

GREXIT

Come Back To Grace ... Leave Self-made Religion

Galatians 3:3

Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? NKJV

How foolish can you be? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? NLT

Having begun in the Spirit

These people were not, non-Christians ... they were definitely born again of the spirit, they'd had a spiritual experience ... they had begun 'In The Spirit'.

SO WHAT WAS THE REAL ISSUE? **Had they backslidden back into sin?**

No! THE ISSUE HERE IS NOT BACKSLIDING INTO SIN. Paul's not saying, 'you're going back to the world & sinning' He's saying, 'YOU'RE LEAVING THE GRACE OF GOD TO BE PERFECTED BY HUMAN EFFORT'.

Galatians 1:6 **SLIDE**

*I am amazed that so quickly you are deserting from the One having called you **in the grace of Christ** to another gospel ...*

In The Passion Translation Paul calls it a '**distorted**' gospel.

It has elements of the truth but is mixed with flesh either **legalism or licence**.

SLIDE THE GALATIAN CHURCH HAD **MOVED ON** IN THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK ... **MOVED OUT** OF THE GRACE OF GOD & **MOVED INTO** HUMAN EFFORT

THE JEWS ALSO DID IT

Romans 10:2-3

I bear them witness that they [Israel] have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge

SLIDE. ³ *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and **seeking to establish their own righteousness**, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

SLIDE BUT IT'S NOT UNIQUE TO THE GALATIAN CHURCH OR THE JEWS. **WE ALSO DO IT.** AFTER FIRST BELIEVING, most of us '**MOVE ON**' in our Christian life ... '**MOVE OUT**' of the Spirit through whom we were first saved & **MOVE INTO** fleshly works.

MANY OF US HAD AN '**I CAN DO**' ATTITUDE

For years I had the 'I can do it' attitude.

As long as I tensed up ... focused and determined ... I'd get there. There are many people in many positions in the Christian Church who have 'GOT THERE' by sheer hard work & determination.

BUT GOD'S WAY IS VERY DIFFERENT.

The way of Grace doesn't say, 'I CAN DO' but without God's Grace 'I CAN'T DO' Grace does for me what I cannot do for myself & without HIM I can do nothing.

SLIDE Jesus Himself said this, 'I can do nothing by Myself' (John 5:30)

John 5:19

*Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.***

John 14:10

*Do you not know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words I speak to you I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwells in me, he does the works.***

ALSO John 8:28, 42

BUT MANY OF US HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THE OPPOSITE & BEEN ENCOURAGED TO MOVE INTO HUMAN EFFORT TO AVOID SIN, TO PERFECT MORAL LIVING & ACHIEVE THE PURPOSES OF GOD WHICH subsequently MOVES US OUT OF GRACE ...

*Many years ago when 'The Grace Revolution' was gaining momentum ... I heard one pastor say in his opening statement, 'These days, there's a lot of talk about 'The Grace of God'. I know we've been saved by grace but once we're saved ... we can't just stay in this grace ... we have to **move on** into serving God.' I thought, 'This fellow is teaching his people to **move out** of The Spirit back into religious works'.*

ONE OF OUR GRACE LADIES PUT IT THIS WAY

*For years as I had lived the Christian life, I had moved out of the Spirit ... wrong teaching and a few other things including Word of Faith Ministries and prophetic ministries which focused on **doing all in my own strength** and which never taught me that trying to perfect my own righteousness with my efforts and in my own strength was wrong. Also these teachings gave me no truths about how to live the Christian life in the Spirit. So blessed to discover Grace righteousness and now learning to rest in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. He shows me how to flow effortlessly in the unforced rhythms of His Grace without any stress or striving from me. HELEN*

**THE EPHESIAN CHURCH WAS ALSO AFFLICTED WITH THIS FOLLY
THEY WORKED HARD IN CHRISTIANITY BUT HAD LEFT THEIR FIRST LOVE**

Revelation 2:2-4 **SLIDE**

*I know your works, **your labour**, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and **have laboured for My name's sake and have not become weary.** ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that **you have left your first love.***

What does Jesus mean, 'you have left your first love'?

Many preach as I have done in the past, they had stopped loving Jesus ... But it is not. These people still loved Jesus ... they were working hard for Him. Look at verse three **Verse 3) You have ... laboured for My name's sake and have not become weary.**

What did Jesus mean 'You have *left* your first Love'. What was this first love & what had they left? They had left ... not their love for God but **THE KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM** – GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF THEM IN CHRIST ... as Paul had written to them many years before – You've been loved in the son of God's love. (Ephesians 1:6)

He made us accepted [bestowed Grace & Favour on us] in the Beloved [the son of his love].

They had stopped 'loving being loved' by God anymore. Some of us GROW UP INTO 'NOT NEEDING TO BE LOVED ANYMORE'. The world teaches us this. **We are taught to toughen up & knuckle under & tough it out ...**

SLIDE LIKE A YOUNG TEENAGER WHO'S DROPPED AT SCHOOL BY MUM. IN FRONT OF HIS SCHOOL MATES, SHE KISSES HIM ON THE CHEEK & SAYS, 'LOVE YOU.' THE TEENAGER, HOWEVER, GETS EMBARRASSED BECAUSE IT'S JUST NOT COOL ANYMORE TO BE LOVED BY MUM. **YOU GOTTA BE TOUGH.** That's what we're like. **WE GET TOUGH INDEPENDANCE**

This is what Jesus is saying to The Ephesian church. YES, YOU WORK HARD FOR ME BUTTTT YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW MUCH I ALREADY LOVE YOU & ACCEPT YOU AND **HOW MUCH YOU NEED TO STAY IN THIS KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE OF MY LOVE FOR YOU.** WITHOUT IT, YOU WILL TRY TO GAIN MY LOVE & ACCEPTANCE BY YOUR WORKS.

NB: This is the church that Paul also wrote about their *being loved, made alive ... raised & seated with Christ in Heavenly Places* (Ephesians 2:4-6) but NOW ... long after Paul had gone, they'd **MOVED ON, MOVED OUT OF HIS GRACE & MOVED INTO RELIGIOUS WORKS. WE ALL DO IT**

ONE PREACHER WROTE ABOUT THE EPHESIAN CHURCH IN REVELATION 2: '*In a sense they (The Ephesian Church) have fallen from that seat of heavenly rest to a place of earthly works. Instead of serving God out of a revelation of His love for them ... they are now trying to serve and love God through will-power instead of being energized and animated by God's love for them. They're no longer resting, they are striving.*'

Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know the love of God (Ephesians 3:18).

THE APOSTLE PAUL NEVER LET GO OF THIS GRACE THAT STARTED HIM ON THIS JOURNEY ...

'I say through the Grace given to me (Romans 12:3)

I am what I am by The Grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:10)

He knew what he meant. It wasn't by his human effort .

WHAT GOES WRONG FRIENDS?

I've listed five causes under alliterative headings

1. WE'RE CONNED BY THE QUOTATION OF CLICHÉ

Have you heard the Christian Cliché 'The Honeymoon period is over'?

Older Christians came up with that cliché and applied it to enthusiastic – usually newly re-born believers saying such things as, 'this is just your honeymoon period. It won't last, you'll soon calm down!' The problem was, WE BELIEVED IT. But I hasten to ask, **WHERE IS THAT PHRASE FOUND IN SCRIPTURE?**

So as new-born believers, we expected to dry up ... we thought it was normal Christianity for things to get tough and of course they did. We then went for counselling where we were taught things like, PRESS INTO GOD ... TRY HARDER ... PRAY MORE ... READ THE WORD ... STOP SINNING Soon we started to look like these elder Christian's – we were anointed with 'Seriousness' ... joy went out of our lives and so began the journey to be 'MADE PERFECT' by our human effort.

THIS IS A CLASSIC CASE OF US **MOVING ON** FROM GRACE ... **MOVING OUT** OF GRACE & **MOVING INTO** 'SELF-MADE RELIGION'.

We cannot naively accept '**Christianese**' – Christian Cliché, because it's usually not founded in scripture & will take you into error.

2. WE FALL INTO THE FAILURE OF THE FLESH

SLIDE I Fail ... I Fall ... I Feel bad ... I Focus on my problem & Fight to overcome

But the more I focus on my sin ... The more I forget I am loved & accepted.

The more I forget I am loved & accepted, the further away I get from my faith in Christ's finished work.

It now gets worse. Overcoming sin now becomes my obsession, which I must try harder to overcome. I go for counselling & get told I need to repent ... So I repent harder & more often and still sin is there ... looming like an insurmountable mountain mocking me.

By now, I have forgotten I am already loved & accepted by God in Christ and I have 'Moved out' of Grace & 'Moved into' **STRIVING IN THE FLESH TO TRY & OVERCOME THE FLESH.**

3. WE'RE DRIVEN BY THE DEMAND OF DIRECTORS

In Chapter One of The Song of Solomon, We see that the Shulamite had seen her King ... she had experienced His love for her (**Song of Solomon 1:2**) ... She'd experienced His Holy Spirit (**Song of Solomon 1:3**) ... She had been into His private chambers & experienced His affection (**Song of Solomon 1:4**) **THIS IS HER FIRST LOVE ... SHE CRIES, 'Let Him Kiss Me**

with The Kisses of His mouth for Your Loves are Better than Wine' (Song of Solomon 1:2)

SHE HAS BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT. BUT THEN WE READ IN Song of Solomon 1:6

Song of Solomon 1:6 SLIDE

My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.

THE MOTHER'S CHILDREN AGGRESSIVELY DROVE ME BACK INTO DEAD WORKS

NB: THESE WEREN'T HER '**FATHER'S CHILDREN**' ... BUT THOSE BORN OF HER 'MOTHER'
THIS MOTHER REPRESENTS HAGAR & THE LAW. Galatians 4:24-25

²⁵ *for this Hagar [The Mother] is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—* (We don't have time to expound this)

She had known the law but now had experienced the Father's love manifest in his son – the king; however, the children of the law were condemning her into keeping 'THE VINEYARD OF THE LAW' and neglect 'Her Own – personal Vineyard' – her organic experience of God's Love & Grace.

LEADERS UNDER THE LAW ALWAYS SHOW DEGREES OF LEGALISM ... THEY ARE MOTIVED OUT OF ANGRY JUDGEMENT OF THE FAILED LAW

They condemn their people for not attaining to the standards of the law and demand they strive harder to try and achieve their standards – which they themselves cannot attain to.

Meanwhile this takes you out of your beautiful vineyard – THOSE BEAUTIFUL GRACES THAT GOD HAS ORGANICALLY PLANTED WITHIN YOU BY GRACE.

She says, 'my own beautiful vineyard I have not kept.' **SHE WAS FORCED OUT OF HIS GRACE**

4. WE MISAPPROPRIATE THE MANTLE OF MINISTRY

Many of us have thought God will be more pleased with us if we have some form of ministry.

Some of us, when we committed our whole life to God, became tremendously ambitious. Some of us tried to carve out a Christian career (I did).

Some craved titles and accolades that confirmed they were accomplishing their calling.

Many people feel approved by God when they are approved by others.

Many others try and develop a greater & superior spirituality by spouting forth prophecies and specific words for unsuspecting people (whether they want them or not). Some have become greatly lost in pseudo-spirituality ... BUT MOST OF THIS IS MOTIVATED BY FLESHLY STRIVING TO BE SPIRITUAL – TO PERFECT SOME SPIRITUAL MINISTRY BY HUMAN EFFORT. Doing this; we are '**Moving out**' of His Grace & '**Moving into**' spiritual striving in the flesh.

Paul continually hammered He was doing what he did 'BY THE WILL & POWER OF GOD'.

'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God'

2 Corinthians 1:1 / Ephesians 1:1 / Colossians 1:1 / 2 Timothy 1:1

5. WE FALL PREY TO FOLLY OF FIGHTING

Then there's The Devil who entices us out of Grace into fighting in The Flesh

Ecclesiastes 10:4 SLIDE

If the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, don't leave your place; for gentleness lays great offenses to rest. World English Bible

This ruler is certainly the ruler of this 'world system' – the god of this world.

Here we are instructed, if Satan should rise up against you (which he does) do not be enticed out of your position in 'The Spirit'.

Our position is in 'The Spirit'. We began 'In The Spirit' (Gal 3:3)

Paul tells us three times in Romans six, 'To Stand' when faced with Satan's attack. Don't be enticed to fighting the devil; let God deal with him.

Romans 16:20

The God of Peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

Fighting the devil is how many Christian's leave their first love.

SO HOW DO WE GROW OR ADVANCE IN OUR FAITH

WE WERE SAVED BY GRACE & WE MUST CONTINUE IN GRACE. Anything else is a retrograde step where we get further away from God's goal for us in grace.

Wieseler: "Instead of your advancing onward to the goal, ye make the most shameful retrogression;"

The same grace that saved us will perfect us in the same Spirit through whom we were initially saved.

2 Peter 3:18 SLIDE

*But **grow in the grace** and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

RETURN TO GRACE, & GIVE UP THE WORKS ENERGISED BY THE FLESH.

REJOICE IN HIS LOVE FOR YOU IN CHRIST & DISCOVER EVERYTHING YOU HAVE.

REST IN HIS ACCEPTANCE & ONLY MOVE FORWARD IN THE UNFORCED RHYTHMS OF GRACE.

A few years ago, Andrea Crouch wrote a song called, 'Take me back ... to the time I first believed'.

Chuck Gerard wrote a song ... 'Return to your first love'.

Last week, one lady told me. 'God took me back to when I was first 'Born Again'

It's the cry of our new heart TO COME BACK INTO THE GRACE WE FOUND
WHEN WE WERE FIRST SAVED – TO FIND THAT FIRST LOVE.

FIND AGAIN THE ONE WHO FIRST LOVED YOU IN THE DAYS WHEN YOU FIRST
AWAKENED TO HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

When you first found out you were **forgiven of your sins** ... When you found out **you were
accepted by God** ... When you experienced the Grace of God and **felt God's love for you**.
Jesus became your focus ... your heart filled with thanksgiving.

**One converted Jehovah's Witness who believed said, 'I felt cleansed in a way that
is beyond this world... I remember looking up to the ceiling and saying out loud in total
awe and amazement, 'You really do love me.' I had never realized the depth of God's love
for me personally.**

RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE (Chuck Gerard)

*Though you tried your best, the Lord just didn't bless
You're wondrin' what to do*

Return to your first love, feel Jesus love again

*The love in your heart you had when you first started
Could be there again ... Return to your first love*

SUPPLIMENTAL

(Galatians 3:3) 'are you now finishing' = **epiteleithe** = To complete, accomplish, perfect ...
terminate