

The Preeminence of, the Exclusive Claims by, The All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ

A Call to Bill Gothard to Return to the
Teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles Doctrine of *Grace Alone through Faith Alone in the Promise
and Provisions of God Alone*

The key word here is “alone,” which becomes the primary obstacle to those who want to add any system of works to establish one’s own righteousness before a holy God. Romans 10:1-5.

God’s plan and promise through the Ages was to provide His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only source for salvation and life, for righteousness, for sanctification and for redemption. (I Cor. 1:30-31). By God’s divine power He has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ who called us by His own glory and excellence... (II Peter 1:2-4).

The entire Word of God explains, illustrates, and offers unending support that God was putting on display for His Glory the Preeminence of Jesus Christ, the Exclusivity of the claims of Jesus Christ, and the All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ for all who would become the children of God.

The Preeminence of Jesus Christ is declared by God, “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile ALL things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross...” Colossians 1:15-22.

The Exclusive Claims by Jesus Christ force a decision when He announces, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6. “...all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16-17. Jesus was clear that He, Christ, was the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life. What can you offer that would compete with that? Why would you offer anything less and thereby hide the good news of the Gospel?

The All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ is proclaimed throughout the Scripture, “By His doing (God’s) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 1:30-31). It may help to put the name of Jesus Christ in direct linkage to each provision He delivers to the children of God stating that “By His doing (God’s doing) you are in Christ Jesus, who, Christ Jesus became to us wisdom from God, and Jesus Christ became to us righteousness and Jesus Christ became to us sanctification and Jesus Christ became to us redemption.”

(Note: Additional Scripture and comments on these aspects of Jesus Christ are attached to this paper).

Whenever religions, denominations, churches, or individual Teachers and Preachers attempt to add to the “simplicity that is in Christ” (II Cor. 11:1-4) or depart from that simplicity they become entangled in either “adding to or taking away” from the Word of God. When these Teachers and Preachers begin to insert their own commandments of men and build up their own religious culture of rules and regulations, standards and requirements, they nullify the gospel and the completed work of Christ.

Teachings and claims which feature and are based on the wisdom and devices of a man displaces two basic aspects of genuine spiritual life; 1) it displaces or in the least competes with the relationship of the believer they already have in Christ which is supported by the power of walking with the indwelling Spirit of God; and 2) displaces the Word of God as “sola scriptura” that the Word contains all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness.” They lead many men, women and children into spiritual confusion, bondage and render them to be powerless religious pursuits. Moral to be sure but a manmade morality stripped of any spiritual strength or underpinnings.

But, What If It is a Good Thing?

If you were anything like me, I was greatly helped by certain of the teachings of the Basic Seminar produced by Bill Gothard. I was thrilled to bring my friends and family to scores of the early seminars in the 1960s and 1970s. I was greatly honored to serve the Lord in the ministry of the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts (IBYC), the ministry of Bill Gothard. I was mighty proud to be associated with Bill Gothard, the renowned Teacher and believed I was doing God's work. What could possibly become unrighteous or out of order in this experience of ministry and service?

A great amount of detail and documentation answers this question, but one account may illustrate best what has become so wrong and out of order in the teachings and ministry of Bill Gothard. This story simply illustrates the same problems that are multiplied in their consequences from his teachings on topics like forbidding men to wear beards, men receiving circumcision, husbands abstaining from sex with their wives for various and repeated periods of time, along with a host of other teachings relying upon Mosaic Law. These are added into, mixed and co-mingled with his erroneous interpretations of Scripture on such subjects as sins of the fathers visited to the 3rd and 4th generations, that Bill Gothard and other leaders are the Lord's anointed and therefore are not subject to correction, spiritual gifts, moral purity, and a host of other similar teachings that mix Mosaic Law, Gothard's own "non-optional" Principles, creating erroneous definitions of Faith and Grace, plus the elevation of his personal opinions to be equal in authority as the Word of God itself. A simple illustration of this follows.

A Pig in a Poke

Now 500 years old, this common idiom is still a good warning today. In the Middle Ages, when good meat was scarce, in their eagerness and hunger the one seeking food would quickly buy a "pig in a poke" (a closed bag) and pay the value for a pig. Upon traveling home he would discover in the bag only a cat or a puppy, not of much value for a meal for his starving family, in addition to having lost the price of a pig from his savings. The second idiom came from the first, "someone let the cat out of the bag" disclosing the scheme of the ill-motivated peddler.

A well-known example is Gothard's selling the idea there is a moral benefit and spiritual blessing from God if any person will stop eating any pork or tuna products. Gothard believes that eating pork is not acceptable to Christians and violates the Law of God, teaching others, and disallowing the eating of BLTs, ham sandwiches and tuna salads, making it a point of division of Christian fellowship. Not only does he believe this restriction will benefit you spiritually and gain for you spiritual blessing, he imposes his personal opinions on others along with references to his proof texts in the Bible while pressuring and shaming people into compliance. In my case he pressed me to persuade and pressure my Dad, brother and Uncle to stop raising hogs back home on the Kansas farm. This pressure continued over several years which I replicated to my family causing much family strain and conflict. A good number of fellow staff became aware of this. Ignorant I thought I was not, but I bought into this legalism and pressure and I put great pressure on my very own family to stop the family business of breeding and raising hogs for a living.

In God's mercy, He arranged by Gothard's own invitation for Dr. Charles Ryrie to come to IBYC in Oak Brook to teach the entire staff some basic doctrine over a 2 day conference in the library on the second floor of the new building. Dr. Ryrie chose the topic of Law and Grace.

On the 2nd day of the Oak Brook visit, Dr. Ryrie opened it up for Questions after one session. I raised my hand and he gladly called on me in my normal back row seat. Bill Gothard and his brother and father were in attendance sitting front and center six feet from Dr. Ryrie. "My question, Dr. Ryrie, how would you characterize a teacher of the Scriptures who would forbid others from eating pork and tuna and would pressure his audience to stop raising hogs as a business?" Dr. Ryrie quickly and easily answered, "That man would be a false teacher." I am not aware that Dr. Ryrie ever learned my need of the hour, the purpose of the question or that the answer reflected upon his host.

I soon thereafter flew back to Wichita to meet with my family and confess this wrong toward them and described my shame of having accepted this contrary and false doctrine. Gothard's pressure on myself and my family, and the resulting loss of family fellowship and strength was wrong, shameful and detestable to God. My error was coming to believe that Bill Gothard spoke as authoritatively as the Word of God. The result was making Bill Gothard an idol and he gladly accepted my worship.

This offense and damage has never been confessed or corrected by Bill Gothard and this false doctrine, widely taught and promoted by him, has never been acknowledged.

So What Does this Admixture and Co-Mingling of Law, Principles and References to the Grace of God Create?

When Bill Gothard insists that Christians must comply with the Mosaic Law and its demands, he causes and multiplies tremendous and serious damage to the spiritual lives of his followers and to the church of Jesus Christ. He causes direct harm to the good news of the Gospel.

1. Bill Gothard's insistence that the Mosaic Law on foods (or any other demand of the Law) be complied with brings him and his followers into the tension of living by the entire Law in all of its requirements to become acceptable to God. Galatians 5:3 declares "...I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law." Even if you were able to live perfectly by the Law, it does not help you spiritually!!! "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins...In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure...Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins..." Hebrews 10:3-11; 9:8-12
2. Bill Gothard rejects the plain teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles in the Holy Spirit inspired writings of the New Testament and presses those who will listen to join him in that rejection of the Gospel's teaching. Jesus said clearly, "it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person..." (Matthew 15:11-20; Mark 7:15). Also expanded by the Apostles often and clearly, warning believers that Teachers would come along commanding them to abstain from meats, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, ... having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For EVERY creature of God is good, and NOTHING to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (I Timothy 4:1-5). The word "every" is "*pas*" which means the same as each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything. Gothard also rejects the teachings of Acts 10:9-17, Romans 14:2-3, I Corinthians 10:27-31 and Colossians 2:16.
3. Bill Gothard explains away these clear and repeated New Testament teachings causing increasing and ongoing doubt that we, his hearers will ever be able to simply read and follow the teachings of the Bible on our own. This practice undermines the believer's reliance on the promise of God that the Holy Spirit will and is able to teach us about God's Truth. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you..." (John 16:13-14).
4. Bill Gothard maintains his relationship with a number of religious groups that also adhere to the Old Testament Law demanding obligations of Christians in the church age. Gothard relies on these groups for support, attendance at his meetings and purchase of his materials. The groups include Seventh Day Adventists, Bob Jones schools and associated churches, and other fundamentalist church denominations which themselves embrace the Mosaic Law as the foundation of their Gospel. Early in his ministry these leaders called him into meetings and communicated their insistence that his message reflect their doctrines if they would send their people to his meetings. Gothard, like Barnabas of old (Galatians 2:13) got caught up in their hypocrisy and once in, it is hard economically to extricate oneself.
5. Bill Gothard was increased in his pride for getting you and me to submit to his teachings of his private interpretations of the Scriptures, whether not eating or raising pigs for business, or not being allowed as a believer to wear a beard, or any other rule, restriction or opinion related to dress code, hair style, selection of friends and a marriage partner, or any other device or scheme he might insist upon. "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.” It is impossible and very confusing when one teaches compliance with the Law of Moses while trying to explain Romans 8:1-4. “...for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did; sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Galatians 6:12-15 explains what motivates men like this, “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.” They are accepted in certain religious circles because of their insistence on keeping the Law and an assortment of additional little laws, even if they make occasional reference to Christ and the cross, failing to see the complete conflict with the purpose of the cross of Jesus Christ!!!

6. Bill Gothard takes back the freedom which Christ Jesus died to bring you into. He entices and enforces your subjection again to the slavery from which Christ Jesus set you free! “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly...It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery...” (Galatians 2:19-21; 5:1-9).

The Precepts of Man

A number of dynamics are put into motion when a Teacher introduces teachings which are the “precepts of man”, which are the “commandments of men” and/or are derived from the Law of Moses which “is not of faith” (Galatians 3:10-14), and which displace the clear teachings of Jesus Christ.

1. For many believers, the Bible is a very large book and a bit overwhelming when they learn it is a combination of 66 books. For many, the Bible is at a first reading a very complex book, clearly not easily mined for its great riches by the casual reader who might read something from it 5 or 10 minutes each week. It seems to many, that to understand the Bible would take a very great effort and a lot of time and talent they don’t have or are unwilling to commit.

It is a very natural and easy decision to let someone, nearly anyone, offer to us the conclusions of their study of the Bible. And it is simply addictive to have someone come along and have the entire Scriptures reduced to a set of instructions with 5 or even 10 Easy Steps, to consult an outline of formulations for how to resolve most every common human need and conflict by referencing a menu and table of contents to get to the correct instructions for the need of the hour.

2. The Teacher (in this case Bill Gothard) became my Master in pressing me to obey the Law regarding no eating of pork and no raising of pigs. His teachings along with his insistence he is our spiritual (and in this case work place) Chain of Command, his wishes were our/my command. I never did like slopping hogs or cleaning pig pens, so I was clearly open to his ideas! His instructions had an expectation that they would be followed and adhered to. Gothard did not invite, encourage or reward anyone who offered any serious challenge to his questionable interpretations of the Scriptures. He did not often award his followers as “NOBLE” for “examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so...” (Acts 17:11). Jesus was fairly clear when He declared, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.” (Matthew 23:8, KJV) Along with many others, I had looked to the wrong Teacher to be my Master / trainer.

3. A system of Principles (little laws) quickly replace a relationship with the living Christ

The introduction of the Law or of any standard or principle that places a demand on a person to perform in a certain way to obtain the blessing of God, the requirement God already put in place in Christ by the Father has been displaced and replaced. The outcome is that “Christ will be of no benefit to you.” Gal. 5:2. The sad

experience of each person who submits to and attempts to follow the requirements and standards outlined in the Law (or any similar system of law or program of principles to earn the favor and blessing of God) will include “falling from grace” and fearful discouragement and he/she becomes obligated before God to attempt to keep the entire Law or system.

In the case of IBYC (pre-1981) and now IBLP, the “7 Universal Non-Optional Principles”, while many references to Scripture are cited (often quite out of context and with obvious use of eisegesis), have been introduced to myself and several millions of people, as a system and program with inherent demands of a performance system involving standards, laws, and rules, formulas, and a series of man devised solutions with steps to solve every human need. Any common dictionary is clear about the definition and meaning of “Principle” being “a fundamental, primary, or general law or truth from which others are derived” (Dictionary.com); “a fundamental or general truth or law.”

The spiritual struggle of so many 100s of 1,000s of alumni of the Basic Seminar can be understood in the contrast between how God’s Word defines our relationship with God the Father and the indwelling Spirit of God, which relationship is in direct and complete conflict with slavery to the Law and its demands which can never be satisfied and which does not produce holiness. This slavery invites and encourages efforts of the flesh which produce its own bad fruit (Gal. 5:16-18). This futility is made clear throughout the New Testament.

“For as many (people) as are of the works of the Law are under a curse...” Gal. 3:10

“But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men... You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.” Mark 7:7-9

“...in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 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.” Col. 2:22-23

“...Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6, and “...those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:8

“...For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes...abounding in riches for all who call on Him.” Romans 10:2-4, 12

Our task as believers is to identify any thing that may even appear religious and good but which in itself undermines the very Gospel of Christ Jesus and the grace of God. “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 Cor. 10:4-6

The “precepts of man” are the created ideas, teachings, opinions, personal views, personal “revelations and special insights” which may sound quite good and even authoritative, but which put a demand on you and I to meet a certain and specific set of standards defined by the Teacher. They come with the Teacher’s insistence upon your compliance earning his praise and with the promised “blessings of God” if you keep them! Such precepts and principles, in their essence compete with and diminish the clear teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. They move a person away from their position with God the Father where His blessings are already fully available to the child of God through the work and merit of Christ Jesus alone and thus are known as the Grace of God.

Most believers might embrace and agree with the teaching that their salvation has come about “...by grace...through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one

may boast (in their own performance or working to gain it or keep it).” Eph. 2:8-9.

Those same believers may be less confident or unsure of how their ongoing Christian life must follow the very same basis for the relationship with God the Father. Colossians 2:6 states it this way, “Just like you have received Christ Jesus, so walk in Him.”

Our human nature gravitates too often to any invitation by so called Teachers to follow a certain program, complete a certain outline of specific steps, to submit to an array of commitments, to solve difficult personal conflicts with a proven formula, and submit to them or others assigned as an authority in our life so that God’s blessings can be experienced by just such obedience. Here is what the Bible makes fairly clear about this approach:

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

“...the Law is not of faith.” Gal. 3:12

“For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” Gal. 2:19-21

God wants so very much for you to grow up into a mature relationship with the Father, communicating with and adjusting your life to the Word of God by the teaching of the indwelling Spirit of God. Any switch of reliance from God’s Word and God’s Spirit to the “weak and worthless elemental things” (Gal. 4:9, 1-9) to which we enslave ourselves stops grace. Instead it sets in place two horrible traps; either a self-boasting of any progress that might occur, or a despair from the resulting failure to overcome the power of the flesh and sin. Col. 2:20-23

It can be clearly shown that submission to the 7 Universal Non-Optional Principles taught at the Basic Seminar has all of the same direct effects of submitting to the Law of Moses or to any other system of law with their demands combined with their punishments or rewards.

So what is Wrong with a “Universal, Non-Optional Principle?”

A “Principle” is the same as a Law.

Definition of *PRINCIPLE*

a : a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption

b (1) : a rule or **code** of conduct (2) : habitual devotion to right **principles** <a man of *principle*>

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/principle

When a system is developed around a “Principle” or group of “Principles” they become an operating system (OS). An easy example is the OS of your computer. Every computer requires an operating system which operates on the basis of a set of “principles” or “laws” “code” or “instructions.”

The “7 Universal Non-Optional Principles” taught by Bill Gothard should be understood as “7 Universal Non-Optional **Laws**” by which he promises “successful living” for believers in Christ or any other person who follows them. I do not believe he would prefer to consider them “assumptions” or mere suggestions. He might be tempted to refer to them as “doctrines” though that would put his teachings in more direct tension with the pure doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. As “Principles” it seems palatable to most of his listening audience.

To enhance the following or keeping of his 7 Universal Non-Optional Principles/Laws Bill Gothard provides a growing body of teachings to aid, to assist you in the compliance to these Laws, increasing your chances of “successful living”. For example, to attain to “moral purity” he teaches this can be achieved by anyone adhering to “7 Steps + 7 Projects.”

When a system is created around a set of laws, with their supporting formulations, rules, regulations, rewards and punishments, each local grouping and the national or world entity soon develops its own traditions and actual culture based on identifiable, recognizable community and the members of it. This system is not unlike the Talmud of the Jewish faith or the Hadiths of the Islamic faith.

Basically, we like order, prescribed ways of doing things, menus, lists, rules and regulations, systems with predictable outcomes, having others making decisions for us that we would fear making ourselves. Our human nature prefers a system where a person can pursue a program of projects and ordered steps and achieve a set of objectives. There is praise and credit due to those who persist in these plans, and usually a good number of people overseeing these cultures who will gladly and often reward those who pursue these achievements. They will as well deliver demerits to those who fail or are slacking in their dedication and disciplines. Many people would naturally gravitate to such a system, to the culture that grows around a group of people living in the same pattern, in the same manner.

The Word of God is clear about these things:

By your traditions you have nullified the word of God. Matthew 15:5-8

“But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.... 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'”

A Very Large Problem with Man Made Religious Laws/Principles

The Law of Moses was designed to bring death (Romans 7; Galatians 3).

Herein lies a deceptive and powerful problem. The development of man-made commandments and teachings involving a new set of rules, regulations, rewards and punishments gives the followers, its subscribers the false idea that they can live in conformance to the Law of Moses as they make progress with the man-made commandments that reference the Mosaic Law.

The deception of a new system of religious laws for the improvement and promised “successful living” of the Christian life is further complicated by all of the same limitations of the Law as announced by God Himself:

The Law...

Cannot make perfect those who draw near. Heb. 10:1

Was not able to take away sins. Heb. 10:4, 11

Was no basis for anyone to be justified before God. Galatians 3:11

The Law came with a warning: No one can set it aside or add conditions to it. Galatians 3:15.

Why not? What would be wrong with adding helps, aids, devices, schemes, even 7 Universal Non-Optional Principles that would help you keep the Law more completely? For this very reason: so as to not diminish its full power of bringing about the conclusion that it is impossible to keep the Law, for “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law to perform them.”(Galatians 3:10-14)

If your religious activity and programs are designed to help you comply with and keep the Law, it is designed to fail! No one can keep the Law to God’s satisfaction. That is why God introduced a better, a superior way through a living relationship with the resurrected Jesus Christ. Jesus described this problem this way, “If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:23)

One Thing Worse

There is one thing worse than building a spiritual life based on the Law of Moses along with the scores of formulas and any man-made supporting laws.

An entirely worse situation is the mixing of a system of man-made laws, standards and principles co-mingled with God's perfect redemption by grace through faith in the promises God has made. This co-mingling is effectively offering two opposing operating systems (OS) to those who are sincerely seeking God with their whole heart. Such mixing confuses the gospel of Christ, confuses the one seeking to know God, and produces a spiritual life without the power of God to provide actual victory over the law of sin and of death.

The Only Thing Better? The Only ONE

So, what is the solution when nearly 3,000,000 people in our churches have bought into a system of religion that offers a program for "successful living" with 100s of references to the Scripture, and which has some obviously good things mixed in with serious weaknesses and a confusion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

"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... 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."

II Corinthians 10:5, 11:3

We must reject any teaching of man and discard every practice of religious culture which competes with living with Jesus Christ in first place in our minds and hearts, not just prominent, but preeminent. We must stake our life and hope only upon the promise and provisions offered by God and His Son Jesus Christ, who is the only faithful one. Hebrews 10:23. We are safe to reject all invitations for us to hope in any program, device, or formula that offers a man-designed scheme to experience what God has already provided to us through the completed work and resurrected life of Christ.

Gideon of old came to his senses and realized God's judgment was because of the worship of idols by his family and the community. Gideon took action, wrecking the idols of his father's house and those of the community during the night. Judges 6:1-32. Even so, Gideon himself returned to idolatry later in his life over which idol Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household. Israel soon forgot the mighty battles won by Gideon, the man of faith, and returned to their idolatry after his death. Judges 8:24-26. We do have a choice.

As individual believers and as local congregations of the church of Jesus Christ, we must return to the Preeminence of Jesus Christ, embrace the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ, and rest in the All Sufficiency offered to us by God which is in Christ Jesus alone.

How has Bill Gothard Displaced the All Sufficiency and Exclusivity of Jesus Christ?

There is ample evidence and a long history of Bill Gothard rejecting the specific teachings of Jesus Christ, displacing God's Word with insistence that Christians must keep what are actually the "commandments and rules of man" which are "lofty things raised up against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:1-6, 3) and thereby "invalidate the Word of God" (Mark 7:13, 1-23). Bill Gothard and the IBLP/ATI organizations have institutionalized these violations of the Holy Scriptures in the many organization publications sold to millions of believers in 50,000 + churches. Bill Gothard has for now 40 years rejected and/or ignored every request to convene a church Council to examine the many charges standing against him in regards to his personal behavior which disqualifies him as a minister of the Gospel, and in regards to the contrary doctrines which he promulgates. These requests had the highest and best motivations to return this man and his organization to honoring Jesus Christ and His Word as our only authority for faith and life. The Reformation and Martin Luther sounded the call for "sola scriptura" (Scripture Only), setting many millions free from

slavery from religious hierarchy, contrary doctrines and demands, making clear that all doctrine and instructions must be subordinate to the clear teachings of Scripture. Bill Gothard and the IBLP/ATI organizations have reproduced the religious hierarchy of the Dark Ages and too much of what emerged from the Reformation to the great and serious loss of spiritual life, fellowship and true growth that is from God. I Corinthians 3:6

How does it happen? How has it happened in this case?

Principles (Law), Legalism, Works, Rules, which Displace Jesus Christ and His Teachings	References	The Knowledge of God and Teachings of Jesus Christ	References
<p>To be successful in life, follow my system of “7 Universal Non-Optional Principles” (which are by definition laws) – Bill Gothard</p>	<p>Basic Seminar, Advanced Seminar, ATI, etc.</p>	<p>“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”</p>	<p>John 14:6</p>
<p>Bill Gothard elevates his personal opinions and private interpretations to an authority equal to God’s Holy Word by violating rules of interpretation of literature and the Scripture, adding penalties to, shunning and publicly attacking those who question his authority or the correctness of his personal views of life.</p> <p>By demanding compliance to his “commandments of man” he adds to the Word of God leaving many confused in their lives and he is left fully exposed to the judgments of God.</p>	<p>No Pork Abstinence in Marriage No Beards Circumcision, Yes Plus many, many more.</p>	<p>“Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”</p> <p>“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:</p> <p>And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”</p>	<p>Proverbs 30:6 Rev. 22:18-19</p>
<p>To obtain/achieve “Moral Freedom” and “Moral Purity” follow my “7 Steps and complete 7 Projects” This abundant literature penned by Gothard fails to reference I John 1:9 which offers some considerable instruction for spiritual cleanness stating “If you confess your sins, He/God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Gothard’s literature references “walking in the Spirit” but offers no explanation of how God’s Word instructs us to do that.</p>	<p>Men’s Manual, Basic Seminar</p>	<p>“Walk by the Spirit (of God) and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”</p> <p>This provision and promise of God seems much more clear and possible than entering into a formula of 7 Steps and hoping to successfully complete 7 Projects to gain “Moral Purity.”</p>	<p>Gal. 5:16; I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:13; Gal. 3:3</p>

<p>(Bill Gothard)While we believe people receive salvation “by faith” and by the operation of the Spirit of God... we are perfected in our spiritual walk and growth by...</p> <p>...by making vows and commitments to prescribed goals. ...by receiving circumcision. ...by practicing abstinence in your marriage relations. ...by forbidding eating of pork and tune. ...by cutting off all facial hair, beards.</p> <p>Encourages separation from their fellowship those who are non-compliant to their little local laws.</p> <p>“...your circumcision has become uncircumcision.” “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written.”</p>	<p>Basic Seminar, Advanced Seminar</p> <p>Galatians 2:11-14</p> <p>Romans 2:23-29</p>	<p>With an acknowledged zeal for God, not knowing/understanding God’s righteousness, they “seek to establish their own righteousness; they do not subject themselves to the righteousness of God”....they are subject to live by the righteousness prescribed by the law, their 7 NonOptional Principles.</p> <p>Freedom which Christ provided to believers is lost when the believer (or unbeliever) submits to any yoke of slavery, everything that God set you free from! If you receive circumcision, Christ is of no benefit, you are severed from Christ, you are fallen from grace.</p> <p>“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”</p>	<p>Romans 10:1-7</p> <p>Galatians 5:2-4</p> <p>Galatians 3:3</p>
<p>Faith is defined by Gothard as the human achievement and capability to visualize what God intends to do in any given situation!!!</p> <p>Gothard’s use of this definition in all his teachings puts responsibility on the individual for their performance (works). This contrary doctrine prevents the believer from profiting from the Word of God.</p> <p>Hebrews 4:1-2, 10-11. “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.”</p>	<p>Basic Seminar, Advanced Seminar</p>	<p>Faith in the Scriptures is always our believing God and His promises so that all of our life experiences rely upon the grace of God.</p> <p>“For this reason <u>it is by faith</u>, in order <u>that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed</u> 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...”</p> <p>“<u>But by His doing</u> (God’s) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us <u>wisdom from God</u>, and <u>righteousness</u> and <u>sanctification</u>, and <u>redemption</u>, so that just as it is written, ‘let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”</p>	<p>Romans 4:16</p> <p>I Cor. 1:30-31</p>
<p>Bill Gothard continues in his personal sin and rebellion, living in hypocrisy, is not living a life above reproach. He is</p>		<p>“For speaking out arrogant <i>words</i> of vanity they entice by fleshly</p>	<p>II Peter 2:11-22</p>

<p>malicious and wicked in his abuse of other believers who have raised questions about his behavior and his contrary doctrines. While Gothard continues to reject certain teachings of Jesus Christ, we do not know that he has “denied the Lord” other than being in serious rebellion against the Lord in behavior and in doctrine.</p> <p>“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways (sensuality); by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”</p>	<p>II Peter 2:1-3</p>	<p>desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.”</p>	
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The Consequences for Those Who Displace Christ Jesus and Replace His Word

Displacement and Rejection of Jesus Christ and His Word/Teachings	Promised Outcome, Consequences and Fruit	References
<p>Advocating of different doctrines, disagreeing with the sound words of Jesus Christ and of doctrine conforming to godliness.</p>	<p>Constant friction, disputes, controversies, strife</p>	<p>I Tim. 6:3-6, 11, 14</p>
<p>“You transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition...you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition...teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.” “...rather than according to Christ.”</p>	<p>Your worship of God is in vain</p>	<p>Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:9, 21-23; Col. 2:8</p>
<p>You are walking in darkness when you fail to confess sin and love your brother, which is required for walking in the Light. “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”</p>	<p>Walking in Darkness, Cause for Stumbling</p>	<p>I John 1:5-10; 2:1-10; II Peter 1:9-11</p>
<p>Walking by the flesh, and the deeds of the flesh are evident...idolatry, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, etc. “...those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Rom. 8:4-8 “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Heb. 11:6 “...the mind set on the flesh is in hostility toward God.” Romans 8:7</p>	<p>You bite and devour one another</p>	<p>Gal. 5:15, 12-21 ; Gal. 6:12-13</p>

For adding to and taking away from the words of the book (of God). This you do by institutionalizing man's laws that are in opposition to God's commands, and by your altering the meaning of the clear teachings of Jesus Christ, believing you can modify His commands.	Reproofs of God and all the plagues of this book	Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19; I Cor. 4:6; Titus 1:13-16
For your continued factions and divisions, and failing to judge the body rightly, failing to understand the placement by God's Holy Spirit into your church each member for specific contributions of each one's function and ministry to the body of Jesus Christ.	Weakness, sickness and premature deaths of believers, by discipline of the Lord	I Cor. 11:30-32, 17-35; 12:14-27
"With force and severity you have dominated them, pushing them with side and shoulder, thrusting at all the weak with your horns, scattering them". The Lord is clear, do not lord it over the flock of My sheep	The sheep of My flock have been scattered	Ezek. 34:1-31; I Peter 5:2-3
The keeping of the old covenant (Law) to be justified, receiving circumcision, wanting to be teachers of the Law (legalism) making confident assertions, the veil is only lifted in Christ alone.	The veil remains in place hiding the riches of Christ; Christ is of no benefit, severed from Christ, fallen from grace	Gal. 3:10; 5:1-13; I Tim. 1:3-5; II Cor. 3:14-16
By the commandments and teachings of men, enforced by rules, threats, "lording" and punishments to obtain compliance, you have disregarded Christ Himself and are no longer experiencing true "growth from God".	Appearance of religious life, but you are operating a self-made religion and are dead	Rev. 3:1-6; II Cor. 3:3-6; Col. 2:9-23, 6, 19
Rejection of walk of faith and rejecting a good/pure conscience, replacing this standard with a focus and priority of administrating a religious organization.	Believers experiencing shipwreck of their faith	I Tim. 1:19-20
"The person who sins will die...the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself...Yet you say, 'the way of the Lord is not right' Hear now...Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?" "...Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life...Repent and turn away from your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die? Therefore repent and live."	"...because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was not good among his people, he will die for his iniquity." Ezek. 18:18	Ezekiel 18:1-32
Rejecting God's mercy to us by being unmerciful to those who fail around us.	There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when He judges you.	James 2:13; Matt. 18:21-35

Fruits of Repentance

What is involved in repentance acceptable to God the Righteous One? What are the “fruit” of genuine repentance?

Godly repentance will allow the cleansing from all unrighteousness (personally, corporately) by the Holy Spirit of God!

“Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.” Matthew 3:8-10, Luke 3:8

King David prayed in repentance, “I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:3-4).

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 reads, “Ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner...for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.” What does God outline here as to what He is seeking? “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9. Repentance must involve bringing to an end what caused the violation(s) against God. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13)

Isaiah 55:7 declares the same requirement. “Let the wicked *forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord; and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Hebrews 12:14, “Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Titus 2:11-12 expands the same admonition: “The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

Lay no other foundation than Christ. I Cor. 3:11

Where ever a beam and sawdust are problematic, remove the beam first from your eye. Matt.7:1-7. In your concern for identifying and confronting bad behavior and views of life held by others that is contrary to the Scripture, consider dealing first and completely with the number of doctrines and practices which themselves may be false or questionable doctrine, extra biblical, and in direct opposition to the clear teachings of Christ. Then you will see clearly how to help others with their desire to understanding God’s Holy Word.

Additional Study Notes and Considerations

The Preeminence of Jesus Christ

The Preeminence of Jesus Christ is declared by God, “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he Himself will come to have first place in *everything*. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile ALL things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross...” (Colossians 1:15-22).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life and the life was the Light of men.” (John 1:1-4)

Jesus Christ is the Redeemer sent from God and is God, whom we have believed, through whom we received salvation by His one-time payment, in full, for all of our sins, God promises we will avoid Hell, will be raised from our graves, and arrive safely in Heaven to live with Him forever.

It would seem our first next impulse would be to put Jesus Christ at the preeminent position, as in first place in our lives, “in everything.” Our choices too often allow the natural temptations of our flesh, the bogus offers of the world, and the devices of the Devil to crowd into the considerations of our mind and responses of our heart. The very benefits of life God has already provided and made fully available to each of His children, being contrarians or terribly ignorant, we rush out to purchase in cheap replicas and bogus copies.

We are not helped when Teachers and Preachers of “religion” make their own “spiritual promises” in exchange for your and my full, dedicated, unquestioning participation and subjection to their well-produced programs, systems for success, instructions for compliance to some mixture of the Mosaic Law and their endless and expanding personally developed laws, with occasional referrals to “God’s grace” falsely defined.

When in life you experience a need common to man, or a serious and urgent question develops, do you think first of...

- a. What would Bill Gothard say or do or advise?
- b. What are the keys to success and instructions for this situation I might find in the Basic (red notebook) or other books of wisdom Gothard has supplied?
- c. How can I put this situation to the authorities in my life (parents, church elders, pastor, boss at my employment, etc.) and obtain their decision for my life?
- d. Or...does the Scripture come to mind that draws you into a closer relationship with God our Father?

“Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters;
They have seen the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves of the sea.
They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;
Their soul melted away in *their* misery.
They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
And were at their wits’ end.
Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brought them out of their distresses.
He caused the storm to be still,
So that the waves of the sea were hushed.
Then they were glad because they were quiet,
So He guided them to their desired haven.
Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness,

And for His wonders to the sons of men!

Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people,
And praise Him at the seat of the elders

Psalm 107 is the account of four different groups of people that had made it into some serious trouble for different reasons. It describes their awful predicaments and how they arrived in their condition, the futility of their own plans, their eventual call to God for help, and a description of what God did next with each group.

What would your friends, family and neighbors say about you?

If all the people you know fairly well were interviewed about their knowledge of you, what would each of them say when asked:

“What person is he/she the most like?” “What person do they remind you of the most?”

“What cause, person or movement are they most closely associated with?”

What person do they think like the most in life? What philosophy or training do they default to most often?

When the crowds in Jerusalem observed the disciples they were not sure what program they were a part of. But they were very clear, because it was obvious, they had a relationship with Jesus. “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13) How many of our family, friends, neighbors, work mates would give that answer if we surveyed each one of them? Or would they describe your relationship to a leader and movement as the most dominant feature / characteristic of your life?

Teachers and Preachers who faithfully serve Jesus Christ with a pure heart will train you to do three things:

1. Think first of how God has provided and will provide all that I need in what Jesus Christ has accomplished by His death on the cross, His burial, His resurrection and His ascension to be with the Father, along with His many good promises for His own children. I Corinthians 1:30-21; II Peter 1:1-11.
2. Seek diligently and eagerly the wisdom of Christ in the Word of God expecting the Holy Spirit to be your Helper, Comforter and Teacher and to guide you into all the purposes of God for your life.
3. Gladly seek the teaching and counsel of godly men and women, being careful to inquire about their personal holiness, humility before God, and transparency about their obedience in walking with the Lord. God has established that His church will grow spiritually with a growth He provides and which He directs through each of the members of the body of Christ, the church. Ephesians 4:11-25.

A Teacher and Preacher argues against the Preeminence of Jesus Christ when they lower the standards, violate and lower the clear requirements set by God for an Elder, Overseer, Teacher, Pastor when they stubbornly reject all correction and go on sinning willfully. Hebrews 10:26-39. It is indeed “a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” The word of God clearly calls for transparency in leaders. The higher one is elevated in leadership the more accountable they must be to a larger number of people. They live in glass houses and all of their followers have Windex!

Psalm 73:25-26 This question is put into its proper priority when the Psalmist declares: “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

More is Written in Scripture Regarding the Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Some additional references of Scripture are listed here which will be so very helpful to study further on this most foundational truth. I trust that you will find the time and quiet place to do so.

“My message and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom...so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men but would rest on the power of God. I Cor. 2:4-5

“No man can lay a foundation...other than...which is Jesus Christ...” But each man must be careful how he builds upon it...each man’s work will become evident...and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work...If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved yet so as through fire...So then let no one boast in men.” I Corinthians 3:10-13

Romans 11:36
John 1:3
Ephesians 3:9
Hebrews 2:10 ff
I Corinthians 8:6
Revelation 4:11
Matthew 11:27
John 3:35
John 13:3
John 16:15a
Hebrews 1:2-3
Psalm 8:6
Ephesians 1:22
Hebrews 2:8a
Hebrews 4:13
I Corinthians 2:10
Philippians 3:21
Ephesians 1:10
Colossians 1:20
Ephesians 4:10
Philippians 2:10-11
Romans 8:32, 37
I Corinthians 3:21-23

I Corinthians 15:24-28: “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself (Jesus Christ) also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”

The Exclusive Claims by Jesus Christ

The Exclusive Claims by Jesus Christ force a decision when He announces, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6). “...all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16-17). Jesus was clear that He, Christ, was the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life.

What can you offer that would compete with that? Why would you offer anything less and thereby hide the good news of the Gospel? II Corinthians 4:3

“Thus says the Lord, Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.” (Jeremiah 17:5)

“Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, ‘Listen to the word of the Lord! ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing...They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, ‘The Lord declares,’ when the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word.” (Ezekiel 13:1-6)

Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who steal My words from each other. Behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who use their tongues and declare, ‘*The Lord declares.*’ Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,” declares the LORD, “and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit,” declares the LORD.(Jeremiah 23:30-32)

How are the Exclusive Claims made by Jesus Christ made non-exclusive?

How is the Gospel of Jesus Christ distorted by Altering, Adulterating, Adding to the Claims of Jesus Christ?

1. Elevating one’s own opinion and self-inspired teachings to equality with God’s Word. This exceptional elevation of a mere insight or philosophy of a mere man is enhanced when the teaching is accompanied by a system of rules with rewards for achievement and punishments for a lagging effort.
2. Offering to the spiritually needy and morally failed person a program of activities, projects, self-efforts along with nifty devices for their attempt to stop the impulse to sin, all which prevents them from seeing clearly the provision of Christ Jesus who was crucified, who died and was buried, and raised again on our behalf so that sin and death would no longer have a basis for being master over us.
3. Combining self-efforts and programs in co-mingled mixtures along with references to and discussions about the grace of God and the power of God.
4. Teaching a doctrine or idea which Jesus Christ has specifically addressed and defined as not true or no longer in effect. The most common examples would include teaching that the demands and requirements of the Mosaic Law are applicable to believers in Christ, such as requiring believing men to receive circumcision as morally required, or that believers must not eat certain meats defined as unclean in the Law.
5. Building upon the foundation of faith laid down in Christ Jesus alone, adding teachings, precepts of man, commandments invented by men, persuading listeners they must subscribe to the total package of their “Christ Plus Program” to obtain the fullest blessing of God. I Corinthians 3:10-15
6. Introducing a program, system, or process that complicates the simple message of faith in Christ and the experience of the grace of God. The very introduction of a new set of laws, rules, processes, steps, devices, principles by which the believer is to operate his life is to supplant the indwelling Spirit of God and the clear teaching of the Scriptures on everything needed for eternal life and for a life of holiness. The circumcision of

Christ on the heart of the believer is the only circumcision needed and it is utterly effective.

7. Teaching ideas that are merely “speculation” in the context of a spiritual question and the suggestion that an answer from God is being presented to give guidance they can rely upon.
8. Adulterating the Word of God, purposely twisting its meaning to support a personal idea or proposition of the Teacher which people will buy into only if they are misled to believe the Holy Word of God is teaching such an idea. Often this includes redefining words such as “grace” and faith” to give the impression of being biblically based.
9. Presentations characterized by “persuasive words of wisdom” which move an audience to making decisions without the time or opportunity to obtain clear understanding from a proper study of the Word of Christ resulting in a changed life that will come only from the power of God working in them. I Corinthians 2:4-6
10. Introduction of a tradition, a culture of association and like behavior derived from the leader’s outline of his philosophy and doctrines which they have subscribed to, which create an unbiblical separatism from sinners (I Cor. 5:9-10) as well as separatism from other believers in Christ Jesus such as Peter and Barnabas in Galatians 2 and Diotrephes (III John 9-11). This introduction of a culture of standards, rules, regulations, compliance and punishments, which results in this unbiblical behavior cancels, “nullifies the Word of God” by the very tradition or culture created by the religious leaders. Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13. It is one of the most damaging aspects of fundamental Christianity which spoils the opportunity to present the gospel’s good news to the world around us. This is in direct opposition to the teachings and life example of our Savior who eagerly sought out dinners and occasions to spend time with the wine bibbers and tax collectors in their homes and places of business.
11. Redefining the very terms upon which the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures rest is directly and clearly adding to the Word of God and taking away from the Word of God, all at the same time. The penalties for the Teacher are serious and out of this world! (Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:28-30). To confuse the most basic doctrines of Grace and of Faith in the Scriptures completely dismisses the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles as the Holy Spirit inspired and superintended the writing of each word. To add to that ongoing and unending promulgation of twisted meanings and conflicting interpretations of the Scriptures is to add insult to the injury of the church of Christ already well underway.

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” (Matthew 18:5-7)

12. The Chief Shepherd has called for His teachings and His claims and promises to be represented by men who prove to be examples to the flock (I Peter 5:1-11), who do not “lord it over those allotted to their charge” making sure all is done according to the will of God.

Any Teacher or Preacher who will not submit to sincere and repeated requests for examination of his teachings and/or his behavior that has been brought into question, defies the clearly outlined will of God for any person who would represent themselves as teacher or minister of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. I Timothy 5:17-25; Ephesians 5:11; Matthew 18:15-18.

“...and many shall follow their pernicious ways (sensuality); by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” II Peter 2:1-3.

The All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ

The All Sufficiency of Jesus Christ is proclaimed throughout the Scripture, “By His doing (God’s) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” I Corinthians 1:30-31.

Again, it will help to repeat the name of Jesus Christ in direct linkage to each provision He delivers to the children of God stating that “By His doing (God’s doing) you are in Christ Jesus, who, (Christ Jesus) became to us wisdom from God, and (Jesus Christ) became to us righteousness and (Jesus Christ) became to us sanctification and (Jesus Christ) became to us redemption.”

When God declared Jesus Christ as “all sufficient” for the believer in Christ, what could any Teacher offer from his own creative work or production of additional instructions from the wisdom of man and the precepts of man that could possibly add to what God has already provided in Christ alone?

Followers become increasingly addicted to their Teachers and Preachers to the extent the Teacher or Preacher causes the audience to focus on the wisdom literature and instructions invented by the Teacher while reducing the audience’s reliance and trust in and exercise of walking with the Spirit of the indwelling Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9-11). A Teacher and Preacher that follow the clear teachings of the Scripture will be working to prevent you from relying upon them or their writings and production materials (which by the way are for sale in the lobby or at their website). They will rather be moving you to become spiritually mature as the outcome of experiencing the fullness of Christ along with ongoing growth as a healthy member /body part in the church, the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

To develop further the perspective for considering the difference between these two types of Teachers, it is instructive to consider even a few of the 100s of references in the Bible that explain how God is directly involved in the life and spiritual growth of His children. The Teacher and Preacher ought only to be involved as a humble servant of the Great Shepherd and like John the Baptist, understand they are not worthy to even tie or untie the sandals of the Savior. They are warned to NOT “lord it over the flock” for this very reason. As you read the following Scriptures, ask yourself if the programs, formulations and wisdom literature invented by the Teacher draw and help believers embrace the all sufficiency of Jesus Christ for spiritual life and growth, or if they are actually a hindrance, a confusion, a nullification of the very promises and grace of God.

The statements of Scripture are straightforward about God’s work in our coming to spiritual life as well as His direct work in each of our lives to develop our spiritual growth as He has in mind. Even so, we too often skip over the declaration of God’s direct hand in bringing us to life and to maturity in Christ. Because of the unusual characteristic of it being FREE, no charge, no work required, the grace of God is difficult to accept without the temptation to add what we can to the transaction so that we have contributed some effort, able to measure some merit of our own, making even some small contribution to the relationship with God. And God says “...and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works so that no one may boast.” And again, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” I Cor. 1:31

Consider our redemption, entering into the salvation offered to us by God:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” This text lists five actions credited to God. Our part? Faith, trust, reliance upon the only true and living God who has a very specific and clear plan already worked out for each of His children, including you!

Consider the outcome of the indwelling of the Spirit of God in your mortal flesh. It is called “fruit” for a reason. You cannot “do the fruit” by any human effort, they are an outcome of the working of God’s Spirit in your life.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, good ness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is not law.” Galatians 5:22-25

The Spirit of Jesus Christ Lives In the Believer

The most important source of life and spiritual growth for the believer in Christ is the indwelling Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ/God in each believer and in the church of Jesus Christ. When you get a good understanding of the purpose and operations of the Spirit of God that lives in your mortal body and see more plainly what the Spirit provides for you 24 hours a day, your actual interaction with the Spirit of God puts into play 100% of everything God is offering to you and all of which you need for living and for godliness. We are alive by the Spirit of God, let us also walk by the Spirit every day, 24/7.

Is Jesus Christ Sufficient for You?

This summary is a review of the Acts of God in the direct development of your spiritual life. It is a good exercise to ask yourself what religious programs, spiritual disciplines, vows, formulations of solutions from man's precepts, what wisdom of man and human devices, what commandments of men would you hope could accomplish any of these changes in your heart and mind which God has already promised to do for you directly and personally?

Salvation by a gift of God, created in Christ Jesus	Eph. 2:7-10
Peace with God	Eph. 2:13-14
Reconciliation between divided groups or individuals	Eph. 2:13-19
Access directly to God our Father	Eph. 2:18
Elimination of all our guilt and charges against us	Col. 2:12-15
Circumcision of Christ, in Him made complete	Col. 2:9-12
The world is crucified to me, through Christ	Gal. 6:14
I have been crucified to the world, through Christ	Gal. 6:14
Made alive to God in Christ Jesus	Romans 6:11
Made one with Christ Jesus, united with Him	Romans 6:3, 4, 5; Eph. 4:1-6
Christ Jesus is our wisdom	I Cor. 1:30
Christ Jesus is our righteousness	I Cor. 1:30
Christ Jesus is our sanctification	I Cor. 1:30
Christ Jesus is our redemption	I Cor. 1:30
No more basis for fear of death or the Devil	Hebrews 2:14-18; I John 4:17-19
No more isolation to fall to temptation	I Cor. 10:13
No more basis for doubt when praying	I John 5:14-15, 3:19-24; Phil. 3:15; James 1:5-8
No more basis for anxiety or worry	Philippians 4:6-7
Righteousness is granted to us by God when we believe in Him who justifies the ungodly	Romans 4:1-17
Receive an abundance of grace to reign in life through Christ	Romans 5:17
No longer slaves to sin, freed from sin, being raised w/ Christ	Romans 6:3-10
Set free from the law of sin and death	Romans 8:1-2
Confidence in the Day of Judgment	I John 4:17
God of all grace will Himself make you whole	I Peter 5:10
God of all grace will Himself make you secure	I Peter 5:10
God of all grace will Himself make you strong	I Peter 5:10
God of all grace will Himself make you establish you	I Peter 5:10
Being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform	Romans 4:21; Hebrews 11:6

What additional basic human desire or need would you have that God cannot provide for and which some offering of a religious program or commandments of a man might be an attraction? There are many faithful Teachers and Preachers whose commitment is to explain carefully to you all of the riches of God which are yours in Christ Jesus. You can spot them easily. They are not hirelings and they are not peddling their version of the gospel to separate you from your money. They are proving day after day to be examples of holiness to the flock which they serve, humble in living a life which is above reproach in every way. I Peter 5:1-7

The Spirit of Christ Jesus/God in You

If the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are in the Spirit. If you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you do not belong to Him (yet). If Christ is in you, your spirit is alive because of righteousness. (Romans 8:9-10).

As a believer in Christ, God's Spirit lives in, dwells in, inhabits your body (I Cor. 6:19-20) who also lives in the church of God (I Cor. 3:16-17).

The Spirit of God living in you works 24/7 to accomplish everything which God our Father intends for your good and for the growth of your relationship with the Father. Consider these few examples of the Spirit's work in you.

By the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, you are set free from the law of sin and of death. Romans 8:1-2

The requirement of the Law is fulfilled in us as we walk according to the Spirit. Romans 8:4

Because we are in the Spirit, our minds are set on the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:5-9

Our spirit is made alive because of the righteousness of Christ in whom we have believed. Romans 8:10

Our mortal bodies are given life through the Spirit of Christ whom God raised from the dead. Romans 8:11

By the Spirit we are able to put to death the deeds of the body. Romans 8:13

We are able to obtain leading, directions by the Spirit of God. Romans 8:14

We are freed from the spirit of slavery and of fear by the Spirit. Romans 8:15-17

God exposes us to the futility of the flesh and this world so our hope will be in God alone. Romans 8:20-25

The Spirit helps us in all of our weaknesses. Romans 8:26

The Spirit prays to God, interceding for us with great energy, for God's will to be accomplished in us! Romans 8:26-27

God's Spirit is always at work to help us become more like Jesus Christ. Romans 8:28-30

Jesus Christ Himself intercedes for us to the Father each day. Romans 8:34

Because of God's continued love toward us, we can in all things overwhelmingly conquer our daily challenges. Romans 8:37-39.

Jesus said, "But when He, **the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth;** for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you." John 16:7-15

Now we have received...the Spirit who is from God, **so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.** I Cor. 2:12

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

"...through whom (Jesus) also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand..." Romans 5:2

"...and **being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.** Therefore it was credited to him (Abraham) as righteousness. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him (Abraham), but for our sake also, **to whom it will be credited,** as those who believe in Him (God) who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." Romans 4:20-25

"...because **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit** who was given to us." Romans 5:5

"While we were still helpless...while we were yet sinners...while we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,** much more having been reconciled, **we shall be saved (made whole, made complete) by His life.**" Romans 5:6, 8, 10

For by Him (Christ) all things were created...all things have been **created through Him and for Him.** He is before all things and **in Him all things hold together.**" Col. 1:16-18

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so, **He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself...**” John 5:25-26

“For if by the transgression of the one (Adam), death reigned through the one, much more **those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**” Romans 5:17

“...nor does His word dwell in you, for you do not believe the One He sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because *you think that in them* you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about Me, **yet you refuse to come to Me to have life.** “I do not accept glory from human beings...” John 5:38-41

There is much more...

Consider each of the provisions of God, by God, through Christ, all for the benefit of your spiritual life, growth and experience. Ask how you might match them or displace each one with some device or religious formula offered on the market today?

Without Me (Christ), you can do nothing. John 15:5

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but **God who causes the growth.** I Cor. 2:6-7

For no man can lay a **foundation** other than **the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ...**but each man must be careful how he builds on it. I Cor. 2:9-15

For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men, **(the grace of God) instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age...** Titus 2:11-14

“...for the same Lord is Lord of all, **abounding in riches for all who call on Him.**” Romans 10:12

“...we have not ceased to pray for you that you may be filled with the **knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, being fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, **strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience**; joyously giving thanks to the Father...” Col. 1:9-14

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, **according to the power that works within us...**” Eph. 3:20

“...but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works...They stumbled over the stumbling stone...for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” Romans 9:30 to 10:5

Is there anything required of us who believe? “...your spiritual service of worship...” Romans 12:1-2

With spiritual life and growth of the believer caused by God, what is the believer’s duty, or responsibility, or work?

1. Be grateful. Say thanks a lot and sing songs in your heart all day long.
Consider the critical importance of a heart of thankfulness in the life of the believer.
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...” Romans 1:21
“...**giving thanks to the Father**, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.”
Colossians 1:12-13. Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your request be made known to God...” Philippians 4:6-7

2. Trust, ask without any doubts about God's capabilities and present your requests to God without any doubts about God's intentions to bless His children with all of His riches which are in Christ Jesus.
3. Trust and Obey. The commandments of God for the believer and His church throughout the New Testament are designed to maximize the experience of the believer in their walk and communications with God the Father.
4. Prepare with great expectation and joy your meeting face to face the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, Savior, and Lord.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of **the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being confirmed to His death..." Phil. 3:7-10