

Christian Study

Lesson 245

Be Light

Focusing on Church beyond Sunday

How Can I Know and Understand What the Bible Means?

Understanding the Basic Gospel

The Conflict Within (continue)

By this time in our walk, we should be convinced that the devil's lies are practically effective when they are aimed at our identity. That is why the love and acceptance of God is not only the foundation of our Christian lives it is the center around which we must orbit as we grow in grace. Grace is not only how we were saved, it is how we live here and now.

Another place where you see people's mistaken; incorrect; or wrong beliefs in their understanding of their own sinful nature is in their judgmental attitude toward others. The following stories are taken from Bob Georges' experience he explained in his book "Growing in Grace" "I went to get dressed after finishing a workout one day only to walk into one of those situations I dread. Some "locker room preacher" was holding court. He grew louder and louder and gestured enthusiastically as he forces three increasingly embarrassed companions into submission. I was trying to ignore the scene, but to no avail. Then I began to pick up the subject of his prolonged outburst of bitter speech, and my blood began to boil. He was talking about a man I knew, who happen to be a professor at a nearby Bible College where this "preacher" was a student

"There is no way (he named the man) is a Christian" he declared. "I happen to know that he is a homosexual. The Bible says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites." **1 Corinthians 6:9**

I was really angry now and wondering what to do, when the preacher noticed me. He turned to me, certain that I would support his position and said, "What do you think about that Mr. George?" I'll tell what I think, I said in careful tones. "I think you failed to quote the whole verse. Also in that lineup are thieves, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers." I moved closer and looked him in the eye. "Now I have

stood here and heard you publicly slander a man I know and respect. You are a slanderer. By your own Theology, you won't get into the kingdom of God either."

On another occasion I had an encounter with an older woman who was a well-known Bible teacher. She was giving me a hard time regarding my teaching on the grace of God because she feared that it would lead people to be "light on sin." Don't tell me, "She declared, "that if a man keeps on committing adultery, he is still forgiven" The Bible says that a person who lives in persistent sin is not saved."

I happen to know this lady pretty well. I asked her, "How long have you been a Christian?"

"Almost 50 years" she answered

"How long have you had trouble with a critical spirit?" I asked. She hesitated and got a sour look on her face. Finally she mumbled, "fifty years." I responded, "Now I will call that pretty persistent sinning."

You can see how in both of these stories the person's theology does not match up with real life. Both of them rely on a very selective view of sins in order to maintain their point. The Bible student was willing to consider homosexuality as a sin that no Christian could commit while ignoring his own sin of slander, even though they are both in the same biblical list. The lady would focus on several "really bad" external sins that "other people" commit while ignoring her own deep long and well established attitude sins. Both views lead to spiritual pride, blindness to the reality of one's own sins, and a judgmental attitude towards others.

The fact that Christians can fall into various sins should not be a thing of a surprise to us, and when they do, we should recognize the weakness of our own flesh (that apart from Christ we are capable of falling into the same kind of trap) should cause us to respond to them with compassion. Our desire should always be to help them get back on their feet. That is why **Galatians 6:1** says, "My friends, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourselves, so that you will not be tempted, too." Read that verse again carefully. I could hardly find a more desperately needed prescription for today's church, individual Christians and any Christian organization.

If we really understand what the Bible says about the wickedness of our flesh, we would never adopt attitudes like the Pharisees', who in their self-righteousness were so willing to stone the adulteress. We would not be like the "locker room preacher" always ready to point a finger and condemn. The church would not be known as "the only army which shoots its own wounded." It's no wonder for many people who have fallen and need a place to admit their need and to seek help the

last place they would consider is their local church. The offices of secular psychologists are filled with Christians who wouldn't dare admit to other Christians what is really going on in their lives. In my opinion, it is the false, deceiving and self-righteousness that comes from wrong teaching on spiritual growth and the flesh which has brought about this situation

As I mentioned before, this whole discussion of indwelling sin is not a joy to hear. As a matter of fact, it is not much fun to write about either, but it is a necessary building block of growing in grace and understanding the conflict we have within ourselves about the spirit and the flesh. We absolutely must come face-to-face with our own inability before we will ever turn to Christ for His ability. That's why there is no greater sign that a person is growing in grace than when with humble tears he discovers the reality that he is a "wretched man." The only people who know this with a real heart understanding are those who are coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ in an intimate way.

As we gain a clear-sighted true understanding of ourselves up against the perfect righteousness of Christ, we see that we all fall miles short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23). It is a natural response The more clearly we see the righteousness of God, the more we see our own sinfulness in reflection, but when we have an understanding of our identity in Christ and His acceptance of us, this discovery does not bury us. It causes us to give humble thanks for the mercy and grace of our Lord and Savior and deepens our understanding of our need to live dependently on Him. From that thankfulness we grow to love Him more and to know Him more intimately. We continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we abide in Him who is full of grace and truth.

1 "Now the Spirit says clearly that in the last times some people will abandon the faith by following deceitful spirits, the teachings of demons, 2 and the hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences have been burned by a hot iron. 3 They will try to stop people from marrying and from eating certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing should be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 If you continue to point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and the healthy teaching that you have followed closely. 7 Do not have anything to do with godless myths and fables of old women, but train yourself in godliness. 8 Physical exercise is of limited value, but Godliness is very dear, A pledge of life, both there and here. 9 This saying is trustworthy and deserves complete acceptance. 10 To this end we work hard and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, that is, of those who believe. 11 These are the things you must insist

on and teach. **12** Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for other believers in your speech, behavior, love, faithfulness, and purity. **13** Until I arrive, concentrate on the public reading of Scripture, on exhorting, and on teaching. **14** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy, accompanied by the laying on of the elders' hands. **15** Think on these things. Devote your life to them so that everyone can see your progress. **16** Pay close attention to your life and your teaching. Persevere in these things, for if you do this, you will save both yourself and those who listen to you."

1 Timothy 4:1-16

It is no secret, what God can do. What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

Our mission is to help people find strength and security on the foundation that can never be shaken, cracked or shattered. This foundation is the remarkable truth of God's unconditional love and His indisputable grace experienced in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The critics of Christianity have launched a full attack to discredit the person and works of Jesus Christ and the reliability of His word. We cannot be silent anymore. Let us as children of light, stand firm in the faith, because He who has taken us this far will never forsake us. You are called Christians, be careful of that name. Let not our Lord Jesus Christ be blasphemed on your account

Believe this, "Jesus did not come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people live."

Keep It Simple

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If you have any questions, comments or you know anybody else who will benefit from this study please feel free to give us their email address and they will be added to our mailing list to receive weekly lessons. The email address is

santigiemandol@yahoo.com,

Remember: A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle (Ephesians 5:8)

Let's go light another candle!