

## **BILL GOTHARD**

### **And His Children**

#### **The Unauthorized Biography**

##### **Bill Gothard and his children**

I want to start this story with Bill Gothard and his children. And to have children you ought to be married. In Bill Gothard's case, he has two families. I would imagine this may be news to you.

In reality and in many details, Bill has two families much like Abraham of old had two families. Abraham was so eager to see the fulfillment of God's wonderful promise to him to bless him in such a way that he would have many children for many generations that would be like the sands of the sea. Abraham was so anxious to see this happen, and being old and married to a very beautiful, but now very old woman, he took matters into his own hands. With the support of regional law and its permission, and with the first support of his wife, Abraham scheduled an evening with his slave woman, the servant to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to the first son of Abraham.

Realizing soon enough the grave mistake of that, he sent the slave woman and her son away (his son as well) to live elsewhere. He returned to waiting on the Lord who brought a pregnancy to his aged wife, well past child bearing years (she, 80 years old, he 90). The Book of Galatians describes the first of Abraham's family as born "according to the flesh" (Hagar) and the child born by the free woman (Sarah) a "child of promise". Galatians 4:22-31.

Bill Gothard also has two sets of children which may initially surprise some reading this. In Bill's case, different than Abraham, Bill kept and worked hard to maintain both wives!! He, unlike Abraham, never sent the first family away but kept them around and actually fawned on them, preferring them over the children of his second family. Have you not met Bill Gothard's personal families? I think you may have and didn't realize it at the time. They have been in attendance at all of his Basic Seminars.

Those who have met Bill Gothard and have closely followed his teachings are from one of his two families and are Bill Gothard's children. You will soon see if you are related to Bill Gothard's first family or to his second family.

##### **First, Bill's second family.**

These children attended Basic Seminars, Advanced Seminars, ATI training programs, and in all of those long hours of material, they spotted lessons and reminders from the Scriptures themselves. They responded directly and personally to God in obedience and gratefulness. They for the most part walked right past a lot of the content being taught that consisted of unique formulations, programs and too many steps to keep track of in their daily lives. They read the Scriptures that were presented and with a humble heart, they realized when and where God's Spirit was instructing them in following Christ Jesus, the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life.

Bill is most uncomfortable with this second family that attended his meetings. The problem he had with them is they think they are free, they act free, they have the idea that what God begins in their lives He is

able to complete it. They trust all of God's promises and believe that God's grace is His gift, His provisions, His making good on His promises for those who trust Him with their whole heart. When they fail or fall they act like children who are greatly loved by a grace-full and most merciful Father, acknowledging their wrongs and celebrating their forgiveness, a forgiveness which is always paid in full without any penalties. They love people. They even have some exceptional love for some exceptionally difficult people in their lives, open to God's teaching them to even come to understand how to love their enemies. They have a strong preference to obeying God rather than man.

### **Bill's first and favorite family.**

These are the children who look a whole more like Bill than the other kids in his second family! These children even act and talk a lot more like him, even the same mannerisms, in the way they turn a phrase or ask a question. They dress just like he does or gladly take his advice and specific instructions for how they ought to dress to please him and God. Their resemblance to Bill is striking!

These children have a great desire to know God and to become acceptable to God in any way they might muster. They have an absolute recognizable zeal for God. They are thrilled to have a clear prescription, some specific marching orders for how they might serve God and become acceptable to Him. They will embrace any and all projects or an exciting program that would put them into consideration by a God who rewards those who are rich in good works. They are most grateful for specific steps and precise formulations they can follow to resolve difficult and complex conflicts and problematic relationships. They are pleased to learn of a system for living a "successful Christian life" that gives them self-confidence to face a very fearful and diabolical world system. They are fairly convinced that the children from the second family are just a bit too worldly, much too frivolous, at some considerable risk for not being much more serious about their faith and the pursuit of righteousness.

Have you ever wondered why Bill Gothard loves certain people, certain groups so very much?

"Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Galatians 6:12-15

Have you ever wondered why Bill Gothard avoids certain people, ignores them, treats them unkindly and in some notable cases, actually carries out acts of hate and revenge against them? It is because Bill Gothard has quickly studied their life and faith and has concluded they are not in his favorite family and he cannot influence them to fall into line with his different gospel.

Do you know which family you are part of?

### **Bill Gothard's Second Marriage is in Trouble**

It is commonly thought that Bill Gothard is a single man and was never married. People have criticized him or at least wondered out loud on what basis he could teach a few millions husbands and wives on how to improve their marriage relationship, regulate their private sexual lives, how to raise their children, while he has never entered into or accomplished either.

The news break of the day is that he not only has been married once, he represents himself to be in a new relationship with a “significant other.” Now if that is proven true, that is enough to raise some eye brows. This story becomes even more complex when it is learned what his ongoing relationship is with his first marriage!!

Yes. This is an unauthorized biography of Rev. Bill Gothard. But hang on, stay with me if you can. I believe the rest of this story, as it unravels, will bring a whole lot of light on the seemingly never ending questions about this man and his unique and previously very popular teachings. First, some background on this story.

When you become united with Christ, the first relationship with the Law is put to death, brought to end, made of no effect, and as God promised, Christ sets you free from the bondage of slavery to the first relationship, to your relationship to the demands and expectations of the Law.

Scripture describes the end of the first relationship with the Law of Moses and the beginning and growth of the new relationship with Jesus Christ in this way:

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.”  
Romans 7:1-5

In the case of Bill Gothard, when he committed his life to Jesus Christ, he entered into a new relationship with the Son of God and his previous relationship with the demands of the Law died, became dead, it no longer had any effect on him. But wait....

Bill Gothard, after living a while in his new relationship with Jesus Christ, began to flirt with, began to spend “quality time” with his first relationship, with a cadaver!!!! Bill Gothard began to sneak down into the basement and cohabit with the cadaver (the Law). Bill Gothard began to commit adultery on a daily basis, violating his relationship with Christ (the term “marriage” used in this passage to clearly delineate the effect of the law in such matters) and obtaining his “benefits” from what he could derive from cohabiting with the Law. In real life, and in this serious conflict between two relationships, do you think it is possible to simultaneously maintain two relationships at the same time, with two very different relationships in the same house?

Why was a relationship with the Law of Moses bondage before you met Christ? Why is it bondage to those who return to romance again their first relationship with the Law?

1. It produces death as it defines sin. Romans 7:7-13
2. It cannot produce life. Romans 3:20

3. It is not of faith. Galatians 3:12
4. It is designed to persuade all people that you cannot keep the Law and are therefore subject to its judgments and that you need a Savior and Lord. Galatians 3:24-25
5. Righteousness and a good standing before a holy God can only be obtained apart from the Law. Romans 3:21

**What is Bill Gothard’s gain to attempt mixing the Law of Moses with the Gospel of Christ with an admixture of his own rules, regulations and repercussions for violation of them?**

They are many.

He is able to present a program for those eager to find a time tested self-help system that has clear and easy to follow steps and actions, projects and lessons to follow to address and resolve common life problems and conflicts.

It produces repeat customers and ongoing revenue from the seriously motivated people who want to pursue “successful Christian living” for themselves and their children.

It creates for him an identity, high recognition and the honor that comes with it, seeing himself as having some value in the Christian community, a legacy for history he can be proud of.

Millions of dollars of revenue each year, with facilities and staff and servants has its privileges.

**What are his losses?**

The Scriptures are clear as to his losses, and they are serious.

He cannot derive any further benefit from his relationship with Christ. Bill Gothard has made the life of Christ of no affect by displacing faith with efforts of the flesh to achieve righteousness. Romans 10:2-5.

He has fallen from the grace of God. He has insulted the Spirit of grace.

**One Bad Apple Can Ruin the Whole Bushel**

How would you know if something is genuine and good news; or how would you be able to determine it is false? Jesus suggested a number of ways to test, observe, and determine the nature of a teaching and of a person.

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit.

"For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.... Luke 6:43-44

You will know them by their fruit (false prophets).

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous

wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.<sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them.  
Matthew 7:15-20

It is not what goes into a man (what he eats, drinks) that defiles (makes unclean) a man, but it is what comes out of a man that defiles him.

So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.” Matthew 15:16-20

The apostles defined in additional detail the tell-tale signs of something that is false, dangerous and to not be embraced.

1. Any teacher whose conscience has been seared as with a hot iron. “...by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth....” (I Timothy 4:2-3). This is a man who finds it impossible to acknowledge his sin and is unable to confess and forsake his sin.
2. Any teacher who does not encourage and invite correction and confirmation of the truth of the teachings. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11
3. Any teacher who designs a system and structure that introduces anyone as a mediator between the person and God Himself. “...there is ONE God, and ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5)
4. Any teacher who distorts the Word of God, adds to it, takes away from it. “In their greed they will exploit you with false words...” (II Peter 2:2-3; Galatians 1:6-7)

I would pose three foundational errors for your consideration.

1. Gothard’s teachings make many references to Scripture texts is abundant, and are troubling in their “eisegesis” (reading one’s own opinions into any particular text) rather than exegesis, working to obtain an accurate understanding of the original intent of the author of Scripture in the text and context.
2. The introduction of a program, a system, a formulation for every problem and need, instead of introduction to a relationship with the living and indwelling God.

3. The admixture Gothard has assembled is beguiling, disarming, and disastrous.

Jesus Christ + Law of Moses + 7 Universal Non-Optional Principles + Your Life Problems

### **Bill Gothard's True Heart Condition Shows Its Fruit**

A well-known evangelist, revival preacher and well known colporteur, Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, IL, spoke often to the IBLP staff and employees in their chapels at Bill Gothard's invitation. In the middle of a week-long engagement of speaking to daily chapels, Bill had a staff man telephone Mr. Roberts to ask him if he would completely shave his very distinguished beard before coming to the next chapel!! Mr. Roberts declined, having worn a beard most of his life at his wife's preference, and having spoken many times to Bill Gothard's staff at their scheduled chapels. In a private meeting with Mr. Roberts the next day, Bill Gothard insisted the Scriptures taught that a righteous man must not wear a beard and that he would not allow Mr. Roberts to teach his staff any longer! Bill Gothard was willing to stop the preaching and teaching of God's holy Word over a new found personal conviction about men wearing beards, which he was glad to enforce on other believers, to the loss of hearing of the gospel by his own staff!

Bill Gothard's own father, Mr. Gothard Sr. most favorite Scripture was Psalm 133:1-3 which describes God's pleasure in a man's beard, "A Song of Ascents, of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing-- life forever." And again in Leviticus 8:12, "He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him. Next Moses had Aaron's sons come near and clothed them with tunics, and girded them with sashes and bound caps on them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses." God Himself approved of Aaron's beard, yet Bill Gothard cannot and will not agree with God!!

Why Mr. Gothard Sr.'s son somehow missed this is still a mystery. It does demonstrate in a stark way the confusion of doctrine and abusive behavior he is willing to inflict on God's children to please himself and his heart's desire to control and manipulate the lives of other people, to his own glory and his own power.

That offensive abuse of a man of God by Bill Gothard must be privately and publicly confessed as the most shameful and most unbiblical behavior and must not be permitted in the fellowship of true believers. Bill Gothard will be well served to confess this sin against God and against Mr. Roberts, and Bill Gothard would be better served to confess this sin publicly to the nation he has terribly misled by his ungodly behavior such as this and by the confusion of doctrine that he has spread. I know Mr. Roberts and his family fairly well, being a guest in their home for several days in recent years. They do pray for Bill Gothard to come to some sense of reality about how far away from the gospel he has strayed.

Bill Gothard regularly and widely elevates his own personal opinions and private views of religious life and makes them equal to and superior to the Word of God. In his development of new law systems and using references to the Old Covenant Law for support of his own rules, views and laws, Bill Gothard is at great risk of adding to and taking away from God's Word (Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Bill Gothard by these deplorable deeds and by his confusion of doctrine is in full violation of Romans 14:1-13. Here the Apostle Paul makes clear how a mature believer is to behave in relationship to others who have various preferences in life that God allows each one to pursue and maintain on the basis of only their communication with God Almighty and their eventual reporting to Him of their choices.

“Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.” So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.” Romans 14:1-13

### **Cult or a Curse?**

Some theologians and apologists of the Christian faith have been reluctant to characterize Bill Gothard and the IBLP organization as a cult, or as a false religion.

In 1980, some of the IBLP staff at that time reviewed the published characteristics of a cult from various theologians and writers, and what they were seeing and experiencing caused them to check most of the boxes on the list.

But, it is worse than that. And here is why.

Galatians is clear about two things:

1. Those who embrace the Law or involve themselves in any aspect of “receiving it”, interacting with it for some moral improvement or advantage with God they are under obligation to keep the entire Law. By that participation (even out of sincere desire and desperation to know God and have His help), Christ becomes of no benefit to them, they have been severed from Christ, they are fallen from grace. Gal. 5:1-9. They place themselves “under a curse.” Gal. 3:10-14.
2. The Teacher who leads people into embracing and receiving aspects of the Law plus his own mix of philosophies, little laws, man’s commandments, places himself under a curse. Gal. 1:6-9.

### **Bill Gothard is placing millions of people under a Curse**

The more basic problem is Bill Gothard’s confusion of the gospel message by his effectively inviting people, compelling people to comply with the Law of Moses and its provisions (such as not eating pork, requiring circumcision of males, regulating schedules of abstinence of physical relations between spouses, etc. ad infinitum) as well as adding in his own little laws, rules, commandments and philosophies (if there is such a thing as 7 Universal Non-Optional Principles), all which according to the Scriptures puts the

believer “under the curse of the Law.” Gal. 3:10-14.

The Biblical problem presented by the Apostle Paul defined a “Judaizer” as any person working like mad to keep Jesus involved (as we agree He must be) plus keeping the Law. Bill Gothard adds to that deadly mix his “plus” keeping the local commandments and precepts of a man all in compliance with and to live a performance based and perfect life to achieve a righteous standing before a holy God and enjoy “success in the Christian life”? It is the admixture of the demands of the Law (requiring perfection) plus the inclusion of a man’s commandments and private philosophies with their penalties and punishments attached to them, e.g. no pork, no beards/except a waiver to the Mennonites (so much for universal and non-optional), submit to circumcision, etc. etc. ad infinitum, all of which the Scripture declares plainly causes believers to fall from grace (not by works lest anyone should be boast) and to be severed from the life of Christ. Galatians 5:1-9; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Do you know why Bill Gothard gives Mennonites a waiver from his teaching that a moral man must not wear a beard? It is simple actually. Bill Gothard recognizes that certain sects of Mennonites have a man-invented doctrine involving a works and self-righteousness belief system that their men must wear a beard and die with a beard on their face to have any sense of security to enter heaven. Instead of preaching the truth of the gospel to them, Bill Gothard recognizes they have the very same works of self-righteousness which he does, though exactly the opposite requirement for his non-Mennonite followers. Bill Gothard’s disciples are required to keep their face clean of all facial hair to improve their morality in his system. Bill Gothard cannot help them understand the gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone, because he holds to the very same confusion about the Scriptures!

Does the IBLP Board of Directors understand that teaching believers to work to comply with the Law of Moses and comply with the commandments, precepts and philosophies of a mere local man, brings each of those people under the curse of the Law? Does the Board understand that such teaching is in direct violation of the Scriptures?

It is most important to consider what “the curse” is in this Bible text?

1. “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26.

They who live by the law will be judged by the law. Romans 2:12.

For whoever keeps the whole law (613 demands) and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. James 2:10

Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. Galatians 5:3.

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Hebrews 10:27-29.

The Law is not of faith. Gal. 3:12.

And that which is not of faith is sin. Romans 14:23.

For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified...

Romans 4:14

2. Any effort to keep the Law, which is itself not of faith, becomes an effort of the flesh. The flesh and the Spirit are always at war with each other. Gal. 5:17-18. You are either walking by the Spirit or you are under the Law. You cannot do both at the same time according to the Bible.

3. Christ will be of no benefit to them. They are severed from Christ. Gal. 5:2, 4
4. They have fallen from grace. Gal. 5:4

### **Bill Gothard has placed himself under the Curse!!**

The Teacher, any teacher, any pastor, elder, deacon who invites people into embracing the Law and its demands places himself under a curse.

“...only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ, but even if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! Galatians 1:6-8

“...but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is...I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.” Gal. 5:10. God is speaking plainly here, declaring that the Teacher who asks you to receive circumcision ought to take a razor blade and go cut on his own private parts!

“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and the purity of devotion to Christ.” II Cor. 11:1-4

### **Four Big Problems**

To obtain salvation and to pursue sanctification (spiritual growth and maturity here) with a holy God, to accept and pursue a mixture of Jesus blood + keeping of the Law + keeping of the precepts and commandments added to the Scripture by a local man, produces three problems for you, and at least one for him.

- a. It is impossible to accomplish, as the Scriptures plainly state. Romans 7:14, 16, 18. The Law is spiritual and was provided to persuade us that keeping it is impossible.
- b. Anyone who attempts it is cursed and is condemned. Gal. 3:10; James 2:10; Romans 3:20.
- c. And the man who teaches it and entices people to join him in it is also cursed. Galatians 1:9 II Corinthians 11:4
- d. It holds people into hopeless bondage. Galatians 2:4. There is freedom and power for living only through the all sufficiency of Jesus Christ who is preeminent and requires exclusivity for the source of our life and growth. Gal. 5:1, John 15:5, I Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:6, 10, and a hundred other texts.

It is the admixture of the Law, PLUS local commandments/principles thrown in as a human promise for good success, PLUS Christ that excludes Christ Jesus from being all sufficient and exclusive.

## **Finding Our Way Out and Back Home**

I do believe we need to go to the next step of defining the nature of the problem which some call “legalism” or moralism etc. but which titles have some considerable emotion, sense of a put down, of name calling, a condemning aspect to it. Galatians goes a bit further and makes very clear the underlying problem that defies a life of faith by God’s grace, and calls it a curse. The book describes how we place ourselves under the curse of the Law, and how we get caught up in following a Teacher who has placed himself under a curse!

The naked facts about the human attempt to participate in one’s salvation or work to achieve sanctification / holiness by self-efforts and by embracing of the Law of Moses are threefold:

1. You are no longer relying upon the all sufficiency of Jesus Christ and a growth that is of God. I Corinthians 1:30-31
2. It negates and nullifies altogether the specific promises and provisions of God toward His children for the specific ways God uses to grow His children into the stature of Christ. “. . .thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.” Mark 7:13
3. Any embrace of the Law and its demands, eliminates the “grace of God” as the provision for meeting the demands of the Law. God has replaced all human effort with the completed work of Christ and the ongoing supply of God’s grace inside of a daily operating relationship between Him and each of His children.

## **Circumcision**

A review of one example of a prominent teaching of Bill Gothard may be helpful. Bill Gothard promotes the teaching that a man, a believer in Christ Jesus should be circumcised. He teaches that a man is less likely to be immoral if he is circumcised. He references the requirement of the Law of the Old Testament as support for his teaching of men who would follow Christ and live a righteous life.

Bill Gothard’s teaching of circumcision is limited to believing men and boys. It excludes woman. It is logical though, in his arguments, that women and girls who believe in Christ ought also to be circumcised to become more moral in their thinking, less inclined to immorality. That is the same line of thinking, teaching, and logic applied to young girls (most before age five) and of reproductive age, applied before they are married, which is the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This is practiced by a wide number of tribes, ethnic groups and is still common on the African continent in tribes associated with Mohammed (“sunna circumcision” following the tradition of Mohammed).

The Gospel speaks rather of the circumcision of the heart, a circumcision of the heart by Jesus Christ. By a relationship with the living Christ, we are united with him in His crucifixion “so that our body of sin might be done away with...for he who has died is freed from sin.” Romans 6:5-6.

“...and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in

which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead....” Colossians 2:10-12

“For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

Romans 2:25-29

Which circumcision would you prefer?

Any believer in Christ Jesus who receives circumcision of the flesh in response to teaching that it will make a man (or a woman) more moral, less likely to be immoral, they are participating in a “work of the flesh” in place of relying fully and only upon the act of God on their heart. If they accept and embrace the idea that doing some act, doing some deed, performing some ritual, would in some way enhance, or improve their standing before a holy God, they have by that act chosen an effort of the flesh in opposition to the Spirit of God.

Is it possible to pray to God in the flesh and it be rejected by God? Yes, the prayer of the hypocrite. Matthew 6:5

Is it possible to give our tithes and offerings to God in the flesh and it be rejected by God? Yes, the publicly displayed gifts of the hypocrite. Matthew 6:1-2

Is it possible to fast before God in the flesh and it be rejected by God? Yes, the fasting by a hypocrite who does it to be noticed by men and cannot do it in secret. Matthew 6:16-18

Is it possible to sing songs of worship to God and it be rejected by God? Amos 5:21-23; Malachi 1:6-14

Yes indeed.

“Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:8; James 4:4; Heb. 11:6. It is the same outcome for any work, any self-effort.

Romans 4:2-16. “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God...now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor (gift, grace), but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in His who justified the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

### **Building Confusion from the Ground Up**

Bill Gothard starts his students and followers off with a redefining of the most basic terms of God’s Word, altering their meaning and causing the loss of the meaning God Himself intended.

Bill Gothard’s redefinition of Faith: “Visualizing what God intends to do.”

Bill Gothard’s redefinition of Grace: “The desire and the power to do God’s will.”

Both terms and their definitions assigned to them by Bill Gothard are faulty in nearly every way. In his view of faith, it is an activity, an effort that you can only hope you get right as you try to determine what God is up to and how you can participate. In his view of grace, again a person is left to wonder if and when they will get the desire and if and when they might ever get the power to do something righteous for God. It sets people up for suggestions from the nearby peer community only too willing to give out assignments and recruit you and me to some new projects, activities, service, as well as private efforts to be pleasing to God.

The consequences of a wrong definition are immense.

### **The Lord knows the way through the Wilderness...**

Consider the use of the term “faith” in Scripture.

It is clearly and always has been trusting, relying upon the promises of God because you have come to believe that God exists and He is who He declares that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Romans 4:16, Genesis 15:all, esp. vs 6; Hebrews 11:6.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. That which is not of faith is sin. Any of us are always living by either the flesh (what comes natural, self-righteous efforts, wrong and sinful) or we are living by the Spirit of God who lives in His children and His church. Spiritual life comes only by God’s Spirit. Life lived in the flesh and in sin only produces death. We are to live by the law of faith. As we live by faith by following the Spirit of God, we enjoy all of God’s riches that are in Christ Jesus without reference to the Law or any other accomplishment, achievement, or effort of the flesh to obtain it or maintain it. Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6. Living by faith in God’s promises alone leaves the outcome in every situation and circumstance in God’s hands, which is what we call the grace of God. Living in the “obedience of faith” is following the Word of God and the indwelling of the Spirit with a whole heart reliance upon God and His good promises without any reliance upon our own performance to earn or merit God’s blessing, trusting God continue His work in our lives.

“...who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;...” Romans 1:4-6.

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” Romans 16:25-27

This is what the Scriptures describe as “living by faith.”

“For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all...” Romans 4:16

Consider the use of the term “grace” in Scripture.

Grace in its essence is the “life of Christ” in us. “I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.”(I Corinthians 1:4) “...and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 1:4) “...so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:21) That life of Christ is a gift of God to His children. It cannot be earned. It cannot be increased or decreased. It is not a commodity that can be traded. It comes through faith, through our placing our trust in God alone, it is experienced in our complete whole heart of reliance upon the promises of God because of His reliability, because of His character of love and grace towards His children.

If any effort is made to earn it, or increase it by some effort or merit, whatever you get next from God or circumstances is happenstance and is not grace. If in your falling and failing spiritually and in life’s events, the grace of God is not diminished by that demerit. The Scriptures make it clear that a believer does “fall from grace” when they take hold of any effort to improve their standing before God by any “work of the Law” of Moses. Galatians 5:2-9.

Colossians 2 outlines the additional religious resources and behavior that cheats, that defrauds believers out of the richness of a growing relationship with the living indwelling God based on a “true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is Christ Himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this so NO one will delude you with persuasive argument,” including...

Philosophy, v.8

Empty Deception, v.8

Traditions of men, v.8

Elementary principles of the world, v.8

Commandments and teachings of men, v.22

Wisdom in self-made religion, v.23

Self-abasement, v.18, 23

Severe treatment of the body, v.23

Judging of food, drink, decrees, v.16

Keeping of festivals and religious Sabbaths, v.16

Worship of angels, v.18

Standing on personal visions, v.18

Inflated minds, big heads, without cause, v.18

Asceticism, v.21-22

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of NO value against fleshly indulgence.”

### **Who is the Daddy of those who follow him and accept this curse?**

It is not my place or capability to declare if Rev. Bill Gothard is a genuine believer in Jesus Christ for salvation, or not, but I would say two things for certain:

1. Throughout the events and relationships with Bill Gothard, during 1980-1981, he did not exhibit even one of the fruits or characteristics of a believer mentioned anywhere in the Scriptures. He did exactly the opposite on every occasion, lying, deception, deceitfulness, entirely insubordinate, manipulative, threatening, issuing a curse to intimidate, unable to confess his own sins, quick to announce the sins of others, carrying out acts of personal hate and revenge.

Again in 2013-2014 (to this date), Bill Gothard has repeated his rejection of confession of sin, has rejected acknowledging his disqualification from the ministry and teaching, and has continued to bear false witness against his Christian brothers.

2. My mother led me to the Lord for salvation when I was eight years old in a backyard Bible club in the summertime. She knew the Scriptures well and for just one example, she could describe in such detail the five stones shepherd David selected out of the stream that you could take your turn at a stream and pick the very same ones. She was the very best story teller. From her teaching of the Scriptures I realized I was a sinner and embraced Jesus Christ as my Savior. She became a believer in Christ for salvation 45 years later! Aided by a godly minister and his wife, she was helped to understand the difference between an acceptable and even spectacular religious commitment and the very different placing of one's full reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and for spiritual growth.

Yes, we ought to and must pray for his salvation. The term "salvation" or "saved" itself is used in at least two ways in the New Testament, one referring to conversion, being transferred from darkness to light, from death to life. The second meaning is to "be made whole" or "to be made complete." In the case of Bill Gothard and not being able to know which he needs, you can Biblically pray for "his salvation" in either sense.

### **Are we responsible for what we say and what people conclude that we just said or taught them?**

Good question.

Is Bill Gothard and the IBLP organization responsible to God and to His church for what they have taught? If there was or is confusion about any particular contrary doctrines, e.g. a man who believes in Jesus Christ ought to be circumcised, and a correction of thinking occurs which aligns with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, should not the first published false and wrong teaching be denounced, renounced, recanted, and notices sent to 2.7 million people and 90,000 pastors to update them?

"Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." James 3:1

"...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." Matthew 18:6

### **Reversing the Veil Rent in Two by Christ**

God gave careful instructions to Moses to build a veil of cloth 60 feet x 30 feet x 4 inches thick which took 300 priests to install each time it was installed. The veil was to create a separate place for a Holy of Holies where God's presence existed among His people. Only the high priest entered this special dwelling place of God, he did so only once a year on the Day of Atonement, and only came with the spilled blood

of a slain lamb. This veil restricted the access to God's presence by 1,000s of priests over a period of 1400 years, and prevented any access to God by all others. It was to remind all people that because of their sin, no one could enter God's holy presence, except the high priest and that only once a year.

God had a spectacular and special plan which He carried out in the life and death of His Son Jesus Christ. God through the prophet Jeremiah spoke plainly of the Levitical system and restricted approach to God coming to an end in a New Covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) On the cross, and at the moment Jesus gave up His spirit, the payment for sin had been accomplished one and for all, the veil which hung between God and man for 1400 years was torn in two from top to the bottom. Jesus had offered to God a blood sacrifice, not of a slain lamb, but the very spilled blood and death of Himself as a payment which God accepted in full for any and every person who would ever embrace God's salvation offered through reliance, trust, faith in that perfect and single payment of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:1-14

The veil was rent in two by Christ, direct access to God was granted to every child, woman and man who would seek God with a whole heart, in faith believing that God exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Direct access to a holy God by every child, woman and man was now possible. No more offering of a sin offering of some bird or lamb or goat. No more standing in line for a priest to offer your sacrifice for you. Through Christ God has thrown open access to everyone who would want to know God, enter into His presence, hear His Word, and serve Him with gratefulness.

The effective consequences of the teaching of the "Chain of Command" and "Umbrella of Protection" concepts by Bill Gothard has reversed the veil. By his own confusion about the authority of God and God's direct dealing with every man, woman and children, Bill Gothard has written and taught damaging concepts about the authority of a man, or a priest, or anyone else in some position of authority and responsibility over others. His additional teaching of his being "the Lord's anointed" and that he and those in spiritual authority like him are not to be challenged, criticized or questioned is a clear exhibit of his confusion about what God did in Christ at the cross. At that cross, it was finished in regard to granting access and standing and authority to approach God and walk with Him without needing to stand in wait for an earth bound authority to grant such access or privilege or to interpret God's will for their lives through their enforced mediation over them.

Jesus Christ bore our "curse" on His cross for us.

"However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE "-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:12-14

"...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls." I Peter 2:24-25.

The curse of the Law was brought to an end in our relationship with the resurrected Christ.

Do not submit yourself or your family back into the demands of the Law which produces only death. Galatians 5:1

Pursue rather the law of faith (Romans 3:23-4:5) which brings you into the all sufficiency of Jesus Christ for your life.

What are we to do to effectively sort out the admixture of the Law, the commandments and philosophies of men which we have attempted to combine into our following of Jesus Christ?

“...We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...” II Corinthians 10:1-7.

“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to my husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully...for such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.”

II Corinthians 11:2-15

Note: Why does the believer in Christ have NO obligation to the Law of Moses?

1. God established “faith” as the basis for a relationship with His children 430 years before the Law of Moses was given. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:16, 1-25;-5-2; Galatians 3:17
2. God established “faith” as the basis for a relationship with His children without reference to circumcision.
3. The Law of Moses was temporary. Hebrews 7:11-12; 8:1-13; Acts 15:6-11, 5, 24; II Cor. 3:6-13.
4. The Law of Moses was replaced by Christ Jesus. Romans 6:14; 7:6; 8:3, 2-4; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:4; Romans 8:2, 13.
5. Christ Jesus made us dead to the Law. Romans 7:1-5, Galatians 2:19.

Note: See additional study of “The Preeminence and Exclusivity and All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ”

Note: Letter presented to Bill Gothard January 6, 2014. It is presented here to outline some of the judgments of God that come out of as a result of placing yourself under the curse of subjecting yourself to the Law of Moses, a continuation in personal sin, a disregard for pure doctrine out of greed for personal gain and reputation. Each of these judgments match specific charges of ungodliness that are outstanding against Bill Gothard, with careful evidence, testimony, and documentation provided to Bill Gothard, his home church, each of his Board members in a 140 page notebook. Bill Gothard and the IBLP Board have failed to respond in any way to acknowledge receipt of or their interest in responding to these charges. The home church which ordained and commissioned Bill Gothard to this ministry have also received a copy of these materials and have to this date not responded with any decision or action.

A careful reading of these Scripture passages in this outline of Judgments below will be helpful in understanding the extent of the current situation.

January 6, 2014

Rev. Bill Gothard  
IBLP  
P. O. Box 1  
Oak Brook, IL 60521

Dear Bill,

As I have prayed for you today, I spent some time considering how I might feel if I was in your shoes. With so many issues, uncountable sources of pressure, ongoing development of old and new conflicts, it seems it may be difficult to consider where a man might start in working through the pile of problems. I have thought through what I might do, based on the promised outcomes God guarantees those who turn from their own way of doing things and choose to walk uprightly. The Scriptures are fairly clear on this question. You would know them well.

At the top of my list would be to deal first and foremost with each judgment of God I might be exposed to. With the abundant evidence, the many witnesses, and documentation of the sins, wrongs, and wickedness you have carried out and are continuing to prosecute against myself and so many others, certain obvious judgments of God come to mind that seem to be in play against you. I offer them here in quick to read text form simply as a reminder this is in my view the most serious business to be addressed. As King David declared, "Against You, You only (God), I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge." Psalm 51:4. Once your adjustments to God's judgments are made, God is clear that He will assist you in correcting your relationship with His children and His creation which you have wronged and brought so much damage into their lives. Matthew 5:23-26.

<b>The Judgment</b>	<b>The Cause</b>	<b>Scripture</b>
Your house is being left to you desolate.	You are scourging and persecuting from city to city the prophets, wise men and scribes I am sending to you.	Matthew 23:34-39
No one will be spared	"Many have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced."	II Cor. 12:21; 13:1-2
Terrifying expectation of judgment...it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.	If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth...trampled underfoot the Son of God, regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, insulted the Spirit of grace.	Hebrews 10:23-39
Disqualified Dishonorable vessels	Failure to remain disciplined and follow the rules. "...if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules." "... after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." "...if anyone cleanses himself from these things (wickedness), he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master..."	II Tim. 2:5 I Cor. 9:27 II Tim. 2:19-22
Defiled	"But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person." Most of these seem to	Matthew 15:15-22

	apply to your treatment of me, as well as others God has sent to you over the years.	
Shipwrecked faith, shipwrecked ministry	Rejected a good, clear conscience. Instead you have covered up your sins, failed to forsake them, and having not confessed them, never experienced the promise of God to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.	I Tim. 1:19; 3:9; Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9
“none of his righteous deeds will be remembered”	“When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he <i>so</i> trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die. But when I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ <b>and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness, if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery</b> , walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live.”	Ezekiel 33:13-16, 8-20
Woe to that man	“...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck...” There are 1000s of ATI kids who are obviously stumbling in their spiritual lives and explain the origin of their confusion is your teachings.	Matthew 18:1-7; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2
Fallen from grace, severed from Christ, the person who is doing this disturbing will bear his judgment	If you receive circumcision (and teach them to do so), you obligate your followers to keep the whole Law, you are hindering them from obeying the truth. Has anyone come to Christ uncircumcised? “He is NOT to be circumcised.”	Gal. 5:1-10; I Cor. 7:18-19; Phil. 3:2
He is to be accursed	Disturbing the faith of believers in Christ, wanting to distort the gospel of Christ, adding in precepts of man, adding in the commandments of man, and elevating these to equality with Scripture supporting them with rewards for keeping and demerits and punishments for failing.	Gal. 1:6-9; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19
The fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work is burned up he will suffer loss...	“But each man must be careful how he builds on it (Christ Jesus as foundation)...now if any man builds on the foundation with...wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident...” In the view of many, your precepts, your man made commandments, your mixing in the Law with the gospel message, produces a whole lot of hay.	I Cor. 3:7-20
God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity. Guilty before the court, the supreme court, and	“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened, professing to be wise, they became fools...” “...the immoral man sins against his own body...” “...whoever is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court, or you “good for nothing”, or “you fool”...”	Romans 1:21-32; II Cor. 10:1-6; I Cor. 6:18-20; Matt. 5:27-30; Matt. 5:20-22

fiery hell.	I am not sure what the penalty is for attributing to a man's careful and spiritual service to the Lord Jesus as involvement with and from agency with Satan?	
Eternal Punishment	"Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." How you have treated those closest to you and who served you with great diligence and commitment, how you have treated them without regard, without mercy is shameful indeed. You have dishonored Christ in how you have dishonored so very many of the children of God.	Matt. 25:34-46
At the Judgment Seat of Christ the deeds done in our body will be recompensed	Whether good or bad, all of our words, our deeds, will be recompensed when we appear before the Lord Jesus Christ. So "don't put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother's way." "There is no creature hidden from His sight..."	II Cor. 5:10; Romans 14:12; Hebrews 4:12-13
It is only just for God to repay with affliction, retribution, and penalty those who afflicted you.	Your own countrymen drove us out, they are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men...wrath has come upon them to the utmost...those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. "for he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done and that without partiality."	I Thess. 2:14-15; II Thess. 1:6-9; Colossians 3:25; Romans 12:17-19
Rebuke before all. Even expose them.	Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning...doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.	I Tim. 5:17-25; I Cor. 5:6-13; Matt. 18:17; Eph. 5:10
Guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.	Does not judge the body (church) rightly.  100s of churches have become divided in their fellowship over the attitudes and actions of the "separatism" spawned and supported by your teachings.	I Cor. 10:27-32 Gal. 2:22-21 I Cor. 12:11-27 Romans 14:1-14
Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire	A good tree cannot bear bad fruit...You will know them by their fruits.  Church pastors and counseling offices nationwide have reported for years the very large amount of bad fruit that results from your combination of teachings and the demands of your system for living a successful life. I would imagine you have worked out many crafty answers to these reports, but in the view of the pending Judgment of God, would you consider once again a careful examination of the teachings and the system itself?	Matthew 7:15-27

Any good shepherd understands the need to leave the 99 that are safe and sound to pursue the one missing to find it and recover it no matter the risk or the cost. The hireling sees such an idea as too much risk and too much trouble and outside of his business plan. He has no genuine care for the sheep. Luke 15:3-7; John 10:12-13. In your case there are literally 1,000s of God's children that have been scattered, frightened, confused, threatened, and brought to despair by your teachings. Would you have any interest at all in determining what in your personal life example and what in your teachings that have caused so much disturbance of the flock of God? The hireling and a good shepherd are starkly different on this very point. This shepherd proves each day to be an example to the flock. I Peter 5:1-4.

Praying for you during this time.