

LEADING GRACE

SUMMER, 2022

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FREE GRACE ALLIANCE

IN THIS ISSUE

RADMACHER
PRESSING ON LATER IN LIFE

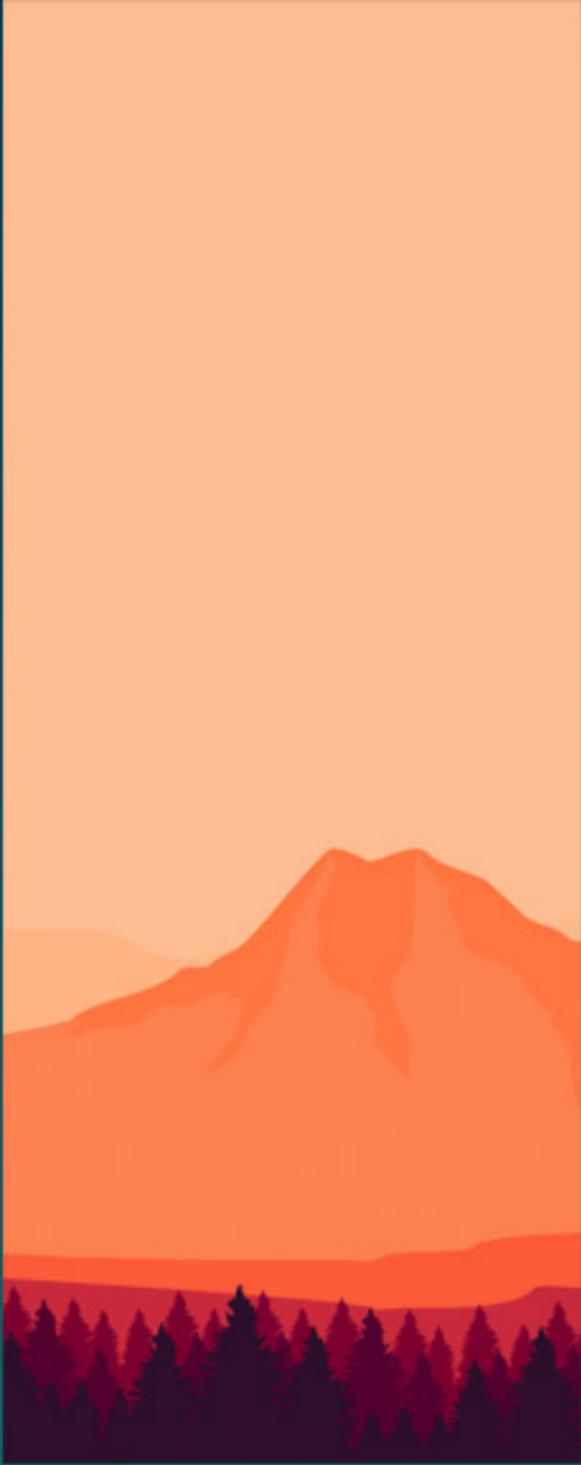
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DISCIPLESHIP, PART 2



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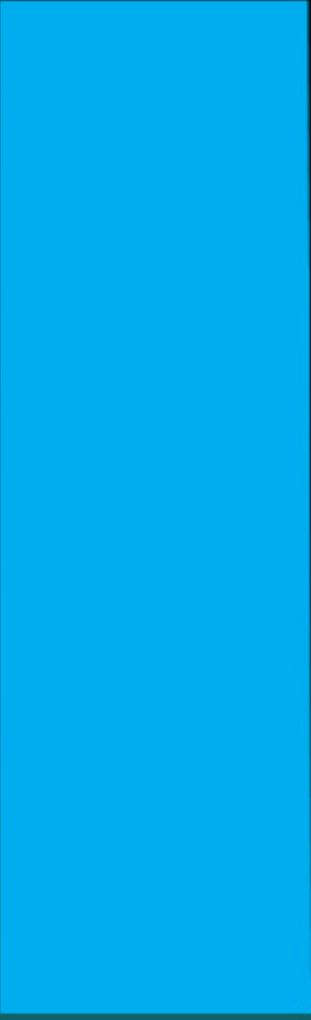
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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



As the summer days begin to shorten and families think about squeezing in those final weekends of camping, hiking, waterparks, whatever they consider summer fun, those in ministry begin to gear up for the new ministry year. Christian schools (all the way up through seminaries) are getting ready to welcome the students back. Parachurch organizations are looking forward to new adventures and opportunities to touch some specific niche or people group they focus on. Churches, knowing their ministry year coincides with the school year, are gearing up with new curriculums for the children, vision casting for the leaders, even doing some deep cleaning of their facilities to have them in shipshape for when those families who are coming home from their vacations start to be more regular again. Every one of these areas of ministry (educational institutions, missions, and the local churches) have two things in common: They want to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world who so desperately needs it, and they want to be used of the Lord to help people become all that Jesus wants for them. What a gracious, loving Father we get to serve Who would allow us to be involved in the things that matter for all of His eternal plans and purposes.

We, The Free Grace Alliance, are gearing up for this fall also. We are making our final preparations for our annual Free Grace Alliance International Conference. The dates are set: October 10-12, 2022. The place is set (it's a new location in the Dallas-Fort Worth area): Bear Creek Bible Church in Keller, TX. The main speakers are set, and the workshops are in place. You can see the details and register for the conference at free-gracealliance.com. Every year this conference is a great way to make new connections and renew old ones, to be instructed and inspired, and to be grounded in the pure original gospel of Jesus Christ. This year's theme is "What Difference Does It Make?" Other ways to say it are, "Why should we be so committed to getting the gospel right?" or, "Getting the gospel right has a huge impact on people, organizations, even whole cultures. What is that impact?" It is going to be a powerful conference that will help shape you as an individual and the organization(s) you lead as this new ministry year begins.

I hope you make coming to this year's conference a priority. We look forward to being together as we continue to pursue what we feel is God's mission for the Free Grace Alliance: to connect, encourage, and equip the body of Christ to advance the grace message throughout the world.

Serving Christ with You – Joyfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Vance". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Vance
President

**WHAT
DIFFERENCE
DOES IT MAKE?**

FEATURING



MARK HAYWOOD



HOLLY HARRIS



GRANT HAWLEY



MICHAEL STEWART



FRED CHAY



JEREMY VANCE



DAVID ALLEN



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Pressing on later in life

Introduction

I am writing this from the West African nation of Ghana, where my wife and I are in the middle of a six-month missionary adventure. We are endeavoring to serve the Lord by encouraging a pastor and his wife, who have built a ministry which includes a church, a 200-student elementary school, and a mentoring and church-planting community outreach. When I was a young pastor in my 30s, if you were to ask me what I was going to do when I reached retirement age, I would've responded, "I can't imagine myself ever retiring; I'll just keep on looking for ways to serve the Lord." Now that I've reached 71 years of age and have been drawing on my social security for eight years, I'm more passionate about using the remainder of my life to serve the Lord than I ever imagined I would be.

My Story

In 2018, my close friend and the lead pastor of our congregation asked if I wanted to go with him to do a pastors' conference in Ghana. I didn't know that he had done evangelism and church planting in Ghana some 35 years earlier, and he didn't know that I had spent three months teaching the Bible to fifth and sixth graders in Ghana some 45 years earlier. The Lord provided the funds, and we ministered to 50-60 pastors and wives for about ten days. We returned the next year and brought two others with us—one sister who was burdened to help develop a women's sewing ministry, and one brother who came to operate video equipment, but ended up being moved to use his computer and economics background to help get the elementary school on a more stable footing.

Stuck in Ghana

I came again by myself on the following year on the 13th of March, 2020, ready to teach hermeneutics and homiletics for eight weeks, but the day after I arrived, the airport closed and the government imposed a three-week stay-at-home order because of Covid. My plan to teach was scuttled; God had other plans. I walked a lot, talked to a lot of people about the Lord, preached on Facebook Live nearly every Sunday morning, worked on my seminary classes, read, and met with the young men the pastor was mentoring. In April, I received a notice from my airline informing me that my return ticket was cancelled, so my stay was extended indefinitely. Spending so much time by myself—with no TV (thankfully!)—I had quite a bit of time to study the scriptures and converse with the Lord. In May, I celebrated my 70th birthday on a Zoom call with my wife, children, and grandchildren. I was eventually able to return home on July 1st.

It was during those days that I strongly sensed the Lord leading me to spend the decade of my 70s establishing an online school for these brothers and sisters. I had wondered at times why God had moved me, at 68, to pursue a doctoral program. Now it made sense to me; if I was to begin a school, it would be much easier to promote if the founder had an earned doctorate. Now I'm back in Ghana and I'm teaching New Testament Greek to about twenty young men and women who are eager to better understand the Bible. And, since my wife didn't like the prospect of me getting stuck over here again, she decided to come with me, for which I am most thankful. Barby is enjoying her first trip to this hemisphere, and especially being with the beautiful people who populate this country. Each week she is using her gifts and love for children to teach preschool and kindergarten students.

Giving Our Lives Away

I'm not writing this article simply to tell my story. What I am hoping to do is to inspire many others who are in the same season of life as my wife and I. You see, of all those who have identified themselves as believers in Jesus, we who have embraced the gospel of grace have the best reason to give our lives away in service to others. Why do I say that we who announce a gospel of faith alone in Christ alone have the best reason to pursue a life of service?

Gary Radmacher

Because we have the freedom to embrace a walk of faith and a life of works—not to ensure that we somehow do enough to get into heaven—but so that we can have a glorious entrance into the kingdom of God and a place of service alongside our Savior in His kingdom.

What is it that God desires of those who have put their faith in His Son? Well, clearly, He desires for us to pursue a love relationship with Him. And how do we best show our love to Him? We love God by loving the ones He loves...especially those who cannot reciprocate in-kind the love we have given to them. God desires that our love for others would surpass the love that human-kind typically demonstrates. In the words of Jesus, "If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matt 5:46-47) This is the righteousness of God: He Himself—not the world, nor the keeping of rules—is the standard for righteousness. And why does God want us, as first order of priority, to seek His kingdom and His righteousness? It is because He wants us to enjoy the blessings that He desires to shower us with—both in this life and in the age to come.

This is the message of the Sermon on the Mount: the righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees is a love for God and a love for people that comes from deep within the followers of Jesus. This is a practical righteousness which we can freely pursue because we have already received the life of Christ through faith in Jesus; it is an accomplished fact. Now we have only to lose our lives in order that we might find them. This is the surpassing joy of those who have discovered that it is, indeed, "more blessed to give than it is to receive" (Acts 20:35). This pursuit of righteousness will assure us that we will not shrink away from our Savior in shame when our eyes meet His (1 John 2:28). Just before my father died, he told me this: "I probably could've done more for Christ, but I feel like I did the best I could." He was my hero, and I want to have that same kind of confidence as I approach that day.

An Appeal

My dear "retired" brother and sister, for decades God has been investing in your life; now is the time to give away what God has given you. God wants to use the things you've learned and the experiences you've had to touch the lives of others in your neighborhood, or somewhere around the world. Let me encourage you to not spend these years serving your own pleasures, but rather to lay up a glorious future for yourself by giving away what God has given you. You may be able to join a ministry that already exists, or God may lead you to begin something that you could never envision yourself doing. Don't be surprised if God calls you into ministry that you don't feel qualified to do; Moses was 80 years old and didn't feel qualified either. In fact, I'm convinced that God prefers using people who don't feel qualified. The apostle Paul, speaking of the responsibility we have to represent Jesus Christ, posed this rhetorical question: "Who is adequate for these things?" (2 Cor 2:16).

My brethren, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward which is the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col 3:23-24). Finish strong. It will be worth it all when you see Jesus, look confidently into His eyes, and hear Him say, "Well done." As I often say: "The most important moment in my life is yet to come. It's the moment my eyes meet the eyes of Jesus. Everything else is just preparation for that moment." *Are you preparing well?*

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In John 13 through 17, Jesus speaks to His disciples on the night before He goes to the cross. It's His last chance to talk to them about what is most important to Him. He doesn't spend that time talking about what foods they should eat, what clothes they should wear, what music they should listen to, or anything like that. He does spend a good amount of time talking about how they can have victory in their emotional lives, but the beginning, middle and end of the sermon is about love.

In the beginning of His sermon, He commanded the disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). In the middle, He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (15:12). In the end, He prayed for God to provide the unity and love we need to obey His commandment:

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me... And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

Jesus' priority is clearly our love for one another, and His priority should be ours as well. But we haven't often kept that priority. One problem is that legalism, of which we have way too much, destroys love and unity, especially when expressed in community.

**JESUS' PRIORITY:
OUR LOVE FOR
ONE ANOTHER**

BY GRANT HAWLEY

Paul tells us about an example of this in Gal 2:11-16. It says:

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

What was happening here is that Peter had been enjoying regular fellowship with Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians. He would eat with them, celebrating the Lord's Supper. I am sure that this was a huge encouragement to these Christians, to be accepted on equal footing with an apostle, enjoying each other's company. I would sure love to sit with Peter and hear His stories about Jesus that we don't get to read about in the Gospels. But when some people came in and said something like, "Peter, what are you doing at this cat-fish fry? Don't you know it's forbidden in the Law?" Peter succumbed to the pressure and withdrew from these Gentile brothers and sisters.

This is just one example of why Paul calls the law "the enmity" and the "middle wall of separation" between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14-15). (Thank you, Jesus, for breaking that wall down and abolishing that enmity.) But legalism doesn't just separate Jews and Gentiles, it divides on lines of race generally, age, economic class, gender, and position in the local church.

It tends to start with the mistaken idea that God wants unity in the Church to be based upon uniformity, rather than diversity. But this isn't God's way. God's way is illustrated in the body metaphor that is often used to describe the Church. Just like the body has many different members with different functions, so is the Body of Christ. This has to do primarily with spiritual gifts, but there are many things that make us each uniquely suited to fulfill a certain role in the Body. You and I don't do the same things, and that's exactly God's design. I can't do everything that needs to be done or reach everyone who needs to be reached, and neither can you. But together, we are much more capable.

We're supposed to be different so that we need each other.

Someone who drives a Harley and has a long beard and tattoo sleeves can reach people with the gospel of Christ who may not give me the time of day. And that person I can't reach needs the love of Christ just as much as everyone else. So, instead of judging the brother who looks, talks, and lives different from me, I thank God for him. And I thank God for the differences between us.

And this is the way it is supposed to be. Every Christian is going to stand before Christ at the Bema, the Judgment Seat:

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:10-12).

**WE'RE
SUPPOSED
TO BE
DIFFERENT
SO THAT WE NEED
EACH OTHER.**

At this judgment, Christ will assess our lives and determine our reward. Everyone who appears at that judgment already has eternal security because they believed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and everyone there will be in Paradise with Christ forever. But not everyone will receive the same reward. Some will rule with Christ in His Kingdom, some won't. Some will receive the crown of righteousness, some won't. Some will hear "Well done, good and faithful servant" and some won't.

So, judgment of each brother and sister in Christ is Christ's job, not ours. It is our job to thank the Lord for our brothers and sisters in Christ and to love them and help them as much as possible to be as effective a sojourner in this world as they can be. In doing this, we multiply our own ministries so we can go to the Bema with confidence and excitement.





**LISTEN TO ASARE KYEI-
BAFFOUR
TELL US ABOUT THE RECENT
FGA CONFERENCE IN GHANA
AND THE UPCOMING WORK
IN AFRICA ON THE LEADING
GRACE PODCAST**

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Gracia y Santidad

22-26 SEPTIEMBRE ~ BARACOA, CUBA
FEATURING
GRANT HAWLEY ~ MARK HAWWOOD ~ JUAN SANCHEZ





CHARLIE BING

UNDERSTANDING THE VICE LISTS

THE PASSAGES

First Corinthians 6:9-11:

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, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:19-21:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:3-5:

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

These three passages are similar in that they list sins and the consequence of those who commit them. The passages often confuse people. What kind of people do they describe, believers or unbelievers? What is the point of listing these sins for the original readers and for us today?

DO BELIEVERS LOSE THEIR SALVATION IF THEY COMMIT THESE SINS?

No. This would be a common Arminian position, but we can dismiss this interpretation because we know that salvation by grace means that works cannot earn (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) or forfeit salvation (Rom 5:20; Col 2:13-14). Besides, the sins named in the lists differ in each passage so there is no certain standard by which one would know that salvation is lost. Some sins are often and unfortunately seen in Christians: covetousness, hatred, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, envy, and drunkenness. Salvation by grace through faith excludes one's performance as a condition for gaining or keeping that salvation.

DO PROFESSING BELIEVERS SHOW THEY WERE NEVER TRULY SAVED IF THEY COMMIT THESE SINS?

This interpretation often comes from a Reformed theological approach which teaches that if God chooses those who believe and implants divine faith as a gift, then they would surely live and persevere to the end of their lives without major sin. Many would employ the phrase "Faith without works is dead" by which they mean that a life without evident good works (and/or a life of sin) shows faith never existed. But this position is theologically derived and comes from a misinterpretation of James 2:14-26. This interpretation also negates the free grace of God and salvation through faith alone because works becomes a necessary component or proof of salvation, and thus a condition. We can agree that good works should characterize a believer (Eph. 2:10), but they cannot prove or disprove one's salvation.

COULD THESE SINS DESCRIBE A BELIEVER IN CHRIST?

There is no doubt that the sins listed could be committed by believers. That is the reason the apostle Paul exhorts his readers against doing them. The believers in Corinth were already doing wrong and cheating (1 Cor 5:11; 6:6-8). The Galatian

THE VICE LISTS DESCRIBE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF UNBELIEVERS WHICH CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT EMULATE

believers are told not to use their Christian freedom to serve their sinful flesh, which could happen if they do not walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:13, 16). Paul does not want the Ephesian believers to be deceived into committing these sins (Eph 5:6-7). The Bible and real life verify the reality of sin in Christians. The better question is, "Should these sins characterize a believer in Christ?" The answer is obviously, "Never!"

HOW THEN DOES PAUL USE THE SIN LISTS?

This question depends somewhat on what is meant by inheriting the kingdom of God. While some see a present aspect of the kingdom rule of God (1 Cor 4:20; Eph 2:6; Col 1:13) in which believers can experience temporal rewards, inheriting the kingdom of God in these vice passages seems clearly to be future, as in other Pauline passages (1 Cor 15:24, 50; Eph 1:14, 18; Col 3:24; 2 Tim 4:1, 18).

With a future kingdom in view, there are two views that maintain the integrity of salvation by grace through faith alone. Both views assume, with good reason from the contexts, that the readers are believers. In First Corinthians, the contrast between unbelievers and believers is seen clearly in 6:1-9. In verse 1 we see the contrast of the "unrighteous" with the "saints" and in verse 6 the contrast between "brothers" and "unbelievers." This helps define the unrighteous in verse 9 as unbelievers in contrast to the believing readers described as washed, sanctified, and justified in verse 11 (cf. 1:2). In Galatians it is clear the readers are believers (1:6-7; 3:26-27; 5:1) who are presented with the options of living according to the Spirit or according to the flesh (5:16-26). The sins of the flesh characterize the readers' former lives as unbelievers (5:24). Vice lists are often used to describe unbelievers in the New Testament (cf. Rom. 1:29-32; Phil. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 3:3; 1 Peter 4:3; Rev. 21:8). The Ephesian readers are called "saints" (1:1) and Paul reminds them they were saved (2:8). After confirming their position in Christ in chapters 1-3, the ethical concerns of chapters 4-6 are introduced in 4:1 with Paul's exhortation to "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." Their conduct should therefore contrast with their former unsaved lives (4:17-32). Accordingly, the issue in Ephesians 5 is conduct "fitting for saints" (v. 3). Paul then contrasts the conduct of believers in the light with unbelievers in the darkness (vv. 1-18). They are not to be partakers with the unbelieving "sons of disobedience" (cf. 2:2-3) who experience the wrath of God (vv. 6-7). So, clearly, Paul's readers of these three epistles are believers. One view sees these passages as warnings to believers about losing rewards in eternity such as ruling with Jesus Christ. This interpretation takes "inherit" to mean fully possess or enjoy rich rewards in the future millennial kingdom of God based on performance or merit. While all believers will enter the kingdom,

only faithful believers (who avoid the vices listed) will be rewarded. Inherit or inheritance is used to speak of enjoying future eternal rewards, including ruling with Christ, in a number of New Testament passages (Rom 8:17b; Col 3:24; 2 Tim 2:11-13). However, in First Corinthians 15:50-53, inheriting the kingdom of God is unmerited and based on the believers' resurrection in the church age. Another view sees these passages as exhortations to believers not to behave like unbelievers. In other words, the vice lists describe the characteristics of unbelievers which Christians should not emulate. These unbelievers will not inherit the kingdom of God and enjoy its riches because they will not enter the kingdom, so why would believers want to identify with them? Galatians connects inheritance to the Abrahamic promise and faith in Christ, not performance (Gal. 3:18, 29; 4:1, 7, 30). Matthew 19:16 shows that to "have eternal life" is similar in meaning to "inherit eternal life" used in the two parallel accounts, Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18. Inheriting the kingdom, if speaking of rewards, would necessarily include entering the kingdom. Those who enter the kingdom do so with the expectation of receiving rewards. The contrasts between believers and unbelievers are so pronounced in the contexts of these passages that this interpretation seems the stronger of the two.

CONCLUSION

The vice lists in these three passages were not written to warn about losing salvation, or to identify those who falsely profess to be saved. They are written to motivate the readers to live up to their calling as new people in a new life. The sins listed characterize unbelievers whose behavior is contrasted with that which should characterize believers. This contrast is consistent and emphatic in each context. It is a sad fact that believers can live according to their sinful nature, the flesh, and look like unbelievers. Kingdom-bound Christians should not live like hell-bound non-Christians; it is incongruous with the new life, new position, and new identity given to those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. Such bad behavior would also forfeit rewards in this life and in the coming kingdom.

WHAT IS FREE GRACE?

FGA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 20TH

RAAMATTU PUHUU IN HELSINKI, FINLAND



DISCIPLESHIP

PART 2

BY CODY WALLACE

INTRODUCTION

There is continuity in the Gospels and the Epistles when it comes to distinguishing salvation from discipleship. Take for example Paul's words when it comes to the cost of salvation (Rom 5:15-17; 6:23; 11:6; Eph 2:8-9, 4:7). In these passages, which refer to salvation, Paul's words are: "free gift," "given," and "by grace." Nowhere in any of these passages is there a cost associated with belief in Jesus. When Paul speaks of cost, it is associated with reward (1 Cor 9:27; 1 Tim 6:11-19; 2 Tim 4:1-8). In each of these verses, Paul looks toward costly goals: an imperishable crown, a storing of future treasure, and a future crown of righteousness.

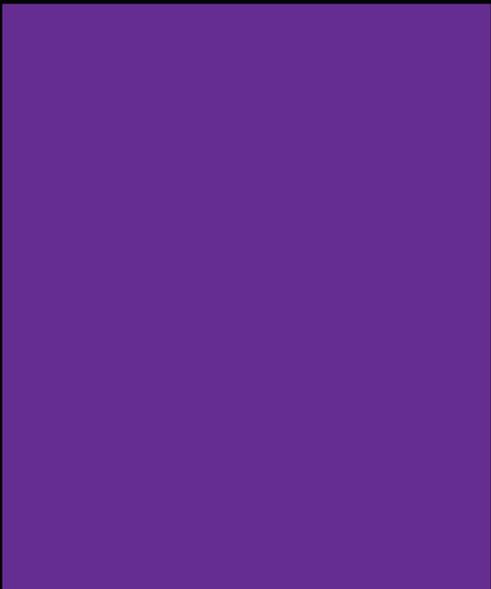
In First Corinthians 3:1, Paul calls the Corinthians "brethren" even though they had not grown and needed milk instead of solid food (3:2). In Hebrews, the writer claims the readers were needing to move beyond elementary teaching (Heb 6:1) even though they had been believers so long they should already be rabbis in their own right (Heb 5:12-14).

MENTORSHIP ROLES

In addition to showing the distinction between salvation and discipleship, these passages suggest that mentorship roles were standard in the early church. Paul considered Timothy his "son in the faith." He gave special attention toward Timothy's growth and development in Christ (1 Tim 1:2).

Paul also used rabbinical language about mentorship when he called the believers in Philippi his "yokefellows." Rabbis were known to have a yoke of adherence to the law (Matt 11:29b-30, 23:4; Luke 11:46; Acts 15:10; Galatians 5); Paul is calling these individuals people that were under the yoke of Christ alongside him.

In the time after Christ, believers knew the cost of discipleship—they would be persecuted by the Jewish leaders and later by Rome. As Earl Radmacher notes, Jesus said persecution was one of the costs of being a disciple: "Persecution will come upon them because they are identified with Jesus whom the world hates without cause" (Derickson & Radmacher, *The Disciplemaker*, 32). A believer's open proclamation of Christ and conversion made them instant disciples rather than closet believers. The cost to follow was clear in the crucifixion of their Savior and martyrdom of those that came before them.



DISCIPLESHIP IS COSTLY

Jesus had a mission while He was on earth. In His own words He said, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10). His objective was to single-handedly redeem the world through His death, burial, and resurrection (John 3:16; 1 Cor 15:1-4, 55-57; 1 Tim 4:10). While on earth, He used His time to gather a crowd of followers, share His message, and verify the message through His miracles (John 2:23). Yet, Jesus realized His message needed to be broadcast beyond those who could listen to His own preaching; He needed to pass the baton to other preachers who would share the good news of the gospel. So with few words, Jesus chose twelve men He would disciple and said, “Follow Me” (Matt 4:19). These men became His learners, and He became their Rabbi, and it was to them He gave the task to spread the good news after He departed to the Father.

Over the span of three years, Jesus trained the twelve for the task of sharing His message. As Earley and Dempsey point out in their work, *Disciple Making Is*, “Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi, or teacher, who used a rabbinical method for disciple making. [B]uilt on progressive level of commitment, trust, obedience, and learning. At each step He demanded greater commitment, which gave His followers greater impact” (58). Jesus required total commitment because these men would face difficulty in their vital calling to carry on His message and be instrumental in laying the foundation of the church.

THE RABBI'S BURDEN

The commitment He required went as far as rejection of familial ties (Luke 14:26), a rejection of provisions (Luke 9:3, 58-62), and a rejection of one's self (Luke 9:23). This was not because Jesus wanted a robotic army of bland, patterned individuals; that is far from what He intended. He specifically chose the men for their character and planned to use their personalities in His mission. Jesus' goal in transforming His followers was to mold them into His likeness of character, mentality, and speech.

“The decision to follow a rabbi meant total commitment. They would have to memorize his words and replicate his lifestyle.” (Dempsey & Earley 2013, 68). Jesus would do the same with His disciples, and yet His words were different than those of contemporary rabbis. Jesus condemned the modern rabbis because they exasperated their pupils with rules, laws, and traditions that they could not even keep (Matt 23:4). There were 613 laws Jewish people needed to maintain and, depending on the rabbi's interpretation, there could be a dozen other traditions and rules associated with each law. Jesus said not to follow these men because they are unfair hypocrites (Matt 23:6-14). When an individual became a pupil of a rabbi, it was said they took on the yoke of the rabbi's interpretation of Old Testament law (Acts 15:10). Earley notes, “the term was adapted to apply to a disciple placing himself under the yoke of his rabbi's instruction.” (Dempsey & Earley, 73). Jesus described these as heavy burdens on the shoulders of men, yet, of His own

yoke, He said, “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt 11:30). He called them to release themselves of the other rabbis' unobtainable teachings (Matt 11:28) and instead, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me” (Matt 11:29).

Jesus' teaching would be surrounded by the four-letter word 'love.' Love God (Mark 11:30), love others (Mark 11:31), love each other (John 13:34-35), and love your enemies (Matt 5:44). It would be up to Jesus' disciples to share His message and engage others to do the same. In fact, this was his main concern after His resurrection, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples” (Matt 28:18b-19a). His last instruction was for His learners to make learners.

FOLLOW ME = DISCIPLESHIP

Like Jesus, Paul committed significant amounts of time to his disciples, and they did ministry together. Paul took Timothy nearly everywhere he went, “Timothy had the opportunity to see Paul in action for a three-year period as he did evangelism and discipleship.” (Dempsey & Earley, 161). And like Jesus, Paul sent out his disciples to do ministry without him. Jesus sent the 72 to spread the message of the kingdom (Luke 10), and Paul had Silas and Timothy stay in Athens after he left to “run the ministry there in his absence (Acts 17:14).” (Dempsey & Earley, 162). The goals were the same, hands-on training and application. Last, Paul made sure to teach Timothy that ministry was not self-driven and inward-focused. “The goal is multiplication.” (Dempsey & Earley, 163). Jesus' disciples grew from eleven to adding thousands at a time (Acts 2:47), and Paul's disciples reached beyond the seas and multiplied to the point of reaching even areas unknown to them at the time. Jesus' goal was to make the Church. Paul's goal was to nurture and grow it. Both used their disciples to maintain their ministries after they left.

Is our work in discipleship focused on preparing others to do the same?

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