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**SEPTEMBER 2019 “GRACE AND GOD’S WORD”**

Dear Friend,

When Jesus was speaking to the Apostle John in Revelation chapter two, He said something interesting about the church at Pergamos,

***<sup>14</sup>But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. <sup>15</sup>So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (Revelation 2:14-16)***

Jesus speaks vehemently against doctrine some of them have embraced, going so far as to say He hates it; that if they don’t repent, He will personally fight against them. This is serious, so much so that we need to try and find out who they were, what they taught, and do everything in our power to avoid their doctrine as though it were a deadly plague.

According to historians, the Nicolaitanes were followers of Nicolas. This is the same Nicolas first identified in the book of Acts,

***<sup>1</sup>And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. <sup>2</sup>Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. <sup>3</sup>Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. <sup>4</sup>But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. <sup>5</sup>And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>6</sup>Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:1-6)***

In this passage, Nicolas is portrayed as a man who was well known among Believers; someone who was born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, strong in wisdom, and firmly committed in his walk with the Lord. The apostles even prayed about him and felt peace in laying hands on him and setting him in a place of service.

However, historians also record that Nicolas began to develop and embrace teachings which opposed what the apostles were teaching. This coincides with the warning given by the Apostle John,

***<sup>18</sup>Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.***

***<sup>19</sup>They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (1 John 2:18-19)***

John wasn't writing exclusively about people who weren't even born again. He was also identifying those who were "not of us," meaning, they were no longer in agreement with the apostles' doctrine and had begun teaching their own "gospel."

Historically, two aspects of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes could be summed up as follows:

- 1) The grace of God for salvation is all-encompassing to the point that every sin – past, present and future – has already been forgiven and eradicated.
- 2) What is done in the flesh is of no concern whatsoever to Believers because their spirit is forever redeemed by Jesus.

In writing about adherents to the Nicolaitane doctrine, Clement of Alexandria stated, "They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence." Jude said it this way, "...***turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness...***" (Jude 1:4).

Sadly, we have modern Nicolaitanes who are teaching the same doctrine today. Even worse, Christians by the tens of thousands are following after these despicable perversions of truth and joining churches where fables are being taught that scratch their itching ears (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

An additional facet of the error many are teaching today could be stated like this: "Spending a lot of time studying and meditating scripture is a work of the flesh; God's grace will impart to you what you need to know." That is a lie of infinite magnitude! Those who teach such a dire falsehood are leading people away from Christ, while at the same time they are revealing how little they really know about God's Word. Are we truly expected to believe that studying God's Word is an unnecessary work of fleshly effort? Seriously? How about this: Since the question is whether or not we should diligently study the Bible, let's find out what the Bible has to say about the matter.

#### **SCRIPTURES INDICATING BIBLE STUDY IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT**

***This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (Joshua 1:8)***

***<sup>9</sup>Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. <sup>11</sup>Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:9, 11)***

***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)***

*<sup>1</sup>My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: <sup>2</sup>For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. (Proverbs 3:1-2)*

*<sup>20</sup>My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. <sup>21</sup>Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. <sup>22</sup>For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:20-22)*

*<sup>24</sup>Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: <sup>25</sup>And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24-25)*

*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39)*

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)*

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4)*

*And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)*

*<sup>19</sup>Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup>And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone  
(Ephesians 2:19-20)*

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

*<sup>16</sup>All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup>That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)*

*<sup>21</sup>Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>25</sup>But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.  
(James 1:21, 25)*

*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48)*

Since God's Word is the standard by which we will all be eternally judged when we appear before Him, common sense would seem to dictate that we diligently study the Bible in preparation for that judgment. What kind of fool goes into a final exam, not having thoroughly studied the subject matter ahead of time?

### SCRIPTURES INDICATING BIBLE STUDY IS NOT IMPORTANT

\*\*\*\* NONE \*\*\*\*

I firmly agree that grace is a powerful force released unto us from God. In fact, I once taught a series titled, "The Force of Grace," (which is available for free download at our website). We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). But grace will never make up for our lack of diligence to work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12). Grace will never be a substitute for prayer, fasting, worship and the study, meditation and confession of God's Holy Word. Only a person who is greatly deceived would deny the message being sent by all the verses I've listed describing the value of God's Word and our need to study it.

Therefore, I would ask you this: (1) Should we believe what is recorded in the Bible, or (2) should we believe all the pastors, teachers, evangelists and others who do their best to convince us that quality time studying God's Word to humanity is a work of the flesh and, essentially, an insult to grace? Furthermore, what do you imagine is God's perspective of such people who teach His children not to study to show themselves approved unto Him? To be blunt, there is no way in all eternity that God has approved of their message and no way He wants them in ministry, leading His sheep away from His pasture.

***<sup>13</sup>And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? <sup>14</sup>The sower soweth the word. <sup>20</sup>And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. (Mark 4:13, 20)***

Who's instructions carry the most weight in your life: those of Jesus, or those of well-meaning, yet ignorant and unlearned preachers?

God's Word is spirit and it is life. It is the textbook of salvation and Kingdom living. It is a revelation of every promise He has made to the world. It is a detailed description of what we become when born again and our potential in this world. It is the instruction manual on how we discover our ministry calling and how to appropriate His promises into our lives. If grace automatically imparts all this information to Christians, then why are so many blatantly ignorant of these things after decades of being born again? Isn't it to God's advantage that we have all the knowledge of these things as soon as possible so we can be more effective for Him on Earth?

The following is a prophecy which came forth in one of our church services. In it, God makes it very clear that we should be diligent in studying the Bible.

## **THE WORD GUARDS YOUR HEART**

There are many voices in this world, many, many voices; many who claim to be speaking for Me. And truly they do speak some truth, but not all truth. You must come unto Me. You must have fellowship with Me. You must pray in the Spirit. You must get into My Word. You must know My Word. You must have My Word hidden in your heart so that you are not deceived by a voice who says one thing and it sounds so good - it sounds so good - but it is not of Me, it is not of Me, saith the Lord.

Come unto Me, for I have the truth, I am the truth, I am the way, the truth and the life. Have I not told you this? I am the way, the truth and the life; no man, no one, will come unto the Father but by Me, saith the Lord. I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life. You must know My truth. Guard your heart. Guard your heart, and you will do this as you continue in fellowship with Me and in the hiding of My Word in your heart. My Spirit reveals to you the truth in My Word, but you can't know the truth if you never get into the Word. You have to be in My Word. Meditate it day and night. It will be your comfort.

As I've shared before, you don't have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to study and meditate the Word of God. The most important thing is to sow it into your life. Even Jesus said that the more of the Word we sow into ourselves, the more benefit we'll reap. Something I enjoy is playing an audio recording of the Bible while driving or while working on my computer; many websites offer such recordings as free downloads.

The Bible is God's life in written form. Our born-again spirit is 100% compatible with that life. The more of God's Word we sow within, the more His life is strengthening us to rise above everything this world offers which would draw us away from Him. God's Word is guaranteed success for every Christian. Hallelujah!

In His Grace,



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