14)***  
<sup>37</sup> ***For their (children of Israel) heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant. 38 But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath; 39 For He remembered that they were but flesh, a breath that passes away... (Ps. 78:37-39)***
- Q. It is a terrible thing to “get away with” sin long term because that means God is giving that person over to their sin. God's discipline is proof that He has not given up on us (Rom. 1:24-26).  
<sup>32</sup> ***When we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32)***
- R. God has tender patience for a season with believers who do not instantly repent. They must not confuse this with His approval. Jesus gave Jezebel and her disciples in Thyatira time to repent.  
<sup>21</sup> ***I gave her (Jezebel) time to repent of her immorality...22 I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent... (Rev. 2:21-22)***
- S. **SUMMARY:** Grace gives us confidence that God enjoys us and will bless us (after we stumble and repent) and that He will discipline us in His zeal (if we do not repent). There are three different mindsets in the Church today. First, some teach high standards of holiness yet with an impatient and intolerant God (mean God). Second, some teach low standards of holiness with a very gracious all accepting God (kind God). Finally, the Scripture exhorts us to teach high standards of holiness that war against sin in our relationship with a very kind God.