

Galatian Error

(The Neo-Evangelical Movement)

This study will begin with an examination of the reasons behind the writing of Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia. The strength of God's Word in this book has been credited by some for stirring Luther's Spiritual awakening and as a major factor in John Wesley's assurance of salvation. I'm sure that its study will be of benefit to you also. The study will then turn to problems in the church today and examine how they are similar to the ones encountered by Paul.

It is generally believed that the churches in view in this book were in southern Galatia because of their apparent familiarity with the Apostle Barnabus [Gal.2:9,13]. It is also believed that they were churches established during one of Paul's missionary travels.

Many of the local churches that had been established earlier by Paul and Barnabas [Acts 16:6; 18:23; Gal.4:13] (and perhaps other Christian evangelists) fell prey to Jewish missionaries. These Jewish missionaries responded to the growth of Christianity by renewing their efforts at promoting the contemporary Jewish view of teaching legalism as the means of salvation. These teachings were mixed with the Gospel within the local church and had the effect of establishing a new, false gospel. It was not the view of all Jews, certainly, but seemed to be the majority opinion. This 'new' version of the gospel taught that a mixture of faith and obedience paid the sinner's debt to the Mosaic Law and that assurance of salvation was through continued obedience to the Mosaic Law, thus qualifying them as proselytes.

They began a smear campaign against Paul, insisting that because Paul had not required obedience to the law that the converts were actually only halfway converted. They showed where Paul was burning both ends of his candle when it came to legalism. They used past cases where Paul sometimes did not require obedience and at other times appeared to embrace it. Although there is no contradiction in Paul's teaching it was, nonetheless, portrayed as such. Their position was that no 'real' Apostle would have made such an error, or at least would not have been inconsistent (in their view) about the requirements of salvation. Therefore, they said Paul was not a true Apostle from God.

- [1:1] This verse begins Paul's address by claiming that, unlike the Jewish missionaries, his calling was not from man. Man did not choose him nor did he carry man's message. His point is that God picks His messengers—not missionary boards' (e.g., notice that Barsabas and Matthias are never heard of again after Acts 1:23).
- [1:3] Paul believes that the Galatian churches need unmerited favor (grace) from God to overcome the error that threatened the church and God's peace to replace their troubled spirit (see vs. 7).
- [1:4] It is Christ who saves—not obedience to rules. God's will is for everyone to be

saved [Ma.7:21; Jn.6:29,40; 2Pet. 3:9; 1Jn.2:17].

[1:6-9] Describes the purpose of the letter. Paul's Gospel was one of grace (belief only) [Rom.1:16]. The 'other gospel' is purposely written generically to mean any gospel that wasn't pure grace. The true test of one's gospel is 'grace'. Does your gospel presentation require any self-effort, or self-reformation in order to come to Christ [see LORDSHIP SALVATION, REPENTANCE]? Any work at all is incompatible with grace [Rom.9:16; 11:6]. This type of false gospel is said to be 'troublesome' and a 'perversion'. It is a perversion of the truth. It is troublesome because the ministers of the false gospel SEEM so much like men of God [2Cor. 11:3,4,13-15]. Paul doesn't mince words in vs.8,9. He makes God's feelings very clear about what He thinks of those who teach a false gospel.

[1:10-2:14] Paul explains why his version of the gospel is inspired—contrary to what was being taught by the Judaizers (who 'learned' their theology from a religious teacher, or institution). These local church members knew Paul. They knew of his single-minded nature to do God's will without accepting credit for the results. Paul reminds them that to willingly do otherwise would be to fall out of fellowship (OOF) with God. The gospel that was taught by Paul was, therefore, not designed to garner a following for Paul. Paul further explains that, had he wanted to, he could easily have gathered disciples to himself because of his superior knowledge and zealous application of the Jewish laws before he was saved (he had a PhD, so-to-speak, in Jewish theology and history) [Acts 22:3]).

He also points to God's Word as the FINAL authority [1:16] in all matters of faith and practice. This is demonstrated by his behavior following his salvation. Rather than consult the 'missionary board' of his day he went instead as the Spirit led him. For three years he talked to only two apostles. Does that sound like a man who felt unsure of his calling? No. Did he feel that it was necessary to seek the counsel of other men or organizations before fulfilling his role in full time service? No.

We also see that Paul was versatile regarding how he presented the Gospel depending on the particular audience he was addressing (educated/uneducated, Jewish/Gentile). [So much for groups today promoting a canned, sales pitch, one-size-fits-all presentation.]

[2:3] Finally, in verse 2:3 we see one of the errors that was being taught in the Galatian churches was circumcision. The Judaizers were saying that to be truly saved you must be circumcised (an earlier covenant between the Jews and God was that circumcision was a sign that a Jewish male was one of God's chosen people). It was a picture of a spiritual truth. While Jews were taught to circumcise the flesh in a physical way we are taught to do the same in a spiritual way. While requiring circumcision for salvation may seem incredible today, it would be easy to believe in

that particular form of work during that period of history. This was an excellent ruse by Satan because Paul couldn't use himself as proof that the teaching was an error since he had been circumcised as a child (being Jewish). Instead he uses Titus, a fellow missionary who is Greek and a frequent fellow traveler with Paul, to show that circumcision wasn't necessary to be saved. If circumcision were required, then Paul's close friend and fellow missionary would have been circumcised.

[2:4] Beginning in vs.4 we see that the Judaizers were called false brethren. This doesn't mean that they themselves were not saved (while it is possible that they are not saved, Paul isn't judging that since he doesn't speak about what the Judaizers may have believed earlier in their life). Rather, he means that the Judaizers are not fellow disciples and are not in fellowship with God (under the direction of the Holy Spirit). He further explains that they didn't show up in church one day by accident. They came with a purpose and that purpose was to undermine grace and bring the churches into bondage to a system of works for salvation. Because of their education, apparent godliness (from the outside, anyway), and the fact that they came from Jerusalem they would, in the minds of many, carry the implied endorsement of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

[2:5-10] These verses speak of the surprise that awaited many of the self-important people (the Jewish missionaries and their misled buddies in positions of authority) in the local churches. Paul says that when he would visit they would present themselves to him as 'shakers and movers' in the local Christian community, but that he couldn't have cared less. These people thought that because of Paul's background as a devout Jew that he would support their contention that obedience to the law was a requirement of getting saved and staying saved. Paul wouldn't give them the time of day, choosing, rather, to use his time to preach grace to the lay members of the church.

No doubt this infuriated the legalists in the power positions of the local churches. They probably resisted Paul's speaking to congregations, saying that as leaders of the local church they had a responsibility to insure that 'doctrinal purity' (their version, anyway) was preserved. Paul supersedes that argument by stating that his teaching was previously recognized as being in total agreement with the other apostles in Jerusalem [Acts 15].

The Judaizers were operating within the local Christian churches and knew that their authority rested on the presumed endorsement of the Jewish church. That being the case they couldn't very well say that the pillars of the Jewish church, James, Peter and John, were also wrong.

Some of the Judaizers would likely question Paul's statement of fellowship with the apostles in Jerusalem based on a disagreement he had with some of those

apostles in the past. Rather than give the Judaizers something to twist out of context Paul chooses to describe the disagreement he had with Peter. Peter's call was to the Jews. There was a time when Peter got a little too wrapped up in the Jewish culture and forgot where to draw the line doctrinally. In 20/20 hindsight Paul was correct and Peter was in error in this disagreement. Paul reproofed (gently scolded) Peter in public [2: 14]. It wasn't a rebuke (sharp criticism). It was a reproof, but it was done in public. Since he is reporting his explanation of the disagreement to a group that has likely heard of the incident, then the lack of reported response by Peter is a good indication that Peter was left speechless (and edified) by Paul's remarks.

Why was it done in public? Why wasn't Peter taken aside and reproofed? Peter was acting out of respect to the Jews, not 'fear' as we understand it. Peter wasn't scared of them. They were fellow believers and a source of fellowship. The problem appears to be that because of their heritage Peter overreacted in trying to be hospitable. In doing so he led others astray. In effect Peter had, perhaps with good intentions, become two-faced about the doctrine of grace in the eyes of the Gentiles. Peter may not have intended it to appear so and may not even have recognized how his actions would appear to them. A public stumbling block would need public correction.

His error was not in being hospitable to the visiting believers from Jerusalem, but in withdrawing himself from the Gentiles (per Jewish law) to do it. There was no error on Peter's part as far as his stand on the gospel. The error was in Peter's inconsistency in its application. This inconsistent practice sent the wrong message. Because of the number of local Jewish church members who followed Peter's lead it had become a serious stumbling block to the Gentiles left behind wondering where they fit in. One might well imagine the Gentiles wondering if all believers really were one in Christ, or if some were a little more equal than the others. It would foster a feeling of class structure within the classless church. This would be similar to the Nicolaitane error (separating an equal brotherhood into 'clergy' and 'laity') an error that is hated by God [Rev.2:6].

The criticism was public because it was addressed not only to Peter, but to all of those who instigated, participated, promoted, or, perpetuated the practice. That would include Peter, those who followed him and perhaps even the visiting Jews. By application, it would also include Nicolaitane like practices carried out in (or through) churches today (only Bible college graduates should teach, be elders, important people in the community should be elected to church office, etc).

[2:15-18] Paul's opening argument against the error taught by the Judaizers is that it was not the same error Peter made. Peter's was one of application. Theirs was one of doctrine. To illustrate this Paul shows that he and Peter were in agreement

doctrinally when the earlier confrontation occurred. He does this by repeating the argument that he used on Peter during the reproof.

In effect Paul told Peter that if Jews say that they are also sinners who have been saved by God's grace (just like the Gentiles), then why would they voluntarily place themselves back under a system of legalism in effect, acting like they were trying to be saved by works again? To do so is sin [2:18].

- [2:19] Paul continues by explaining that, for the believer, the Jewish law had already served its purpose by bringing them to the cross of Christ. When an unbeliever realizes his inability to meet the perfection required by the law he is drawn to Christ. Christ's death on the cross was the answer to legalism. It is through our attempt to live up to the law that we are led to Christ and are saved. Salvation makes legalism a dead issue. The believer's only job now is to live for God.
- [2:20] The old version of Paul [Acts 7:58-8:3; 9:1-2] died when he believed the Gospel [Acts 22:13-16]. The new version of Paul was not his own doing, but the outworking of an indwelling Christ (via the Holy Spirit).
- [2:21] If one's salvation requires self-effort, then it is a gospel of works (law). A gospel that is 50% grace and 50% work is a gospel of works (legalism). A gospel that is 99% grace and 1% works is a gospel of works. A gospel that is 99.9999% grace and 0.0001% work is a gospel of works [Rom.11:6]. Paul's point is that if the gospel requires any work (any self-effort, self-reformation, etc.), then nothing has changed and Christ's death on the cross didn't change anything (legalism had already required work). His message is that legalism and grace don't mix at all.
- [3:1-5] Paul says the Galatian churches were foolish to have been so easily turned from the truth. Today he might have said, "If you don't understand anything else, then understand this; did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works you performed, or by hearing the Gospel of grace?"

Those Galatian believers had heard and believed the Gospel and, as a result, had been indwelt by the Holy Spirit immediately upon having believed [Acts 15:7,8] (see SPIRITUAL GIFTS). After you are saved (and indwelt) you are not perfected, you do not mature through your own self-effort (the flesh). Rather, you are perfected in the faith by submitting to the outworking of the Holy Spirit. When you do this it's as if the old you has died and a new, Spirit-directed-you lives on [2:20]. As an individual you don't get the credit for anything not your salvation (God saved you by His grace, not because you earned it in any way) and not in any good work accomplished after salvation (it's not you, but Christ living out His life through you).

When a believer gets to heaven all he/she will be able to say is that they believed the Gospel and, after that, were used by God. They themselves didn't actually

perform any work worthy of reward, but it was God who used them to accomplish His work. Since your reward in Heaven is based on motives and not outcomes, then it is easier to see that the rewards are not for the work you accomplished (you didn't accomplish any), but for your success at remaining in a position of fellowship and, thus, available to be used by God.

[3:6-9] The Gospel was the same in the Old Testament as in the New. It has always been by believing (or trusting) in God's ability. Abraham was an Old Testament figure and he was saved by his faith that God would do what He said He would do [Gen.15:2-6]. Today you (if you are saved) are one of those stars used as an illustration by God. Paul says that as believers we are the children of Abraham.

[3:10-12] If they wanted to be saved by obedience to the Law, then they had to buy into the whole Law, not just the laws they liked (circumcision). If, as the Judaizers were teaching, you must be in subjection to the legalism to be saved, then they won't be saved because they couldn't meet the standard required by the whole Law (perfection). Since it was impossible for those believers to meet the requirements of their Law, then it was obvious that it didn't provide salvation. Rather, salvation was provided for those Jews that believed that God could meet the requirements of the Mosaic Law so that they wouldn't have to.

[3:13-16] The Old Testament (O.T.) Law served two functions. Believers from any age are saved by God's grace through faith. The knowledge of a legalistic plan brings people to the issue of salvation. This is done by their recognition of the futility of self-reformation by application of legalism. This, then, was the curse spoken of by Paul. Having experienced the frustration of self-reformation the person is led to total reliance in God's ability to save and reform. This results in immediate salvation. Christ's death on the cross eliminated those portions of the law that were purely legalism [Col.2:14]. After salvation the remaining portions of the Law served only as a divine guide to enjoying the relationship established by trust.

Abraham's blessing was the promise that all nations (including Gentiles) would be blessed through his seed (Christ) [2:8].

While salvation by faith was available to any believer at any time in history (through what Christ would do) it remained for Christ to die before the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit became possible as a consequence of that faith (see SPIRITUAL GIFTS & CHARASMATICS).

[3:17-25] Paul states that you can't mix promise with legalism. If God promised Abraham that salvation would be by faith and that promise was never withdrawn, then it supersedes anything that the Mosaic Law could provide. To that end the Law was intended to characterize sin as a transgression. By the mere nature of the

Law it led those who would attempt to adhere to its requirements to an understanding of faith.

The Law demanded righteousness. The failure to comply with that demand required an offering. All Jews under the Law were aware of their OWN inability to please God and their constant need to offer a sacrifice. The Jews recognized God's grace in providing the sacrifices as a means to cover their sin, but here is where the split occurs. Despite the Spirit's influence many Jews (Judaizers among them) clung to the Law as the sole expression of God to man while others recognized the Law as a very limited expression of God's tremendous grace.

The Law influenced the latter group to seek a deeper understanding of the 'grace' relationship between God and man. After placing their faith in God's ability to save the law was no longer their 'schoolmaster'. The schoolmaster required obedience toward authority. After faith has come believers are asked to voluntarily submit to God's leading.

[3:26-4:7] All believers became the children of God when they first trusted in God's ability to save (a method of salvation made available by Christ's future or past death on the cross—see Before You Begin Any Study) [3:26]. Immediately upon trusting God for salvation today you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will then provide guidance and instruction (your submission is voluntary) [1Jn.2:27].

God frequently uses experience, your time in the Word and other Christians within the body to provide this guidance, but promises to provide it regardless of your circumstances. After you have grown to deeper understanding of God's relationship to you through Christ you will have shed the significant vestiges of legalism. This 'legalism' today expresses itself in many ways from ritualistic worship services to movie, TV and dancing bans and even to forbidding young girls from playing with Barbie dolls. This is expressed by 3:27 where 'baptism' is used to refer this deeper understanding (literally, saturated with doctrine).

'Baptism', here, is the Greek word 'bap-TID-zo' and means 'to make fully wet'. While it generally refers to water baptism it is not used exclusively to indicate water baptism [see BAPTISMS].

Those who are water baptized were to do so as a public expression of what they had believed internally. The public expression did not result in any change in your relationship with God. Since it is an expression of an event that has already happened, then it can't be said that you 'take on the character of' (put on) Christ at that time. It would have to refer either to the point of salvation (Spirit baptism) or to a degree of doctrinal maturity concerning Christ.

The key to which of the two remaining interpretations applies is the text of the

sentence. The letter is written to the saved members of the various churches. Therefore, the use of the word 'you' refers to believers. Since Paul indicates that 3:27 refers only to a portion of the population of believers ("For as many of you as have..."), then the reference cannot be to Spirit baptism since that occurs to ALL believers after Cornelius when they believe the Gospel [see SPIRITUAL GIFTS & CHARASMATICS]. The second hint is the word "into" (KJV). The Greek translation of this word is literally, "with respect to a point reached or entered" (past tense). The choice of this primary preposition before the object 'Christ' indicates that the baptism spoken of is subsequent to the salvation experience. Since Spirit baptism and water baptism have already been eliminated as possibilities, then this application of the word refers to having been 'soaked' with doctrine sufficient to mature you to the point that you can appreciate God's indifference toward purely cultural distinctions [3:28]. This, incidentally, was where Paul's disagreement with Peter centered [2:11].

All of the people to whom the letter was written were already saved. The expression 'if' in 3:29 is a class #1 conditional particle indicating that there is no question in the mind of the speaker (i.e. "If, and I know it is true,...").

Paul expands on the distinct roles played by the Law for unbelievers verses believers in 4:1-7. Here he relates it to the typical education of a child in their culture. The unbeliever, like a child, is placed under the tutor (schoolmaster) and governor/governess (i.e. an Edwardian era nanny, like Mary Poppins). These overseers required strict discipline from their charges. In like manner, God had placed all the Jews under the strict discipline of the Law (as their 'nanny', so-to-speak). After the child matured (from 'child' to 'son' in this case) he was no longer under the authority of the 'nanny' (Law), but became a 'son' (believer) who answered directly to the father (God).

So, Paul has again proved that it was one's faith that saved them and not their adherence to any form of legalism. He shows that the Law was, to the unsaved Jew, both a light to show us their own inability to reach God and as a guide to bring them to faith in God's ability to save.

[4:8-18] Here Paul shows us that once we are saved by grace that returning to a system of legalism is wrong. He teaches that legalism is a tie to the physical creation, but that Christianity is to break the bonds that tie us to observances based on the physical creation and focus on our supernatural Father. Paul was originally received, during the establishment of the churches, as a spokesman for God (focus on the supernatural). They believed what he said in the same manner as if Christ had spoken the same words (focus on supernatural). They did not regard Paul's physical limitations and appearance (focus on the physical), but were concerned only for the message he brought (focus on the supernatural).

Now the churches had embraced a gospel that included works. If he was to bring them the identical message that he had brought when establishing the churches years earlier, then he would now be considered an enemy of the 'truth'(?). It was not their zeal that Paul found objectionable (zeal was desirable), but it was a mis-directed zeal flamed by the infectious fervor of the Judaizers.

[4:19-5:15] Paul begins by expressing the same concern all evangelists have. Namely, that Satan will get to new believers with false religion before they have had an opportunity to become well grounded in the essential truths of Christianity. This fear had come true for many of the Galatian believers because of the efforts of the Judaizers. They are still saved (everlasting is everlasting), but they have come under the influence of legalistic teachers. As such they will not mature as Christians, but as legalists.

For the fifth time in the letter Paul proves that grace and works do not mix. This argument uses an illustration from scripture. The son born of the slave woman (Hagar) was named Ishmael and represented the fruit of self-effort (works) [Gen.16]. The son born of the free woman (Abraham's wife Sarah) was named Isaac and represented the fruit of God's promise (grace) [Gen.17:15-19]. Both would result in great nations, but one's greatness would be measured on a physical plane (Ishmael—legalism) and the other would be measured on a spiritual plane (Isaac—salvation by grace). God's covenant promise was with Isaac [Gen.15:19] and not with Ishmael.

The illustration continues in the life of Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael used to intimidate the younger Isaac [Gen.21: 9] just as legalists persecute those who believe in grace. As a result God directed Abraham to cast Hagar and Ishmael out [Gen.21: 9-14] so made a clear distinction between legalism and grace. Paul concludes the illustration by indicating that, because legalism and grace don't mix, that the churches should also throw the legalistic influence out as Abraham was instructed to do.

[5:1-15] Paul directs them to not be moved from their position of salvation by grace to a position of mixed grace and works. Any mixture of works with grace turns the mixture to works just as mixing any metal with another, no matter how slight, makes the mixture an alloy and no longer pure. A scriptural illustration would be the use of leaven [5:9]. Mixing any amount of leaven into the dough means the bread will no longer qualify as 'unleavened' bread. If left long enough the small amount of leaven mixed in will leaven the whole lump of dough. For this reason Paul instructs the Galatian church [5:2] that if they must be circumcised to be saved (works), then Christ's death has no meaning to them. Christ died to provide a means of salvation via grace. To try to apply his death to a means of salvation other than grace (i.e. a mixture of grace and works) is doomed to failure and

makes Christ's death of no profit to the legalist.

Once a person adds works to salvation by grace, then he or she is required to fulfill all the works [5:3]. Paul is saying that you can't mix grace plus works, that it must become one or the other. It's like saying that you can't mix standing up and sitting down. You must do one or the other, but you can't do both [Rom. 11:6]. Once you mix circumcision into the formula, then you are required to get to heaven by your own devices and not grace because you have nullified Christ and grace.

Once a person is saved [5:4 "you"], if that person later falls for the false gospel of works added in, then he or she has fallen, but has not lost their salvation. What is lost is their position of fellowship with God. Those who have not believed the message of works [5:5] may still be in fellowship and under the direction of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Those that were still in fellowship [5:6] produced works because they were saved. They didn't produce works to become saved.

The Galatian churches used to be well grounded in the faith [5:7], but the Judaizers who came to the churches turned the direction of the church around by persuasion. The source of that teaching was not God (despite what the Judaizers said [5:8]). As a result the Godly impact those churches could have had in the community was lost [5:9]. God's will is for everyone in those churches [5:10] be 'grace-minded'. For that to occur either the Judaizers must have a change of heart, or they must be dismissed from church membership, even if they were now big shots within the church (after all, the only requirement God ever set on church membership was whether one was saved not their position on Biblical authority, tithing, etc.). Paul had confidence that God would correct the situation within the local churches through the remaining believers once they had been alerted to the fault and its cause.

Despite the error that had been introduced into the churches Paul still refers to them as 'brethren' because salvation cannot be lost simply because a believer later believes a false doctrine [5:11]. Everlasting life is everlasting (by definition) and cannot be lost for whatever reason. True, many of the brethren had fallen out of fellowship (OOF) with God as a result of the false teaching, but they were still saved.

[5:11] In this verse Paul makes another reasoned argument against those Judaizers (that would claim that he also taught circumcision for salvation) by saying that if that were true, then on what grounds did he suffer so much persecution. After all, if that were true (if he did teach works), then Christ would become, to Paul, of no effect and he would be found to be teaching the Law again hence, no reason to be persecuted.

The Judaizers' argument was that salvation by grace would allow you to sin with impunity (once saved, always saved). Judaizers today say the same thing (they refer to 'grace only' as 'easy-believism', or 'cheap grace'). Paul points out that the liberty (from legalism) that a believer achieves when saved is not a license to sin with impunity, but an opportunity to be motivated by agape love (a love that serves) [5:13] and rewards [1Cor.3:11-15]) rather than by fear of legalistic reprisals. The distinction between these two motivations is identified in the Law [5:14].

[5:16-24] An unbeliever is under only one internal influence his Old Sin Nature (OSN). All of us were born with an OSN (also called 'flesh'). It is the infrastructure that leads us to sin. Notice that a person is not born with sin, but is born with the capacity to sin (the OSN). This influence continues unabated from within until such time as the person believes the gospel (via external influence). A believer is then under two internal influences the Old Sin Nature (OSN) and the Holy Spirit (HS). Both influences operate on his human spirit. Both influences vie for the attention of the spirit at every waking instant. The believer must constantly decide which influence to follow.

[5:18] Paul states that if a believer is operating under the influence of the HS, then that person is not under any system of legalism. Legalism is provided to an unspiritual people as an external means of holding in check the consequences of the day-to-day manifestation of the OSN which has no internal check. Notice that it is a means of controlling the actions of both the saved (but OOF) and unsaved alike. For anyone who is operating under the influence of the OSN (believers out of fellowship, or unbelievers) legalism serves a purpose, but for those who are under the influence of the internal HS there is no legalism. The guidance of the Holy Spirit supersedes any law.

[5:19-21] Paul describes the manifestation of the OSN gone unchecked by legalism. It is at this point that many people are stymied by Paul's statement in 5:21b. It would be easier to look first at what Paul doesn't teach. It does not teach that a person who has committed one of these sins cannot be saved. After all, Paul's zealous behavior against believers before salvation was characterized by some of these same sins. It also does not teach that one will lose their salvation if they commit any of these sins after salvation. Christ died for the sins committed after salvation also.

Scripture (KJV) differentiates between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit by capitalizing one. What does it teach? Notice that the object of the statement is not those that are saved ('ye' [5:18]), but refers to unbelievers ('they'). Unbelievers are under the power of the OSN. They have no choice but to follow the OSN to produce human good and human evil (all of which amounts to "filthy rags" [Isa.64:6]). Believers, on the other hand, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and

have a choice as to which influence they will follow. Thus, the contrast is between vs. 21 and 22. Unbelievers are under the power of the OSN's influence and produce sin. Unbelievers will not inherit the kingdom. Believers are not under the power of the OSN and will inherit the kingdom because they have the indwelling Holy Spirit as their security deposit [Eph.1:14]. This is explained in more detail in 1Cor.6:9-12. The term 'unrighteous' [1Cor.6:9] refers to the positional state of being unsaved, not to the practical state of being out-of-fellowship. 1Cor.6:12 explains that it isn't a question of legalism, but a question of influence. Paul couldn't be put under the power of the OSN's influence because the indwelling Holy Spirit influence would always make sin a choice between obeying the flesh or obeying the Spirit. Verse 5:24 uses the term "they". This is a reference to those believers who are also yielded to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus it indicates those who are saved AND in fellowship with God (as opposed to those who are either unsaved, or, saved, but out of fellowship).

[5:25-6:17] This portion of the epistle describes the visible manifestation of an invisible in-working Holy Spirit. It is important to note as you read this that the manifestation of the indwelling Holy Spirit (HS) is not proof of salvation. That often repeated error is a subtle form of back door works for salvation. To say that one is saved by grace, but must evidence works as proof of salvation still performs a work in his submission to that guidance.

Even if in theory it was possible to justify this brand of back door works for salvation what would it prove? It would only prove that if you were omniscient you could discern those that were saved by their fruit. The problem is that we are not omniscient. What we may discern as fruit of the Holy Spirit may actually be human good produced by our old sin nature. Who's opinion would then set the criteria for discerning between fruit of the Spirit and human good? Our lack of omniscience makes it very difficult to know for certain.

The flip side of that observation is that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not an automatic consequence of being saved. Our first verse in this group [5:25] points this out. The use of "we" indicates that Paul is speaking to those who are already saved. A distinction is drawn between living in the Spirit (being in fellowship) and walking in the Spirit (evidencing the fruit). Although believers are admonished to meet both conditions it is not at all certain that they will. In fact it is quite certain that this is not an automatic response [1Jn.1:8]. Walking in the flesh [5:26] is then contrasted with walking in the Spirit. The following verses do more than admonish believers to walk in the Spirit. They direct us to help other believers to do the same. These verses may be described as the 'No-man-is-a-spiritual-island' verses and address spiritual issues rather than physical ones.

Remaining in fellowship and helping others to return there (or remain there) is first described in 6:1 the ‘Don’t-let-fellow-believers-continue-in-sin’ verse. Paul refers to the saved (“Brethren...”), but introduces a subcategory of ‘saved and in fellowship’ (“...ye [saved] which are spiritual [in fellowship]”) and instructs us to help others to reach and remain in this category.

The case of the burdened brother in the ‘Don’t-let-fellow-believers-become-proud’ verses [6:2-5] indicates the common denominator in all examples of evidenced fruit agape love. There is no discrepancy between 6:2 and 6:5. Verse 2 refers to present tense whereas verse 5 is future tense (at the Judgment Seat of Christ see DISPENSATIONS).

In the case of the ‘Don’t-let-fellow-believers-remain-ignorant’ verse [6:6] we see that even Sunday School teachers, elders and Pastors need to continue growing in doctrinal moxie and spiritual maturity, No one is beyond learning even from those are teaching.

Unfortunately, this verse is frequently (and I believe mistakenly) used to address financial support one’s teacher (or pastor). Let’s look at this more closely.

I will use Nestle’s Greek (a majority vote scheme between Tischendorf, Westcott / Hort, and Weiss and the basis for modern translations like the NIV). Immediately underneath the Greek is a phonetic equivalent, then a literal translation—first by the individual Greek words and then contextually.

<i>ΚΟΙΝΩΝΕΙΤΩ</i>	<i>ΔΕ</i>	<i>Ο</i>	<i>ΚΑΤΗΧΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ</i>	<i>ΤΟΝ</i>	<i>ΛΟΓΟΝ</i>	<i>ΤΩ</i>	<i>ΚΑΤΗΧΟΥΝΤΙ</i>	<i>ΕΝ</i>	<i>ΠΑΣΙΝ</i>	<i>ΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ</i>
<i>koinoneo</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>katecheomnos</i>	<i>ton</i>	<i>logon</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>katecheonti</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>pasin</i>	<i>agathos</i>
<i>hold common</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>him being taught</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>instruct</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>things</i>	<i>benefits</i>
<i>And [let] him [being] taught the Word commonly hold with the teacher all beneficial things.</i>										

Here are the reasons this verse is not a reference to financial support of one's teacher.

- The very first word, *κοινωνεῖτω* (pronounced koy-no-NEH-to), means *to share with others*. However, this is a special type of “share.” We might use the English word “share” when we are referring to a financial contribution to a brother, church, or ministry. There are much better (and more frequently used) Greek words to select if this was meant (*ἐλεημοσύνη* = alms, *ἀποδίδωμι* = pay, *ὀψώνιον* = allowance, etc.). This “share” means *to hold in common (as a partner)*. You may recognize the word from the phrase *koine Greek*. The

Greek dialect created by Alexander the Great as a common language shared by all his armies.

An example would be if you went to a movie with your wife or girlfriend (presumably, you don't have both) and bought a single bag of popcorn. You don't split the bag 90% : 10% or even 50% : 50%. Rather, the bag becomes *common property* (koinoneo) from which either party takes as they see fit. You can obviously see the problem here between a stipend for your teacher and co-ownership of *all beneficial things*, that is, your estate.

- Note that the definite article “τῷ” (translated as “with”) is in the singular, dative form. The dative, definite article (there are no indefinite articles in Greek) identifies the indirect object (the person or thing that receives the action) of the verb (koinoneo) regardless of whether the article is neuter or masculine. So, what is the object of the “holding in common” (partnering)? The possible objects are the (1) teacher, (2) the items to be commonly held, and, (3) the Word. However, “things” is not singular and may be eliminated. Also, if the definite article was meant to be masculine, then the instructor is the one shared. Hardly! That leaves the article as neuter. The only neuter, singular object identified in the verse is “word”. This means that the object to be “held in common” is the beneficial things of the “word” (which is singular and neuter). It may be loosely paraphrased and amplified as, “The one being intensively taught should commonly hold those beneficial things (doctrines, valuable lessons learned, applications, etc.) with the instructor.”

Why is this important? Primarily because it promotes like-mindedness, but also this type of dialog/fellowship allows higher order cognitive instruction—synthesis (extrapolating a principle beyond what you have been taught). [Remember, this isn't referring to Sunday School as typically practiced it in most churches. Synthesis is the whole point of intensive instruction.]

- The next reason for interpreting it as an admonition to share God's Word is the context of the chapter. Recall that I described these verses as the ‘no-man-is-a-spiritual-island’ verses. Verse 6:1 primarily addresses the spiritual realm, rather than the physical. Verse 6:2-5 also primarily addresses the spiritual realm [compare 2Cor.10:12-18]. Downstream of 6:6 verses 6:7-9 speak of the spiritual battle in a disciple's life. There is no reason to believe that 6:6 is a momentary lapse in the context and direction of Paul's message by jumping to the physical realm of pay-to-play.
- In Greek, the word order of a phrase or clause is an indication of emphasis.

Because the word translated as *communicate*, *contributor*, *share* is the first word, then it is an indication that it is also the primary emphasis. But, it isn't the only issue of importance. Lost in the debate over the meaning of that word is the meaning of 'katecheomnos' and 'katecheonti.' The root word in both is 'katecheo,' pronounced kat-ay-kheh'-o. This is the Greek word from which catechism is derived and it means *thorough instruction or schooling*. This is not your typical 20-min. Sunday School lesson once per week. It rarely happens in churches today, yet *indoctrination* is Paul's clear expectation of converts. This choice of words strengthens the argument that Paul is not referring to donations in this verse.

We have become so accustomed to the traditions of church infrastructure that we are as blind to its abuses as the Galatian church was to the error of circumcision for salvation. Ask yourself this question: Who should witness? The answer is that every believer should witness. Every believer should be 'thoroughly explaining the Gospel' to people today—that's the Great Commission. Should every believer expect money for his or her 'preaching/teaching' to the unsaved? Of course not!

Given these reasons, I hope it is clear now why the King James Version translators choose to use "communicate" as the proper translation.

Once it is settled in your mind that the things communicated in 6:6 are doctrines, then the question becomes one of are you complying with the additional expectation of indoctrination? Does twenty minutes of actual Biblical teaching/training each week in Sunday School meet the expectations and consequences of "catechism"—the word used in this verse?

So, yes, paid instructors did exist (and do exist now); and free-will contributions are not wrong. Paul himself was a good example. While he was appreciative of donations, he worked as a tent maker to support his ministry. [Imagine what advances for Christ could be accomplished if all churches adhered to that single principle!]

All other things being equal, from who would you rather receive your instruction—someone expecting temporal reward for ministry, or, someone focused on eternity? Are you impressed by the advanced degrees? Catholic Seminaries hand those out too. What does it mean—really? Do they get more Holy Spirit than you get?

[6:8-9] Verse 6:8,9 refers to our lives now and not to heaven. One can't reap of the flesh in heaven. It also doesn't refer to salvation since unbelievers can't reap to a Spirit they don't possess. The 'life everlasting' refers not to a position already prom-

ised to believers, but refers to the practical results of remaining in fellowship with God continuing happiness and contentment here on earth (despite hardships).

We are asked to express in a physical way the benevolence of God we have experienced through His grace. We are not only to share of ourselves with those we recognize as fellow believers (our first priority), but with unbelievers [“all men”] as well.

[6:11] This verse is to be compared with Paul’s normal practice of dictating his letters (e.g., 1Pet.5:12). Here Paul writes the letter himself. While most would say that this verse is evidence of Paul’s poor eyesight the reasons may differ. It doesn’t say that Paul wrote using large letters, but that is the likely inference considering 4:13,15. On the other hand the only evidence supporting the plural form of ‘letter’ is from the Westcott and Hort lineage (see BIBLE). If we side with the more numerous Greek texts we must also conclude that the reference is to “letter” (singular). This may mean, as the KJV states, that Paul is referring to the length of the letter (considerably longer than might be expected for someone of his physical condition). Paul may be pointing to the letter’s length as an indication of the importance of his message. Because I am partial to the Byzantine text types I prefer the latter explanation.

[6:11-13] Refers to the Judaizing missionaries. Their biggest concern was how many circumcisions they could report to the home church. They suffered from the trappings of legalistic form and missed the original function altogether.

[6:14-15] The only glory Paul (or any of us) could claim is the glory of God through the provision of grace. It is a reference to both saving grace and the ongoing grace to affect his ministry. This ongoing grace is an indispensable part of discipleship and is accessed through fellowship (i.e. through the Holy Spirit). It is this option of fellowship with the Father through the Holy Spirit that sets us apart from unbelievers that makes us new creatures.

[6:16] Believers will enjoy peace and mercy while they are in fellowship. Not the peace and mercy that the world provides, but, rather, what God provides.

[6:17] Paul expresses the desire to remain in fellowship and to enjoy the peace that it brings. Despite the persecution that the world had handed him he was still content with where God had directed him. To those believers who had met Paul it must have been very evident that the physical scars he bore (due to persecution) spoke volumes more to his lifestyle than did the mark of his circumcision.

Paul’s closing remark is that we should remain in fellowship. From a positional point of view the grace of Christ is always with the believer (he is sealed with the Holy Spirit). From a practical view His grace is with our human spirit only when we are in fellowship.

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Churches in America have fallen prey to the very same type of false gospels today. It is called 'neo-evangelicalism', but not because the idea of false gospels is a new one. Rather, the form of the 'work' is all that has changed. In Paul's letter to the Galatian churches the form of the 'work' was circumcision. We may say to ourselves that you wouldn't be fooled by a requirement like circumcision that was so obviously wrong. No, you probably wouldn't, but you must remember that circumcision was a very big stumbling block to people in that time. Satan knows that circumcision will not work in our culture. Instead, he has found some works that are as big a stumbling block to us today as circumcision was to the Galatian churches.

Today the form of 'works' being passed off as part of the gospel generally takes on the following six forms:

In addition to trusting in God's ability to save you must also do one or more of the following.

1. Make Jesus the Lord and Master of your life.

Submission to God's authority and obedience toward Him is important, but in discipleship, not salvation [Rom.11:6]. To require this as part of the plan of salvation is to mix grace with works. The two don't mix.

2. Be willing to turn from your sin.

This is admirable, but as a man, your willingness to turn from sin doesn't pay off your sin debt [Jn.1:12,13; Rom.9:16]. The willingness to turn from sin is important in discipleship, but not salvation. To mix this additional requirement in with the Gospel presentation is to mix grace with works.

3. Inviting Jesus to come into your heart and life.

The Holy Spirit indwells believers today the moment they believe, or trust, solely in God's ability to save them. It is through the indwelling Holy Spirit and your submission to the Spirit as a disciple that Christ manifests Himself to you. God does not wait for an invitation following one's belief in the Gospel. Salvation is immediate based on the belief alone [Rom.4:5; Eph.2:8,9]). The error is based on texts that speak to the disciple and not to the person seeking salvation.

4. Pray to God for salvation (the 'Sinner's Prayer').

Another work mixed with grace. While prayer is essential in the life of a disciple it has no meaning until AFTER salvation. God makes no promise to attend to the prayers of the unbeliever [Pr. 15:29; Isa.59:2], but once you have be-

lieved, then it is no longer a salvation issue. An instant after believing the Gospel the focus shifts to discipleship.

5. Confess with your mouth that _____ (fill in the blank)

A misinterpretation of Rom.10. The chapter describes the typical witnessing situation. In 10:9 “confess” is a Greek word meaning to communicate your understanding (by whatever means nodding, repeating back essential truths, answering questions that are designed to verify that certain concepts are understood, etc.) In 10:10 the word “unto” (“for” in some translations) could just as easily be translated as “concerning” since it is a primary preposition indicating a point already reached or entered. In 10:12,13 the phrases “call upon” and “call on” are translations of the Greek word that literally means ‘to invoke’. That the verses do not require any type of confession is clear from 10:10a where belief alone made you ‘righteous’ in the eyes of God. [See [ROMANS 10.](#)]

6. You must show evidence in your life of that salvation.

Who decides what constitutes sufficient evidence to prove you are saved? If you don’t show sufficient ‘works’, then you aren’t saved? This is a subtle attempt to say that all true believers will evidence their faith. This is a true statement, but not in the way today’s ‘Judaizers’ would have you believe. All believers will evidence their faith to an omniscient God. God doesn’t require an outward manifestation of what we have inwardly believed. The only ‘evidence’ He requires is the supernatural knowledge that you have believed in Him as your only recourse to your sinful state. The second form that this error may take is the teaching that if you don’t continually evidence ‘works’ in your life that you may lose your salvation. You receive everlasting life the moment you trust in God’s provision [Jn.6:36-39,47; Heb.10:10; 1Pet.1:4; 1Jn.5:13]. Everlasting means that this life ‘lasts forever’ (by definition). You can’t lose something that lasts forever. If you could lose it, then it wasn’t everlasting, was it?).

The remainder of the study examines statements from various ministries to see how common place these errors have become. Many people will find a reason to be offended by what they find in this list. I am not judging anyone’s salvation or their ministry. I am, only pointing to weaknesses in their doctrinal position in order to strengthen their witness. The bottom line is that none of these groups answer to me for what they publish. But, it is very educational to examine what is purported to be the Gospel. It’s about time believers took the blinders off and saw this for the Spiritual battle that it is.

“Back to the Bible”— Lincoln, Nebraska’

“Are You Born Again”

- Error #6: “Thousands of nominal Christians show none of the signs of being born again...no habitual sinning...practicing righteousness...loving other Christians...overcoming the world... keeping oneself pure...those that do not have these marks are not born again.

“God’s Way to Heaven”

- Error #2: “...do you leave your sins and turn to God?”
- Error #5: “Do you confess...your sin?...Lord, forgive my sins; I confess them...sign the following confession.”

“What Do We Have To Lose?”

- Error #6: “When salvation is real, it should also result in overflowing gratitude and enthusiastic obedience. It should be marked by: Radical commitment to Christ...Loving relationships.

“William Barclay”— Westminster Press, Philadelphia’

“The Letter to the Romans”

- Error #5: “A man must say that Jesus Christ is Lord...But a man must not only believe in his heart; he must confess with his lips.

“Bible Tracts, Inc.”— Normal, Illinois

“Transformed”

- Error #1: [from the decision statement] “Here and now, the best I know how, I take God’s Son as my Lord and Savior.”
- Error #5,6: [from the decision statement] “...I intend to confess Him before others as my Lord.”

“Dear Dr. Van Dusen”

Your Life Can Become a Great Adventure”

- Error #1: “...surrender my will for the will of Christ... and [for Christ to] take His rightful place on the throne...You must step down and relinquish the authority of your life to Him... and surrender your will completely to Him, right

now?...become my Lord and Master...receive you as savior and Lord. Take control of the throne of my life.”

- Error #3: “...I invited Him to enter the ‘door’ of my life, forgive my sin...will you not sincerely invite the Lord Jesus into your life?...ask Christ to come into your heart...Lord Jesus, I invite You to come into my life...To invite Christ into your life is absolutely the most important decision that you will ever make; and when you do so, several wonderful things will happen: 1. Christ will actually come to live in your heart. 2. Your sins will be forgiven...Did you ask Christ into your heart?...invite Christ to come into your life...We receive Christ by personal invitation...I open the door of my life and receive you...”
- Error #4: “While in prayer, I invite Him to...kneel or bow reverently in God’s presence...In prayer you can say something like this...Pray in your own words...If, after reading this letter you have prayed to invite Christ to come into your life...You can receive Christ right now through prayer...pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life...”

“Have You Head of the Four Spiritual Laws?”

- Error #1: “We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God’s Love and plan for our lives...I receive you as Savior and Lord...Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be...”
- Error #2: “Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance)...as an act of the will...Self is yielded to Christ...Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God’s plan.”
- Error #3: “We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation.”
- Error #4: “You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer...The following is a suggested prayer:...pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life...”

“The Gideons International”— Nashville, Tennessee

“2+2=? Is This Your Problem”

- Error #5: [from the decision statement] “Confessing to God I am a sinner...I do now receive and confess Him as my personal savior.”

“Southern Baptist Convention”— Atlanta, Georgia
“Christ the Only Hope”

- Error #1: “...Make Him your hope by committing your life to him...”
- Error #5: “...You must confess your sin...[from the decision statement] I ask forgiveness for my sins.”
- Error #6: “...you have committed your life to Jesus Christ and, from this time, when alternatives are presented, you will always take Christ...I commit my life to him as my savior and Lord and only hope.”

“God Wants You”

- Error #4: “Do you really want God for your wise, wonderful Father? Tell him so. Talk with him about forgiving you and making you his child.”

“Make Jesus Lord”

- Error #1: “We should make Jesus Lord in order that he may be our savior...his lordship means salvation only to those who voluntarily make him Lord...Making Jesus Lord is essential to salvation.

**“Board of Evangelism, Mississippi Conference of United Methodists”—
Nashville, Tennessee**

“The Four Great Emphases of United Methodism”

- Error #1: “This inward confidence is confirmed by outward change i.e., a new style of life...I need to receive Christ as savior and Lord...and receive into my life as savior and Lord... as evidence of my faith...”
- Error #4: “Following are suggested prayers...to receive Christ”
- Error #2: “To receive Christ means turning from sin...”
- Error #5: “We must acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only savior...”

“Foundation for Christian Living”• Norman Vincent Peale’

“Live Alive With Faith”

- Error #1: “But how do you receive Him? You receive Him by...studying about Him; by living with Him; by making Him the central fact of your life...The answer, then, is complete spiritual surrender and commitment...Get your thoughts under control.”

“Sowers of Seed, Inc.”— Ft. Worth, Texas

“Am I Going To Heaven”

- Error #1: “...[I] receive you as Lord and Savior.”
- Error #3: “I open the door of my heart...”
- Error #4: “MY PRAYER...Lord Jesus, I repent of my sins and I ask you to forgive me [and receive you as] Savior...Thank you Jesus for saving me and for hearing my prayer.”

“Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc.”— Minneapolis, Minnesota

“Decision Magazine”

- Error #1: “...if you accept Jesus as Lord, He will accept you...I will follow Jesus as my Lord and obey Him in all that I do.”
- Error #4: “Dear God, I know I have sinned by breaking Your laws, and I ask your forgiveness [as a prerequisite to salvation].”

“Steps to Peace With God”

- Error #1: “What you must do:...Receive Him as savior and Lord...invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life...I want to...follow you as Lord”
- Error #2: “What you must do:...Be willing to turn from your sins. I want to turn from my sins.”
- Error #3: “We must TRUST JESUS CHRIST and RECEIVE HIM by personal invitation. Invite Jesus to come in...I now invite you to come into my heart and life...Did you sincerely ask Jesus Christ to come into your life?”
- Error #4: “What you must do:...Through prayer invite Jesus Christ to come in...What to pray: Dear Lord Jesus...Did you pray this prayer?”

“The Gospel of Jesus Christ According to John”

- Error #1: “Believing that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and acknowledging Jesus as your LORD means that you don’t have to pay the penalty of sins...if we receive Jesus as our ruler and trust Him we will be acceptable to God...Have you personally trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?...I now receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior...I am willing, by God’s help, to follow and obey as Lord of my life [p/o sinner’s prayer]...When you accept Jesus

Christ as Lord and Savior, you become a member of God's family, a child of God."

- Error #2: "To receive Jesus as your ruler means to deliberately turn your back on all sin and no longer try to run your own life...help me turn away from sin [as part of 'sinner's prayer']...we must be willing to repent or turn from our sins... receive Him as Savior and Lord"...I now turn from my sins and receive you."
- Error #4: "Your response, in prayer, is to call upon God to enable you to surrender your will...ask for mercy, and fully trust in Him...Through prayer...Tell Him that you would like to trust in His Son...You can receive Jesus Christ into your life here and now, praying to God something like this:...Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control his life... Through prayer we can come to Christ as the Door to Life.

"Radio Bible Class" — **Grand Rapids, Michigan'**

"Our Daily Bread"

- Error #1: "...come into my life as my personal Savior and Lord."
- Error #3: "I invite You to come into my life..."
- Error #4: "He wants to come into your life. Prayer this simple prayer or use your own words: Dear Jesus..."

"What Do We Have To Lose? SALVATION: Security"

- Error #2: For evidence and assurance that you have been saved, ask yourself the following questions. Do you:... desire to obey the Lord?
- Error #6: "True Christians have a personal, God given faith in Christ that will endure to the end...As long as I [continue to] believe and trust in Christ, God sees me as being 'in ____' Him'...Those who are truly saved are those who will endure... those who endure give proof of the Lord's saving work in them...as we work hard in our Christian walk our salvation becomes more sure, certain, and beyond all doubt. [True believers] will love the people of God;...sense God's Spirit;...sense correction for sin."

“ Truth for You” — Newton, Kansas’

“The Truth Made Plane”

- Error #1: “We must confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior... I receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.”
- Error #2: “We must repent of our sins, have godly sorrow for them,...turn from them to abide in them no more...I repent of my sins, and I turn from them now.”
- Error #3: “Come into my heart and save my soul...I receive Jesus Christ into my heart...”
- Error #4: ““• Prayer for Salvation”...I pray this prayer in Jesus’ name.”
- Error #5: “We must confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior... I believe that as I confess my sins, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin (1Jn.1:9).”

“Jesus Inside Prison Ministry”— Indianapolis, Indiana

“Prisoner...Go Free! Be Free!”

- Error #1: “I want to begin right now a brand new life. I receive you now as my Lord.”
- Error #4: “If you are an unsaved person, you are also in prison and Jesus wants to set you free. Pray this prayer...”
- Error #5: “Pray this prayer out loud.”

“The Love Express”— Camden, South Carolina

“Good News Corner”

- Error #1: “Receive Him as your personal Lord and Savior... I now receive you as my Lord and Savior.”
- Error #3: “Come into my life and make me as you want me to be.”
- Error #4: “Pray this prayer, from your heart.”

“The Navigators”— Colorado Springs, Colorado

“bridge to life”

- Error #1: “Lord Jesus,...be my Savior and Lord.”
- Error #3: “If you have invited Jesus Christ into your life, the Bible says you now have eternal life.”
- Error #4: “How does a person receive Jesus Christ?...If you pray sincerely, asking Him this... He will do it now.”

“American Tract Society”— (Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation) Garland, Texas

“Power for Living: The First Step”

- Error #3: “It’s up to you to open the door of your life to Christ. Are you willing to invite Jesus to come in and change your life?”
- Error #4: “...let me suggest you complete the transaction by praying something along the following lines:”

“Words That Show You the Way”

- Error #1: “This means to turn around...we turn and go in the opposite direction...I hereby commit my life to Him for eternity.”

“Christ for India”— Columbia, South Carolina

“Gather It Or Gutter It! Bring It In or Burn It Up”

- Error #1: “...be my Savior and Shepherd.”
- Error #3: “Lord Jesus, come into my heart; help me; save me from my sins...”
- Error #4: “Just ask him, ‘Lord Jesus, come into my heart’ ...just tell H[i]m now, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me of my sins and be my Savior...”

“Salvation: Make It Sure and Share It!!”

- Error #1: “...be my Savior and Lord...Thank you,...for saving me.”
- Error #3: “...come into my heart and be my Savior...”
- Error #4: “Pray to Him just now...[prayer]. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for saving

me”

- Error #5: “I confessed Christ with my mouth. I confessed and repented of my sins and believed in my heart...I was saved for sure that night. Are you sure you are saved...If not, why don’t you confess Christ with your mouth and believe in your heart...”

”Midnight Call” — W. Columbia, South Carolina

”The Greatest Tragedy”

- Error #4: “...lay this paper aside now. Go down on your knees and call on God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

”International Prison Ministries”— Garland, Texas

”Personal Evangelism”

- Error #6: “The substance of faith is action. Jesus told Peter to step out of the boat and walk on the water. The word was spoken, but faith was born only after Peter stepped out. The appropriation of God’s Word is the lifelong pattern of faith...Faith acts obediently to the commandments of God.”

“The Bottom Line”— West Columbia, South Carolina

”You Can Know You Are Going to Heaven”

- Error #1: “Will you let Jesus sit on the throne of your life?”
- Error #2: “Right now, are you willing to turn away from every known sin...”

John MacArthur— Sun Valley, California

”The Gospel According to Jesus”

- Error #6: “Herein lies the fallacy...the Gospel [of faith only] makes an ongoing trust in the Lord optional.”

“Rev. Garth Leno”— (C&MA) Medicine Hat, Alberta

“We Have Broken Faith”

- Error #6: “[God’s] gospel requires purity of life. It demands that we become salt and light in a dark and desperate world.”

“The Christian and Missionary Alliance”— Nyack, New York

“A Fall to Death”

- Error #1: “...ask Him to come into our hearts as Savior and Lord.”

“I Could Not Understand Him”

- Error #3: “...I invited Christ to come into my life.”
- Error #4: “Simply ask Jesus Christ to forgive you and cleanse you of your sin and to fill your life with His divine Presence.”

“Prison Fellowship”— Washington, DC

“Countdown to Paradise”

- Error #1: “I asked Rusty [Woomer—a death row inmate] if he wanted to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior...”
- Error #4: “...Through tears, he nodded, then prayed.”
- Error #6: “The Bible says Jesus won’t forgive us unless we forgive others...”

“Joni and Friends”— Portland, Oregon

“Christmas Promises”

- Error #6: “The fact is, many did stop believing. They held no faith. As a result, they had no righteousness to their credit.”

“KCP [Kenneth Copeland] Publications”— Fort Worth, Texas

“Welcome to the Family”

- Error #1: “If you have never made Jesus the Lord of your life, then you are separated from God by sin....The only thing keeping you from becoming a child of God is failure to turn from your present world and your present god, which is Satan, and make Jesus the Lord over your life....you have not made the choice to receive Jesus as your own personal Lord and Savior....If you choose to make Jesus your Lord, God will receive you as His very own child....When you make Jesus the Lord of your life, the Holy Spirit hovers over your body and causes your own spirit to be recreated...the moment a person makes Jesus Christ the Lord of his life. Before I accepted Jesus as my Lord, I was headed straight for hell.”
- Error #4: “I want you to join me right now in praying this prayer for salvation. When you finish this prayer, you will be born again.
- Error #5: “To be born again, you use your mouth...you confess with your mouth because you believe it....if you believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved...”

Pastor Rick Warren, Saddleback Church — Lake Forest, CA

[“The Purpose-Driven Life”, 2002, pg. 58-59. From the ‘*40 Days of Purpose*’ Campaign]

In this book, Pastor Warren begins by appealing to the reader to ‘believe:’

- Believe that God loves them. [True]
- Believe that they are not an accident (of fate). [True]
- Believe that they were made to last forever. [True]
- Believe that God has chosen them to share a relationship. [Partly true. Of course, this statement reeks of the false teaching of Calvinistic predestination, but that’s another study.]
- Believe Christ died on the cross for them. [True, but without discussing why this was necessary.]
- Believe that God wants to forgive them. [True, but without discussing why this was necessary.] In fact, Pastor Warren never addresses the issue of trust here as it relates to salvation. He never discusses the fallen state of man. We

might overlook all of that if he made a simple statement that it was the reader's decision to place their trust in God concerning their fate, but he never even comes close. As a substitute for the Gospel, Pastor Warren implores the reader to subscribe to a system of works (rather than grace) as follows:

- Error #1: “Don’t worry. God will give you what you need if you will just make the choice to live for him.” [Work]
- Error #2: “Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ.” [Work]
- Error #3: “Second, . . .” [After accepting the ‘believe’ statements above] “. . . receive. Receive Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior.” [Work]
- Error #4: “Bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: ‘Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you.’ If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations! Welcome to the family of God!” [Works]

Folks, that’s just the tip of the iceberg! And as you can see, there is enough blame to go around to just about every well-known group there is. The really sad part is how incredibly similar these approaches are to the one Satan used in the Garden of Eden—one built on half-truths. It is unfortunate that God’s people today could be so blinded to the truth that many of them would fall for the same tricks Satan used nearly two thousand years ago. Even many of our well-respected evangelistic ministries have fallen for Satan’s subtle additions to the gospel. It permeates many Bible College campuses where it is later thrust upon unsuspecting Church lay members who presume that the seminary graduate in their pulpit must be right because of his/her professional training.

Truth is spiritually discerned. Anyone who is saved has the same Holy Spirit inside them as any saved Doctor of Theology, the same access to God, the same ability to pray, the same ability to understand the meaning of scripture. Ask God if this study reveals truth. When He answers, then make it your business to stand up for the truth!