



The Voice of Truth



November 4, 2012

“Christian Living”

By Jimmy Pettigrew

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27). The “conversation” (manner of life, ASV) of the Christian is to be “as becometh the gospel.” The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ.

The conduct of the Christian should “adorn” the doctrine of God (Titus 2:10). “Adorn” means to beautify. The life of a Christian reveals the beauty of God’s will and way. There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life! It is the most overpowering, undeniable argument for Christianity. The Christian must, by his/her life, show the world what a Christian is! Remember the words of Paul, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Christianity changes people (1 Peter 4:1-4). Saints are to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). In Christ people become “new creatures” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Jesus is the one we should follow (Revelation 14:4); whose steps we should pursue (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (Luke 9:43). The perfect pattern of Jesus describes the Christian life as a life of

service to God (Luke 22:42). It is the Christian’s responsibility to serve God, not mammon (Matthew 6:24). Serving God means serving Christ, which in turn, means following and living for Christ (John 12:26). The life Christ lived is not just to be admired, talked about, or sung about, but it is to be followed. Christ is the perfect pattern. It is mockery to claim to be a servant of Christ while living in disobedience to Him (Luke 6:46). The Christian is distinctive! The conduct of a Christian is a powerful preacher. So, what are you preaching? Would you verbally proclaim that worship (singing, praying, giving, preaching and the Lord’s Supper) is insignificant? Would you preach that Bible study is unimportant? What do you preach by your manner of life? Preachers should not have to **BEG** Christians to study, and attend every time the doors are opened. **TRUE SERVANTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE BEGGED!**

Christ wants us to do all in His name to His glory (Colossians 3:17). We need to magnify Christ (Philippians 1:20), so others can see Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20). The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the doctrine of Christ and glorifies the Father (Matthew 5:16). Paul urged Timothy to be an example of the believers (1 Timothy 4:17). To be a Christian, our manner of life is different! Following our Master is the way we adorn the doctrine of Christ! Which are you doing? ♦

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

BETWEEN the atheist who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church?

BETWEEN the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian who never reads it?

BETWEEN those who do not believe in Bible classes and those who choose never to attend a class?

BETWEEN the atheist who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who finds fault with others, but does nothing himself?

BETWEEN a man of the world, and a person in the church who lives like a man in the world?

BETWEEN a man of the world who lives for self and a person in the church who lives for self, not God?

These are tough questions for Christians who live in a tough world. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different. Again, **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?** ♦

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Are Grace and Law Mutually Exclusive?

By Jonathan L. Perz

An oft-repeated, though poorly-conceived, notion is that Christians must relate to God through an avenue of grace, rather than law. Says who? Are grace and law mutually exclusive? Are grace and law an either/or proposition? If so, by what standard do we make this claim?

First of all, is it possible to relate to God through both grace and law simultaneously? I wholeheartedly believe it is not only possible, it is necessary.

Under both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, in every age of man, grace and law are interdependent. Law teaches us right from wrong (cf. **Gen. 2:16-17a; Deut. 11: Rom. 3:20; 7:7**). Law teaches us the consequences of right and wrong (cf. **Gen. 2:17b; Lev. 26-28; Rom. 2:5-11**). Law is the standard of judgment (cf. **Gen. 3:8-24; Ex. 24:3-8; John 12:48-50**). Whereas, grace is that free, but conditional, gift God gives us to atone for and find forgiveness of our sins so that we will not have to face the consequences of them (cf. **Gen. 3:21-24; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:6-10:10**; also **Rom. 5:9; Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 4:7; Heb.8:12; 10:17**).

Grace and law are both given of God. The very idea of justice is rooted in law (cf. **Prov. 31:5; Isa. 51:4-5; Hab. 1:4; Matt. 23:23**). The very idea of God's grace is rooted in justice (cf. **Rom. 3:24-26; Tit. 3:7**). They are not independent, but interdependent. To suggest we must view God through one and not the other is like accepting only the goodness of God, while rejecting the severity of God (**Rom. 11:22**). It is like accepting Jesus as full of grace, but rejecting that He is simultaneously full of truth (**John 1:14**). It is like accepting Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord (**2 Pet. 3:18**).

Without law, how would we know God's grace? Where there is no law, there is no sin (**1 John 3:4; Rom 5:13**). It is law that not only teaches us how to obtain grace (cf. **Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:8-9**), it is the violation of law (sin) that causes us to appreciate God's grace (**Rom. 6:1, 15, 23; 1 John 2:1-2**). If we only view God through the prism of His grace, we will find that grace

pretty bland because we won't see or appreciate our need for it. But then again, we would not find God's grace at all except by the law, for it is there that God instructs us about His grace and the conditions of obtaining it.

Nevertheless, in light of all of this, someone might still be foolish enough to argue, "*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law: you have fallen from grace*" (**Gal. 5:4**). Is Paul telling us in this passage to view God through the avenue of grace and not law (generally)? Or is Paul actually talking to a group of first century Christians who are trying to find justification by the law of Moses? The context suggests that Paul was not speaking of all law, but a law—the law of Moses (see **Gal. 5:1-6** in light of **Acts 15:1-5**). To generalize this passage is to twist it, and it is not even a difficult passage to understand in the first place (**2 Pet. 3:16**).

The reason they could not be justified by the law of Moses was because the covenant that Moses' law was a part of is no longer in force (**Heb. 9:16-22**), since Christ fulfilled it (**Matt. 5:17-18**; cf. **Gal. 3:19-29**). The blood of animals could not save them because God always intended for His Offering to save them (**Heb. 10:1-10; John 1:29**). The law could not save them because they would not live by all of the law (**Gal. 3:10-14; 5:3; Jas. 2:10**). So, it is a false doctrine that suggests from **Galatians 5:4**, and passages like it, that grace and law (generally) are mutually exclusive, and that Christians must learn to view God through an avenue of grace, and not law!

Thus, rather than trying to draw a line between law and grace, we need to view grace and law as symbiotic, or having a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence. For the righteous, God's law brings joy, peace and salvation. For the unrighteous, God's law brings fear, turmoil, and condemnation. For everyone, God's grace brought Jesus His Son, and the continual, but conditional, cleansing of His blood (**John 3:16; 1 John 1:8-9**). Praise God for His wonderful gift of grace and His amazing law that is light—that lamp unto our feet (cf. **Prov. 6:23; Psa. 119:105**)!

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

Can You Imagine?

1. **Paul saying:** "You don't have to obey the gospel to be saved?" Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
2. **Paul saying:** "We are sprinkled with him in baptism?" Read **Romans 6:4**.
3. **Jude saying:** "I don't think it is right to argue the scriptures?" Read **Jude 3**. ♦

Fellowship Or Folly-ship

By Lowell Blasingame

Fellowship! It's a good Bible word but like some others, it is often abused and misused. John said that we have fellowship with God by walking in the light (**1 Jn. 1:7**). Some folks don't seem to be able to say the word without conjuring visions of fried chicken, coffee and donuts, etc. or without frolicking through church sponsored social activities.

The truth is that such no more fits the Biblical use of the word fellowship than sprinkling or pouring fit the Biblical use of baptism. Neither do such activities conform to what former gospel preachers have taught us about the work of the church. The late B. C. Goodpasture, who edited the *Gospel Advocate* for years, in answering a question about the work of the church, said: "This question can be answered both negatively and positively. It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world, or even for its members. For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. If the church will discharge its duty in preaching the gospel, in edifying its members, and helping the worthy poor, it will not have desire or the time to amuse or entertain" (*Gospel Advocate*, pg. 484, 1948).

Former gospel preachers taught us that it was the duty of the home, not the church, to provide recreational activities. I believe that, not just because preachers such as Hardeman, Goodpasture, Lyles, Boles, etc. taught it, but because it is what the Bible teaches (**1 Cor. 11:22, 34**). Don't be fooled into thinking that Paul is merely dealing with an abuse of the Lord's supper. He is pointing out that social activities belong to the home and ought to be kept there.

Some churches of Christ have adopted this denominational folly. Like Israel of old, they have sat down to eat and drink and arise to play! They erect play houses called

"fellowship halls" or "multi-purpose" buildings, employ a "Youth Minister" to cheerlead the folly and immediately following the worship, the pulpit is removed, the goal posts set in place, the chairs pushed back and the ball game or shuffleboard play begins! I am not exaggerating. I have before me at this writing *The Family Flyer* of the Madison church of Christ, Madison, TN. and among its activities are listed Softball, Volleyball, Ping Pong, Ladies Slimnastics, Bowling, a CPR class, Jogging (included is a jogger's prayer), and Golf. Among the events for the "Golden Agers" are a Halloween party, Christmas crafts and a Valentine party! Now if you think that these are activities belonging to the work of the church that Christ bought with His blood, you and I have been reading two different books!

Fellowship or folly-ship, which is it brethren? If we initiate a practice that is unscriptural, then misuse a Bible word for its justification, are we any different from those who substitute sprinkling for immersion and call it baptism? Are we so foolish as to suppose that gospel preachers of the past who rejected church sponsored recreation did not believe in and have fellowship with other children of God?

Jeremiah called Judah a gadding bride for trimming her ways to be like nations about her (**Jer. 2:32-37**). Is the church of Christ of which you are a member becoming like the denominations about us? If it has a "Youth Minister", will he have a "Youth Gospel" and preach to a "Youth church?" Why not a special "ministry" for spinsters and bachelors? Such foolishness simply paves the way for further deviations from the Lord's way.

There are still those who cry for the old paths (**Jer. 6:16**) and plead for brethren to walk in them. Are you one of them? ♦

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

If you want friends — **be friendly.**
 If you want someone to smile — **smile.**
 If you want courtesy — **be courteous.**
 If you want knowledge — **study.**
 If you want a good name — **live right.**
 If you want to reap well — **sow well.**
 If you want to be a Christian — **obey God's word.**
 If you want to go to heaven — **live a Christian life** ♦

The church of Christ

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (Eph. 5:23)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
- The kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28)
- The depository of those saved (Acts 2:47)
- One body, not many bodies (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believeth that Christ is the Son of God (Jno. 8:24)
- One must repent of sins (Lk. 13:3)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
- One must be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27) ♦

Things That Impress Visitors

1. Members that day dream or sleep through sermon; talk during observance of the Lord’s Supper.
2. Members that open a bottle of pop during services which makes a noise each time it opens.
3. Scribbling in and playing with the hymnals.
4. Members who whisper, talk, write notes, and pass pictures, etc. during services.
5. Members who are privileged to serve during the worship, but are so over medicated that they sound drunk.
6. Persistent late-comers who disturb and distract the worshipers.
7. Members who do not speak to visitors. ♦

Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .
Or sin will keep you from the Bible.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Our Address

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com