

A License to Sin?

Written by Norman Ward

One may say, "We all sin. Some of us run a stop-light. Others do worse things. So, let's be gracious to one another." I do not hear the urgency for getting right with God, but a permissive attitude to allow for sin. When I hear people make such statements, I want to reply with, "Well, if you have sin in your life, then you need to repent, confess it and seek God's forgiveness."

We should give up the desire for living in sin at the time of our obedience to the gospel of Christ. Paul asked, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" and answers his own question with, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). God does not bestow grace so that we can continue sinning. Paul goes on to explain how Christ regenerated us with his blood in baptism and that we rise to walk in a new life.

Many preachers today focus on grace and downplay the law of Christ, telling people not to concern themselves with trying to keep His law. The writer of Hebrews presents a different view: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:28-31).

According to this, Christians who despise God's law insult the Spirit of grace. The writer prefaced the above passage by saying: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). Christians should concern themselves with God's law, and not use God's grace as a cloak to live ungodly.

The Holy Spirit declares godly fear a necessary ingredient when living in God's grace. "... let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). This verse goes along with Ps 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." When we reverence God and obey His laws, not seeking to use his grace as a license to sin, we acquire a wisdom and good understanding in life.

False teachers redefine God's purpose for grace. "For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, *turning the grace of our*

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God into lasciviousness,
and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:4).

Paul tells Titus what God's grace does for the Christian. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). Deny ungodliness. Deny corrupt desires for things forbidden. Live with self-control. Live righteously. Live piously. God's grace helps us overcome sin, but it does not give us a license to sin. —818
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