

Growing in Grace

Scripture

“. . . the path of the just [is] like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”
(Proverbs 4:18 NKJV)

Commentary

When one is born again, he/she is not born fully grown. Like an infant coming into the world, believers must grow in grace. As the verse says, it is like the sun that begins with just a glow then rises ever brighter in the sky.

John said, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (John 15:8 NKJV) Believers are to be growing in grace. “. . . we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV)

This is the natural order of the Christian life, to grow stronger in faith. Today, many in an effort to excuse the sinful byproducts of their evangelistic efforts are willing to speak against the council of Scripture. They say, a believer may be born again and never grow in grace. In fact, they go even further to say that a person may be saved by simple faith in the name, Jesus. While it is true there is no “. . . salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 NKJV) And, it is true that salvation comes to those that believe in Jesus. As it is written, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.” (John 6:47 NKJV) It is not true that a person may be saved without any knowledge of who Christ is. The following is an example of a theologian stripping the truth out of the Gospel.

“Jesus Himself never invited anyone at all to believe in:

- (1) His eternal oneness with the Father and the Holy Spirit;
- (2) His incarnation and virgin birth;
- (3) His sinless and holy life;
- (4) His death on the cross for our sins;
- (5) His bodily resurrection;
- (6) His ascension to the right hand of God;
- (7) His intercessory work as our Great High Priest;
- (8) His Second Coming” —Zane Hodges, *The Hydra’s Other Head: Theological Legalism*

What Zane Hodges has done is seized upon the word “invited” to ignore the obvious context. For example Hodges quotes John 6:47 as a proof text in the same article as was given above.

“Jesus always made Himself the object of our faith and offered eternal life freely to anyone who believed in Him, or in His name, for that. John 6:47 is typical of many statements to that effect: ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life’” —Ibid.

What Hodges doesn’t do is give the context of Jesus’ statements. Below is the passage in context.

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6:44-51 NKJV)

This is a far cry from simply saying a name as some incantation which magically transforms you. When Jesus asked Simon who he thought Jesus was he responded, “. . . ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’” (Matthew 16:16-17 NKJV)

More could be said, but the point is made. We all are to be growing in grace. As Paul said, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to [the degree] that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame— who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:13-21 NKJV)

Prayer

Father, give us grace to grow. Help us to mature through the use of your word. Keep us from temptations, and deliver us from the evils of the day, amen.