

GRACE NEWS TODAY



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“Faith Alone in Christ Alone”

Krupa! That means Grace in the Telegu language. And, grace is what we experienced everywhere we traveled during our recent trip to India. Krupa, and greetings to you all. Our trip was supported by a cushion of prayer courtesy of your faithfulness in lifting us up before the throne of Grace. We are grateful to our Father, and to you, for remembering us to Him.

Beauty, grace, and hospitality personify India. Guests are said to be next to gods and are often garlanded with flowers and showered with their petals. India is a land of contrasts, from its countryside lined with rice fields and dotted with palm trees to the big city skyscrapers of Delhi (a cosmopolitan city of 10 million), from the smaller cities with their colorful marketplaces to the wide city boulevards with the stunning heritage of British architecture.

And temples! Temples are everywhere. Often they are magnificent, standing in a community of thatched-roof mud huts. The 330,000,000 gods of Hinduism take much and give little. It is good to appease them for they are not benevolent. Forgiveness is unknown. This is bondage for sure! While we were there, the Muslim extremists bombed a temple in the holy city of Varanasi. I found it curious that the news men reported “20 people have died but fortunately the idols and the temple structure were not harmed.” They actually call their idols, idols. They know they are worshiping idols. Satan does blind the eyes. This, however, presents an opportunity to ask if they are worshiping the creature rather than the creator. We present the living, loving God who is the Sovereign creator over all. It does get their attention.

Taking a drive cross country from Vijayawada to Hyderabad is not a journey for the faint of heart or body. What would be a simple highway journey in the U.S. is an adventure in India. The roads are host to cars, bicycles, pedestrians, motor bikes, rickshaws powered by bicycles, motored rickshaws, large trucks, carts pulled by bulls and covered wagons...no kidding...and herds of goats or water buffalo and their shepherds! The constant swerving in and around all these participants nearly leaves one seasick. Plus, they have an understanding of space and distance and highway etiquette that looks more like they are playing chicken than maneuvering in traffic!

A pastor once noted, “Everywhere you go there’s just people and dirt! The only real difference is the thinking of the people” which shapes a culture. And Satan has had hold of this culture for centuries now. The people, as a whole, love God. They are not in a post modern culture like we are in the U.S. Everyone believes in god...it is just changing that focus to the One True God.

It seems that in India, Christians beget more Christians which holds the Christian population in India at about 2%. The real need is for Christians to evangelize the heathen and to increase the number of believers. As Moses taught pastors, it was evident that they are not well grounded in truth enough to successfully reach out to the lost. They do love God and are humble and took the truths offered them without resistance or hesitation.

As God led us from place to place and contact to contact, He showed us clearly the positive volition among the people and the pastors. God has His eye on India. Indeed India is ripe if not over ripe. Just a touch and the harvest falls off the vine. We look forward to returning to this great land. We hope to train pastors, share the grace gospel with many, and prepare doctrinal materials in the native languages. It became apparent to us that part of feeding milk to babies is getting food to them in their own language. Many do not speak English and those who speak English as a second language have a difficult time processing information in English. We currently have “Riding the Death Train” in Telegu. Hindi and Telegu are two of the

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main languages spoken in India. Please continue to join us in prayer, lifting these people and their needs before the throne of grace. We ask for God's guidance, for all the glory goes to Him alone.

EEM News Team

WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Count on God—His objective is crystal clear: To conform us to the image of His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29) and, consequently, to energize us to glorify Him to the maximum. What a solace to know that our God is ever ready to prepare and use the highest qualified candidates in His production line—gold believers. To the “Radiance of His Image” Scripture affirms:

For it is God who is at work in you [in us, who energizes us], both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10). Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8).

Heat begets gold that glitters! God, in His infinite wisdom and abundant grace, will sooner or later introduce us to the furnace of suffering, not as punishment but for refinement so that by making Christ's thinking ours under the intense pressure of suffering in all its ugliness, enables us to produce the highest quality thinking so

That the man of God [the children of God] may be adequate, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:17).

My friend, God never promised us anywhere in Scripture that our spiritual journey would be a bed of roses; on the contrary, He promised to be with us as we surf through the waves of our suffering, and His promises are salve for our souls:

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world (John 16:33). Lo I am with you **always**, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20b). Do not fear, for **I am with you**; Do not anxiously look about you, for **I am your God**. I will strengthen you, **surely I will help you**. Surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire [furnace of suffering] you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For **I am the LORD your God** (Isaiah 43:2, 3a).

He never promised that we would be trouble free. Rather, that He will be with us through it all! What a loving and caring Father! I believe Job was using God's promises to him, though not on written record at that time, when he lamented:

And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives (Job 19:25a). Though He slay me [intensifies the furnace of my suffering], I will hope in Him [yet my confident expectation in Him shall not be shaken] (13:15a).
...when He has tried me [refined me, no doubt about it] I shall come forth as gold (23:10b).

By the same token, King David's confidence in God was no different,

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

And so my friend let's be encouraged as the heroes of the past who went through the furnace of suffering. May we never lose sight of this fact:

The eternal God is a dwelling place [Castle of Mercy] and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27a). **...WEEPING MAY LAST FOR THE NIGHT, BUT A SHOUT OF JOY COMES IN THE MORNING** (Psalm 30:5b). For He Himself has said, I WILL NEVER...FORSAKE YOU (Heb 13:5b).

Count on Him!

DOCTRINE OF GRACE

An Overview of God's Word – Lesson 5

In our previous installment (volume 42), we concluded our doctrinal exposition with a dialogue between God and a prodigal son who had a wrong priority, never had time for daily fellowship with God and, consequently, became the object of divine discipline under the paragraph entitled, “For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines” (Hebrews 12:6a). In his predicament, he sought divine solution. Armed with the knowledge that 1 John 1:9 (a passage for restoration to fellowship) has been distorted and abused in the hands of false teachers, we were compelled to ask an important question: *When Is Confession of Our Sins A Mockery To God?*

Does 1 John 1:9 (“If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”) always work no matter what? Sadly, not many communicators of Scripture ask this question. It is disturbing that some believe the notion that this verse is no longer pertinent today. Many use this verse in ignorance of the truth of the infallible Word of God when they witness to unbelievers. I recently asked someone on one of my mission campaigns, “What must one do to be born again?” He immediately referred to 1 John 1:9.

It is a painful fact that this verse is one of the most misunderstood verses in all of Scripture. Why? Satan is behind it. He is acutely aware that our spiritual strength depends solely on our fellowship with the Holy Spirit. And that without the mentorship of the Holy Spirit, we would be deprived of spiritual power and vitality needed for whatever Christian service we perform. And, no matter how impressive, that service would be tagged as “...Wood, hay and straw” (1 Cor 3:12). Equipped with this knowledge, he fights tooth and nail to obscure and confuse many about the Biblical truth behind 1 John 1:9. Simply put, you cannot and will not live the spiritual life without the filling of the Holy Spirit. Satan seems to be winning the battle to blindfold believers! For many believers today are totally ignorant of the God-given prerequisite of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

In the course of this study and beyond, we need to be aware of the fact that Satan is subtle, very crafty, a genius and even more clever than we give him credit. He is a master of deceit. It's my uttermost desire that God the Holy Spirit would shine His beam of light on this subject so that we can realign our mental attitude to the whole realm of doctrinal truth and to be aware of the hindrance of not being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Many of us have come to believe that living the spiritual life is all about the use of 1 John 1:9 and the intake of Bible doctrine on a regular basis. On the authority of God's Word, the spiritual life is more than confession and perception of doctrine. **IT IS ALL ABOUT APPLICATION!** Application is the core—the wheel that drives our spiritual lives. It is obedience to God's Word that characterizes the spiritual life. We can master God's Word and know how to exegete every passage of Scripture with an arsenal of doctrine in our souls, but if we have no access to the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit and no application of this doctrine to the exigencies of our lives we are **NOTHING!**

I have become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol (1 Corinthians 13:1b). Even so faith [doctrine], if it has no works [application], is dead, being by itself (James 2:17).

Our Lord puts it this way: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15). That's application! And, James echoes our Lord with these sobering words,

But prove yourselves doers [applicers] of the word, and not mere hearers who delude themselves (James 1:22).

Point blank, spiritual life is a matter of mental attitude! God honors 1 John 1:9 a gazillion times based on His faithfulness and the finished work of the God-Man; however, it is a conditional verse evidenced by the “IF” clause which is in the 3rd class condition in the Greek, which means, “Maybe we will or maybe we won’t.” We may choose to use 1 John 1:9 when we fail or again we may ignore it. The spiritual life is optional. God’s purpose after your salvation is that you may, “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1).

Moses wrote,

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear [revere] the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Secondly, God honors 1 John 1:9 based on the mental attitude of our souls. We shall expound on these conditions as we progress. Suffice it to say, God, in His infinite wisdom, has provided every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ with a marvelous grace recovery procedure from spiritual failures (1 John 1:9). Does it work for every priest in the Royal Family of God no matter how and when it’s used? More succinctly, is God under obligation to forgive our sins and purify us from all wrongdoing when we acknowledge them to Him without factoring in our spiritual status quo? We shall endeavor to present a Biblical answer to this doctrinal question.

Sin in the life of a believer ruptures fellowship with God and confession of that known sin is the only means whereby the believer is restored to fellowship. Contrary to popular belief, salvation is never appropriated through acknowledgement of ones’ sins. Rather by means of faith alone in Christ alone one is born anew into God’s family:

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1 John 5:1a). By faith Noah...became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Hebrews 11:7). Then he [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and He [God] reckoned it [his faith alone in Yahweh alone] to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

Salvation is always by faith alone. On the other hand, sin after salvation is dealt with only in one way—through confession. King David was a perfect example with his sins—adultery and homicide ruptured his fellowship with God and he was cut off from any spiritual vitality! David had no fellowship, no joy, no peace with God as long as his mental attitude was blistered with hypocrisy and cover-ups until he had a radical change—a surgery for his mental attitude. His fellowship with God was suspended in limbo until he took to heart God’s grace offer for restoration to fellowship and acted upon it. God’s grace offer is crystal clear:

Let the wicked [carnal believer] forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7).

Take note of two key words in Isaiah—“FORSAKE” and “RETURN.” These words emphasize a change in mental attitude and would serve as building blocks in answering the questions before us. King David shows us the alternative to recovery and then the solution:

When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’; and You did forgive the guilt of my sin (Psalm 32:3-5).

David, a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), in the course of his daily walk with God was caught up in a tangled web which brought his spiritual life and service to God to a screeching halt temporarily. He applied the Biblical provision of 1 John 1:9 to jumpstart his spiritual life. The truth of the matter is that it cannot work for anyone whose mental attitude is still tangled in the web of carnality.

One fellow said, “Some people confess their sins before they actually commit them.” For instance, the desire to sin is lodged in one’s soul, one confesses that desire while awaiting the opportunity to consummate it. That’s a shear and

adulterated mockery to God and His grace policy. God honors His Word in light of His justice! It should go without saying that sin after salvation must be dealt with in accordance with God's grace recovery procedure otherwise fellowship with God becomes a myth. Similarly, God in the Old Testament afforded believers a means of restoration to fellowship through a series of rituals such as the slaughtering of sacrificial animals and water purifications. In Job's account we read,

And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them [Job's children], rising up early in the morning and offering **burnt offerings** according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus Job did continually (Job 1:5; cf. Genesis 8:20).

We need only mention briefly the issue of water purification which is delineated in the book of Leviticus, Numbers, and elsewhere. Interestingly, our Savior, Jesus Christ, prior to the institution of the Church Age, washed His disciple's feet as a teaching aid with regard to the necessity of maintaining fellowship with God. Today, we only use 1 John 1:9. We don't engage in the foot washing business, nor are we ever commanded anywhere in the Bible to keep this ritual alive.

The washing of the disciples' feet depicts both restoration to fellowship and our Lord's humility. The ritual of foot washing is a symbol for hospitality as recorded in Scripture (Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 43:24; 1 Timothy 5:10). It was an ancient custom, but the Lord's practice of it was far weightier than mere hospitality. Water purification was a concept the apostles were accustomed to as taught in Scripture. In Ezekiel's account we read,

For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. Then, I will sprinkle **clean water** on you, and you will be clean [restoration to fellowship]; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (Ezekiel 36:24, 25, 27).

After David sinned he lamented,

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (Psalm 51:2, 7b).

What a scene! The same Lord who instituted this ritual in the Old Testament for spiritual purification is the one who brought it to a screeching halt prior to offering Himself as the True Lamb of God. It is His efficacious sacrifice that atones for our sins once and for all and keeps on cleansing us from all sin when we fail and acknowledge them! John the apostle recorded this event in the 13th chapter of his gospel.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his hour had come...got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples feet, and wiped them with the towel with which He was girded (John 13:1-5).

However, one of the apostles defiantly refused to be washed. But Peter said, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' (v. 8a).

In response to this ignorant refusal the Lord warned: If I do not wash you [your feet], you have no part with Me (v. 8b).

In essence the Lord is saying to him, "Look Peter, without this ritual of cleansing of your dirty feet you cannot maintain fellowship with Me." Not salvation. Fellowship! The apostle erroneously assumed the Lord meant salvation and demanded outright,

...'Lord then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head' (13:9).

Jesus said to him, 'He who has bathed [cleansed by faith alone in Christ alone] needs only to wash his feet [a symbol of acknowledgement of our sins 1 John 1:9 when we fail], but is completely clean; and you are clean [regeneration], but not all of you [Judas Iscariot] (13:10).

In reference to this passage, John Walvoord affirmed: A preferable interpretation [of this passage] is that after salvation all one needs is confession of sins, the continual application of Jesus' death to cleanse one's daily sins (cf. 1 John 1:7; 2:1-

2). When Jesus added that not every one of you is clean, He was referring to Judas (cf. John 13:11). This suggests that Judas was not converted.¹

Feet are meant for walking, and it is fitting that the Lord chose this part of human anatomy as a teaching aid since walking in the Bible is typically used as a metaphor for spiritual life.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him (Genesis 5:24).

...Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).

Feet treading back and forth on dusty paths are likely to soil and would need constant washing—an analogy to the constant use of 1 John 1:9. This passage applies to believers in active service, who in the course of their spiritual walk wade ankle-deep in the mud of sin and require cleansing. On the other hand, it doesn't apply to believers who are in status quo spiritual quagmire with no intention of changing their mental attitude regarding the plan of God. It's worthy of emphasis. It applies to the believer priest who in active duty stuck his feet in the mud of sin. Or someone who needs to wash his feet afresh after a prolonged stay in the mud of carnality. Further, James sheds light to this symbolic concept when he commands believers, who were neck-deep in carnality, saying,

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom (James 4:8, 9).

Undoubtedly he too alluded to the Old Testament ritual of water purification. The prophet Isaiah wrote:

So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers [attend Bible class regularly], I will not listen. [Why? Because] Your hands are covered with blood. **Wash** yourselves, makes yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good (Isaiah 1:15-17a).

Come now, and let us reason together,' says the Lord, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18).

The phraseology, "CEASE TO DO EVIL" is another building block in our exposition, a key that unlocks the door of the recovery procedure of 1 John 1:9.

The truth of the matter is that God cannot be mocked. He is not a remote control that with a push of a button we can get a desired channel. He is a God of protocol. Simply put, when we apply 1 John 1:9 without a radical change of mental attitude to "Lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit" (Ephesians 4:22b), it becomes merely a lip confession. Our Lord puts it this way:

Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men (Mark 7:6-8).

What is the commandment of God? The whole realm of God's Word is in the imperative mood! One example of the imperative mood of command is seen in the Pauline epistle,

Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children; and walk in love just as Christ also loved you... (Ephesians 5:1, 2a).

¹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck The Bible Knowledge Commentary (1984, p320).

The truth of the matter is that you cannot be an imitator of God apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit. And you cannot have access to the filling of the Holy Spirit when you have lingering baggage of sin in your soul. Let me illustrate. Someone has a mental attitude of hatred (not willing to change), and they are under an indictment at the Eternal Bar of Justice for murder:

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life [the life of God] abiding in him (1 John 3:15).

And with that condition hanging over him, he commits the sin of anger to add to his growing list. Then suddenly he decides to apply 1 John 1:9 trusting that his sins will be forgiven even though his mental attitude of hatred lingers on. That unchanged state of hatred invariably negates God's promise in 1 John 1:9. For in fact, the believer is still in spiritual status quo carnality despite the fact that he confessed the sin of anger or hatred. You see, we can't just take one portion of Scripture and act on it; we must reconcile it with the whole Bible. Our Master explicitly told us,

If therefore you are presenting your offering [confessing your sins to God] at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go; **first** be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering (Matthew 5:23, 24).

In other words, "If your spiritual life is not properly aligned, change your mental attitude before approaching the throne of His grace." In balancing Scripture with Scripture we read,

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, [when you use 1 John 1:9] your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **But** if you do not forgive others [hatred is vividly alive in your soul], then your Father will not forgive your transgressions (Matthew 6:14, 15).

It's that simple. Later, our Lord spoke concerning an unwilling slave whose master forgave a mega-debt, but failed to reciprocate by forgiving his brother's tiny debt. Accordingly, when his master heard this, he ordered him back in prison until he repaid the debt that was previously forgiven him. In our Lord's Word we read,

And his lord moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him (Matthew 18:34).

'My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother **from your heart**' (18:35).

With the groundwork in place, it's time to dive unto the heart of this subject and perhaps provide a doctrinal answer to the erroneous statement that some believers often make, namely, "Bible doctrine doesn't work." It does not work for these believers who say that because Satan, in his cleverness and ingenuity has robbed them of the power of the Holy Spirit. In our Lord's day, It took only twelve disciples to turn the "world upside down." Today, we have millions of believers all over the world with little or no spiritual impact. How do we account for the sharp difference between us and apostles of the old? In six words—THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT! Read this:

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**, and began to speak the word of God with **BOLDNESS** (Acts 4:31).

Think of it. Christianity is designed to glow in darkness. It is designed to rock the world of Satan. It's meant to be a channel through which God can reveal the Shekinah glory to the outside world. It's meant to impact the world! Indeed spiritual interactions among believers are meant to produce rapport, love, and care for each other. The apostle Paul admonishes us,

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those

who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another, do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so as it depends on you, be at peace with all men (Romans 12:9-18).

This is the epitome of Christianity. But nowadays, our interactions with fellow believers can be anything but harmonious rapport. You are a living testimony to this spiritual quagmire. At this juncture, may I ask when was the last time you were in the midst of saints and came out reinvigorated spiritually? Enthused with an attitude of gratitude to the Most High God? Excited about spiritual life? Or do you come out worse because you have been drawn in to partake in the fellowship of judging, gossiping, maligning, and slandering fellow believers for whom Christ suffered immensely?

Personally, I have been in the company of many believers and came out so disappointed that I questioned why, “What is this all about?” “Why are we so busy maligning, ridiculing, slandering, and throat-cutting one another? And yet these are the same people who a few minutes later would invoke 1 John 1:9 with their mental attitude unchanged. Needless to say, this grace paragraph does not work in a state like this. We can count on it! We can attend Bible class a gazillion times, pump in Bible doctrine like fuel in a tank, but without the filling of the Holy Spirit we have no spiritual life at all. God rebuked the believers in Isaiah’s day because of their mental attitude. They were enmeshed in sacrifices unto God, but He was uninterested. Scripture reveals:

‘What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?’ says the Lord. I have had enough of **burnt offerings** of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no more, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me...Cease to do evil (Isaiah 1:11-16).

My friend, there can be a time when actually attending Bible class, giving offerings, and praying can be an abomination to God—when done in carnality—without the filling of the Holy Spirit. In Walvoord’s commentary on the book of James 4:9 and 10 he proclaimed: Recognition of the tremendous need for cleansing allows no room for merriment. Grieve (lit., “be afflicted”), mourn, and wail was James’ candid advice... A contrite spirit of confession is essential for God’s cleansing. The key is humility. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. The way up is down. The lowly one becomes the lifted one. There is a marked advantage to humility—eventually it brings honor.² Surely there’s an element of truth in Walvoord’s commentary. Although we do not need to feel sorry for our sins to be forgiven, the picture is vividly painted nonetheless.

Amazingly, the Lord through Moses instituted a ritualistic program for restoration to fellowship and, finally, through the apostle John, shed light on its reality in the Church Age. And so we refer to the seven churches in Asia Minor. To the church at Ephesus our Lord declared,

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and **REPENT** and do the deeds you did at first, or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent (Revelation 2:4, 5).

He alerted the church at Pergamum:

So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore **REPENT**; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth” (2:15-16).

And to the church in Thyatira:

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bondservants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to

² Ibid. p831

idols. And I gave her time to **REPENT**; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold I will throw her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, *unless they repent of her deeds*" (2:20-22).

And finally to the church at Laodicea, our Lord sternly warned,

So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and **REPENT** (3:16, 19).

Grace takes precedence before judgment! In lieu of the failures of some believers in the aforementioned churches, one would think that the Lord would appeal to these carnal believers to use the Greek word *homologeō* of 1 John 1:9 as a means of restoration to fellowship. Rather, He selects another *metanoeō*. Accident? No! Accidents do not exist in God's plan. What is the difference between these two Greek words? The former depicts acknowledgment or confession while the later refers to a change of mind. On the one hand, one can acknowledge guilt without a change of a mental attitude for his offense, but on the other hand, no one can have a change of mind without giving a serious thought to his offense or action. And without a change in our habits, be it habitual sinning such as gossip, maligning, lying, greed, various lusts and so on, our sins cannot be forgiven. King Solomon asserts,

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes [a change of mind about] them will find compassion. How blessed is the man who fears always—[who respects God always] (Proverbs 28:13, 14b).

Again a change of mind is underscored. Owing to the abuse and misunderstanding of 1 John 1:9, one can hardly over illustrate the doctrine of confession.

Let's consider a business man who majors in lying—a pathological liar—he can't wait for an opportunity to lie to his customers regarding his products and how much he paid for them from his manufacturers. At the end of the business day, he closes his boutique and rushes to get to Bible class. Suddenly, before the lecture begins, he bows down and confesses his wrongdoing, "Father I lied to my customers." The BIG question is, did God forgive him? Accordingly, this believer's sin is not forgiven in that he has no intention of changing his lifestyle of habitual lying so for him, 1 John 1:9 is a ritual without reality. Sadly, this is where many of us are today in our spiritual lives. No wonder Christianity is not appealing to the outside world. We are believers with no power! This is exactly where Satan wants us. He wants to keep us deceived into believing that we are filled with the Holy Spirit when in essence we are not. Many of us have become careless believers.

Looking back at the truths taught by our Lord Himself regarding the prodigal son, the scenario is apt. First, his mental attitude was corrupt with the result that he experienced a ruptured fellowship with his father. Secondly, in his predicament, he came to a change of mental attitude.

But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger [no spiritual vitality]! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight [signifying a change of mind] (Luke 15:17, 18).

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:17).

The GREAT question now is, are we willing to adjust to the justice of God or should we allow our adversary to keep on robbing us of our joy, peace, love, and happiness—which are the bi-products of the filling of the Holy Spirit? And so, may we be challenged to take a moment and re-evaluate our spiritual lives and give serious thought as to how we avail ourselves to 1 John 1:9 to ensure that Satan has not been shortchanging and robbing us of our God-given-grace recovery procedure so that we can truly be in fellowship and constantly manifest the life of Christ. After all it's not about us, but about honoring and glorifying our Savior who went through hell on earth to purchase our freedom! It's my prayer that we live our lives in light of eternity becoming copycats of the Shining One and avoiding, at all cost, every hurdle that would keep us from spirituality! THE UNFORGIVEN SPIRIT—A HINDRANCE TO SPIRITUALITY (To be continued in the next issue—volume 44).

MISSIONARY REPORTS

G.E.M. AFRICA

OUTREACH TO BAMENDA AND MAMFE

KUMBA, CAMEROON -- WEST AFRICA
PASTOR CHAH JOSEPH REPORTS:

Greetings once more from Cameroon and especially from Kumba. God has continued to do great and mighty things in the lives of men and women since I last visited Bamenda for the outreach seminar. Many more are registering for our Bible which have been a source of blessing to many. Recently, the demand has exceeded our supply. Pray that God will assist us.

We will be in Bamenda for a week. The Grace Bible Clubs will all assemble for a seminar, and the next set of lessons. There is great demand for Reverend Moses books especially, The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation and Riding the Death Train. Please send us an assortment of books by Moses and R.B. Thieme, Jr.

After Bamenda, I will be in Mamfe Town and will need more material for this trip. Pray and let our prayer partners pray for these outreach programs that God will provide support. Traveling in Cameroon is very hard. Mamfe Town is west 110 km from Kumba.

I will concentrate more on outreach and evangelism ministries in 2006. I covet your prayers. God bless you mightily as you faithfully labor for Him daily.

BIBLE TRAINING CENTER TO OPEN

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE -- NORTHERN AFRICA
SAHR PAUL JAMES REPORTS:

I have successfully made three mission trips. The last trip was in Kono District where pastors received GEM materials. God has opened a door for this ministry. There was a request to start a Bible training center that will impact lives in the entire district.

After the trip, I visited Michael Turay. We discussed the plan for a teaching ministry in Kono and he embraced it. Your materials will continue to be a help because we want to start with clear doctrinal teachings on salvation, grace, etc.

SUCCESSFUL OUTREACH TO BURUNDI

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI -- CENTRAL AFRICA
PASTOR PHILIPPE SELEMANI REPORTS:

The work is going on; God is in control. Please pray for this region. The climate is very hot and many suffer from malaria and fever. Please also pray for our church in Walungu; the rebels there are troubling people so pray for the body of Christ in Walungu.

G.E.M. ASIA

GEM TEAM RETURNS FROM INDIA

ANDRA PRADESH AND DELHI -- INDIA
DEBBY HAGAR REPORTS:

The trip to India was back-to-back pastors' conferences, open air crusades (except when driven indoors by rain), and children's programs. Besides the scheduled activities, there is always the airport ministry, the hotel ministry, and this time the taxi ministry. We know of two drivers and one hotel employee who turned from atheism and Hinduism to believe in Christ. Waves of positive volition were experienced both among the people and the pastors. The pastors are lacking in knowledge, but humble and anxious to learn. This letter, from one of the point men, typifies the response we got throughout India:

LETTER OF APPRECIATION: SYAM KUMAR

“For many years, we have been sincerely praying for a true Bible teacher for the present generation of pastors. God looked upon our faithfulness and answered our prayers. He sent Rev. Moses Onwubiko to India just for us. We are so happy and blessed to have had him and the rest of the GEM team to minister among us.

By day, pastors assembled to hear Biblical truths taught and explained by Rev. Moses. In the evening, hundreds of people were blessed at gospel crusades and learned Bible truth through his teaching. People heard and came to know what salvation really is. We can't give you material things, but we promise you we will teach our people what we received from Rev. Moses which he got from above.

I learned many things from Rev. Moses by being his translator. Excellent reports are coming from pastors saying that his teachings will enable them to impact others and asking when he will return. People are so clear now that Jesus Christ is the only one God we have on this earth.

The pastors have a passion to hear Biblical teachings from Rev. Moses Onwubiko; they are expecting his teaching again. We are giving an open invitation to you all. Please come again and minister among us.”

Point Man Highlights

Dr Rao bathed, fed, and evangelized 19 street urchins that the orphanage couldn't take in for three months. He mobilized them into a mini task force with the assignment of distributing, “Riding the Death Train” in Telugu. Each day he fed them breakfast, gave them money for lunch, and gave them an all-day bus pass and 50-70 tracts. Their assignment was to distribute at least 50 tracts to anyone they felt led to.

In three months, the teen missionaries distributed over 30,000 tracts and some “Riding the Death Train” tracts were deposited in train depots! As people rode busses or waited for trains the boys gave their testimony and offered the tract. Many people took the tracts from the boys when they would not have taken them from anyone else. The pocket-sized tract is quite handsome, not an item you would easily throw away. 80 people have called from the address on the tract.

Pastor Emmanuel Raj Kumar uses a rented house in a Hindu area for a church. It is in an area dotted with temples and with heavy idol worship, but the congregation are all Hindu converts. Many are so new that the women have not yet taken the dots off their foreheads (Hindu women wear Bindi dots on their foreheads from

birth till the death of their husband). Bibles were purchased for those desiring one; printing is very affordable in India and \$2.50 - \$4.50 U.S. buys a Telugu Bible (good to great in quality) and cover.

Dr. Martin Luther - In addition to church planting and running an orphanage, Martin Luther has begun a slum ministry. He realized that all strata of the population had been the focus of evangelism but the homeless in the slums had been overlooked. Now they have slum churches.

Joyson Meruga - Moved to this hostile area, 24 years ago when he was only four years old. His family came with one cart of belongings and slept in the church (their only shelter) until he was 15 years old. Recently, they built a residence and an orphanage. We traveled to Delhi to change our travel arrangements when our trip to Pakistan was postponed due to unrest. God used this diversion for us to meet and spend time with **B.K. Singh and Pastor Vishal** in Delhi. We look forward to working with them next year.

All these men are devoted to and burdened for their people. Through these able point men we have learned much. Hinduism is a genius work of Satan which absorbs all other religions...and so we are very careful about how we present the gospel. God is leading us. He guides us to point men and pertinent information. One of our point men is a Medical doctor who converted from Hinduism. His viewpoint gives another perspective to information already gleaned from those who have been born into Christian families. It is a magnificent privilege to watch God work and see Him take us here and there so we can not only teach and train others but at the same time become taught and trained ourselves.

PAKISTAN TRIP POSTPONED

Lahore – Pakistan:

PASTOR ANTHONY AZAM REPORTS:

Greetings in the name of Jesus to you. We at Christ Revival Church are very sad that because of the Circumstances we have missed our very beloved team from the USA. We are looking forward to having them in Pakistan the coming year for which we have already started praying for safe meetings and for their arrival in Pakistan. Please join us in Prayers.

Editors Note: Due to unrest in Pakistan, Pastor Azam asked the GEM team to postpone their programs. The Muslims are still quite agitated over the political cartoon and thousands are demonstrating. Please pray especially for the protection of the churches and Christians in Pakistan. Pakistani police stations asked for placement of guards around the churches and security cameras.

G.E.M. EUROPE

MAY CONFERENCE IN LONDON

LONDON, ENGLAND

REV. ELIJAH DENNIS EJILA REPORTS

Everyone is looking forward to the London Conference May 19 - 23.

MISSION TRIPS

Please pray with us as we look forward to and prepare for pastors' conferences, crusades and youth evangelism as the Lord provides open doors with locations and resources.

% FUNDED	PROPOSED TRIPS FOR 2006
100%	May – London
54%	August – Kenya, Zimbabwe, Australia
0%	November - Nigeria

LETTERS TO G.E.M.

Dear Sir:

Calvary greetings to you in Jesus name, amen. I have had the opportunity to study your books through colleagues in the theological school. They have blessed my life and are helping me to advance in my teaching ministry as a seminarian. The approach you have given to the concepts and their analysis are wonderful, inspirational and scholarly.

Pastor, is it on this note that I am privileged to make a request of your assistance concerning these valuable treasures: One copy of each of your books. All these and any others it will please you to send me will be immensely used to enrich my soul and to edify the Body of Christ in this part of the world.

Thanks for your understanding.

Nigeria



Dear G.E.M.,

We wish to affiliate ourselves with GEM. We need to have some books and tapes by Moses and R.B.Thieme, Jr. We are running a Bible school with 50 Bible students and radio and television here in Bukavu. Please join hands with us in expanding and spreading the truth here in D. R. Congo. Pray for us as we need to reach many with the truth of the word of God.

Yours in Him,
D.R. Congo



Dear Moses:

Whilst in hospital a couple of months ago I was handed your book to read, or rather I grabbed it from the staff nurses pocket, and since then I have tried to find a copy of it, because, naturally I returned it back to the nurse. Today I decided to try putting your name on my computer, and there it was an address where I could reach you.

Your book, Joseph - A Pillar of Grace is one of the best books I have read for a very long time, so unjudgmental in the approach, easy to read and understand and yet very moving. I would be very grateful if you would send a copy to me as soon as possible. God bless you in all your works.

Epson, Surrey U.K.



Dear Friend in Christ:

I write to you as a prisoner in the state of Texas, but also as a believer the Lord Jesus Christ. My past has certainly been a dark one, but as the scriptures tell us, "He has delivered (me) from the power of darkness and conveyed (me) into the kingdom of the Son of His Love. Col. 1:13 And for this, I praise Him!

Recently a christian inmate shared one of your newsletters with me. I was encouraged by what it had to say, and hope I may be placed on your mailing list to receive this publication. I have been a believer for a number of years now, I know that there is always that growth process that needs to take place in our lives each and every day. I would certainly look for that sustenance that you might provide for me so as to continue on my journey and in my growth.

I am also requesting books. I notice that R.B. Thieme was mentioned in the newsletter and the material of his I have read has been enlightening. Thank you for reading my letter and considering my request.

Always by His grace
Iowa Park, TX



Phone call to G.E.M.

I received one of your books from a friend at church. I work with the military men and women here in Michigan. Could you please send more publications for distribution as many soldiers here are very receptive to the Word of God.



Please Join us in Prayer

THANKSGIVING:

- For many open doors around the world.
- For the strides made in Moses' recovery.
- For the knowledge that Jesus Christ controls history.

PETITION TO OUR FATHER:

- President Bush (for wisdom and guidance).
- Israel's protection and the U.S. Military.

PETITION TO OUR FATHER (CONT'D):

- The U.S. (For a great revival, peace, and freedom from terrorism).
- The restoration of Moses' health.
- Protection of tape ministries, G.E.M. personnel, and foreign translations.
- Doctrinal pastors and their tape ministries.
- Health of Col. and Mrs. R.B. Thieme, Jr.
- The spiritual growth of new believers.
- Indigenous pastors (that God will totally equip them)
- Open doors in 2006 and 2007.
- Divine provision and sustenance for missionaries desiring full time work in the field.
- Energy, wisdom, and discernment for G.E.M.'s God-assembled team.
- Protection and deliverance for those persecuted for their faith.

CONTACT US

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