



# ZION

MINISTRIES

## RESTORED TO MINISTER

- REDUCING BEFORE PRODUCING
- NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE
- THE GREATEST DIAMOND CUTTER

# RESTORED TO MINISTER

by Dr. Brian Bailey

God has placed a burden on my heart for His people to be able to triumph in the coming days of trouble. We are warned by Christ in Matthew 24:12 that because sin shall abound in the last days, the love of many shall grow cold. I therefore felt the need to write this so that as God's people, we can be washed through obedience to the commandments from all filthiness of the flesh. My prayer is that you will experience afresh the cleansing power of God's Word to make you more than conquerors as you read on.

In looking at this from the life of David, we're going to consider the topic, "Restored to Minister." We're going to take this from his sin with Bathsheba and his later years, after his repentance enabled God to bring him into complete restoration and an ongoing ministry.

## Sin in the Life of a Leader

The seriousness of sin in the life of a leader cannot be overestimated. When one studies the sin offerings in the book of Leviticus, we find in chapter 4 that if the priest sinned he must offer a young bull as his sin offering. This is the most expensive and highest offering. It is the same as the sin offering for the whole congregation of Israel, as seen in Leviticus 4:13-21. But if an individual sinned then the offering was to be considerably less- a female goat. The point I want to bring out here is that even in the Levitical law God was giving an awesome warning concerning sin in leadership. Therefore when David, the anointed of Israel sinned, it was equivalent to the whole congregation going astray.

Now when we look at the reasons for the sin of David, we have to understand that prevention is better than cure. Sometimes when we see the reasons for sin it will stand as an admonition and warning to us.

## The Reasons for David's Sin

First of all, although David was a man after God's own heart, there was weakness within him toward moral impurity. Immorality was in his family genealogy. Judah was immoral, (Gen. 38); Rahab was a harlot (Josh. 2:1); and there were others. He had a divided heart in the area of women, and this weakness was not carefully guarded. After his sin he asked God for a united heart to fear the Lord because he had been so lacking in this area, Ps. 86:11.

The Lord gave me a vision when I was speaking at a Women's Aglow meeting in New Zealand years ago. In this vision, I saw the hearts of three generations: a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter. The grandmother had a little weed in her heart, which the Lord told me represented a specific bondage in her life. She passed that weed on to her daughter, and in her daughter, it became a very strong bush. Her daughter, in turn, passed that bondage on to her own daughter. However, by this time, it was no longer a weed or a bush, but a full-grown tree in the heart of her daughter. Thus the problem that the grandmother had was passed on to her daughter and from her daughter to her granddaughter, all because neither the grandmother nor the mother allowed God to deal with it.

You know that some of the reasons we are as we are, and some of the battles we have in our lives, are not because of our own sins but because of the bondages that have been passed on by the forefathers. We need a revelation from God concerning that. We must realize that unless issues are dealt with in our hearts, we will pass them on to our natural and spiritual children, and these issues can become even more powerful in their lives. If only we can understand that there is no need

to pass on the fallen nature to the next generation. We can go to God and put the axe to the root and bring down that tree.

A second reason was that David was in direct disobedience of the law of the kings. In Deuteronomy 17:17 God warned the kings, "Neither shall he [the king] multiply wives to himself," but we read in 2 Samuel 5:13, "And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron." King David did not keep this law of the kings, so in this area of his life there was no protection from the Lord. God protects us in every area where we seek to be obedient, but in other areas where God is ignored or rejected, the wall of protection around us is broken down by disobedience.

Thirdly, David had become self-confident and lax. He had a string of remarkable victories against fierce and strong enemies just before his falling into sin. In 2 Samuel chapter 8 he defeated Philistia on his western border and then Moab on the east. He next fought against the Syrian kings of the north and enlarged Israel's borders to the Euphrates River. We find that David became famous, but also so self-confident that he neglected to walk in the spirit at this critical period in his life and he came into a place where he was exposed to temptation.

David came to a very troubling situation. He was so self-confident that he did not bother to go to battle. He remained in his palace at a time when he should have been in the battlefield (see 2 Sam. 11:1), and because he did not go, he exposed himself to temptation. He was not in the right place, and neither were his eyes. During this time he saw Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah,

bathing. He desired her and then committed adultery, fully knowing that she was the wife of one of his soldiers.

Earlier, in 2 Samuel 7:18, King David had enjoyed the privilege of sitting before the Ark of the Covenant in the very presence of the Lord. It is a very disturbing situation because it seems that David came crashing down when he was almost at the height of his spiritual life. This is my deep concern- we cannot be spiritually so high up that we are immune to falling. That is why we have to be very careful. If we are deliberately disobedient in a certain area, we are not going to be protected by God in that area. The result is that we can come crashing down.

Prior to crashing, there is always a warning from God. My wife was saying one day, "This person just fell into sin." The Lord corrected her and said, "No one just falls into sin. I warn My people in various ways, yet if despite these warnings My people choose to go past all My cautions, then they fall into sin."

There was such a difference in David's life at this moment from that which we see in 2 Samuel 5:19 when he went against the Philistines and inquired of the Lord, "Lord what shall I do?" There had previously been a humility in the life of David that preserved him. If only he had cried out at this time, "Lord should I go into battle or should I not go," the Lord would have been able to speak to King David and say, "David, go out to battle" and he would have been preserved from temptation.

We should inquire of the Lord, "Where do You want me to walk today?" A pastor friend of mine once wanted to

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ZION MINISTRIES is a non-sectarian parachurch ministry that has been raised up by the Lord to help prepare and equip those called to Christian leadership. Towards this goal, we offer you this teaching magazine.

go to Las Vegas to preach at a church there. However, the Lord said, "I do not want to go there" and my friend obeyed. He did not go to Las Vegas, and preserved the purity of his mind that could have been defiled by the things he would have seen in that city.

How important it is to realize that one can be a top Christian leader and yet be filthy. I have heard of many who have risen to prominence in religious organizations, in politics, or in other areas of life, only to lose all they have gained. One reason is that when they have been lifted to a high position they fail to control their boundaries, thinking that they no longer need to obey the things that lesser people need to follow.

We have to be very careful that when God meets with us and blesses us, we do not trust in our own accomplishments or ability. We must not let our hearts become lifted up because of what God has done for us or through us. There is always a danger that when one is blessed of God, one relies upon that blessing and upon one's own strength. Abraham Lincoln once observed, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." I believe he was right. We never really know a person in adversity, but their heart is revealed when they have been elevated to a position of authority and trust.

Fourthly, David had the attitude that whatever he desired, he took. You find this in Solomon's life too, that although endued with wisdom in so many areas of his life, he yet had this problem. In Ecclesiastes 2:10 Solomon said, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure..." Solomon saw, desired and took- and his undisciplined desires disqualified him.

And that is why the Apostle Paul stresses that godliness with contentment is great gain. Unsanctified desires become covetousness, and eventually our lives can be given over to vanity and bondage if we follow after those things that do not profit. And so there's a beautiful prayer from a man of God in Proverbs 30:8-9. He said, "Remove falsehood and lies far from

me; give me neither poverty nor riches— feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God." You know the attitude of Judas is very interesting. He said to the priests, "What will you give me?" He never dealt with those desires, and therefore those desires engulfed him in the betrayal of the Lord.

### David's Repentance

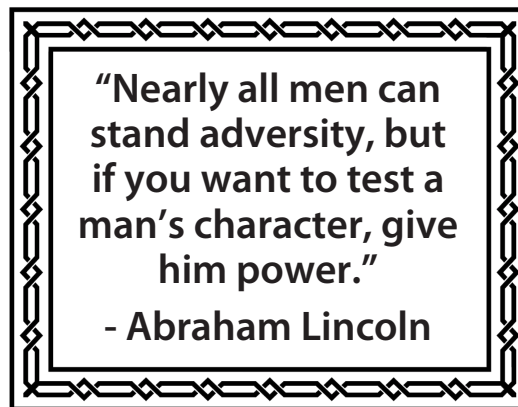
King David at first sought to cover his sin, but finally confessed his iniquity after months of pressure and conviction (see 2 Sam. 11:6-27 & 12:1-13). In fact, Psalms 32 and 38 suggest that it was through

deep sickness that David finally acknowledged his sin. "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin," Ps. 38:3. "For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I

said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," Ps. 32:4-5.

When Nathan confronted David with his sin in 2 Sam. 12:13, David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." That is the first requirement to receive cleansing and restoration—we have to openly confess our sin and acknowledge that we are wrong. To be able to acknowledge one's need of cleansing and purging is actually a work of God's grace, because so many people say, "I do not need it." As Proverbs 30:12 says, "There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." One of the problems when a person has sinned is they so often become stubborn and continue in that sin. A danger for many ministers and spiritual Christians who fall into sin is that they think they can be exceptions, that they will not be exposed or punished. However, God warns us that He makes no exceptions (see Rom. 2:11-12 and Eph. 6:9).

God is longsuffering and may patiently tolerate our sin for a season, even sometimes for several years.



But we should never mistake God's *patience* with us as being God's *permission* for sin. I knew a preacher in South Africa who repeatedly fell into immorality. When he prayed he pleaded, "God forgive me!" Amazingly, God did this again and again. This continued for several years. However, there came a time when this preacher declared "If I am living in sin (which he was), then let God strike me down." Two days later he was dead.

Because of David's sin you find there are at least 15 judgments that came upon him. The consequences of sin are very, very serious indeed. However, God warns us that He makes no exceptions (see Rom. 2:11-12). While God forgives when we repent, He still allows us to experience the consequences of our sin. We reap what we sow, Gal. 6:7-8.

In Leviticus 26:41-42 there's a very interesting principle God gives when sin has occurred. "If then their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant." If one accepts the judgment or punishment of one's sins then God will remember His covenant promises to us. And so King David cried out to God, "Oh Lord, judge me." There's always punishment for sin and it is sometimes important to realize that we have the option of accepting that punishment or not. David humbled himself to accept the punishments that he reaped from the sin he had sown (see 2 Sam. 12:19-20, 15:25-26, 16:9-12, 18:33, and Psalm 51:4). In turn, the Lord remembered His covenant promises to David, and fulfilled them all.

True repentance accepts the consequences of sin, and in fact, can turn out to be a blessing for us because we learn to hate the sin. David wrote in Psalm 51:8 of the result of this judgment, "That the bones that You have broken may rejoice." David was a shepherd who knew that sheep are extremely stubborn and stray into many dangerous paths because of their self-will. These rebellious sheep must have their legs broken

by the shepherd in order to keep them close to him. This treatment causes them to limp forever, but the important thing is that they will never stray from the shepherd again. In like manner, David was a sheep who was broken by the Lord, who never strayed from the Shepherd again.

### **David's Restoration**

Those who have fallen need not be disqualified from attaining the Lord's highest. God specializes in restoration. God can cleanse and transform a person. The Lord once showed me a vision of two vases: one was clean and the other absolutely filthy. The Lord said, "All the dirty vase needs is to be washed, cleaned, and dried, and then the two vases are identical. They have the same value." He also said, "Someone can fall right into the mire of sin, but when I lift them up and cleanse them, they have the same value as another."

Part of David's restoration was what he had prayed for in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation." He testified of its fulfillment in Psalm 4:7 where he said, "You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." The joy David experienced after his restoration was far greater than the joy of the farmer when he reaps a good harvest. It was this joyful experience of true forgiveness for his sins that sustained David through all the adversities and conflicts that he reaped as a result of his grievous failure. Many who commit deep sins never come into this place with God. The reason is that they are not willing to confess their sin or accept the Lord's punishment. However, those who experience true repentance and cleansing will also know the renewal of the joy of God's salvation.

Another result of David's restoration he spoke of in Psalm 51:13 when he declared, "Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted to You." From the place of complete



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restoration can come forth the ministries of teachers and evangelists. This happened in David's life. In the coming revival, God wants to meet with the people who are in the pits of sin, and use us to bring a wonderful restoration in their lives, so that they may have clean hearts and ministries that will in turn touch thousands of others.


### David's Training of Solomon

The latter years of King David's life were spent in the training of Solomon, as he understood that God had appointed Solomon to be king in his place. The first 9 chapters of the book of Proverbs are the proverbs that David gave to Solomon during his formative years. They are filled with awesome warnings about the immoral woman because David knew the kind of character and weakness he had given to Solomon. It's important when you train a person that you know their strengths and their weaknesses.

In 1 Chronicles 28:7 the Lord said to David about Solomon, "I will establish his kingdom forever, if..." The prophetic word and the promises of God always have conditions. People often claim the promises of God, but forget the conditions, and then they wonder

why the prophecies are not fulfilled. This is what God said: "I will establish his kingdom forever if Solomon is faithful to follow My commandments..." God was giving a warning and said, "David, I will do all these things you have prayed for Solomon, if he is faithful to follow My commandments." God knew that in the heart of Solomon there were going to be those temptations that could turn him off from the path. And later on in Solomon's life he did become unfaithful. Unfortunately I must say that in the training of leaders there are those who are just like Solomon, who do not heed wise counsel. I believe the Lord would have us all cry out to Him, "Oh Lord speak to me! Speak to me! I want to hear what you say to me because I realize they are going to be my guide throughout life."

I knew a pastor's wife in another country, who said the scripture that the Lord gave her constantly was, "a foolish woman tears down her own house," so I said to her, "Well, you better listen to what God is saying." But do you know what happened afterwards? She neglected her husband, and her husband fell into adultery - and he was one of the leaders of that country. You want to listen to the scriptures that God gives to you. They are your safety. If God keeps repeating things for your life, spend time with God



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The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.  
*1 Timothy 5:17*

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and say, "Oh God, let this get right down into my spirit, and let these words correct my spirit."

### David in the Millenium

So great was the restoration of David that he is to be resurrected and will be the king in Jerusalem during the one thousand year reign of Christ upon earth. Several scriptures declare quite clearly that the Lord will raise up David to be the king of Israel in the millennium. Note the following:

• "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, who I will raise up unto them" (Jer. 30:9).

• "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd...and my servant David shall be their prince forever" (Ezek. 37:24-25).

• "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:5).

David will be uniquely qualified to minister to the Jews who are in Israel at the Second Coming of their Messiah. We are told in the prophecies of Zechariah that Christ will descend to the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem, and deliver the Israelites from the nations who are fighting against them, Zech. 14:1-4. When they see Him more closely, they will recognize their Messiah as the Christ they crucified as they say, "What are these wounds in Your hands? Then He shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends," Zech. 13:6. Then their rejoicing will be turned to mourning, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn," Zech. 12:10.

It will be at this time that King David will be uniquely qualified to bring restoration to the mourning nation.

He who slew the innocent Uriah to cover his sin with Bathsheba will be able to minister restoration and consolation to the grieving nation as they realize that they were responsible for slaying their innocent Messiah upon the cross of Calvary. The sin of David and the sin of Israel as a nation are comparable, and the king whom God will raise up for them will be the one who will bring them reconciliation. He who knew restoration for his sins and cried out, "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of your righteousness" (Ps. 51:14), will be able to console

and lead future repentant Israel through their period of intense grief and mourning into a right relationship with the Lord. Sometimes the best person to reach others is one who before had been in the same pit as they are in.

**We cannot have double standards. God will not permit it. Let us be those who say to God, "O Lord, I acknowledge my iniquity. Purge me, wash me!"**

This is how God is going to prepare many of us: He is going to point out certain things in our lives. Then when we are shown our needs, we must first acknowledge them and say, "Yes, Lord, I admit that this has to be washed from my life." As you acknowledge them, then by the grace of God you can be washed and purged. Perhaps there will be judgments to purge and break us, Heb. 12:6. But if we are willing to accept the judgment that God chooses to give for that sin then the Lord will pick us up and restore us. Perhaps our sin may not be immorality like David, it could be our finances or another wrong way we might live. We cannot have double standards. God will not permit it. Let us be those who say to God, "O Lord, I acknowledge my iniquity. Purge me, wash me!" He did it for David, and if we will ask Him, God will do it for us as well.



*By the late Rev. Brian Bailey (1925-2012), the former president of Zion Fellowship and Zion Christian University. For over 60 years he helped bring renewal and revival to many nations around the world through his leadership in many organizations, ministering in over 100 nations and authoring over 65 books.*

# Reducing before Producing



by Daniel Gazaway

I appreciate the fact that God gives second chances. He wants us to make it. He intercedes for us, lifts us up and helps us when we don't really deserve it, because He loves us and He has an inheritance for us. We should be appreciative of the fact that we really are nothing except God does something for us.

The Lord spoke to me and said, "You know you wear hearing aids because you are hard of hearing. A lot of My people are wearing spiritual hearing aids because they're hard of hearing, and they need to hear something more than once." So I'm going to share something with you that you have heard before, from Hebrews chapter 12:1-2 on the topic of "Reducing before Producing." "Therefore.... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus..." We'll look at this in three points: the first is Concealment, the second is Attraction, and the third is Minimize & Maximize.

## 1. Concealment

Recently we were putting up a fence behind my assistant pastor's house. In order to do that, there were some extremely large tree stumps in the area that had to be taken out of the ground. One tree stump had probably been there for more than a hundred years. It was extremely large. So we asked some of the students to help dig around the roots of this tree and the young fellows got axes and they dug down about a meter and severed all the known roots- they were huge coming out of this tree stump. They decided that they would take a chain and put it around the stump, and attach it to a four wheel drive truck and they yanked on the stump. It never even quivered, it didn't move, it didn't even tweak, it just sat there. So then they tried another process, they had a backhoe and began working with

that, trying to shake the stump back and forth to remove it but it would not budge. We had to put a six ton winch on it and we were winching it back and forth and the chain broke. So this was not a little stump, this was big.

But there was something about that stump that the Lord spoke to me about. He said that stump represented a lot of evil spirits that had to be removed, so I said, "I want it out." I wanted it out because it represented something spiritual so they kept working on it for many hours until they were able to nudge it a bit. Finally the young people got energetic and had the four wheel drive truck pulling the chain. I expected to see that chain break, but it held and they finally got that stump out. As they took this big stump out of the ground, I found out what was going on. All of the old roots had been cut, but what we couldn't see because it was concealed under the stump, were all these new roots that were growing. What happened was when the tree was cut down years earlier it formed new roots. There were mazes and mazes of roots, they were everywhere. That stump was unmoveable until there was tremendous force put upon it.

The Lord spoke to me about it, and I want to share this point about concealment. In a person's life at times it might look like all the old sinful roots are cut, but underneath are a maze of roots that are concealed. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal it to us. So what happens is that the Holy Spirit reveals those roots that need to be removed, and He says, "I told you to get rid of this".

We need to pay attention to when God puts His light on what has been concealed for years. We need to pay attention because the Word of God echoes in our conscience and says, "This is what I want out."



Our Heavenly Father wants to help us by putting the light on hidden situations and what He is asking us to do is to respond to Him. The Lord spoke this to me- we have things that have been concealed in our hearts. Little by little, they have been growing there for years. We would like to have them out; and when we have tried to remove these things in our own strength we have become exhausted and have given up. We have had turmoil in our hearts because of the concealment. But just like we needed a bigger piece of equipment to remove the stump, now, in the timing of the Father in Heaven, He comes to each of us, shines His light on us, and says "I am showing you what is there, and that I am the one that can remove it." And the Spirit of God can get rid of it! I am so thankful that in the spirit, the Lord says, "I told you to get rid of that." It is the Father's love to show us the wrong things that can sometimes remain concealed in our hearts for many years.

## 2. Attraction

Job 14:7-9 says of a tree that has been cut down, "Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant."

After a tree is cut down it can still have an attraction to water. The water can be pure or impure; roots will grow in either one. Sometimes nobody knows that inside of us are wrong attractions like these hidden roots- but God knows about it. Anybody else would look at us and say, "Well, they don't drink, they don't smoke, they have good Christian standards working in their life," yet inside our heart is this attraction towards impure water and we struggle with these attractions. We must make up our mind what we are going to seek for- either after the pure channel of life, or allow ourselves to be fed by impure water. We need to know what attracts us.

God wants us to understand that He is the Deliverer. He is our Heavenly Father who offers us everything that we need so that we can have a clear spirit that will let the flow of the Holy Spirit come through us. We all want the river of God to flow through us, but God wants us to know that He is not interested in mixture.

I want to look at the attraction to the voice of God from Song of Solomon 5:2-6. "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open

for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them? My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him. I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock. I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."

The voice of the Lord is a tremendous attraction; the voice of the Lord can come to us at home, at work, at church, anywhere. I love the voice of the Lord. The only time I do not love the voice of the Lord is when I'm doing something that I should not be doing. Then it's like, "Lord I really would like to have you come at a better time, when I'm on the mountain top, not when I'm whining and complaining."

This situation in the Song of Solomon is referring to someone who knows the voice of the Lord. They know what it is to be attracted in the spirit to God. But what happens in this situation in the Song of Solomon is the bride says, "I sleep".

There can come times in our life when self-satisfaction settles in and spiritually we sleep. We can say, "Thank



you Lord, I appreciate all that you have done for me. It's been a good time. You know Lord that I've given my life to You. But even though there are some wrong areas in my life, I am quite satisfied where I am, I don't need to go on any further." And so we spiritually sleep. Then here comes the voice of the Beloved, the voice that we love- but we're sleepy; we have excuses, we're satisfied, we're okay with our present condition. May God help us to hear what the Spirit of God is saying. Our Heavenly Father wants to move us on so there will be the continuation of our spiritual growth so that we may mature.

He comes time and time again to us to check our response. I've learned something, the Lord never unlocks the door to our feelings, we have to deal with them ourselves. We have feelings sometimes that nobody knows about except God. We have problems with people, we have problems with those working in the church, we have problems with ourselves, there can be problems everywhere.

Sometimes we have good sounding excuses for these problems, but God doesn't listen to our excuses, so we need to give Him the response of our heart. It is at these times when the voice of the Lord comes and manifests His presence and He leaves us a blessing. But here is what we need to understand, we are not just to be attracted to the blessings, we are to be attracted to God. Sometimes we just want blessings, but be careful folks, the message is that we are to be attracted to winning Christ. We are to go beyond the veil, into the holy of holies. It's Christ who wants to have the attention that He rightfully deserves. Our attraction has to be to Christ. The goal is to win Christ. But He is saying first there is something in the heart that He wants to remove so the river of God can flow. Pay attention to what you are attracted to. Now I want to look at the third point.

### **3. Minimize and Maximize**

A number of years ago I was picking fruit way up in the top of a tree, and I had the extension ladder fully out, 7 1/2 meters up. I wanted to make sure that I didn't fall

off the ladder so I pushed the top of the ladder over so it would catch on to the top of the tree, to hold me there. Because the best fruit was up to the top and I was intending to get it. So as I started climbing up, the ladder said, "I think I'll change position" and the ladder started to sway back and forth and I said, "Well, I'll catch a branch on the way down." But I didn't have a chance to grab any branch. The ladder went "boom" and it was aluminium and I fell on top of it from 6 meters up. I thought that somebody had just knocked me out; I was hurting big time. I hit every extremity and hit my head, and the worst thing was I hurt my heart. I managed to get up and went in the house. Then my wife came out of another

room and saw me groaning and bleeding. She said, "What happened? How are you?"

Coming from New Hampshire we have the tendency to minimize our injuries. "Ooh I'm alright", I said. She replied, "I will call the doctor, look at you." I said, "No don't call the doctor, I'm alright. Just get one of those stretch bandages, put it on and I'll be alright." I had a hole right down to the bone in my leg, and I still do, because I refused to have it properly stitched. Minimizing! My daughter Rona came in and said, "Dad I'm going to call the emergency, I'm going to call 911", I said, "Rona for goodness sakes I'm not on death row, cut it out." I should have maximized the fact that I was really hurt, but because I minimized it I have these scars for the rest of my life.

So I want to look at this minimizing and maximizing because it has to do with us. In John 14:2 Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Once the Lord showed me a house in heaven that you could see through completely from one room to the other. It was transparent like glass. It did not have partitions; it was multi-spaced and it had my attention because it was so beautiful. It was a tremendous place to be in, to spend eternity there.

Now I want to look at some of the things we maximize when we should be minimizing them: our clothes, our

**There will not be enough reapers for the harvest. That is why God is shining His light onto what is concealed in our hearts, so we can be a reaper.**

cell phones or computers, our social status. Sometimes we give natural things too much attention, but when we instead maximize spiritual things we will have lasting results throughout eternity.

So what are we building in heaven? Are we building a mansion or are we building a little shed? If you continue to maximize wrong things that you should be minimizing, you might be building a shed, not a mansion. And when the Lord puts His light on something in our life, if we minimize it and say, "That's not important Lord, it's been there quite a while," we will be building a shed instead of a mansion. What we minimize and maximize will determine what we build for eternity, and what we will live in throughout eternity. That is a sobering thought.

When the Lord puts the light of His Spirit upon us and says, "I'm maximizing what has to be removed" it's because He has something better for us, so that the flow of the river of God can come through us and we can fully be part of what He is going to do.

Amos 9:13 says, "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.'" There will be an outpouring of God's Spirit in these last days; it will be so tremendous that even the reapers will have a hard time keeping

up with what is going on. There will not be enough reapers for the harvest. That is why God is shining His light onto what is concealed in our hearts, so we can be a reaper. He wants us to be able to flow in the Spirit so we can be a part of the greatest revival the world will ever know. We can be complacent and say, "Well, that's alright for you people who believe that, but as far as I'm concerned I've done all I could do. I thank the Lord for His voice, I thank the Lord for leaving little blessings for me, I am content and do not desire to win Christ and His full plans for my life." But we need to maximize the revival that is going to flow through every nation and we need to say, "Lord help me to stop maximizing my natural circumstances and minimizing what God is saying to us." We need to get our ears open so that we start maximizing the tremendous revival, the move of the Spirit of God that we can flow in. We need men and women; workers and reapers who will be trained and ready. Now is the time for preparation to be maximized, not minimized! Let's not settle for a little shed in heaven when we can be preparing a mansion. Our help is coming from the Lord, and we need to maximize that. Amen, amen, amen.



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# *Not Under Law, but* **UNDER GRACE**

**by Norman Holmes**



The Apostle Paul taught that there is a great difference between living our life under God's law or living under God's grace. If someone lived as a Jew under the Old Covenant, they were obligated to obey all the laws of Moses. This is different than a Christian who lives in the New Covenant and is to be under the grace of God. But what is the essence of this difference? What are the results of this difference? Various opinions about this are sometimes the opposite of each other! Yet if we are going to be faithful to our calling and live as New Testament Christians, it is crucial that we understand this topic.

## **Jesus Taught the Difference About Being Under the Law, Or Under Grace**

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount the clear difference between living under Moses' Old Covenant Law and living under Christ's New Covenant Grace. The Sermon on the Mount, the first sermon in the New Testament, can be called "The Constitution of the Christian Faith." This is because in this first sermon Jesus starts the message of the New Testament by laying a solid foundation about what true Christianity should be.

In this message Christ quickly focuses in on the difference between His disciples not being under the Old Testament laws of Moses, but under the New Testament grace of Christ. From Matthew 5:21 to the end of the chapter He shows this by contrasting six differences between those following Moses' law, and those who would follow Christ's New Covenant of grace.

In the first contrast, Jesus said that Moses' law commanded "you shall not murder," and then went on to say that His followers should not even be angry or speak harshly to another. In the second contrast, Christ taught that Moses commanded "you shall not

commit adultery" but then He tells His disciples that if they even look at a woman with lust, they are already committing adultery in their heart. Then in the third contrast, Christ began by referring to Moses' law that a written certificate justified divorce. But then when Christ contrasted His standard for His disciples, He said that no one should get a divorce except for the reason of fornication, and that anyone who married the divorced one was committing adultery! In each of these six areas of how to live a life that is pleasing to God, Christ taught that His followers should have a much higher standard than what Moses and the Law taught. Christ did not say we should ignore or reject the righteous teachings of the Old Testament, but that instead we should fulfill them: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill... For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven... Therefore be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." –Matt. 5:17, 20, & 48.

Many Bible teachers today are saying - either with their words or with their lifestyle - that a Christian can live a low standard of righteousness, because God's grace forgives all our sins. However, that is not what Jesus taught - and if we will be faithful followers of Christ, it should not be what we teach. In fact, in this same section of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned that those who teach God's Word will be either promoted or be given a lesser place in His eternal kingdom depending upon whether they teach and personally live righteously: "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven."

## Paul's Message of Grace

The Apostle Paul was the author of the quote "for you are not under law, but under grace." He repeated it twice in Romans 6:14-15 where we read, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? Let it not be!"

Paul did not teach that being under grace means that we can continue to sin- in fact, he taught the opposite. He wrote in Romans 6:1-2, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" The Apostle Paul taught that God's grace is not to permit us to continue in our sins, but to enable us to have victory over sin's dominion so that we will overcome habitual sin!

It is true that the grace of God can forgive our sins. As Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Our own good works cannot save us- it is only the good work of Christ on the cross that can save us! But then Paul goes on to say in the next verse that while we are not saved by our good works, we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works."

The grace of God applied to us offers forgiveness of our sinful past through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. But when we become born again, the grace of God wants to start to work within us, to transform our lives into the image of Christ. Christ's righteousness *for us* becomes the open door through which Christ's righteousness can become built *within* us by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit! That is why Christ expected a higher standard of righteousness for His followers than what was required for the Old Testament followers of Moses' law. The Old Testament Jews were not born again and did not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. Therefore they did not have the inner power that is now available to us, to help us live transformed, godly lives.

A story about a Japanese convert helps illustrate how the grace of God can work within us to help us to fulfill the law of God. This man had lived a life of terrible sin, repeatedly breaking all of the 10 commandments and

ending up in prison for many years. There he heard the gospel and was born again.

Years later, when he was released from prison, his first request was to be taken to a church as he had never been inside a Christian church. He was taken to a nearby Presbyterian church, and as he entered the main sanctuary, he saw a large model of Moses' 10 Commandments written on two tablets. As he read it, he fell on his knees, exclaiming, "Look at God's promises! I will not kill! I will not commit adultery! I will not steal! Look at His promises to me, a sinner saved by grace!"

This man was not looking at the laws of God as 10 Commandments that he should attempt to keep- he was looking at them as 10 Promises that God's transforming power had written in his heart! And these same promises are for each of us that seek to live and walk as New Covenant Christians (see Jer. 31:31-34, 2 Cor. 3:3, & Heb. 10:16).

## Modern Unbalanced Grace Messages

Jude said at the beginning of his letter that he felt the need to warn the churches about ungodly men that were creeping into the churches and bringing corruption. What they were specifically seeking to do was to "pervert the grace of God into a license for immorality," Jude 1:4 NIV. Another translation says, "ungodly people have sneaked into the churches, saying that God's grace gives us permission to live sinful lives." Just as Jude saw the need to sound a warning in his day about those who were perverting the message of God's grace, many today are warning about an unbalanced "grace" message that is spreading again. This message commonly teaches such unbalanced things as "Christians no longer need to confess their sins. Because of grace and Jesus' finished work on the cross, all sins are now forgiven as soon as they are committed. There is no need to ever ask for forgiveness."

When questioned about the many scriptures that contradict their teachings, various unscriptural reasons are given. One example is how they wrongly interpret the Apostle John's teaching in 1 John 1:9. They say that when John wrote, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us," that John was

not writing this to Christians, and therefore it does not apply to us. However, if you read this letter, John is clearly writing to believers- he even said "if we confess our sin." John was clearly including himself, a Christian, in the group that should confess their sins!

Another example of how they twist the scriptures is that they often reject the teachings of Jesus, such as those that we already mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. They say that since Jesus spoke His gospel teachings before the time of the cross, His teachings do not apply to us, as they were only "Old Covenant." Any teaching should be instantly recognized as unbalanced and dangerous if it says that we should disregard the teachings of Jesus as being irrelevant for Christians - we who are to be disciples of Christ! Furthermore, if you look at Jesus' teachings to the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three, you will see that His message there, which He spoke to John many years after the cross, is the same message that He spoke before the cross. To five of the seven churches Christ told them of their various sins that they needed to repent of. The message that Christians should confess their sins and ask God for forgiveness is a central doctrine of the Christian faith, as even shown to us in The Lord's Prayer where we are taught to pray "and forgive us our sins...."

Even among those who believe that we should ask forgiveness for the sins that we commit, another unbalanced doctrine that some claim is that when we ask for forgiveness, then everything is instantly "fixed up." This shows a lack in understanding the difference between forgiveness and restoration.

If we sin and sincerely ask God to forgive us, we can receive instant forgiveness from Him. However, that does not automatically fix all the damage that was caused by the sin. A murderer can be forgiven for their crime, but that does not bring the dead person back to life again. A thief can be forgiven, but that does not instantly restore the money back that was stolen. Someone can deceive themselves and say "I can

commit adultery and then repent, and everything will be OK again." Perhaps they will be forgiven, but that does not reverse all the damage created by their sin. Their mind and heart have become polluted by their sin, and they may battle wrong thoughts and lust for a long time before they restore the damage done inside them. Their relationship with their marriage partner is not magically fixed either. They may need marriage counseling and a long period of time to repair the

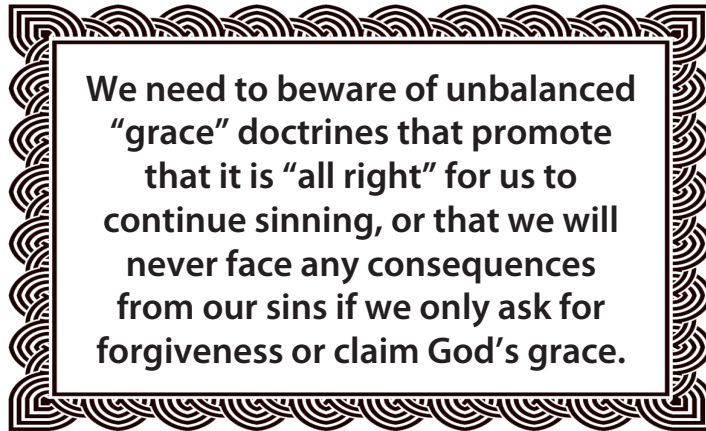
damage that this sin created in their marriage. Their reputation in the church may have been badly damaged, and even their health may have been damaged if they picked up a sexually transmitted disease. Forgiveness is not restoration! Many people ask for their sins to be forgiven, yet they must

then start the process through which they can repair the damage made by their sins. In this way they can become restored to wholeness and be a person who can properly serve God and minister to others.

Many times the process of restoration is helped along by our experiencing the suffering that our sins have brought upon ourselves, our families, and our churches. In Gal. 6:7 we read, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap." When we reap troubles from sins that we sowed, it teaches us the badness and ugliness of our sin, and this can help move us towards a deeper cleansing and restoration from our sin.

We can see this illustrated in the life of Jacob. When he was young he deceived his brother and father, yet he reaped a much larger harvest of pain when he was deceived for many years by his father-in-law Laban, Gen. 29:25 & 31:41. This "reaping what he had sown" caused Jacob to deeply hate his own sin of deception, and helped motivate him to meet with God to become transformed and restored.

David also experienced this because of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. When the prophet Nathan rebuked David for his sin, he immediately repented and was forgiven by God, 2



Sam. 12:13. But the Lord also said that his adultery would result in many judgments. David's own wives would be publicly raped (2 Sam. 12:11-12) and David would reap a bitter harvest for bringing the sword upon Uriah, by having the sword remain in his own house, 2 Sam. 12:9-10. David's one adultery reaped a bitter harvest of ten adulteries (2 Sam. 16:22 & 20:3), and his killing one man resulted in the death of several of David's sons as well as civil war in his kingdom! But these painful results, the multiplied harvest of what was sown by his sin, helped bring David into a deep repentance and cleansing, Heb. 12:10. That in turn helped restore him into further greatness and ministry in his later years.

We need to understand how the Lord makes these things work together for our good, so that sin becomes not only forgiven, but also purged from our lives. This can bring us into the restoration of the damages that sin has caused in our lives and families so that we can also become skilled ministers of restoration for others. We need to beware of unbalanced "grace" doctrines that promote that it is "all right" for us to continue sinning, or that we will never face any consequences from our sins if we only ask for forgiveness or claim God's grace. It is becoming increasingly common that Christians and pastors who embrace these unbalanced teachings are less and less interested in prayer meetings and seeking God. Instead, such things as drunkenness, corrupt partying, pornography, and immorality are becoming increasingly embraced. Through this, many churches are growing weak and corrupt.

In balance, it is good to also mention that many Christians struggle with guilt and condemnation and need a greater revelation of God's grace. Some believers suffer from a legalistic "performance-driven" mentality that God cannot love or forgive them unless they become more holy. Such Christians need to more deeply understand the true message of God's grace. However, a clearer revelation of God's grace will not liberate them to continue in their sins, it will instead help liberate them from their sins! This is because when the grace of God properly works within a life, it will transform that person from glory to glory to become more like Christ. Paul illustrated this when he declared- not legalistically, but liberatingly- "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I live, I live by

the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20.

May every teacher of God's word proclaim the power of the grace of God! But this must be done in balance, by teaching that God's grace needs to first work *for us* in the forgiveness of our sins, and then secondly should work *in us* to free us from the power of sin. Both of these functions of God's grace are repeatedly taught throughout the New Testament, and are crucial to help bring us into Christian maturity.

If we only preach the first part of what grace can do for us, our followers may remain "spiritual babies" that need to repeatedly have their dirty diapers changed- or if we teach them that they are already always clean, we might declare that babies never even need to have their diapers changed! Yes, God loves and forgives His children when we ask Him to, but He wants us to grow up from being little children into becoming "young men" who are strong, and have the word of God abiding in us, and overcome the devil, 1 John 2:14.

If we only teach the second part of what grace can do in our life, we may condemnably require our followers to live a high standard that they cannot attain, because they do not yet understand how they are forgiven and given the nature of Christ within them to help them to overcome sin. This can create legalistic Christians who are in bondage to the concept that they are not yet "good enough" to receive the love and grace of God that should empower them to go on towards spiritual maturity. This imbalance will also not produce victorious overcoming Christians!

May each of us who have been called of God to teach the Scriptures learn how to rightly divide, and teach, God's Word. Then we can help build the triumphant Church of the last days, and become teachers that will be among the great in God's kingdom!



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# The Greatest Diamond CUTTER



by Audrey Bailey

Years ago at the Premier Mine in South Africa there was found the most magnificent diamond in the world's history. It was presented to the King of England to blaze in his crown. The king sent it to Amsterdam to be cut. It was put into the hands of an expert diamond cutter. And what do you suppose he did?

The man to whom it was entrusted was one of the most skillful diamond cutters in the world. He took the gem of priceless value and cut a notch in it. Then he struck a hard blow with his instrument and the superb jewel lay split in two in his hand. Some may say, 'what recklessness! What wastefulness! What criminal carelessness!' Not so. For days and weeks that blow had been studied and planned. Drawings and models had been made of the gem. Its quality, defects, and lines of cleavage had all been studied with the greatest care.

Do you say that blow was a mistake? No. It was the climax of the diamond cutter's skill. When he struck that blow he did the one thing that would bring the gem to its most perfect shapeliness, radiance, and jeweled splendor. That blow, which seemed to ruin the superb precious stone, was, in fact, its perfect redemption. For from those two halves were wrought the two magnificent gems which the skilled eye of the diamond cutter saw hidden in the rough uncut stone as it came from the mine.

Sometimes God lets a stinging blow fall upon your life. Your soul cries out in agony, the blow seems a terrible mistake. But it is not, for to God, you are the most priceless jewel in the world and He is the most skilled diamond cutter in the universe!

Someday, you are to blaze in the crown of the King. He knows just how to deal with you as you lie in His

hand now. Not a blow will be permitted to fall upon your shrinking soul but that the love of God permits it, and works out blessing and spiritual enrichment unseen and unsought of by you. "Your heavenly Father knows..." (Matthew 6:32). God knows! God is your Master and your Father!

Isaiah 33:23 says: "...the lame take the prey." This contradicts the rules of warfare. The coming visitation of Jesus will be so glorious that even those who appeared lame or broken will participate in His victory. Although God takes us through circumstances and we may feel broken by our experience, God will transform defeat and failure into victory.

It is possible for us to choose to be less than what God has purposed for us. We can choose to submit to His dealings, or take the second best. God has given us the power of choice. Our part is to yield to God. This is absolutely essential to our going on with Him. Rebellion and resistance will mar God's precious work of remaking our lives. If we choose God's second best, then God cannot do the work that He has planned with the 'rough diamond' that is our life.

Today, God is calling us to yield to His purposes and dealings in our life, that He might make us a vessel of honor, as a precious cut diamond in the crown of the King.



*Audrey Bailey (1924-1994) was the wife of Brian Bailey. She served in the ministry with her husband for over 30 years, preaching around the world.*