

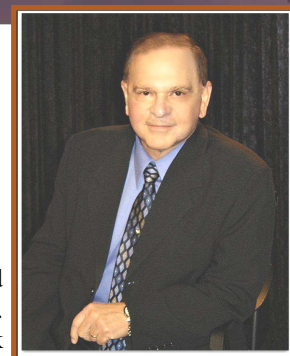
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LAW **VS** GRACE

By Dr. Henry A. Harbuck/ PCAI Int'l General Overseer



World renowned evangelist, Billy Graham, often began his crusades by briefly quoting from an old hymn: “*Jesus loves me; this I know, for the Bible tells me so.*” This is a magnificent confession of what the Bible says about grace. Though we may fail, God’s abiding love never fails!

Without realizing it, many Christians still rigidly follow some form of Old Testament Law. These same believers reject the New Testament doctrine of grace believing it makes them appear “soft” or “weak.” This belief often prevails among holiness groups who accept nothing less than human perfection from the point a person is saved.

Paul said in Romans 3:20-24: **v.20** - “...no human being can be brought into a place of justification (*right standing*—some Greek scholars say *God’s righteousness*) by the works of the Law. For all the Law can do is to make human beings aware of their sin. **v.21** - But now it has come to light that a righteous God has given human beings a way of having right standing with Him. It is a way that is not prescribed by the Law, but is attested to by the [scrolls of the] Law and the Prophets. **v.22** - God’s righteousness comes to all human beings who believe [in Christ and have faith in

Him]. **v.23** - For everyone has sinned [and missed the mark], and are falling short of the glory of God—[that is, the honor bestowed by Him], **v.24** - being made righteous (literally - *justified*) as a gift by His grace (love), provided by the *priestly/sacrificial atonement* of Christ Jesus to make them free [from sin].” (Note: *Missing the mark is in the Greek aorist tense and is essentially the same as the English past tense as listed above. And “falling” is the Greek present imperative tense.*) If this is true, then how will we be approved *or be made righteous* by God? It is by His grace!

The above-mentioned Scripture, penned by the apostle Paul, is the most masterful explanation of *grace* ever written. Yet, this masterpiece is virtually ignored and/or misunderstood by a large majority of Christians. The truth is, “You don’t have the wherewithal to be considered pure and clean by your deeds; only by God’s grace is this made possible.” As I often say, “*The Law gets you going, but grace keeps you going.*”

Romans and Hebrews are the most neglected books of the Bible. Why? It takes much intensive study to understand

these books and to teach them. They both speak of *grace*.

The following outline provides a better understanding of Grace:

I – The Law Cannot Justify Us (Heb. 11:8)

Word processing programs justify words and sentences automatically so the typist doesn’t have to be frustrated with alignment. In like fashion, this is what God does for us: *He lines us up properly so we both look better and become better.* Grace is most often misunderstood. Worldwide, there is a tendency for human beings to believe that following a prescribed code of law will give them

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Staying Engaged in the Battle but at Peace with our Maker

By Rev. Michael Taylor / Raphah Ministries President

In this article I feel led to write about where we are and where the Lord is leading us. These are amazing times we are living in but also very challenging. People are rising up all over the world.

They are saying enough is enough. End the tyranny. We have despots now in control all over the world. When Jesus was describing how things would be in the end times, He said in part, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. He said we will hear of wars and rumors of war. He said many will be offended and will betray one another, and will hate one another. He said lawlessness will abound and the love of many will grow cold. This sounds like today's news but was said and written approximately two thousand years ago.

There is a story in the bible describing how King David defeats Goliath. Before David gets ready to fight Goliath, Saul tries to place his armor on David. You can read about this in 1 Samuel chapter 17. The bible says that Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk. David could not walk, he needed to be free of Saul's armor to fight the battle. Many of us in this season of our life are trying to fight battles with someone else's armor. We must be made free to move about and be who God created us to be. For each of us it may be different. Many times, I have used the expression "I can't wear Saul's armor" when I am trying to complete a task and I am forced to come under another's approach to the same task. It may work for them but not for me. David defeated Goliath but he did it his way. He did not fully reject Saul's armor, he just said I can't walk and fight in this I need more time to test it out.

In terms of going forward recently the Holy Spirit said I want you to partner with me to bind the evil principality that controls politics. The political spirit that controls the masses worldwide which now is estimated to be around eight billion people. This is not your garden variety demon. We are talking about a major principality that controls the lives of the world's population. Not all politics is evil but many of today's leaders are being led by this evil principality. There is a cry now in the earth for freedom. The Lord did not say He wanted me to partner with Him to kill this spirit or eliminate this spirit He said bind this spirit.

I believe God is going to hold back this spirit for a short time. Like when God parted the red sea and the people crossed over to the other side away from their captors. I believe during this time there will be a great freedom worldwide and millions of people will get saved and make Jesus Christ the Lord of their life. This is the next great spiritual awakening that is coming and, in many ways, has already begun.

Do not be confused or have fear from the chaos in the world and in your world. All great moves of God are preceded by spiritual



warfare that causes warfare in the natural world. It's why we are seeing so much on the news now and America is very divided. The enemy knows his time is short and he is trying to stop what God is about to do in the earth. Our job is to watch and pray and let the Holy Spirit lead us forward. It's a time to take our stand and do our part in the body of Christ and not have fear.

Eventually God will destroy this spirit along with the devil and the host of evil spirits including the Anti-Christ. We know from the book of Daniel that the Anti-Christ will eventually rise up and the saints shall be given in to his hands. This will be only for a short time. I don't believe we are there yet but clearly; we are in the season of the Anti-Christ coming on the scene. I know there is a lot here to unpack. A good place to start might be Daniel 7:25.

In my future articles I plan to further unpack this and write about any further revelation I receive from the Lord. Most revelation and insight comes from God when we rest in the Lord. Not easy in this world but we must find a way to stay engaged yet stay at peace with our Maker. ♥

Social Media Guidelines— part I



SOURCE: Church Law & Tax Website

While preaching a few years ago, a notable pastor made comments on homosexuality that were recorded and posted on the internet. Her comments went viral. Many viewers—Christians and non-Christians alike—acknowledged that while portions of the comments were in line with Scripture, the delivery was devoid of love and instead perpetuated hate and condemnation.

Can a Court Bar Malicious Remarks Online?

A pastor went to court to stop a former parishioner from making disparaging comments on the internet about him and his sons. See attorney [Richard Hammar's analysis](#) of the case—and its implications for churches.

The pastor in question was forced to respond to the backlash on social media, and in turn, she experienced a wave of ramifications, including the loss of an appearance on a popular television show, the cancellation of a radio show, and even the stripping of an earned honor and award.

I watched the situation with this pastor unfold from the

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“peace and illumination,” and that eventually “right standing” with their God (or gods) will come about. People today search the world over seeking “peace and love,” never realizing that all these things are found in Christ.

Cults rely on codes [of law] to please God. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons, and the “Oneness Pentecostals” all fall into this category because their doctrines are based firmly on “works” and not “grace.”

World religions rely on codes [of law] to find peace with their god (or gods). Though many world religions trust in some code of law to give them peace, the three major ones are mentioned here:

Hinduism: For the Hindu, the path to salvation wherein one may experience release, deliverance, emancipation, and liberty is found in *moksha*. This means to rid one’s life of something felt to be undesirable; and is done through a cycle of rebirth. It indicates an expanded view, a sense of calmness and security; and carries the notion of attaining a goal, or grasping the power “to be” and “to do.”

Buddhism: Like Hindus, the Buddhists believe in reincarnation, and in the law of *karma* – i.e., of cause and effect. Buddha taught it is possible to abolish *bad karma* and to find liberty from its grip by reorientation of life. Thereafter, a new process begins, which is called *good karma*. A good Buddhist always follows the teaching of Siddharta Gautama, who became “the Buddha” (“the enlightened one”), born in modern day Nepal, once a part of India. The Buddha’s Eightfold Path is: right knowledge, right attitude, right speech, right action, right living (for an occupation), right effort, right mindfulness, and right composure.

Islam: This religion requires strict obedience to all its laws in order to be a “good Muslim.” Founded by Mohammed, Islam uses exclusively the codes and laws found in the Qur’an (English—*Koran*), which Mohammed claimed were given directly to him by Allah (God). To the western world, one of the most unusual and puzzling doctrines of Islam is *jihād*. This is the belief that Muslims are called to wage war against evil forces that hinder Islam from advancing, thus bringing the non-Muslim world under the dominance of Islam.

Remember: Grace is never taught or accepted by either the World Religions or the (so-called) Christian Cults.

II – The Law Cannot Make Us Righteous— Clean and Holy - (Gal. 3:11-12)

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place where he was to receive an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

The prophet of old has said, “Your righteousness is as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). This statement, which should cause each of us to pause and think seriously, is virtually ignored in the Christian holiness denominations. Though holiness groups believe this is a state one must strive for; it cannot, in point of fact, be humanly achieved by anyone. Why? Because this is only accomplished by

the action of the Holy Spirit within us. Interestingly, when one is lacking in holiness, he or she often appears (on the outside) to be more holy than they really are.

John Wesley, an early church pioneer, highly esteemed by most Christians, once said: “I believe that absolute sanctification is possible, but I cannot achieve it.” So, what is the greatest proof of holiness? Is it proved by how much you may read the Bible? Or by how well you apply Christian principles in everyday life? During the times of Christ, the Law demanded adherence to 680 rules and regulations in order to justify (or make righteous) one before Jehovah (Yahweh—*God*). These rules were nothing more than a “yoke” (or burden) to the Jewish people, which most of them could not follow perfectly in order to please God.

III – The Law Cannot Replace Faith— (Gal. 3:11; 3-14)

The promise of the Spirit is by faith (Gal. 3:14). In the Old Testament, the languages of the people were “confused” (Genesis 11:9) at the Tower of Babel. In the New Testament, the languages of the people seeking God (Acts 2:6) were “infused” at Jerusalem.

The Bible says. “...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; that is, freedom, not bondage” (2 Corinthians. 3:17). Now, this applies to what I am saying. The Spirit of the Lord is not manifest because someone speaks in tongues or shouts “Hallelujah!” But those who have the testimony of the Holy Spirit know beyond doubt that they have been freed from the bondage of sin, and by God’s grace, will complete their course on earth.

Faith also brings unity (Psalm 133:1). When brothers and sisters dwell together in unity and harmony, the Spirit of God dwells in their midst, because God hates anything among His people that brings disunity or discord.

Returning to find the Galatians again under the Law [of bondage], Paul (who had previously taught them about grace) exclaimed, “O you foolish Galatians, who has bewitched [that is, *mesmerized*—or *deluded*] you, and caused you to follow [again] the Law [by casting a spell over you? Gal. 3:1]” They had once again reverted to arguing about holy days, holy foods, holy clothing, holy living, and holy swearing. Though much may be said today about “holy living” (which is pleasing to God); legalism is of little value, and puts people under bondage and slavery. People don’t need to perform “good deeds” to be saved, but they will perform “good deeds” when they are saved.

In conclusion, I am convinced the Bible teaches that grace is simply trusting in God’s love to run the race of faith. Even though we may fall away and hurt ourselves and others, through confession and obedience to His Word, we are given another chance. This is GRACE in its purest form! You may feel like a loser when you fall away, but a real winner will rise to the occasion and try... try...try again. ♥

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periphery and as an outsider, but with a great deal of interest. As I fellowshiped with church leaders and met with clients of mine who are pastors, this trending topic was a constant point of conversation.

Through these dialogues, I had the opportunity to talk to these ministry leaders about the rules of engagement for social media. After all, social media brings many positives to the church experience—through it, many churchgoers and followers feel more connected and more invested because they can interact with pastors and leaders as they share about issues and matters outside the realm of the pulpit and Bible study. Social media is now an intrinsic part of modern evangelism and a church’s “new normal” on myriad fronts.

The right shares and the right audience can trigger an avalanche of sharing across the internet. But it can also go wrong. One inherent characteristic of social media is that it is not a passive activity. Those who have social media accounts don’t just go on the platform to *see* what is happening, but instead they actively engage with the platforms, sometimes causing posts to go viral.

The right shares and the right audience—coupled with the topic at hand in the post—can trigger an avalanche of sharing across the internet. When that occurs, a post can gain a life of its own, sometimes providing a celebrity or leader (such as the aforementioned pastor) with infamous status.

How can you avoid a similar situation from playing out at your church—while still taking advantage of the benefits social media offers to ministries? Here are some key guiding principles for engaging online in safe (and smart) ways.

1. Monitor what you post—and what others post about you

If you’re in the pulpit, there is a great likelihood that your comments will find their way into someone’s social media post. As previously discussed, social media users are not passive participants or spectators in their social media worlds. They are engaged, and they post content.

If you say something that evokes some emotion—good or bad—expect that, just as they react to your words live, there is a chance that someone will post the information online. We all do it. Whether it’s a caption, a meme, a video, or a photo that makes us laugh or cry, we quickly hit the “like” or “share” button. With that in mind, consider anything stated or published publicly, by you or by the church, to be accessible and potentially published by others.

Additionally, some common social media situations in ministry can potentially expose a church to liability—and it is important to know how to respond.

The following list is not exhaustive, but it can offer guidance in regard to several specific scenarios:

Reposting copyrighted materials. A church can easily find itself in a situation in which it has committed copyright infringement. When posting on a social media page or a website, church

leaders should remember that any material—outside of content directly created by the person drafting the post or article—must be duly credited, and permission for use must be duly obtained.

Authorized use can be obtained via payment for a licensing fee or by expressed consent from the original creator of the work. Obtaining permission for use also applies to photographs and even digital images. Reposting verbatim, without the need for payment or consent of the copyright holder, is only allowed under what copyright law deems as “fair use,” which is when material is used for a specific purpose, such as criticism, news reporting, teaching, or research.

Prayer requests and sensitive information. The publication of a person’s [prayer request](#) should not be done without that individual’s express consent. The invasion of privacy that results otherwise is a huge point of liability for the church. Also note the [sensitive nature](#) of posting images and videos of congregants, especially children.

Privacy settings. Facebook and Twitter have privacy settings that can be customized to ensure maximum protection for a church. This can be a way to manage who has access to the church’s posts.

Churches can also limit who has access to their accounts and institute an administrator-approval process before an item is posted on their public pages. On public pages, the church may also post a disclaimer indicating the type of information it will allow (e.g., no disparaging remarks about individuals or the church, no profanity, and so on).

Deciding who to “follow” or “friend.” Just as the content of posts on social media should be reflective of a church’s values and mission, who the church follows on social media should be just as thoughtful and consistent with what the church and individual leaders represent.

The account’s administrator (or the church’s social media team) should monitor who the church follows and is followed by; should any inappropriate or concerning activity arise, it can then be immediately addressed.

To be continued...

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