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**Leon L. Combs, M.A., M.Div., Ph.D.**

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**“May it Never Be!”**

**Past issues of these letters (390 so far) may be read at** [**http://livingtheology.com/letters.htm**](http://livingtheology.com/letters.htm) **and I encourage you to catch up with them if you have not received earlier letters. Other writings of mine (48 articles and 30 commentaries) are at** [**http://LivingTheology.com**](http://LivingTheology.com) **and I pray they will be helpful. The author is solely responsible for the content of these letters and they do not represent any particular denomination.**

There seems to be a new attack on Christianity. Satan continues using his same tactics but I do not remember this particular approach from church leadership before. Christians are not seen as distinct from unbelievers with regard to sinning! The Pope just stated in essence that Christians need to stop focusing on some Biblical standards and emphasize the love of God for sinners. After all, he said that he is still a sinner! Then on a national news program a Catholic priest who is a Fox contributor read part of a letter from his sister who is legally married to another woman. She wrote how she felt so close to Jesus after reading what the Pope said. This priest then commented that after all we are all sinners. This seems to be the new Christian mantra: we are all sinners in need of the love of God. Of course that is very true of those who have not been redeemed! But it seems that Christians are being told that we are not to be concerned with what the Bible calls sins since people are different today than when the Bible was written. Then it does not matter if we are practicing some sin for that just shows we need more grace. We have lost focus on what God calls sin and the need for people to resist Satan and to submit to serving the righteousness of God. Paul dealt with a similar claim almost 2000 years ago and this is his reply:

Rom 6:12-15 *NASB Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?* ***May it never be!***

I bolded Paul’s reaction to the suggestion that people should just go on sinning since they are under grace, and the more they sin the more God must dispense His grace. MAY IT NEVER BE! Paul then went on to explain:

Rom 6:16-18 NASB *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you* ***were*** *slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having* ***been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.***

I bolded portions of the above to focus on what **we were** (slaves of sin) and what **we are** after being born again (a slave of righteousness). A sinner is a slave to Satan. A Christian is a slave to the righteousness of God. It is that simple. I recommend a book by John MacArthur entitled “Slaves” for he makes the same point about the status of Christians being slaves to righteousness and not to sin. The Greek word that should be translated as slave is *doulos* but many translators substitute the word “servant”. For example, look up Matt 25:32 in both KJV and NAS translations. In the KJV the word is translated servant but in the NAS it is translated properly as slave. The word servant is more politically correct than the word slave to modern people who want to have all of their desires, hopes, and dreams fulfilled. The drive of people today is to fulfill their personal ambition and personal gratification and part of that means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But the NT gospel is for people to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and that requires **total submission** to Him regardless of how that impacts our personal goals. We are called to a holy life totally dedicated to serving Jesus Christ as our Lord. If there still remains a strong resistance to living holy for God then something is wrong with our heart. The following is based on “Holiness” by John Charles Ryle (1816-1900), Anglican Bishop in Liverpool, England. Perhaps each day this week you can review the following Scriptures.

**Eight Reasons to be Holy**

**1. The voice of God in Scripture commands that we be holy.**

Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Matt. 5:48

**2. Holiness is the one grand end and purpose for which Christ came and suffered.**

Romans 8:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:30

**3. Holiness is the only sound evidence of saving faith in Jesus.**

James 2:17-20

**4. Holy living is the only proof that we sincerely love Jesus.**

John 14:15; 1 John 5:3

**5. Holy living is the only sound evidence we are true children of God.**

1 John 3:12; John 8:39-44

**6. Holy living is the most likely way to do good to others.** Matt 25:34-40

Holiness does not run counter to the commands of God and inevitably produces good. Others may even come to Christ and God may win unbelieving husbands through the chaste behavior of their wives. 1 Pet 3:1-2

Others may learn how to live holy lives by imitating us as we imitate Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1

**7. Holiness is our present comfort and blessing**,

Sin always produces suffering without reward. Matt. 5:2-12.

We find favor with God. 2 Cor. 1:2-7; 2 Cor. 4:7-12

**8. Without holiness here, how are we to enjoy heaven?**

Heb. 12:14; Rev. 21:27

**Holy living is possible, not through only our own efforts, but because of the power of God through faith and because God comes to the aid of those who determine to live for Him.**

Heb. 2:18; Heb. 4:15-16; 2 Pet. 2:4-9; 2 Cor. 3:5

Today, let us examine our goals, routines, activities, commitments, and priorities to be certain that we are indeed set aside as slaves to righteousness. Don’t let yourself be deluded into thinking you can continue practicing sin and be a Christian. Such people are nominal Christians or CINO as I recently discussed. Let all of us prove ourselves to be God’s children (John 1:12):

James 1:21-22 NASB *Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*