



Open Water Ministries

# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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[www.chapel-flock.com](http://www.chapel-flock.com)

## Worship Music

### Prayer

Lord, I ask You to help me tie up the loose ends that I've allowed to remain in my mind and emotions. Today I am making the deliberate choice to start submitting every area of my mind and emotions to the Word of God and to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Please let the power of Your Word and Spirit flow into every area of my mind and emotions, energizing them with Your Presence so that the devil can no longer access me through these areas of my life. Give me peace Lord, I ask my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

[You Are Faithful- Phil Driscoll](#)

[Holy,Holy,Holy- Phil Driscoll](#)

[Love Comes Down- Kerrie Roberts](#)

[Savior To Me- Kerrie Roberts](#)

[Traces Of Heaven- Bryan Duncan](#)

### Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

[" A Hardened Heart" Bob Coy](#)

[" Who Is Responsible For Evil" Ravi Zacharias](#)

## Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

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## Bible Study Sites

[Chuck Smith Through The Bible](#)

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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## Deuteronomy 9:1-29 (AMP)

1 HEAR, O Israel. You are to cross the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you are, cities great and fortified up to the heavens, 2 A people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, Who can stand before the sons of Anak? 3 Know therefore this day that the Lord your God is He Who goes over before you as a devouring fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall dispossess them and make them perish quickly, as the Lord has promised you. 4 Do not say in your [mind and] heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out from before you, It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land—whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you. 5 Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your [minds and] hearts do you go to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out before you, and that He may fulfill the promise which the Lord swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Know therefore that the Lord your God does not give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a hard and stubborn people. 7 [Earnestly] remember and forget not how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you left the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. 8 Even in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, and the Lord was so angry with you that He would have destroyed you. 9 When I went up the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate food nor drank water. 10 And the Lord delivered to me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the Lord spoke with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And at the end of forty days and forty nights the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant. 12 And the Lord said to me, Arise, go down from here quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten image. 13 Furthermore the Lord said to me, I have seen this people, and behold, they are stubborn and hard. 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under the heavens; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they. 15 So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God; you had made for yourselves a molten calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way which the Lord had commanded you. 17 I took the two tables, cast them out of my two hands, and broke them before your eyes. 18 Then I fell down before the Lord as before, for forty days and forty nights; I neither ate food nor drank water, because of all the sin you had committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure which the Lord held against you, enough to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also. 20 And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, angry enough to have destroyed him, and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21 And I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I cast the dust of it into the brook that came down out of the mountain. 22 At Taberah also and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the Lord to wrath. 23 Likewise when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you, then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, and you did not believe Him or trust and rely on Him or obey His voice. 24 You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. 25 So I fell down and lay prostrate before the Lord forty days and nights because the Lord had said He would destroy you. 26 And I prayed to the Lord, O Lord God, do not destroy Your people and Your heritage, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember [earnestly] Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or at their sin, 28 Lest the land from which You brought us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. 29 Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.

## Deuteronomy 9–10. Israel's Persistent Rebellion

Three times over, Israel is reminded that God's wondrous dealings with them were not because they were so righteous ( 9:4–6)—they had been a rebellious and stubborn people all the way.

(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 177)

As we have told you the word Deuteronomy means the second law. It is really a rehearsal, sort of a capsulation by Moses of the law that was given. Deuteronomy itself, though it covers the forty years from Egypt to the entering in of the Promised Land, covered only about forty days, as far as the time of it being given to the children of Israel.

Moses was now an aging man, however he was still very spry. He still had excellent eyesight, excellent hearing, none of his forces had abated. Sometimes I have to put on my glasses I say, "God, you did it for Moses, why don't you do it for me?" And there he still had good sharp vision, a hundred and twenty years old. None of the natural forces abated, still a spry fellow, able to get over the rocks as quick as any of them. But God had said that he wasn't going to be able to enter into the Promised Land.

Knowing that they are now ready to enter in, knowing that they have come now to the border of the land. In front of them is the Jordan River, on the other side the city of Jericho, the first of the conquests. Knowing that he cannot cross over Jordan by God's divine order, knowing that the time had come to cross over Jordan, he realizes that the time of his departure is at hand.

And so he is giving in these last forty days of his life a charge to these people in which he is rehearsing the covenant that God had established with him again. The covenant relationship that they were to have with God, the covenant by which they were to possess this land and to dwell in this land. And so these are important things that Moses is covering in the book of Deuteronomy, as he again goes over and rehearses for the people, bringing them into remembrance the laws, the commandments, the statutes, the judgments

God for he will soon be departing. They'll no longer be able to come for him for counsel, advice and for the leading of God or for the word of God or the counsel of God. He will soon be departing, and thus, he is giving to them this final charge, the book of Deuteronomy. And so in chapter 9 he continues, Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess the nations that are greater and mightier than thyself, cities that are great and fenced up to heaven (Deu 9:1), Now they had come to the point of entering into the land once before in their history some forty years earlier. But at that point because fear overtook them when they heard that the cities had great walls, were heavily fortified, when they heard that giants inhabited the cities, they became so frightened they felt that they could not go in because the inhabitants of the land were actually stronger than they were. And they tried to get a leader to take them back to Egypt. And God's wrath came. And because of their failure forty years earlier, God had condemned them to this forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Even as the spies had been in the land for forty days spying out the land, so God said you'll have a year for every day the spies were in the land, just roaming in the wilderness until this whole generation be passed away. Their cry was, "God had brought us here to destroy us. If we go in and try to take the land, they're gonna kill our wives and all of our little children and we're gonna be buried here in this area". And so God said, "You've worried about your little children but they are the ones that are gonna go in and possess the land. You won't be able to go in. Now Moses is trying to insure against this fear gripping their hearts again. If they do not enter in at this point it will be disaster for them. And so Moses is seeking now to brace them, to encourage them, to declare the problems that exist. To look realistic, in a realistic way, at the things that they were facing and yet to encourage their hearts that the God that they serve was greater than any obstacle they faced. Now I think that it is important for us as Christians to look realistically at the problems of life. I think that it is foolish for us to try to make light of serious things. I think that we need to look realistically, and yet at the same token we need to look beyond the problem and realize that the God that we serve is capable of handling any problem that we might face, to look beyond the problems to the power of God and the sustaining hand of God upon our lives. And so this is what Moses—he's seeking to be realistic. He said, "All right, now look. You're gonna cross over this Jordan and you're gonna go in and you're going to possess lands and possess the cities and people that are stronger than you; nations that are greater and mightier than you are. But you're gonna conquer them". A people who are great and tall (Deu 9:2),...You're gonna be facing a bunch of these giants, the children of the Anakims (Deu 9:2), And the Anakims were like the Watoosi tribe in Africa, the giants. And they felt like a bunch of Pigmies in front of these people that inhabited the land. "And these people are great, they are tall." You know them, you've heard them say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! (Deu 9:2) You've heard that remark. And said "Oh, they're so—they're giants who can stand before them?" And understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before you (Deu 9:3); You see, your gonna have—the nations are great, granted. The people are tall; they are giants, granted. But the Lord your God is going to go before you. I think that many times we get spooked when we're just looking at our problems and we, in just looking at the problems that we face, get a loss of perspective where we fail to see the greatness and the power of God. You know it's amazing how big our problems can look to us when we're right next to them. In fact, we can lose perspective and can't see anything else but our problem when you get so close to it. At that point, we're prone to forget God; we're prone to lose sight of God. We must never lose sight of God. The sun is eight hundred and sixty-five thousand miles in diameter, one million two hundred thousand times larger than our earth. As big as it is, you can block out the sight of the sun with something as small as a glasses' case. Though it is that big, something this small can block your sight of the sun if it's close enough to you. You get so close to your problem, all you can see is your problem. Now God is as great as the universe. He fills the whole universe but I can't see Him. My problems have blinded me. Now Moses speaks of the problems but then he reminds them that they don't need to be really concerned about the problem because the Lord thy God is gonna go before you. We are faced with a strong and powerful enemy who is stronger than we are. We are no match for Satan's power and you can get so involved with the power of Satan, so overawed by the power of Satan that you lose sight of the power of God. But "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). You're no match for Satan but Satan is no match for God, and it is the Lord thy God who goes before thee to fight your battles, to dispossess the land of your enemies. We need to remember the Lord and His power. For he is going before you; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and shall bring them down before thy face: so thou shalt drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said unto thee (Deu 9:3). Now, he said when you get into the land and God has driven out the enemy, and you've gone in and possessed them, and wiped them out, then beware of self-righteousness; lest you kick back and say, Well it's because we were so righteous that God has done this for us. Oh, what a terrible thing self-righteousness is and how easily it attaches itself to us. There is something perverse about our nature that we desire to have people think that we are more righteous than we really are. That's a perversity of our nature. We like people to think that we are spiritual giants, that we really walk close to God. And there is oftentimes a perverse tendency on our part to put off some kind of a righteous aura. We try to look very righteous and holy and pious. We like people to think, "Oh, we are extremely holy people". Like because I am so holy God is able to use me, but I can understand why He doesn't use you. You know this spiritual putdown kind of a thing.

When Peter was at the temple going in with James at the hour of prayer and the man said, "Alms, Alms" and Peter said, "Hey, look at me, pal". And the guy turned expecting to receive something and Peter said, "I don't have any silver and gold". Ah, smart mouth. "Then why did you ask me to look at you?" "What I have I'll give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise to your feet and walk" (Acts 3:6). And Peter took this fellow by the right hand, lifted him to the feet. Immediately he received strength in his feet and ankles. He began to walk and leap, running through the temple, walking, leaping, praising God. After one pass through the temple walking, leaping, praising God, as he was going by people said, "Isn't that the lame man that's been laying out there every day for years? Man, it sure looks like him." "What in the world has happened to him?" "I don't know. Let's go see". And a crowd followed this guy, some five thousand. So that by the time he came out back to the porch where Peter was still standing, he no doubt grabbed a hold of Peter, hugged him, kissed him, jumped up and down so that the people related the miracle to Peter some way. And Peter said, "Ye men of Israel. Why look ye on us as though we through our own righteousness had brought this deed to this lame man?" Peter, at that moment, was in one of the greatest jeopardies of his entire ministry. When the people were looking at him, as though he were some holy, righteous kind of a creature, it would have been very easy with all of these people looking at Peter in awe and in wonder, "Oh, Peter" you know "Can I touch you?" For him to say, "Well now, to have this kind of power in your life it takes real sacrifice and dedication. You've got to really commit yourself totally unto God. Few people are able to make the sacrifices that are necessary in

order to handle this kind of power." And what is he doing? He's taking the attention and the glory away from God and putting it on to himself. Now many ministers have been guilty of doing this because our flesh would like people to think that we are something special, that we are something that is holy, that we're a little bit above the normal in our dedication and consecration. And my whole flesh, my whole body is so sneaky that it would like to give off a little righteous aura around me so that people will think that I'm so very, very holy. But that's a constant danger to anyone who is ministering, to anyone who experiences the work of God in his life, because people are prone to look at the instrument rather than at God, the One who is using the instrument, and begin to give glory and credit to the instrument rather than to God. And thus, the instrument has to be very careful that it doesn't take glory, that it doesn't take credit. So Paul the apostle said, "I keep my body under. I buffet myself and keep my body under". Under what? Under control, under the spirit. "Lest having preached to others, I myself should be put on the shelf" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

And so it is important that when God works in your life you don't begin to get some kind of spiritual pride and spiritual righteousness saying, "Well, it's because I'm so sweet or I'm so holy or I'm so righteous or I'm so committed God has done this for me". God said, "Hey, don't get that kind of a frame of mind". When you come into the land and you're possessing the land and you're dwelling there, then don't think "Well, it's because we're so righteous, we're such a holy people, God gave us this land." That isn't the reason because we were more righteous than those who are there and so forth. God said, "It isn't your holiness and it isn't because you are so righteous that I'm giving you the land. It's really because these people are so vile and so impure I'm just driving them out." Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God gives thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for you're a stiffnecked people (Deu 9:6) Sounds like Romaine; doesn't it? Our Moses. And then He reminds them of their stiffneckedness. How that they provoked God so many times. When they just left Egypt, they weren't even out of the land of Egypt when they provoked God the first time. And how all the way through they were continually provoking God. And so he reminds them of how he had to intercede more than once, lest God would have wiped them out. And so he reminds them the burnings, Taberah, verse twenty-two, the Massah, and Kibrothhattaavah, the graves of lust, the place of temptation where God was provoked against them, and also at Kadeshbarnea. And he said, "You've been a rebellious against the day LORD from the day that I knew you (Deu 9:24). From the beginning. Therefore, it isn't for your righteousness that the Lord is doing this or the uprightness of your heart, but actually God has given a promise unto your fathers, to Abraham and to Jacob. And God is just fulfilling His promise to your fathers but you're just a bunch of stiffnecked rebellious people. (Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

It seems there are always those who stand ready to move into harvested territory in order to glean off some of the crop.

In Calvary Chapel's parking lot, we often catch people distributing flyers which promote weird doctrines. At other times we've seen people stand in the driveway and try to put some kind of a doctrinal trip on the parishioners as they are coming in. We always ask, "Why would you go to a church to pass out your flyers?" If we were holding some special event and planned to pass out flyers to announce it, we would send our kids to the beach or to the shopping centers - not to another church! Why would you go to a church to try to siphon off those who already are established there? If you have a vital doctrine that you feel others must understand and believe, then rather than trying to convert us, why not grant us the privilege of seeing how that truth has transformed your life into the image of Jesus Christ? Let us see that truth demonstrated in your own life. When we see your glorious commitment and your close walk with the Lord, we no doubt will ask you what is going on because you have something we need. Sadly, people are never satisfied to do that. It is tragic that they feel they have a divine calling to rip off the body of Christ to another persuasion. That is why the New Testament is full of warnings and exhortations against false teachers and their cunning and charming ways.

You Can Be Sure;...All cults tend to pervert the gospel of Christ. Usually they heavily emphasize works and a works-related righteousness. If you ask a person involved in one of these cults if they are born again, quite often they will respond, "Brother, you won't know that until you die, because you don't know what your last works are going to be." Now, wouldn't that be a horrible time to find out? God wants us to have assurance of our salvation, and if we depend upon Jesus Christ and His work, we can have it. If our salvation is based upon works then assurance is beyond our grasp. If our salvation is based upon faithfulness to a creed or to a system of works, then we won't know our eternal destiny until we die... and then it will be too late. But if our salvation is based upon faith in Jesus Christ and His work alone, we can be sure. The Bible teaches that the way of salvation is indeed a narrow way. You know, I am not sure of my works. I am not sure of my self-righteousness. I am sure of His work and His righteousness. As the hymnwriter put it, "My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name." Paul is so convinced of this truth that he writes, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Strong words! Paul uses the term anathema, which means "cursed to the lowest hell." Suppose that some angel sits on your bed tonight. You feel restless, wake up, and see a glowing creature sitting there on the foot of your bed, seven feet tall. If he says, "Don't be afraid! I have come to share some good news with you. You are a special person - God has chosen you for a special work. If you will just get in and do this work for God, He will save you." What should you conclude? One thing is for sure: This angel is not from God. Let him be accursed. The Bible teaches that the way of salvation is indeed a narrow way. Paul's words strike a death blow to the broad kind of religion so popular today that says, "I believe a person who is doing what he feels is right in his own heart will be accepted by God." Peter said, "[Christ] is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner [that is, chief cornerstone]. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11,12). Many people today would respond, "Oh Peter, you are too narrow. You mean to tell me that Jesus is the only way? That is too narrow, Peter. I can't follow that." Very well. Then be accursed. "But those are such harsh words," they reply. "That is too narrow. Surely, Jesus was broader than that!" But it was Jesus Himself who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). And it was Jesus who said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14). Paul had it right all along. Even today you can almost hear him pleading with the Galatians: "Look, I am going to say it again. If I or an angel of heaven or any man come and lay on you any other trip - one that gets you to rely on yourself, in your own works, in your own goodness, in your own righteousness, in your keeping of the

law, in your being circumcised, in your following some ritual, in your joining some group, in your giving so much - let him be accursed!" Why was Paul so adamant? Because God has accepted us just as we are - as we put our faith in His Son Jesus Christ. By our trust in Him, He has cleansed us from all our sins and He has received us. God desires to bestow upon us the richness and the fullness of His love - not because we deserve it, but because He loves us. This is the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. This is what Paul eventually died for.

It's a Marvel;....Do you ever wonder why the doctrines that teach good works as the basis for relating to God seem to gain such a strong foothold in people's lives? I confess I have. No doubt Paul wondered too, for he said to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Galatians 1:6). It is a marvel that people would leave the grace of Christ for another gospel - especially when this "gospel" isn't good news at all! Whenever a person says, "It's good to believe in Jesus Christ, but it takes more than that," watch out! The minute you tell me that I have to be righteous and must prove myself before God by my holiness, you are not bringing me to God; you are pushing me away from Him. I am not righteous and I am not holy and there is no way I can be, so what you are telling me is not good news. It is far from good news. It's a proclamation of death. Paul could not understand why anyone would want to leave a loving relationship with God to try to establish a relationship based on works, circumcision, or through keeping the law. "There be some that trouble you," he wrote, "and would pervert the gospel," the good news of Christ (Galatians 1:7).

Love as a Weapon;....It is a wonder that people would leave the real gospel for a counterfeit, but it is no mystery how false teachers often recruit their new disciples. Paul points out that one common technique is a zealous use of affection: "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Galatians 4:17). Those who have been pulled into cults often report an incredible shower of love and attention directed their way when the cult considered them a hot prospect. Once a person commits to the group, however, the zeal turns from love to indoctrination. Rather than being overwhelmed with affection, the new convert is put under strenuous physical discipline and eventually is worn down to the point of exhaustion. Any feelings of self-confidence are stripped away, leaving the person extremely susceptible to the group's spiritual distortions. The love so readily demonstrated at the beginning is only a means to isolate the individual and bring him or her into bondage. If one doesn't go along with the program, the love quickly ends and the person finds himself excluded and ostracized. If he fails to be won over to the new persuasion, the "love" quickly turns to open hostility. In my early years of ministry in Tucson, I had an unpleasant encounter with a group of "Jesus Only" Pentecostals. This cult teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are merely different terms for Jesus. (Of course, they have a difficult time explaining who Jesus was speaking to when He prayed to the Father, or who it was who spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism. Perhaps the voice in Matthew 3:17 that said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" was just a clever bit of ventriloquism?) The weakness of this position is evident, yet the followers of this persuasion love to come on strong and create all kinds of conflict. Sadly, a couple of influential families in our church bought into this doctrine. Soon they targeted me as their next project and began to "zealously affect" me. They would take me out to lunch and go on and on about my great potential and how much they loved the church. Now, I have always detested arguing Scripture with people. I usually let them lay out their faulty positions without trying to tear them apart. And so these people would quote the scripture where Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and I would say, "Yes, that is right. That is what He said." Every time they would quote Scripture I would say, "Yes, that is what it says." But I wouldn't argue with them. Of course, I knew many scriptures that would clarify the issue, but I didn't bother to argue with these folks. Jesus said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him" (Matthew 5:25), so I would agree with the scriptures they cited. While I didn't agree with their peculiar interpretations, I always agreed with the scripture itself. Since I wasn't arguing with them, these people thought they had me persuaded. One day, they brought up their doctrine in an adult Sunday school class. When the teacher effectively refuted their position, some of them tried to claim that I was in their camp. The teacher immediately called me in to settle the dispute. When I told the class I believed that God is one yet is manifested in the distinct persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the "Jesus Only" faction became livid. The next day they called me on the phone and said, "We want to see you tonight at our house." That evening I visited them and they demanded, "What is the big idea, denying the truth? How could you deny what you really believe?" And I replied, "I didn't. I did not deny the truth nor did I deny what I believe. I stated in the class exactly what I believe. I don't think Jesus was playing cheap tricks of ventriloquism and I don't believe He was trying to deceive the people when He was praying to the Father. I believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate personalities, though there is one God." That's when I started seeing the proverbial end of the finger. "Brother," they threatened me, "God has given us a revelation, and we had a vision of you being carried out in a black coffin unless you stand up before the church and tell them that we are right! As I listened to an avalanche of dire threats, I began to wonder, What happened to all the love these people had for me? "We will give you until Saturday to make up your mind whether or not you are going to fess up," they said. I replied, "I don't need until Saturday. I can tell you right now." "Don't say another word," they answered. "Just you pray about this, brother, and if by Saturday night you won't promise that you are going to do this, then we will never be back to your church." Naturally, the leader of this group had 11 kids out of the 53 in our Sunday school. That makes it tough when you are trying to grow your Sunday school. On Saturday night I got the call. "Well, brother, what have you decided?" "I haven't changed my mind or my thinking at all," I replied. "All right, we warned you," he said, and I heard a click at the other end. He was gone, and his 11 kids with him. This man and his faction were zealous in showing affection as long as I was a potential convert. But when they discovered I wouldn't go into bondage to them and their persuasions, they dropped both me and the church like a bad habit. That wasn't true love; it was only a hypocritical demonstration in order to make a convert out of me. As Shakespeare once observed, "Love is not love that alters, when it alteration finds." When I wasn't converted, their true feelings were displayed. This is a frequent tactic of false teachers. They will be very zealous in their demonstration of affection in order to make a convert out of a contact. But if the person doesn't submit to their persuasions, they will quickly exclude him. People can come on very strong and seem so loving, so nice, so sweet - but only because they are seeking to win you to their persuasion. If you are not won over, watch out! They will call you every name in the book and will hit you with all kinds of judgments and condemnations. This is not the gospel of grace!

**Don't Get Tripped Up;....**It's always difficult to see people leave the truth for a lie. You love them and want to spare them the pain you know is ahead, but there's little you can do. Paul knew that feeling well. Galatians 5:7 is a bittersweet verse that recalls the relationship the apostle shared with the Galatians. He writes, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" The Galatians had formerly walked in such love for God and one another that they ministered to Paul openly and selflessly in a time of extreme circumstance. They had even been willing to give up their own eyes for him. But now they had become so hindered in their walk that some considered Paul an enemy. Why? Because he cared enough to tell them the truth. Drawing an analogy from the realm of athletics, Paul likened the Galatians to competitors who made a good start out of the blocks but then got tangled up as they ran the race. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you," he wrote (Galatians 5:8). Paul insisted that the "new and deeper truths" brought by the Judaizers were not from God. Each believer is responsible to search the Scriptures to see if the teachings are true or false. Yet how many people are taken in by this kind of false persuasion? Oftentimes even sincere believers in Christ are led astray by the clever stories of an evangelist. They buy into false teaching not because they have searched the Scriptures, but because they have been influenced by the force of a persuasive personality. The sad result of such ungodly influence is that the victims end up in bondage, almost stripped of their own personality. Have you ever wondered how seemingly normal people can come so far under the sway of a cult that they will end up selling flowers or peanuts in the airport for their leader? This kind of persuasion certainly doesn't come from God. In fact, in all bondage-oriented systems, people will sooner or later find themselves under the lordship of men. The best safeguard against this kind of deception is to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). No matter how highly respected an individual is, no matter how prominent or large a following he may have, we can't take anyone's word for the gospel truth. Each believer is responsible to search the Scriptures to see if these things be so. How tragic that we set such precaution aside and believe everything a particular teacher has to say merely because he has a certain look or speaking style or television or radio ministry. When we fail to check up on the teachings presented to us, we leave ourselves wide open to persuasions not of the one who calls us. God doesn't change His mind. God doesn't edit His truth or spice it up with new revelations. The gospel of grace doesn't change - yet it's not hard to find preachers who claim it has.

**Bondage by Any Other Name;....**Even today there are all kinds of people who preach legalism. They will ask questions like, "How were you baptized, brother? Who baptized you? What did they say when they baptized you?" Some even say things like, "If you weren't baptized with the right formula, then it isn't a true baptism. Were you just sprinkled or were you immersed?" The tragic thing is that these teachings serve only to alienate us from the work God has done in our hearts through faith in Jesus Christ. Any ritual, whether it is baptism or communion or foot-washing, will not avail a thing to make us righteous. Right standing with God is ours totally and completely by faith, which works by love. This is the key to real power and peace in our walk with God. No wonder the great apostle said, "I am amazed that you would so soon turn from the truth unto another gospel which isn't really a gospel"! The true gospel is good news. It is the good news of God's grace and the forgiveness of sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Your relationship with God isn't based on your righteousness or your works or in keeping certain rules, but upon your believing in God's sacrifice for you. If you will just believe in this work of God, through Jesus Christ you can have a beautiful, unbroken relationship with God. All your sins will be washed away and the guilt of all your shortcomings, failures, and attitudes will vanish. They won't exist, for you will have been justified through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul knew the folly of trying to relate to God on the basis of works. He could see the end result, for that's where he started out. "Don't tell me about the law," he might say, "I know all about the law. I know all about the righteousness which was of the law. I was a Pharisee. I was zealous. I was more zealous than my brothers. Don't give me that business of the law; I know what it is all about. But thank God, I was delivered from all that when I came into a new relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ!" We have been, too. Therefore, having been established in the gospel of grace, don't let men trouble you and lay guilt trips or the idea of righteousness by works upon you. It's not worth it. None of us need a word like anathema to be attached to our name.

("Why Grace Changes Everything"; Chuck Smith; Chapter 11: "Booby Traps And Land Mines")