

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

SINNERS

And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. (Mark 2:15)

The Bible says *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD."* (Rom.3:23) This scripture reveals the startling truth about men. *"There is none that doeth good; no not one"* (Rom.3:12) simply adds emphasis to the fact that man in his own self possesses nothing that will give him a right standing with a holy GOD. You would think in light of this truth that it would be easy to find many people who are convinced of this fact, yet the rarest thing in all the earth is a "sinner". In fact; apart from divine revelation men will not believe that they are sinners. All men by nature know that they have committed sin; for the LORD has given us a conscience (see Rom.2:15). Yet by nature man is not convinced that HE is totally separated from GOD. He feels GOD will hear his prayers and pity him or at the very least overlook any faults he may have and receive him on the basis of his good works outweighing the bad. The worst case scenario he expects is a slap on the wrist or a short season of punishment for evil deeds. Yet the scripture reveals a much more serious problem. Isaiah said, *"But your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid HIS face from you, that HE will not hear."* (Isaiah 59:2) So man of his own self cannot make himself righteous before GOD. But the LORD came into the world to save "sinners" (see I Tim.1:15) and HE said *"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Mark 2:17) So exactly what is a sinner?

A sinner is someone who is convinced of his own sin. He does not try to make excuses, explain it away or blame it on someone else. (see Gen.3:9-13 for a look at how the natural man responds to being discovered in sin). Like the woman taken in adultery he has no excuse.

A sinner is someone who is convinced of the awfulness of his sin. (see Ps.51:4) He has been made aware that his sin is a crime against a HOLY GOD. (see Hab.1:13) and as such is deserving of eternal damnation.

A sinner is someone who is convinced of his own unworthiness. One of the best examples of a "sinner" found in the New Testament is the Publican in Luke 18:13; *"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, GOD be merciful to me a sinner"*. A sinner does not proudly converse with the Almighty GOD but humbly pleads for mercy.

A sinner is someone who is convinced of the absolute righteousness of CHRIST. He falls upon his face in worship before this ONE in whom is all the beauties of the earth. Like the woman in Luke 7:37-38 he washes the feet of the LORD with his tears of repentance. When the LORD reveals HIS righteousness repentance always follows. Like the apostle of old when he is asked if he will go away, he will confess, *"LORD, to whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that THOU art that CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD"* (John 6:68-69).

A sinner is someone who is convinced of his absolute need of that righteousness. As David prayed; so is the prayer of every sinner, *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."* (Psalms 51:7-10)

A sinner is someone who is convinced of his need of a continual supply of mercy from the hand of the LORD. When GOD opens a mans eyes to see himself as a sinner, HE allows that man to understand that the only reason that he can continue in the favor of the LORD is to be kept in that favor by the grace of the LORD. *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto THEE."* (Psalms 51:12-13) *"For of HIM, and through HIM, and to HIM, are all things: to WHOM be glory for ever. Amen."* (Romans 11:36) With that knowledge comes the promise. *"And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to WHOM be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (2 Tim 4:18)

A sinner is someone who follows the LORD. (see Mark 2:15) The righteous will follow religion, custom, society, and all the things that appeal to the flesh but those that know themselves to be sinners will follow CHRIST. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me."* (John 10:27)

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