

Preface

As you may have noticed, this book is divided into two sections. The first deals with a problem with which most us struggle; the second addresses how to solve our problem biblically. Right up front, I would like to give you a warning as you read Part One as well as make a request as you study and apply Part Two. Both have a common denominator: the grace of God as found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First, the warning: Part One of this book may well contain some of the most convicting material you have ever read. It is intended to be so. You see, most of us would never change the things in our lives that are out of sync with God's Word apart from being convicted of our sin. That is why as a father, an elder, a counselor, and an author, I strive to use great precision as I convict with the Scriptures those to whom I minister. Of course, conviction is only a small part of the process of change. Indeed, all Scripture is useful for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, and for disciplined training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

The thought of my trying to convict you of your sin may seem like a rather severe (if not unsympathetic) approach to encourage you to change, but it is actually a very loving approach. The truth is, what we will be discussing in this book is not a sickness (or a psychological

disorder) for which there is no cure; it is not a genetic predisposition that you as a Christian will be forced to live with for the rest of your life. It is simply a sin! And Jesus Christ came to do away with our sin. That is where the gospel comes in. To help you see your problem as a sin is one of the most hopeful things I can do for you because there is a powerful cure for this type of problem – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who have trusted in Christ, we understand that our justification is by faith in Christ apart from works we have done or righteousness we possess within ourselves. We understand that any righteousness that we may possess apart from Christ is as filthy rags. We understand that we were born into this world dead in our trespasses and sins therefore needed to be quickened. We understand that despite the guilt of our sin, former bondage to it, and current struggle against it, we have been declared righteous by virtue of Christ's substitutionary death and therefore are (or should be) conscious at all time of His imputed righteousness and of our adoption as sons and daughters of Almighty God.

Despite our indwelling sin, we have been reckoned to be righteous. We have been legally declared 'not guilty.' The guilt that we experienced as a result of our sin is covered by the blood of Christ who ever lives to make intercession for us. Because of Him, we no longer relate to God as a judge, but as a father. This is a wonderful thing, a

cause of great rejoicing, and a very present help in times of unholy self-condemnation and satanic accusation.

As sons daughters, however, Christians still can and do experience guilt. And though justified, "they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, begs pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."

This leads us the request: As we consider the specific biblical remedies of this problem given in Part Two, please don't lose sight of the fact that you will not be able to change apart form the Spirit of God applying the Word of God in sanctifying power to your mind and will. An unsaved individual may be able to reform his life to a certain degree and perhaps conform to his own self-imposed standards (or those of his therapist). But what he cannot do without the Holy Spirit is to transform himself into the image of Christ. What's more, the changes that he is able to make "in the flesh" do not please God.