

GRACE NEWS TODAY



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“Faith Alone in Christ Alone”

Greetings to all who have traveled around the world with us in prayer. It has been awesome to watch God as He works His plan, for He is the one who goes before us. Your precious prayers paved the way. As we traveled from the third world countries of Kenya and Zimbabwe in Africa to the first world country of Australia, it was difficult not to compare and contrast their differences, both spiritual and material. We in the West still reap the blessings of our spiritual heritage but sometimes fail to recognize our wealth as blessing from God, our gracious benefactor. As a people, it seems we are not passing the prosperity test. We have become self-sufficient, preoccupied, and apathetic.

Yet the poverty and often persecution of the third world act as a compass to point people to God; where else could they turn? They look to God; who else could come to their rescue? An author suggested that the poor identify with this verse:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich (II Corinthians 8:9.)

They read: “for our sake He became poor - poor like me.” This poverty may be what is opening the door to eternal riches for them. In this sense, their poverty makes them rich - for they have no option but to seek the spiritual riches available to them through the grace of God.

In Kenya we visited a school with block buildings (no classrooms under trees like the school in Zimbabwe). Neatly uniformed children gave us the sense that all was well. But an incident alerted us to

the reality of their lives. At the end of the lesson about the Essence of God, a description of heaven was used as a lead-in to a gospel presentation. It was the last day of school, and we sought to engage them with “In heaven there is no homework!” “Yay!” they all shouted. “And in heaven, there is not even school!” “Yay!” they all cheered. “In heaven, there are all your favorite foods and as much as you want to eat”...a deafening “HOORAY” thundered through the classroom. They were all hungry. The people of Africa are hungry for physical food and for spiritual food. In Kenya, we met a woman who walked an hour each way to church. In Zimbabwe, we met a man who walked a mile or two to church on crutches.

After visiting two African countries, we flew to Australia for our last programs in Melbourne and Sydney. There, we met up with Pastor Jacob and Sam (Pakistani’s by birth). They are friends of Pastor Azam (who hosted a crusade for Moses in Lahore, Pakistan.) We left the third world for the West, but God had a surprise for us. Pastor Jacob and Sam took us to two churches in Sydney made up of people from all over Asia—Pakistan, India, Fiji, Korea, and Nepal. Their response was an overwhelming acceptance of grace teaching. They wanted more. So God smiled and took us to the East even when we went to the West. These immigrants are hungry for the Word. Jacob believes they are the spiritual anchor for the prosperity Australia enjoys today.

Thanks again for traveling with us and sharing the surprises God sends as He opens doors for what He would have us do. Your prayers for wisdom and guidance as we go about His plan are always appreciated.

G.E.M. Team

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WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them [Satan and his minions]; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (I John 4:4).

That's the word of encouragement from the apostle John. Simply put, we have the '*Lord of the Armies*' on our side! It's interesting that believers in the Apostle John's day were not the only ones who hit the panic button. For instance, the Prophet Elisha's servant was struck with fright when he saw the enormity of the Aramean army who came to capture Elisha, his master. Gripped with fear, he hit the panic button! You see, you are not alone.

Elisha tried to calm his attendant with the infallible Word,

'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' **And the Lord opened the servant's [inner] eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha.** (II Kings 6:16-17).

Think of it. 'Horses and chariots of fire' were sent to protect and grace-out Elisha who, like us, is no more deserving than is an earthworm. What a grace gesture from the '*Lord of the Armies*'!

Now just what does the Scripture say about us? We are called the Pupil of God's eye:

For thus says the Lord of [*the armies*],...for he who touches you [with the intent to harm] you, touches the [pupil] of God's eye (Zechariah 2:8).

Just the thought of such a thing is horrible! But of course you can't harm just a pupil without hurting the entire eye. Metaphorically though, that's what anyone does if he ventures to hurt you—you who are in union with Christ:

Your life is hidden in Christ in God (Col 3:3b).

Are you fully aware of the positional sanctification that exists for believers in Christ? The elect angels are amazed! Those doctrinal notebooks piled up haphazardly in our closets must stagger their minds; and yet, we climb the walls when testing hits!

Let me point you to two elements of the essence of God which are pertinent to this Word of Encouragement: His **sovereignty** and His **omnipotence**.

Sovereignty stated plainly means: Everyone to your tent; for God has spoken! That's final! No round-table-discussion necessary! He will bring His promise to pass,

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Omnipotence means *All-Powerful*. God has the power to safeguard His Word or promise. The Exodus generation is a perfect example of God's omnipotence in action in that He wrought ten, no-nonsense, dynamic miracles that led to the Israelite's deliverance from the world's most powerful nation, Egypt.

Let it be said that the phrase "Your life is hidden in Christ in God" actually means that you, as a believer, are in a place of the tightest security that Heaven can offer. God the Father is Omnipotent and so is Jesus Christ. You are hidden within two Omnipotent beings. How secure is that? For Satan to hit you with his missile, it must pierce at least two impenetrable security gates!

NOTHING can rock your boat apart from God's Sovereign will and endorsement. Have you been hit with suffering? Has unemployment caused you to tighten your belt? Have you been blind-sided by a so-called, incurable disease? Are you infuriated by unfair treatment and the like? If so, KNOW that the very One who controls history is at work on your behalf right now! Our Sovereign God, not Satan, nor anyone else for that matter, is in control of the outcome of your situation which will reflect His overall plan for your life. Scripture guarantees it!

DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Dear Heavenly Father,

We humbly approach Your throne of grace in awe and reverence. Father, we praise You because of who and what You are—the Omnipotent Sovereign God—the God of the universe. We thank You because of our so great salvation and Your dynamic plan for our lives. Heavenly Father, we realize that our spiritual life and the execution of this plan depend entirely on the provision of Your power through the filling ministry of Your Holy Spirit. We equally realize that our personal sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Father, many of us are in a state of confusion as regards to the proper procedure on how our fellowship is restored when we fail.

Therefore, Father, as we undertake the task to summarize the doctrine of the filling of the Holy Spirit previously taught in (volumes 43 and 44), we ask that Your Holy Spirit will shine His beam of light on Your Word as we examine this vital doctrine. We humbly ask that Your Word would arrest every ambiguity we may have concerning this truth. May You give us once and for all a clear understanding of the grace recovery procedure passage of I John 1:9 in context with all of Scripture. May Your truth be made perspicuous to us. May You enable us to have a humble and objective mind so as to be always willing to adjust our minds accordingly. All this we ask in the name of our wonderful Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S WORD LESSON 7 (Continued from vol. 44)

RESTORATION TO FELLOWSHIP SUMMARY

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear (Psalm 66:18).

[But] if we confess our [known] sins [plural], He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins] (I John 1:9).

Be assured that God knows exactly what He's doing and why He would have us *slow down* to closely examine this doctrine in this crucial time of Christendom. This doctrinal exposition would help us to understand why after many years of learning doctrine many of us have not made any real spiritual progress. It will also help those who have alleged that Bible doctrine does not work to know why it does not work for them. **The truth of the matter is that no one can make any spiritual progress without the filling of the Holy Spirit.** Without following God's recovery procedure when we fail, Satan stands guard to rob us of the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. Sadly, when it comes to dining in the Grace Restaurant of Recovery Procedure, many believers have been found dining in the Restaurant of Incorrect/Incomplete Recovery Procedure of Ritual without Reality.

God does indeed have a good sense of humor. One of my best friends, after combing through the Scripture as the Berean believers did in Acts 17:11, called me in the middle of the night! "Man of God," he asked, "Have you read volume VI of Chafer's *Systematic Theology*?" I told him "No, I have not." He said, "That's surprising because it appears that you copied him verbatim in your previous newsletters (vol. 43 and 44)!"

The coincidence can be explained. The same Holy Spirit who shone the beam of light to His Word in Chafer's day more than a half a century ago is still at work today! Equally, it is God's way of saying, *Moses, this truth has been uncovered before.*

As Chafer tells us in vol. VI, page 239 "To walk in the light is not to become the light, which would be sinless perfection; it is to be adjusted to the light. **When the searchlight, which God is, reveals needed changes in ones life before God, then to walk in the light one must adapt oneself to the will of God thus revealed. When thus adapted, the blood of Jesus Christ goes on continuously cleansing from all sin.**"

He goes on to say, "Fellowship does not depend upon an impossible sinless perfection, but the willing compliance with all that God desires and makes known." Chafer concludes, "Thus

confession, which is the outward expression of inward repentance, [change of mind] becomes the one condition upon which a child of God who has been injured by sin may be restored to unbroken fellowship again.” We shall expound on this later.

And so my friend, while you are going through this doctrine, it will be of good benefit for you to study along with your Bible open and to give this doctrine your undivided attention. God is doing something! No doubt about it!

When it comes to the interpretation of the Bible, Scripture must harmonize with Scripture; therefore, we would do well to re-examine every jot of His Word under the high-powered microscope of the Holy Spirit—comparing Scripture with Scripture, verse with verse, chapter with chapter and, subsequently, a single verse in light of the entire Bible.

The grace recovery procedure passage of I John 1:9 is the verse we need to CAREFULLY scrutinize as we endeavor to shed more light on and also summarize the lessons of volumes 43 and 44 which are critical to our spiritual race. We are acutely aware that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not determined by how one feels. Rather, it is always contingent on believers PRECISELY following God’s procedure. When we fail to adhere to God’s procedure we remain in perpetual carnality. God cannot compromise His justice. What many believers do not realize is that we can be in perpetual carnality and still be devoted members of our local assembly with an avalanche of full notebooks to prove our loyalty to doctrine. Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians is a perfect example. We see why the Holy Spirit through Paul’s words cautions us to,

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! (II Corinthians 13:5a).

In other words, examine yourself to see if you are in compliance with the Word of God.

Col. R. B. Thieme Jr. firmly asserted that ritual without reality is meaningless. On the foundation of his assertion, we have elected to lay the bricks of this summary.

The first course of our bricks is to highlight and italicize some fundamental principles:

1. ***God’s forgiveness of our sins when I John 1:9 is properly used is based entirely on His grace through the work, the atoning sacrifice and the merit of Jesus Christ on the cross.***
2. ***All human work, including feeling sorry for sins and promising God never to sin again, is not the basis for forgiveness.***
3. ***As previously stated, Dr. Chafer’s exegetical teachings on confession give us the third principle. “...Confession, which is the outward expression of inward repentance, becomes the one condition upon which a child of God who has been injured by sin may be restored to an unbroken fellowship again.”***

We rely on the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit in the original languages when it comes to the message the Holy Spirit intends to communicate through the word confess. Greek experts state that the word confess means, “to assent, accord, agree with,” or “to agree with another.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, page 120 defines it best, “to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction (I John 1:9).”

In light of I John 1:9, Greek expert Kenneth Wuest, in his commentary, echoes Chafer and Vine’s commentaries and thus we read, “Confession of sin on the part of the saint means therefore to say the same thing that God does about sin, to agree with God as to all the implication of that sin as it relates to the Christian who commits it and a holy God against whom it is committed.”¹

On the same footing a handful of other experts concur. Every communicator or student of Scripture who depends on the work of the original language authorities, would concretely agree that the word ‘confess’ as per the context of I John 1:9 means, “to

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*—Volume II, Grand Rapids, Michigan

say the same thing with God.” It equally means, “to agree with God as regards to His views about sin.” Scripture questions,

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3 NKJV).

In essence, we must understand what we need to agree with God about before confessing our sins.

For this is the thin line that divides ineffectual confession of sins, which perpetuates carnality, from effectual confession of sins, which leads to restoration to fellowship. In other words, it’s the line that divides pseudo filling of the Holy Spirit from true filling of the Holy Spirit! Not understanding this doctrinal issue, which we are about to examine, opens the believer up to the danger of falsely assuming that he is back in fellowship. Without effectual restoration, there is no power of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. The believer then concludes that doctrine doesn’t work.

The truth is, if we really have a grip on Gods’ view of personal sin, how it grieves the Holy Spirit and what it does to God’s plan for our lives, we will be motivated to quickly adjust ourselves to the Holiness of God every time we fail! Jerome in the fourth century declared that, “light view of sin induces false views of God,” and Maclaren of Manchester stated that, “ninety percent of all doctrinal errors have grown up around defective views of sin.”

The Scripture is clear that God’s direction is the antithesis of sin (I John. 3:8). Scripture has many references to God’s mandate that we stop maintaining a lifestyle of carnality (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22, 30, 31; Colossians 3:8; Hebrews 12:1). In light of the Greek definition of the word confession, we must agree with God about the position and direction He takes on sin. So, we can approach confession in this manner: “God, I agree with you that my thought or action is a sin and is in violation of your mandate for my life.” Confession, by its very Greek meaning, constitutes an agreement with God. Keep in mind, this does not mean sinless perfection or remorseful regret! It simply means that whenever you sin, in the privacy of your own soul, you pause and confess that particular known

sin. This is what the apostle Paul had in mind when he stated,

But if we *judge ourselves rightly* [proper confession], we should not be judged [we should avoid divine discipline] (I Corinthians 11:31).

If we remain unyielding, refusing to confess our known sins, we are then judged and disciplined by the Lord.

The question that baffles us is, *is a believer in perpetual carnality capable of changing his mind?* The Scripture has the answer:

And do not be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2a).

The Greek grammatical construction of the above verse shows that a believer in carnality is capable of changing his mind. The word conformed is the Greek verb *sunschematizo*. The verb is a present imperative with [the Greek negative] *me*, the negative, which in construction forbids the continuation of an action already going on. In other words, a change of mind followed by a confession of known sin is what the apostle had in mind in Romans 12:2. Re-read the Greek construction again! Paul exhorts the saints, “Stop assuming an outward expression which is patterned after this world, an expression which does not come from, nor is it representative of, what you are in your inner being... “Stop masquerading in the habiliments of this world, its mannerisms, speech expressions, styles, habits.”² Ordinarily, no one can change direction without a change of mind. This is true of an unbeliever. He changes his mind prior to faith alone in Christ alone. Paul calls this,

Repentance [a change of mind] toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21b).

Similarly, a believer in perpetual carnality is no exception. He must change his mind about his

² Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*—Grand Rapids, Michigan

carnal state prior to the confession of his sin to God. A change of mind does not rob grace of its power! The ability for one to change his mind is an attribute to grace. The apostle Paul asks,

What do you have that you did not receive?
(1 Corinthians 4:7a).

It is no work at all; otherwise, the Lord would not have beckoned the unbelievers to do so.

And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent [change your mind] and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).

The Holy Spirit would not have, through Paul, exhorted the saints in Rome who were in perpetual carnality to stop an ongoing action if they were not capable of changing their minds. A change of mind occurs when an individual recognizes that some known act is the root of sin in his life, it is wrong, and it needs to be uprooted by means of confession. **However, a change of mind, in itself, has no power to bring about any spiritual change in one's life without the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.** The believer only recognizes his behavior as a sin and wishes to regain his broken fellowship with God. His will power falls way too short to alter his behavior!

With this truth in mind, confession falls into two categories, namely, an instant and a soul-searching confession. At a glance, I John 1:9 applies to believers who are either **grieving** the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) or **quenching** the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

A believer in spiritual motion, that is, in the light as per I John 1:7 would not harbor any sin such as hatred and bitterness toward others. He is already in agreement with God's view on sin. If he fails, in other words, grieves the Holy Spirit, all he needs to do is to instantly name that sin to God. Why is this? Because he is already in the light. He just missed the mark. He has not totally fallen or lost his spiritual compass.

But for the believer in perpetual carnality, like the prodigal son who has quenched the Holy Spirit, the following warning applies to him outright,

Remember therefore from where you have **fallen** and repent [change your mind] 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 [change your mind]" (Revelation 2:5)

The Lord takes spiritual life and constant fellowship with God seriously. In Luke 15, He taught us a thought provoking lesson on restoration to fellowship. That's not all! His last message to the seven churches in Asia Minor is equally thought provoking. Every believer should give his undivided attention to this lesson. Ironically, the Lord used the word repent seven times in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 to warn the five churches in perpetual carnality.

To the church at Laodicea, the Lord warns,

I know your deeds...you are lukewarm [in perpetual carnality]...Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent [change your mind]. (Revelation 3:15, 16, 19).

To the church at Sardis, the Lord equally warns,

...I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead [in perpetual carnality]. 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die... So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent [change your mind] Therefore if you do not wake up...I will come upon you (Revelation 3:1-3).

To the church at Thyatira, again He warns,

Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent [change their minds] of her deeds (Revelation 2:22).

To the church at Pergamum, He warns,

So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent [change your mind]; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth (Revelation 2:15,16).

And finally to the church at Ephesus, the Lord gives a resounding warning,

Remember therefore where you have fallen and repent [change your mind] 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 2:5)

Now let’s carefully dissect the truth in the above verse.

- i. “Remember therefore where you have fallen”: in the above context, the word ‘remember’ is a word that calls for a soul searching. Without this, one would hardly remember where he has fallen.
- ii. “Repent”: the *searchlight* of the Holy Spirit guides the believer in a soul search which brings about an inward conviction. This conviction then leads to repentance, a change of mind. Again let it be said, repentance does not mean to feel sorry for sin.
- iii. A change of mind, which is no work at all, initiates an honest confession of known sins to God alone.
- iv. Consequently, confession of all known sins results in forgiveness and restoration to fellowship. This is God’s grace in action.
- v. “Do the deeds that you did at first”: Upon confession of known sins, God forgives the believer of all wrong-doing. And thus, provides the believer with the power to fulfill the mandates of the spiritual life. The restored believer now has the power to,

...walk in a manner worthy of the calling [namely, living the spiritual life] (Ephesians 4:1).

Again, Revelation 2:5 commands that the believer in perpetual carnality must go through serious soul-searching prior to the confession of his sin. Thus, a change of mind to reverse the course of perpetual carnality is a prerequisite to restoration of fellowship.

Amazingly, both the believer in spiritual motion who misses the mark and the believer in perpetual carnality will equally be restored to fellowship when they acknowledge their sins to God. **In both cases grace prevails!**

On a different note, if a believer **knows** a thought or action to be a sin but does not confess it, he remains **out of fellowship** with God.

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17).

Obviously, harboring un-confessed, known sins means no restoration to fellowship. It constitutes hardness of the heart (Ephesians 4:18). God’s instruction is precise. *Confess all known sins. Do not worry about the unknown sins. My grace will take care of all of them.*

To amplify this awe-inspiring and thought stimulating doctrine of restoration to fellowship, we consult the lesson that the Lord taught us in the parable of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). We are all familiar with the story. The son wandered off, that’s to say, he went out of fellowship from his father when he,

...went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living (15:13b).

Invariably, this describes every believer who is in the state of perpetual carnality. Carnality rears its ugly head in various ways ranging from bitterness, sexual immorality, hatred, to even murder. As we previously delineated, often times, we as believers attempt to camouflage our perpetual carnality by pretending to be living the spiritual life. Some of us even continue to attend Bible class regularly. One may ask, “How can I know that I am in perpetual carnality?” Simple self-examination would suffice. Have you been bitter toward someone for a prolonged period? Do you hate anyone to the point

that just thinking of the person elevates the level of your adrenal hormones, possibly even triggering high-powered anger and rage toward the individual? If so, according to Scripture you are in perpetual carnality. My friend you need recourse in a hurry!

The one who says he is in the light [living the spiritual life] and yet hates [Greek: keeps on hating] his brother is in darkness [in perpetual carnality] until now (I John 2:9).

That's the Word of God! John repeats,

But the one who [keeps on hating] his brother is in darkness and walks [keeps on walking] in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (v. 11).

The apostle then became very emphatic:

Everyone who [keeps on hating] his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life [the quality of God's life] abiding in him [or better enjoys the life of God through maintaining fellowship] (v. 3:15).

The issue is perpetual, undiminished hatred. That's what the Holy Spirit seeks to communicate through John. Hatred is just one aspect of sin. If you are guilty of such a lifestyle that is detrimental to your spiritual life, then Luke 15:11-24 should be of much interest to you. The truth of the matter is that you can not maintain a lifestyle of hatred and still be filled with the Holy Spirit. Impossible! In other words, the filling of the Holy Spirit and hatred are mutually exclusive!

The good news is that God's recovery system is a grace procedure. In forgiveness of sin God does all the work. All we do is follow His instruction. And His instruction is as simple as ABC. Grace all the way! The book of Luke continues,

Now when he had spent every thing, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need (Luke 15:14).

Disaster is always God's warning bell to a believer in carnality:

In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity [disaster] consider

[contemplate as to why you are in a jam]— God has made the one [prosperity] as well as the other [disaster] (Ecclesiastes 7:14).

Amos questions,

If calamity occurs in a city has not the Lord done it [is not the Lord responsible]? (Amos 3:6b).

The author of Hebrews says it best,

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines and scourges every son whom He receives (Hebrews 12:6).

John the apostle, on the island of Patmos, received these sobering words from our Lord,

Those whom I love, [including believers in perpetual carnality] I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore [follow the procedure], and repent [Greek: *metanoeo*] (Revelation 3:19).

Now let us harmonize Scriptures. *Strong's Concordance* defines *metanoeo* as “**to change any or all of the elements composing one's life; attitude, thoughts, and behaviors concerning the demands of God for right living.**” Simply put, metanoia (noun form of *metanoeo*) means “a change of mind.” An even more illuminating translation of Revelation 3:19 is given to us by Col. R. B. Thieme Jr. in his book titled *Christian Suffering*. His translation states it best, “Those whom I love I reprimand and I punish; therefore, be zealous, and change your mind.” *Change your mind about what?* The answer is clear. Change your mind as regard to the carnal state for which you are under divine discipline.

Again, the Apostle John was not alone in his dissertation. James also states,

My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth [is in perpetual carnality] and one turns him back [encourages him to have a change of mind], let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20 cf. Galatians 6:1).

Thus, the road to spiritual recovery is a change of mind in regard to our carnal state. It's a process whereby God the Holy Spirit shines the beam of light into the dark soul of the believer, who then recognizes his carnal state and initiates a change of mind that ignites the fire of a real or true confession.

But when he [the prodigal son still in carnality] came to his senses [literally to himself], he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger. I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'I have sinned'' (Luke 15:17, 18).

Read the passage again and follow along, for the entire passage is very vital to our study as we near the end of this exposition. As we can see, first, adversity brought him to his senses. Second, a desire to change his mind followed. And third, confession of his sin became inevitable. And finally, he moved away from the pigsty and came to his father (v. 20a). Here a change of position occurred because the power to change had become available to him through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The truth of the matter is that the moment he came to his senses, the moment he had a change of mind, and the moment he formulated his confession in his thought, restoration occurred outright! This is grace in action.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him [even before his intended long speech simply because restoration of fellowship had already taken place] (v. 20b).

For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7b).

Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all (Psalm 139:4).

It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24).

This is what God's omniscience is all about!

Now go back and reread our third principle on page 4. This is the teaching of God's Word.

Simply put, a true confession is ritual *with* reality. Like Dr. Chafer explains, it "**is the outward expression of inward repentance, [which] becomes the one condition upon which a child of God who has been injured by sin may be restored to an unbroken fellowship again.**" Again, it's agreeing with God that my sinful behavior is sin. It is wrong and needs to be put asunder via confession by naming the sin to God. We can't emphasize this enough. After all, that's what God says.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice (Ephesians 4:31).

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your [life] (James 1:21).

Scenario: Your big foot is on somebody's small toe. He yells "Ouch! You are on my toe!" You respond, "I agree with you, I am on your toe!" And yet there's no change of mind on your part to take your foot off his toe. Does that make any sense? We are admonished to,

...let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Heb 12:1).

It is unlikely (though not impossible) that one who has made an honest confession, that is, he agreed with God that the sin he committed was wrong and needed to be put away (and took his foot off the toe) will *immediately* turn around and repeat the same sin. But if he does sin again, the grace recovery procedure of 1 John 1:9 applies again and again until the believer learns how to fly a little longer before crashing again into sin. What a grace package!

In light of this, Dr. Chafer concludes his doctrinal exposition on the prodigal son with these thought stimulating words: "No one can believe that the

wandering son, after having been restored, and after resting again in the comforts of that fellowship and home, would immediately ask his father for more of his goods that he might return to the life of sin. Such action would be wholly inconsistent with the heart broken confession he has made. **True confession is real and transforming in its power...** Until the one who has sinned makes confession, he is contending for that which is evil and thus is in disagreement with the Father. ‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed?’ God cannot agree with sin. The child can agree with the Father, and this is true repentance that is expressed in true confession.”

Then Chafer concludes, “Again let it be said: repentance is a change of mind. By it, those who have sinned turn to God from sin. *The blessing does not depend upon sinless perfection; it is a matter of not grieving the Spirit. It is not an issue concerning unknown sin; it is an attitude of heart that is willing always instantly to confess every known sin.*”

In other words, when the Holy Spirit fills a believer, the believer has the potential to experience one or more awesome fruit of the Spirit. For example, if the believer has experienced love (Galatians 5:22), a fruit of the Spirit, which is the power to overcome hatred (Romans 12:14-21), then it would be very difficult to instantaneously revert to the sin of hatred with the love of God overflowing in his soul like the rivers of living water.

Illustration of Confession: Let’s demonstrate with the sin of theft. In acknowledging my sin, I confess, “God, I stole petty cash from our company’s treasury box.” That’s all we need to say. Now the believer, back in fellowship, should be motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform to the mandates of God, to desire to stop doing what God commands him not to do.

He who *conceals his transgressions* [known sins] *will not prosper*, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion [forgiveness] (Proverbs 28:13).

King David best illustrates Proverbs 28:13 in the following verse,

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 forgave the guilt of my sin (Psalm 32:3-5).

We see the harmony of both the Old and the New Testament! At the point of confession, God forgives us of all our sins and restores the filling of the Holy Spirit with the availability of His power to enable us to reverse our carnal behavior.

He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need (Ephesians 4:28).

In conclusion, God’s wrath falls on the believer who refuses to adjust to the justice of God and judge *himself rightly* when utilizing I John 1:9. Again Chafer reminds us, “**When the searchlight, which God is, reveals needed changes in ones life before God, then to walk in the light one must adapt oneself to the will of God thus revealed.**” God gives greater grace to the humble (James 4:6)!

My beloved, I have no doubt in my mind that God in His unfathomable grace has shed light on this vital truth. And so it’s my supreme desire that this doctrinal exposition be a source of blessing and challenge for us all. May we pray for discernment and wisdom so that we may avoid mere ritual and, through the correct application of God’s Word find reality in the christian way of life—a life of meaning and purpose.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 1:24, 25).

MISSIONARY REPORTS

G.E.M. AFRICA

GEM JOS HOSTS VISITORS FROM 12 AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Jos, Nigeria

Darlington Elekwa Reports:

In August, I met with Secretaries of the International Federation of Evangelical Students who traveled to Jos from Malawi, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, The Gambia, Angola, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, and Nigeria. We had dinner and a very fruitful discussion. Of course, they went home with copies of GEM publications.

We also hosted a visitor from the Niger delta state of Bayelsa, who we have been speaking to on the phone and sending GEM publications to since last year. As he was leaving back to his state, he gave GEM the highest single donation ever which has since been deposited in the GEM reserve fund.

NAIROBI CONFERENCE IMPACTS KENYA AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Nairobi, Kenya

Conference Participant Reports:

In Nairobi, Kenya, GEM held a pastors' conference and crusade which was hosted by Pastor Naboth. Moses also spoke at the downtown Nairobi Bible Study which is taught each weekday by Pastor Maurice Mwale. Pastors from the great lakes region attended the conference (Pastors Gift from Tanzania, Philippe from Burundi, Enock from Rwanda, Baguma from Uganda, and Guillume from D.R. Congo). We hope to visit these areas in 2007. No report can shed more light on the events of the trip than the participants own words:

From Pastor Guillaumd in Bukavu, D.R. Congo: It was really a wonderful opportunity for me to attend such a conference and to be challenged by Moses' teaching. I do not know how to express it, but let

me say this, I surrender all and begin a new experience in the spiritual journey.

Now we are going to spread the grace doctrine all over our country. I will travel, right away, to different parts of the region to teach the grace doctrine, so pray for me. When you come in 2007, may God open doors for you so that my brothers and sisters can receive and hear this. Next week, we will start a fellowship in my house to spread this doctrine. I was so challenged. Pray for us as I am looking for a hall to rent in town. God Bless You.

From Pastor Gift in Tanzania: I received wonderful encouragement through Rev. Moses' teaching. When you arrive back in the USA, please send more materials by Rev. Moses Onwubiko. This man is a very gifted preacher. I never met anyone like him. I like his teaching, Focus on Marriage, his teaching about Job, and Joseph has transformed my soul a great deal. Please send to me more and more divine insight. Thank you very much.

From Maurice Mwale in Nairobi: Your visit in Nairobi touched and changed many lives. The entire team was very encouraging to relate to. The one hour that Rev. Moses ministered at the downtown Bible Study fellowship revolutionized many who listened keenly as he spoke. To date, there is still talk of "building capacity for blessing".

VICTORIA FALLS MAYOR BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW CHURCH

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

GEM Mission Team Reports:

The pastors in Victoria Falls benefited from a double portion of teaching. It was wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit dovetailed the teachings of Rev. Bruce Bumgardner with those of Moses. Bruce paved the way with the subjects: Man, Sin, and Salvation. Moses taught about spiritual gifts and demonstrated how some were effective just long enough to lay the foundation of the church. It was also a time of reunion and fellowship for Moses and Bruce who were ordained together by Col. R.B. Thieme in 1995.

The GEM team members worked with the new converts on the crusade ground each evening and assisted by teaching the children. New believers were given materials and a few training classes to get them started in their spiritual lives.

The mayor of Victoria Falls joined Pastor Gumbo and the team as we broke-ground for a new church we are building to serve Victoria Falls. It will serve the townspeople as well as the international tourist trade. It is ideally located on the road between the airport and town.

ASIA

DOCTRINAL BREAKTHROUGH IN INDIA

Kakinada, India

Pastor Emmanuel Raj Kumar Reports:

Editor's Note: God provides point men to open doors that enable us to take the gospel to their people. In the process, they hear and accept the

truths we bring; however, they hear it through the filter of past knowledge. Through time, study, and prayer, they come to a full understanding of what they have heard. This letter says it perfectly.

I have taken time to thoroughly read the literature that Moses has written. I must admit that I had, previously, just superficially looked at the books and thought that this grace doctrine does not work but leads to the carefree attitude of a believer. But I wanted to reread the books to really see what grace doctrine is all about. So I started reading the books one-by-one: *Gods Plan After Salvation, Comfort in Suffering, Eternal Security of the Believer, Overview of God's Grace, and Focus on Christian Marriage*. Wow, they are awesome, and I am so blessed by the doctrine in these books [still need to learn more]. Instead of just having the care free nature, I got so much reverence and fear of the Lord by learning sound Bible teaching.

I really felt that I have missed much all these days - the grace of God which is unearned and unmerited favor - by not understanding it. Yes it is so, each believer has to understand sound Bible doctrine as

an infant and learn to grow and mature through grace doctrine and become mature. When maturity comes, bearing fruit comes with it. Wow, amazing how good it is to learn sound Bible doctrine. I strongly believe that this is nothing but the plan of God for us and for India. Can you forgive me for neglecting to read the literature until now?

Now I want to learn sound Bible doctrine/grace doctrine completely so that, in turn, I can answer to all who come to me to learn. We need a strategy for doing things in order. After learning, I would like to introduce grace doctrine to pastors and churches so that all over India we can take the grace gospel to those yet un-reached. We can make evangelistic efforts and at the same time teach doctrine. I believe strongly that we need to hoist the banner of GRACE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES and to set up headquarters for India and Asia.

We look forward to the program in 2007 in India. We and all our churches and pastors are praying for the crusades and hoping for a great harvest of souls. Keep praying for us, we are praying for you.

AUSTRALIA

GOD SENDS US TO "ASIA" IN AUSTRALIA

Sydney, Australia

Sam Patrick Reports:

Editor's Note: In addition to the scheduled programs in Melbourne, at the last minute we added meetings in Sydney with friends of Rev Azam (of Pakistan). Moses spoke to two congregations made up of people from Asia, predominantly India and Pakistan. We were all amazed at how even in Australia we were sent to Asia to minister. Here are some comments from our hosts who were just as amazed as we were:

God puts His people together from anywhere and everywhere in accordance with, and for, His works. We are delighted to have your wonderful presence in the early life of our ministry. The common vision that we share (for the lost) is definitely at the forefront of our association with each other. This was no accident (cliché but divinely true).

I continue to ponder about God's plan for our meeting in Sydney. The love of Christ really bonded us in such a short period of time. It is felt strongly whenever I think about it. Indeed we serve a great, loving God! We now await His instruction for us to do His works together, somehow, somewhere!

May God's blessings be upon you all for blessing us with your messages and encouragement. We will keep in touch, as there is so much to share in our collective pursuit of doing His work.

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 (locations and resources).

FUNDED	2006-2007 MISSION TRIPS
Completed	Feb/March 06 - India
Completed	May 06 - London
Completed	August 06 - Kenya, Zimbabwe, Australia
50%	November 06 - Nigeria
0%	March/April 07 - India & Pakistan
0%	July 07 - Zambia & Malawi
0%	November/December 07 - Nigeria

LETTERS TO G.E.M.

Dear Moses

I have been blessed with receiving Grace News Today. Your teaching helps me understand Grace better. I have been a taper of R.B. Thieme, Jr. for many years, and now R.B. Thieme III. God has blessed me with all this wonderful Bible teaching

and it gets better. I'm thankful God led me to GEM.

Love and prayers
USA

Dear Sir,

First of all, I'd like to say praise God that He brought you along in my life at the right time, and I praise God again for how He is always right on time. I saw the word Grace on one of your newsletters that someone else had, and I asked my friend if I could read it after him. From the first reading, I liked it and it is a blessing to me. I would like for you to send me, personally, a bimonthly issue of Grace News Today. Thank you and God bless you all.

Albany GA Jail

To Sir:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I picked up a copy of your tract "Riding the Death Train," in a shop. God has blessed me and my family through the publication. My wife and I are now born again. Today, we enjoy peace of mind because the grace of God is abundant unto us, through Christ.

Thank you for your clearest presentation of the gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has used your ministry to reach many in Nigeria and around the world. Please kindly send some basic books and other materials which will help me in my spiritual living and development.

Moreover, please send more copies of your tracts for prayerful distribution to college students, my fellow teachers, neighbors, friends, and extended family members in the village. My desire and prayer is that they all will be born again and experience God's grace and peace. Jesus loves them and died to save them from eternal damnation.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and your ministry richly.

Sincerely in Christ,
Nigeria

Dear Grace Evangelistic Ministries,

Thanks for the book, Joseph: A Pillar of Grace. That book is so powerful. I wish to have all the books written by Moses C. Onwubiko. As you can see, I'm not in a very good place, but I'm very happy, and I'm growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes it feels great to be born again and renewed in the knowledge of God.

Your brother in Christ
Prison USA

PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYER

THANKSGIVING:

- For many open doors around the world.
- 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.
- The U.S. (For a great revival, peace, and freedom from terrorism).
- 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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To join our *e-mail café* and receive updates and prayer requests, email us at:

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www.GraceMissions.org

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