

Cyber Truths By E-mail

20. Are You Living Without His Grace? (June 16, 2006)



Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

We're writing this email with a lot of emotional pain because we're hearing from far too many "Christians" who nullify the Person of our Lord Jesus in their midst. We grieve that Someone we both love so dearly seems to be so readily discounted in the lives of those who call themselves by His Name.

The following anecdote happened recently. It is symptomatic of many who have contacted us and have spent considerable time in the Nicolaitan religious system. They have little or no "Vertical dimension" to their faith. As a result they turn to man for help far more than they look to Jesus. And, in so doing, they miss the offer of His grace.

Female Caller: I just found your website and I really need help. I live in North Carolina and have been plagued by demons for years. I've gone for deliverance, and my pastor has sent me to several counselors. If only I could come spend some time with you and your wife, I know I'd be better.

Mike: When you went for deliverance what happened?

Caller: I went through a three-month program at our church, but it didn't work. That's when I was sent to two different counselors.

Mike: Did the program you went through rely on the authority of the Name of Jesus, or did they have you revisit your past?

Caller: We spent most of the time going over our past.

Mike: Why don't you download *Demolishing Strongholds* from our website and go through it? Trust in the authority of Jesus!

Caller: But I need *people* to help me.

Mike: No, *you need Jesus* and what only He can do. *People* don't deliver anyone. Only *Jesus* does.

Caller: How come *you* don't want to offer me help?

Mike: I *am* helping you! Let me ask you a question: If my wife turned to *other men* every time she had a problem, how would that make me feel?

Caller: You'd feel awful.

Mike: How do you think *Jesus* feels every time you turn to others but not to Him, especially when *He* is the only One Who can help you?

Caller: Pretty bad.

It was painful to have this conversation with this woman—not because of her as a person, but because of the religious system that has kept her seeking any which way but Jesus.

Her situation isn't unique. A church leader from a large denomination once told us, "We can't have our people trusting Jesus as your writings call for. That would cause *mayhem!* We need to *control and direct* the actions of the people in our congregation."

In essence he was saying: **We need to speak about Jesus, but not let our people trustingly relate to Him. If they do, we'll lose our influence and control over their spiritual life.**

Isn't this what the religious leaders of Jesus's day feared as well? So many Nicolaitan religious systems today have no more reliance on the Son of God than did the religious system which Jesus challenged while on earth. In fact, I (Mike) have a Masters degree in Business Administration and can't see any difference between the motives and practices of Nicolaitanism and corporate America! The measures of success are exactly the same.

Do you remember what Jesus said to the religious professionals of His day?

And the Father who sent Me has Himself testified concerning Me. You have never

heard His voice nor seen His form, nor does His word dwell in you, for you do not trust in the One He sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life (John 5:37-40).

Many spend time studying Bible passages yet *never encounter the Lord* Who has breathed life into them through His Spirit! We've found that this woman's phone call is more the rule than the exception as people in religious systems come to our website. Trust and dependence on Jesus is dodged by so many who call themselves "Christian".

And, this is why we are writing: So you won't be one of those who fail to turn first to our Lord Jesus!

If You Plod On Without His Grace, Life is Uphill ALL THE WAY

The grace our Lord bestows on His people can't be grasped by your reasoning acuity. Certain scribes *reasoned in their hearts* that Jesus was blaspheming when He declared the paralytic's sins forgiven (see Mark 2:5-10, NKJV). The trust that healed the afflicted man was notably absent in the men who refused to acknowledge the One Whose powerful grace had revealed Him to be God incarnate!

You can't be "rooted and established in love" *without* His grace! Without grace, you'll never fathom the fullness of our Lord's love (see Ephesians 3:16-19). Nor can you grasp His purposes in the events that surround and impact your life (see Isaiah 55:8-11).

Certainly you can never fully *understand* His grace, either the nature of it or why He should choose to shower you

with it. But you *can* by faith experience it!

On one level God bestows grace on all mankind because we are made in His image. Jesus speaks of that general care for human beings: "*He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous*" (Matthew 5:45).

Yet, there is a *particular grace* that's experienced by those who diligently live in Covenant union with God. These are the ones who *love* their God and *live repentantly* and walk in *obedient trust* to His commands. To these our Lord manifests His grace as He gives them ***the desire and the power to do God's will.***

When a follower of Jesus experiences this kind of grace, *testimonies* pour forth to our Lord's faithfulness. Through the presence or absence of testimony you can discern the viability of faith in a person.

Experiencing our Lord's grace through your ongoing repentance and desire to obey ALWAYS leads to testimony. ALWAYS!!!

People who habitually *seek our Lord first* bring to their conversation a quality of communication that's both glorifying to Him and mutually edifying to themselves and to the one(s) with whom they share. Their words and testimonies bespeak a depth of relationship with Jesus as His follower.

The *lack* of testimony tells us something else about an individual. When people have nothing to share about our loving and faithful God, they're not looking to Him in loving trust and dependence. And if that person is looking to *us* (or to *you!*) to fulfill that role, that's a spot reserved only for Jesus.

This is where religious leaders often get into trouble. To turn to others rather than to God first is *idolatry*.

People who don't depend on our Lord first find their lives that much harder because they're counting on their own strength rather than on His power.

When You Consistently Recognize and Experience His Grace, Your Life Has Testimony

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray” (James 5:13).

Grace is often found initially on your knees. Your trusting dependence on our Father is best demonstrated when you humble yourself in love to seek His face. At that moment something wonderful happens on your behalf in the spirit world:

*And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the **Spirit Himself intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because **He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God**. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, **who also intercedes for us** (Romans 8:26,27,34).*

Envision for a moment what occurs when you pray in total dependence on God to act on your behalf. First, you are *not praying alone!* With such Divine help, why would anyone look to man first?

Those who live repentantly in love-grounded trust and seek to obey God's commands have promises that are received through the *grace of God*:

*Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us [if we have no unconfessed sin], we have **confidence before God**; and whatever we ask we **receive from Him**, because we **keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight** (1 John 3:21,22).*

It takes humility and personal volition to respond to the Spirit's urging to repent — but what intimacy when you pray!

*For the eyes of the Lord are on **the righteous** [those who repentant and confess their sins] and His ears are **attentive to their prayer**, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil (1 Peter 3:12).*

The Apostle who was based in Jerusalem certainly anchors the mighty influence the righteous wield in the heavenlies: *“The prayer of a righteous man is **powerful and effective**”* (James 5:16).

For 30 years we've recognized and shared the connection between walking uprightly in relationship with Jesus and finding answered prayer that brings grateful testimony. Those who are earnestly following Jesus similarly experience His wonderful intervention. Conversations with people who can testify of His faithfulness in response to their prayers are mutually encouraging and edifying — and some of those answers *have* been after perseverance and protracted crying out before His throne of grace!

You probably know firsthand how dry it is to converse with “Christians” who've never experienced God's grace being poured out on them in answer to their prayers. Probe a bit and you may find worldly motives or hidden distrust.

Resting In Our Fathers's Grace

After our Father revealed to us the Hebraic foundations while we were in Israel, He gave us a ministry of *availability and mobility*. This kind of life isn't for everyone, of course, but He's given us a particular "apostolic assignment": "**Share this message.**" With His command has come *His grace* to accomplish it.

In the Greek language, the word for apostle, "*apostolos*" [uh-POS-tuh-loss], means "sent forth on an assignment or mission." That pretty well sums up our past twelve years!

By *His grace* we share the Hebraic foundations. If *you* want to make them a way of life, you also need our Lord's grace. People can't lean on other believers for the power and the will to live out God's truth. Humans have no divine power to give outside that which the Spirit bestows as gifting to edify the body.

If your background has included considerable time in Nicolaitanism, you may be hindered in learning to depend on Holy Spirit intervention that can then be confirmed by two or three witnesses. All too often, you may find that as soon you hear a truth, you turn to the *messenger* for help rather than to the Source of grace, Jesus.

The two of us do give spiritual advice to others from time to time. But, we'd much rather be asked to confirm AFTER people have earnestly sought the Lord for guidance.

Don't turn to others too quickly for counsel and advise. Time on your knees *first* will benefit and strengthen you, and will reap the grace of God that accompanies the guidance He gives. And be diligently in His Word with the express purpose to seek *application* of it, for through

it the Spirit may bring steps of wisdom, comfort, or correction.

Our Father shared two other specific commands to us as direction for our service to Him:

- **Lead by example.**
- **Contend for My Son Jesus.**

As we share this message, we don't lead by control or direction. Instead, we endeavor for a way of life that results in testimonies to our Father's glory. We're a *grace-dependent* couple!

After our Father told us to "Contend for My Son Jesus," we quickly became aware of how *absent* the Person of Jesus is in the Nicolaitan system. His *Name* is mentioned often, but little regard is given to a "set-apart" life of holiness and the dependence on His Lordship that both Testaments of His Word affirm.

Grace-Guidance for You

You may have noticed when you buy a piece of equipment that you're given a list of things to check before you contact the manufacturer for service. For instance, if the item is powered by electricity, you're advised to make sure the equipment is plugged in.

For His people, the Bible is our Maker's instructions (and a whole lot more since it reveals His character, ways and wonders!). But are you among the many who find it more convenient to turn to *people* than to God Who through prayer and His Spirit wants to make known His will and the mind of Christ? We encourage you: *plug into heaven* first!

Use the questions below as a means of determining where you are concerning *grace*. Which do you depend on more: God's grace or your own strength and reasoning?

- Write down your understanding of grace.

Please examine your own life:

- Ask those who know you closely in the faith to describe whether they see God's grace at work on your behalf. Write down what they share.

- Are you encouraged by what others told you about the work of God's grace in your life?

- From your own viewpoint, is your life *grace-based*, bringing testimonies to our loving Father? Yes or No? If no, why not, and what do you need to do to change?

- When you encounter problems of any sort, do you stop to pray **FIRST** as James commands? Or, do you immediately seek help from others?

- Are you free of unconfessed sin at this moment? Yes or No? If no, why not?

- Describe how you seek God's guidance for situations and relationships in your life.

- Is that which you've written above Scriptural? And, are you finding our Lord's grace and intervention at work in your life?

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart'.

(Jeremiah 29:11-13)

Our Father knows we need His grace; do you?