

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## SELF LOATHING

*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42:6*

The modern psychobabblers tell us that the key to a man's happiness and productivity is to have a great self esteem. They tell us that we must encourage one another to love ourselves first or else we can have no true love to our fellow men. This line of thought which was once a novelty (especially among those who lay claim to a belief in the scriptures) has now become the mainstream line of thought even among those professing to be Christians in our day.

Most present day preaching is purposely designed to be non-offensive and kind to the supposed tender sensibilities of men, who are (purportedly), just hungering to be affirmed and encouraged to reach out and take the proverbial "carrot on a stick" which the LORD is offering to each one in hopes that they will avail themselves of it and be able to enjoy true happiness both now and in the ages to come, in a place called heaven. The concept of repentance is almost totally avoided and when it is mentioned it is considered as a one time activity which men have within their power to perform and by doing so secure the favor of GOD towards them once and for all.

While such concepts can be discovered in many "best selling" books written by the popular writers of the day and its strains and derivatives heard from most pulpits across the land (even the world), one will search the scriptures in vain to find this doctrine taught there. If we would discover the LORD's dealings with man's sensibilities we might learn something from HIS "affirmation" of Jacob, when HE said, "thou worm Jacob," (Isa 41:14)

The LORD has indeed revealed HIS purpose to redeem and deliver HIS chosen people from the sin and depravity into which they have fallen. Yet the manner in which HE will manifest this deliverance is in acquainting them with the depths of their woe, the despicableness of their character in their natural state, and their absolute need of HIM.

Men, by nature, love themselves and their own way and would be completely content to live out their days in pursuance of their desires without any thought to a sovereign and sin hating GOD. Even the "noble" among them, seek out their own ultimate enjoyment, though cloaked in the performance of religious and moralistic deeds, which are as much a satisfaction to their flesh as the man who seeks out his basest desires and lusts, is in fulfilling his. (see Phil 3:4-7)

Sin takes on many forms in the natural man but all sin stems from the basic pride of men who delight in their own way rather than submitting themselves to GOD in spirit and truth. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom 3:10-18)

The LORD said Job was a righteous man. (see Job 1:8) He was (as one might say) the crème of the crop and was indeed a man favored in the LORD's sight and one preserved by HIM as HE demonstrated to Satan in Job's trial which the LORD was pleased to bring upon

him. By nature Job was not a bit different from any of the other men of the earth but he was a man sought out by GOD and made upright according to the pleasure of the LORD who had delight in him, and would maintain him and keep him from falling.

Yet the manner in which the LORD was pleased to work in HIS servant Job is quite foreign to the sensibilities and considerations of propriety according to the understanding of natural men, most especially that of his wife and his erstwhile “friends” and “comforters”. Men would suppose that the blessing of GOD is visited upon men when they are vested with this world’s goods or are basking in happiness and freedom from the cares and worries that beset men on every hand. It is according to man’s “common understanding ” and “sense of propriety” that doing good deeds and being religious insures that one will enjoy this sort of favor from the hand of the LORD and conversely that the avoidance of the opposite behavior will insure the same.

In this thought process, men do greatly err and prove the wisdom of the Proverb which says, *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* (Pro 16:25) Most suppose that Job had favor in the eyes of GOD because he eschewed evil, feared GOD, and walked with an upright manner of life. They feel quite certain that if others followed his path that they too would enjoy GOD’s favor even as Job’s miserable comforters sought to point out Job’s faults as the cause of his heartaches.

Yet the reality is that Job was a vessel of mercy in whom GOD was pleased to manifest HIS grace and favor, causing him to love the way of obedience and the path of the righteous even though Job was, himself, but an earthen vessel. This manifestation of grace and favor was as real when Job was scraping himself with a potsherd as it was when he was held in high esteem by the multitudes who observed his wealth and upright walk. GOD was faithful to sustain him when even his wife encouraged him to curse GOD and die and enabled him to confess to his “comforters”. that he would trust the LORD even if HE slew him.

The work of GOD in the lives of HIS people is an ongoing and continual process whereby HE is leading them into all truth. The revelation of the Holiness of GOD is over the course of the lives of the sons of GOD made increasingly evident, and as it is, the work of repentance is carried out by the same SPIRIT in them.

Even though Job was one who “eschewed evil” and “feared GOD”, yet his knowledge of himself and the absolute degree of his utter depravity was only made clear to him as GOD was pleased to reveal HIS own absolute HOLINESS and matchless glory. Job testified that he thought that he knew something about the LORD since he was instructed in the ways of GOD, but as the LORD brought him face to face with HIMSELF experientially, he was made to cry out, *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”* (Job 42:5-6)

He said that he “hated himself”, that is that he despised his own righteousness (let alone his wickedness) and recognized that he had no place of standing before GOD except on the basis of HIS mercy extended to him. Such is the work of grace in the lives of GOD’s people. Whereas religious men consider themselves to be progressing in a work of sanctification and climbing new heights every day, as they grow closer and closer to GOD, and winning victories left and right; those in whom GOD is pleased to work are “progressively” acquainted with their own wickedness and absolute dependence on the LORD. They become progressively filled with despair at any thought that something could be found in them which would enable them to merit the favor of GOD or somehow precipitate HIS blessings upon their heads. This is indeed the SPIRIT’s work of repentance in them. *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* (Phil 3:8-9)

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