

Jim Martin
P.O. Box 291962
Dayton, Ohio 45429

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THE PATH BEFORE US

Dear Friends,

It was back in 1982 when I began living for Jesus with sincerity and determination. Since that time I have come to a conclusion: Christians can be very strange and confusing people. I'll explain what I mean.

As you may know, one branch of our ministry is Grace Ministries Bible College, a four-year school that focuses strictly on in-depth studies of scripture. It is very unique in that we do not charge for tuition or course materials. Many who have inquired about enrollment ask about our "free Bible school." I let them know that even though we do not charge, it is not free: God will tell them what to give in support of the college and we expect them to obey His instructions.

Over the years we have had some interesting encounters with students. One time, a correspondence student adamantly refused to listen to any of the class recordings, demanding to be allowed to do nothing but take the tests and write the papers. We wrote back and explained that it would be impossible for him to pass the courses if he did not listen to the teaching. In his reply he made it clear in no uncertain terms that he would not listen. We took that as his choice to withdraw.

Another time, some students approached me and said they wanted to receive passing grades, but did not want to take the tests or write the papers. I explained that they had enrolled in a college and that the course work was required. They did not seem to understand why they could not receive a grade of A or B without doing the required coursework, and subsequently dropped out.

These are just two examples of incidents which left me scratching my head. The way I look at it, why would God tell a person to enroll if He did not expect them to comply with the standards of the college? Maybe they enrolled without first praying to find out if God wanted them to be a student. Or maybe they just wanted things to be done their way regardless of what was expected.

This sort of debatable behavior is not limited to what we have experienced at GMBC. Over the years there have been incidents where pastors and evangelists have had their immorality exposed to the public. I'm not talking simply about a one-time event, but behavior that has taken place on more than one occasion. Instead of demanding accountability of these ministers, many Christians have risen up in defense of such men and demeaned those who brought to light the sin. In some cases, congregations have not expected their pastor who has committed such sin to step down for a season of restoration, seeing nothing wrong with him continuing to minister.

It would seem that such Christians have forgotten what is recorded in 2 Peter 1:15-16:

¹⁵But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

This is not a suggestion, but an expectation that God has for all Christians. Believe me when I tell you that long before their sin was made public, God had been convicting them in private to repent, but they had been searing their hearts to that conviction. The public exposure of their sin is not God wanting to ruin their lives, but to bring them to a place of genuine repentance and restoration in their fellowship with Him.

Along with this are the ministers who have had their doctrinal error exposed. But instead of turning away from such teachers, their supporters adamantly defend the error and sometimes even harshly criticize anyone who, through a contextual use of scripture, confronts the wrong teaching. These supporters appear to have forgotten that in scripture, God has exposed **BY NAME** preachers who have embraced and taught error, and that He has instructed the Body of Christ to do the same (Romans 16:17, Galatians 2:11-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:10, 14; 3 John 1:9-10).

What it comes down to is that far too many Christians want all the benefits of being a child of God, but they do not want to live by the standards He has established in His Word for all who have called upon the Name of Jesus for salvation. It's almost as though some Christians think that since we're no longer under the Mosaic Law that God's grace is tolerant of anything we do that is opposed to what is recorded in scripture. But what does God have to say about this in the Bible?

But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. (John 8:51)

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. ²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (John 14:23-24)

¹⁰If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. (John 15:10-11)

²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:2-3)

These passages (in addition to those already mentioned in this letter) are just a sampling of what God has said about those who have been born again and are now citizens of His

Kingdom. Our free will enables us to choose how we want to live, but God warns us in scripture about the consequences of rebelling against His Word.

Repeatedly over the years I have encountered Christians who choose to commit sin, then try and justify it by twisting scripture or explaining, "That's just the way I am." The power of God's life in us is the strength to say "no" to all forms of temptation. The grace of God does not accommodate sin; it enables us to live free from sin.

Then there are Christians who interpret scripture to fit what they want to believe. They steadfastly refuse to leave scripture in context and become defiant when truth is explained to them. Yet God has made it explicitly clear that the only way to establish correct doctrine is for His word to be taught line upon line (Isaiah 28:9-10), that we are to study His word to be approved unto Him (2 Timothy 2:15), and that all scripture is profitable for our correction, doctrine and spiritual equipping to fulfill His call (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Although it's taken me several years to understand this, I have finally realized that God's way works 100% of the time. If He has identified something in His word as being sin, then it is sin. If He has said that seeking first His Kingdom and righteousness will result in provision for my life (Matthew 6:33), then that is what will happen. If He tells me that by Jesus' stripes I am healed (1 Peter 2:24), then healing is available for me. If He tells me that praying in tongues edifies me spiritually (1 Corinthians 14:4), then I am edified through such prayer.

It seems so easy to want to do things "our way" and then expect God to fall in line. However, our way is based upon how this fallen world perceives success and happiness. God's way is based upon the perfection of His life and Kingdom. Jesus said it this way in Matthew 7:13-14,

¹³Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The way that leads to destruction is wide because it is the way of the world. Since we live in this fallen world, we are constantly surrounded by broad paths that can be so appealing to our flesh and which make so much sense to a world mind-set. The reason the way unto life can seem very restrictive and filled with "don'ts" is because it is the path of Kingdom life. Kingdom life is diametrically opposed to fallen world life and Christians are simply not accustomed to living a Kingdom life.

However, the Kingdom way which at first seems so narrow is actually very wide. It is lined with all the blessings of God. It is paved with His peace, presence and glory. It is the path of His anointing, power and life. As we read about the earthly life of Jesus in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we witness what happens when someone stays on the path of Kingdom living.

Many Christians would say that they want to walk the way unto life, but aren't sure what to do. The Apostle Paul gives us some direction in Colossians 3:1-3,

¹If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

By telling me to set my affections on things above, Paul is revealing that doing this is a conscious decision, one I am not accustomed to making. In other words, I am so familiar with doing things both my way and the world's way that I am not familiar with doing things the Kingdom way. Therefore, I have to redirect my focus and make a decision to set my affection, or attention, on the things of Christ and His Kingdom. The only place to find these things is in God's Word.

The more I read and meditate in scripture, the more the life of scripture begins to impact my way of living. When I approach my time of reading and meditating God's Word with the attitude that I **WANT** to change and live exactly as He desires, I am opening my heart and mind to the transforming power of His word so that I can conform more to the image of Christ.

The influence of the broad-path world is very strong; this is why we must take up our cross daily, making a quality decision to desire the things of God and His Kingdom. It is not always easy, but the battle is worth it. On that narrow path we will find everything He is to us, everything we have in Him, and everything we can be in Him. Make a quality decision to walk this path every day, knowing Jesus will be with you every step!

In His Grace,

Jim

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SPRING PRAYER AND POWER CONFERENCE – March 22-27, 2015

Our Spring Prayer and Power Conference starts in just over three months. I realize many who are hoping to come here from other nations may be finalizing their plans to attend. Based on some of the emails that have come in, I believe it is best that I again communicate some important information. Our two host hotels are listed below (additional hotels can be found at our website).

Country Inn and Suites- Fairborn South
3971 Colonel Glenn Highway
Beavercreek, Ohio 45324
937-429-2222
<http://www.countryinns.com/fairbornoh>

Holiday Inn Dayton/Fairborn
2800 Presidential Drive
Fairborn, Ohio 45324
937-431-4644
www.holidayinn.com/fairbornoh

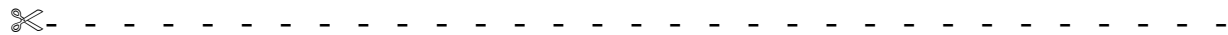
- 1) Our ministry will not be covering your expenses for a visa, travel, meals or hotel rooms.**
- 2) Our ministry does not have on-site sleeping accommodations or dormitories; neither will we be preparing meals. Please do not anticipate that if you can save enough money for your flight to Dayton that we will pay for your hotel and meals once you arrive. You must plan ahead to pay all of your own expenses for the entire trip.

- 3) Potential costs for traveling to Dayton:
 - (a) As much as \$2,000 or more for a plane ticket
 - (b) Approximately \$750 or more for a hotel room for seven days.
 - (c) Between \$6 to \$20 per meal depending on the restaurants where you eat.
- 4) Each person is responsible for making all travel and hotel arrangements. Our ministry will not be planning your flights or contacting the hotel on your behalf.
- 5) You must fly into the Dayton International Airport. If you fly into any other airport but the Dayton International Airport, we will not be able to provide transportation from the airport to your hotel.
- 6) Once you have purchased your plane tickets, please forward your itinerary to us so we will know when you arrive.

If you have any questions, please send them via email to PastorJimGCC@gmail.com

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Recently the Holy Spirit gave me a sermon concerning a very subtle attack that Satan had been launching against our church. What I realized is that this attack is not restricted to our church, but to others in the Body of Christ as well. The title of the sermon is, "Awake the Slumbering Worship" and you can order a copy on CD below.



_____ Please send me the CD of the sermon, "Awake the Slumbering Worship".

[PLEASE PRINT] Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Email _____

My love gift is: \$ _____ (Make checks payable to "Jim Martin Ministries.")

JIM MARTIN MINISTRIES
 P.O. Box 291962 • Dayton, Ohio 45429 • USA
www.jmmgrace.com • PastorJimGCC@gmail.com