

Book review of "Grace Walk"

After reading the book and studying it carefully I am extremely disappointed and concerned that the principles in this book are being taught or endorsed. I am confused as to why a promotion of reformed theology under the banner of "Let go and let God" is encouraged and condoned by church leadership. The book often is confusing and where it is clear contains statements that are clearly opposed to what scripture teaches.

The author of the book does not seem to understand the difference between justification and sanctification, frequently uses scripture out of context, and seems to base the entire book on an experience he had behind his desk. Progressive sanctification is acting by faith upon the word of God, by faith depending on God, and by choice obeying the commands of scripture. I am to act, depend, and obey which allows God's Spirit to transform me. (Rom. 8:12-14, 2 Cor. 3:18).

The author states that the primary responsibility of a Believer is to rest. A Christian who struggles with working in the church will like this book. The author states that victory in the Christian life is a gift not a reward. A Christian who doesn't want to be held accountable will like this book. The author states that intimacy with God is a top priority for a Believer. A Christian who is after an experience will like this book. The author states that right and wrong are unimportant to God. A Christian who isn't willing to stop sinning will like this book.

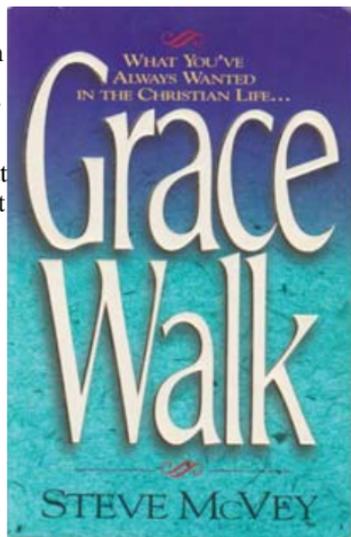
I believe the results of the theology of this book can be clearly seen. We should not be frustrated by people who stand around and drink coffee and don't help out with the two year olds - they are resting and you shouldn't force a grape to grow. We should not be surprised by starting out the year in the hole - God doesn't care whether I give or not, He just wants me to rest and be intimate with Him. We should not be disappointed when people are not willing to share their faith with those who are going to spend eternity separated from God - the "work of an evangelist" is not the priority, rest is, and besides I'm not to do anything that I'm not excited about (pg. 151).

Below are some of the comments in the book that stood out and the questions and issues I feel are raised by the positions espoused.

The truth is that victory is not a reward but a gift. A person does not experience victory in the Christian life by trying hard to live for God. It just won't work.... (pg. 16) We are to use our will to accept the gift of victory; we are not to make an effort to win the victory.(pg. 102) God doesn't intend for us to struggle for the victory.(pg. 103) Don't focus on the commandments as a doorway to victory. Christ is your victory. (pg. 131)

1 Cor. 9:24-27, 2 Tim. 4:7,8, 2 Tim. 2:3-6, 1 John 2:28, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:12

Christ might be my victory as far as the penalty of sin is concerned (justification) but this is



not true as far as the power of sin is concerned (sanctification). A reward is something that is earned and Paul clearly stated repeatedly that how we live our Christian life is a matter of effort on our part. He encouraged others to "suffer hardship" with him and Christ told me to pick up my cross and follow Him. If we are not to make an effort to win the victory then what was Paul doing?

Some who are quick to point out that keeping religious rules won't cause anybody to become a Christian believe that keeping certain rules will help them grow in the Christian life. (pg. 19)

1 Peter 2:2, 2 Tim. 2:22

This is a clear misunderstanding of justification and sanctification. Justification is grace plus faith. Sanctification is grace plus works. If "keeping religious rules" is the same as obeying the commands given to us in scripture, then growth is logically connected with obedience.

Christianity isn't built around performance, but is centered on the person of Jesus Christ. (pg. 21) God never intended for our focus to be on performing and producing. (pg. 22)

1 Sam. 15:22,23, Eccl. 12:14, Matt. 5:48, Matt. 25:14-30, Rom. 8:2,15, Rom. 12:1-16:27

James 2:26

This statement is certainly misleading and will cause a great many Believers to be disappointed at the Bema if applied. The justification aspect of Christianity is truly centered on the person of Christ. The sanctification aspect of Christianity is built around performance. Why am I evaluated if performance isn't an issue? Why did the master in the parable get upset with the servant if performance isn't an issue? Why was Paul so concerned with his conduct if performance isn't an issue? Not once does Paul ever say, "Let go and let God." Faith without works is useless, non-productive, dead. If producing isn't important, why did Christ tell us in the parable that if the vine doesn't produce, it will be cut off and burned up?

....I discovered that the key to enjoying success is not strenuous work, but spiritual rest. (pg. 23) Resting in Christ is the sole responsibility of the Christian. Everything else flows out of that. (pg. 37)

Matt. 10:38, 1 Cor. 10:31, Phil. 2:12, Phil 2:25, Col. 3:17, Col. 1:29, Heb. 3,4,

Heb. 3:18, 4:6-11

*Six terms are used for rest in the NT. A rest IN work not a rest FROM work (producing or performing) was the common use of the term. There are only three times in the NT that the term rest is used as a command. **Mark 6:31** in which the disciples were told to take a lunch break. **Luke 12:19** in which a fool in a parable used the term inappropriately. **Philemon 1:20** in which Paul asked another brother to give his heart rest by treating another brother appropriately. In none of these verses or in any other verses do we find that our "sole responsibility" is to rest. The statement is FALSE and UNBIBLICAL. Christ said He would give us rest **after** we "come" (command) and "take" (command). If our sole responsibility is to rest (not producing or performing) why do we have all the commands in the NT? Why does Paul command us to WORK out our salvation? **The sole responsibility of the Christian is to glorify God, and this is done through good works (Rom. 15:8,9, Eph. 1:4-6, 1 Cor. 6:20, 2 Cor. 9:12-15, 1 Peter 2:12, 4:4-16).***

(Christ) isn't interested in what we can do for Him. Christ is interested in living His life through us. (pg. 35) What a relief to discover that God isn't interested in what we can do for Him... (pg. 87)

1 Cor. 3:10-15, Rom. 14:10, 2 Cor. 5:10, Matt. 6-8, Rev. 2,3

Christ is interested in what we can do for Him; that is why we are evaluated. The Spirit of Christ produces the fruits of the Spirit as I "walk" (command) by the Spirit. After mentioning the fruits of the Spirit, Paul gives numerous commands (things we are to do for Christ) in the following chapter and throughout every book he wrote. Why is Christ so hard on the churches in Revelation if He isn't interested in what they can do for Him? Why does Christ give His disciples numerous commands in the Sermon on the Mount if He isn't interested in what we can do for Him? Once again, why am I being evaluated if Christ isn't interested in what I can do for Him? A misunderstanding of the process of sanctification in the Christian life is plainly obvious in the book.

God wants to bring us to the understanding that we weren't saved to do something for God. (pg. 35)

Matt. 6:24, 1 Cor 6:20

We were bought with a price in order to glorify God, not rest. Service to God is clearly stated as a responsibility in the Bible; Timothy was expected to be "useful to the Master." If I wasn't saved to do anything for God, don't get upset at me when I don't.

You can just be yourself, allowing the nature of Christ within your spirit to flow through your personality and out of your life, like the river of living water that Jesus talked about that flows from one's innermost being. (pg. 45) This is where things get exciting because the Bible shows that our sin nature is dead... (pg. 57) Our sin nature won't be coming back...(pg. 58) It has been taken away...(pg. 60) While it may go against your feelings, the truth is that a Christian has only one nature. (pg. 62) God has forgiven us of our *sin nature*. (pg. 124)

Ecc. 7:29, Jer. 17:9, Rom. 6:2,6, Rom. 7:17,18, 1 Cor. 3:1-4, 1 Cor. 9:27, Col. 3:5

Positionally (justification) I am a child of God in right standing with the Father. Practically (sanctification) I am just like Paul, a wretched man with a desperately wicked heart. My sin nature has not been eradicated or made extinct (Rom. 6:6) but has been made powerless or ineffective. If I choose, I can allow it to have power again and to be extremely effective in my life. This is why I'm given commands in Scripture to obey. This is why I am held accountable. To say that I sin because I forget I'm a child of God is a poor excuse and not true in my life. I sin, knowing I'm a child of God, because I want to. The prodigal son didn't forget about his relationship with his father, he did foolish things because he wanted to. If I only have one nature, and I sin, then the new nature in me must be causing me to sin but we know this isn't true because "no one who is born of God practices sin." John tell us in 1 John 3:9 that a regenerate person who abides (obeys) in Christ does not sin. The "new self" from God does not sin - the "old self" does. It is my choice which nature I'm going to live by and it is my responsibility. Our true nature (positionally) is the "new creature" but it isn't the only nature we have.

The Christian life is easy if you just let Him do it. (pg. 69) It is His (Christ's) responsibility to do the work of Christian ministry. It is your responsibility to be absolutely surrendered to Him. (pg. 73)

Matt. 10:38, Matt. 28:18-20, Heb. 11:35-40, 2 Tim. 3, Eph. 4:12

I don't think it's easy for Christians living in Egypt, Sudan, Indonesia, Russia, China, Vietnam, or Saudi Arabia. Christ told us that even though it was light and comfortable, He still had a yoke and a load for us. This statement might be true if He "just did it" for me in the sanctification process, but I'm a vital part of the process too. This is another way of saying, "Let go and let God."

As we experience the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, godly action is the consequence of His life flowing from us. It is not the result of dedicated effort on our part. (pg. 88)

1 Peter 1:13-17

Dedicated effort is required in the Christian life. "Be holy" is a command that requires effort to obey. The audience in Hebrews was warned "Don't drift", "Don't develop a hard heart", "Beware of permanent dullness", "Willful sin is dangerous", and "Don't fail to heed His speaking." These Christian Jews were considering giving up the Christian life and going back to the old religious system they came from. Once again, the sanctification process depends upon two parties, God and me. My part in the process is dedicated effort. Paul's last words were of his effort in the Christian life and his confidence that he would be rewarded for it. Why would Paul receive a reward for his effort if it was just Christ's life flowing through him? Obviously Paul thought he did something in the process that was worthy of reward. Peter tells us that we are to supply a godly lifestyle at our own expense.

The only thing we did to enter into the Christian life was to trust Christ. Does God require something different now that we have become Christians?....of course not! (pg. 88)

Gal. 6:9, 1 Cor. 15:34

Justification requires faith. Sanctification requires obedience. We are not to be only hearers of the Word, but doers.

An intimate relationship with Him will produce a godly lifestyle. A focus on behavior will not create intimacy with God or a godly lifestyle. (pg. 105)

Prov. 3:32, James 3:13, 1 John 1:6-9, John 15:14

"If you love me you'll keep my commandments" - a godly (obedient) lifestyle will produce

intimacy with God. The wisdom writer says that God is intimate with the righteous. What do I do if I don't feel intimate with God? Behavior does affect my intimacy with God and it does affect my lifestyle. If I don't behave properly (obey) how can I be godly?

God never proposed your lifestyle to be built around the principle of right and wrong...(pg. 110) ...the believers shouldn't build their lifestyle around anything. They aren't involved in a building project. Their goal is not to have a moral lifestyle but a miraculous one. They are to rest in Christ and allow Him to express His life through them. As they abide in Christ, the divine virtues Jesus will be revealed through their attitudes and actions. (pg. 113) It's a feeble goal for a Christian to only want to live correctly. (pg. 113) We are no longer required to live under a system of rules which outline right and wrong behavior...(pg. 116) He doesn't care about rules. Right and wrong are incidental to Him. (pg. 117)

1 Sam. 15:22,23, Eccl. 12:14, John 8:31,32, John 15:4,10, 1 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:10

Rev. 3:16, Psm. 119:127,128, Jer. 22:3, 1 Kings. 3:39, Is. 7:15,16, Rom. 13:3

1 Cor. 3:10-12, 2 Cor. 13:5, Eph. 5:15, Phil. 4:7-14, Titus 3:8

*I find these to be very dangerous and unbiblical statements. Since God is holy and perfect, how can one say that right and wrong are unimportant to Him? The believer is evaluated on good and bad works, the unbeliever is judged on good and bad works. I would deem this line of thinking to be **heresy**. If I am to imitate my heavenly Father and if He doesn't care about right and wrong, and if living a moral lifestyle isn't important, how am I to raise my children? I cannot find anywhere in scripture where I'm to pursue a miraculous life over a moral one. If it is a feeble goal to want to live correctly and if we're not involved in a building project, then what was Paul doing and what am I supposed to be doing?*

(Jesus) never gets disgusted with me. (pg. 116)

Matt. 22:12, Matt. 25:26, Eph. 4:30, 1 Thes. 5:19, 2 Tim. 2:12, Heb. 10:30, John 15:6

Why does He want to "spit" useless Christians out of His mouth, why does He use terms like "you wicked and lazy slave", why is the guest that is dressed inappropriately "cast into the outer darkness", why will some Christians "shrink back at His coming", why do I suffer loss for disobedience, why will He deny me if I deny Him? To say that Christ never gets disgusted with me is to say that He is always pleased with me. This is not true.

...it may be necessary to work through some faulty beliefs before you can feel intimate with Him. (pg. 123)

Rom. 1:17

The righteous man lives by faith, not by feelings.

The only genuine motivation in the Christian life that will consistently sustain a godly lifestyle is love.

Luke 6:35, Luke 17:7-10, Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 3:12-15, 2 Cor. 5:9-14, 2 Cor. 7:1, Heb. 12:28

Why isn't fear a genuine motivation that will sustain a godly lifestyle? Why aren't rewards, thankfulness, or duty genuine motivations? This type of thinking encroaches upon God's gracious arena for biblical motivations for obedience. This type of thinking encourages a critical attitude in those who see others working for rewards or out of duty. Christ's love FOR Paul is what motivated him, but he was also motivated by fear and rewards. Does this mean that Paul wasn't genuine in his pursuit of godliness? Heroin addiction is a bad thing for my son. I don't want him to use it. If he chooses not to use it because he loves me, fears me, is grateful to me, or thinks it's his duty to me, as a father I don't care; as long as he isn't sticking a needle in his arm. It would be foolish for me to tell him, "If you're not using because you don't love me, then go ahead and use it." God is interested in godly behavior and allows a number of motives for it to take place. We will be held accountable for improper motives only if right and wrong are not incidental to Him.

It was only after I began to understand grace that I realized that God never intended that we should live by the Bible. We are to live by His life. (pg. 137)

Duet. 8:3, Psm. 1:2, Job 23:12, Matt. 4:4, Acts 20:32, 2 Tim. 3:14-17, 1 Peter 2:2

Where in scripture am I told not to live by the word of God? How do you know you're not to live by the Bible unless you look in the Bible to find out? Perhaps this is direct revelation from God that in turn makes this man a prophet?

And this silent supposition (that God has finished with speaking) floats around the church today largely unchallenged. (pg. 144) A deep knowledge of God won't come by

biblical education alone, but through divine revelation as He chooses to open our eyes to understand Him more. (pg. 169)

John 1:1,14, Gal. 1:8,9, Heb. 1:1,2, 2 Peter 1:19-21, Jude 3

It is not a supposition that goes unchallenged, but a biblical fact. There is no new revelation. This is how cults start. I know God through His word and through His creation. I will understand Him more as I know the word better and obey Him more consistently.

However striving to produce in order to be "successful" is wrong. Jesus said that we are simply branches who are to abide in the vine. Fruit on the vine can do nothing to make itself grow. (pg. 170) God will accomplish His purposes in our life according to His divine schedule. Grapes can't grow faster by grunting and groaning to produce growth. (pg. 171)

Esther 4:14, 1 Cor. 9:24, 1 Cor. 15:34, 2 Tim. 2:5, 2 Tim. 2:21-25, 2 Thes. 3:7, Heb. 5:12

James 3:13, 2 Peter 3:2

There are expectations of growth and production and fruitfulness (grapes from the vine) throughout scripture. The point of the parable of the vine and the branches (grapes aren't even mentioned in the parable) is that fruitfulness is expected, can be achieved through obedience, and not bearing fruit has consequences. Nowhere in the parable is a "Let go and let God" principle seen. Scripture makes it clear that there are things we can do to grow, and there are things we can do to hinder fruitfulness. God's schedule for obedience is not tomorrow but now. If I want to be "successful" in the race or fight that God has set before me, is that wrong and why? These statements in the book are extremely confusing, vague, and can lead one not to put forth any effort in the Christian life, but just be a "grape."

The way to enjoy and express Christ is to allow Him to live His life through us. As we rest in Him, He will express His character and His ministry through us. When we struggle to live the Christian life, we stop the flow of Christ's life and begin to live after the resources of our own flesh. (pg. 172)

Eph. 6:12-17, Phil 4:3

How do I allow Christ to live through me? How do I allow Christ to express His character and ministry through me? Is it by "resting" or obeying? Is it by "resting" or running to win? Is it by "resting" or fighting the good fight? Is it by "resting" or enduring? Is it by "resting" or taking off the old and putting on the new? Is it by "resting" or is it by being salt and light. Nowhere in scripture did Christ command us to "rest" but He did command us to "let our light shine." The term "abide" is used frequently in the book, and Christ makes it clear that to abide in Him is to obey. (John 15:10) Once again the author generates confusion on one hand by saying "rest" and "abiding" are priorities, but on the other hand that performance (obedience = abide) is not. Sometimes the Christian life is a struggle because we live in a fallen world and have a sin nature. If it isn't a struggle, why did Paul have such a hard time with his sin nature 21 years after his conversion? (Rom. 7)

We don't have to overanalyze our actions and attitudes. Life isn't a test, it's a rest. (pg. 172)

Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 4:16, James 1:1,2, 2 John 1:8

Life is not a test but surely has tests throughout it. Nowhere in scripture is life defined as a rest. Life is an opportunity to glorify God. I will give account for how well I did, I will give account for when I allowed my sin nature to control me, I will give account for the right and wrong things I engaged in or disengaged from.

It appears that the word "grace" is taking a beating and is being forced into a definition that is biblically inaccurate. Perhaps I am wrong in my evaluation. Nonetheless, I believe there is a reasonable basis to be alarmed at the biblical inconsistencies presented and how readily a book, that appears to avert the issue of Christian accountability at the Bema seat (*1 Cor 3:10-15. 2 Cor 5:10, Rom. 14:10*), is comfortably embraced by Believers and those in church leadership.

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