

Have You Fallen for This Widespread Lie?

Have you ever noticed that most Christians think they are pretty decent people? You know, we have all those “good” things to our credit: going to church, tithing, giving offerings, teaching Sunday school. How could anyone think we are anything but wonderful?

I used to have this perspective about myself—until God gave me a revelation of my true nature. A few years ago, I could have enumerated several adjectives that I thought described me: loving, hardworking, honest, trustworthy. Now I know without a doubt that “in my flesh dwell[s] no good thing” (Rom. 7:18, KJV).

Like many believers, I was deceived. I thought my own efforts to live the Scriptures were keeping me straight. I didn’t realize that without God’s grace, I would be numbered among the worst of sinners.

One day at a birthday celebration I requested prayer, asking my friends to agree with me for a deeper revelation of God’s love. Much to my surprise, one of my friends prayed, “God, give her revelation of her sinfulness.”

That was not what I had been hoping for. I was asking God for a supernatural embrace—you know, one of those, “Jesus appeared in my room last night” types of experiences. I couldn’t see how acknowledging my own sinfulness fit in with that picture. Besides, I didn’t think I was that sinful!

A week later, I went to a friend’s house to use some of her reference books for research. While there, I did something—more out of idle curiosity than for any other reason—that constituted a serious invasion of her privacy. At first I wasn’t conscious of the magnitude of my trespass, but

within moments the Holy Spirit overpowered me with conviction.

Never before or since have I had such an experience! My entire body from head to foot was consumed with holy fire, an intense inner heat almost impossible to bear. I was literally burning with shame.

Needless to say, I repented immediately. In the grip of that holy fire, I had no choice! But the lesson I learned went beyond promising “not to do it again.”

I saw that in myself, I had no personal integrity at all. I was not honest or trustworthy. Instead I was a product of my own sin nature, and without God’s grace, I would be lost. It was this grace alone that had given me the appearance of being “good.”

Suddenly, my friend’s birthday prayer made sense. There was no better way for God to increase my understanding of His great love for me than for Him to reveal my fallen nature—and remind me that in spite of it, Christ had given His life for me.

What extravagant love! The Bible tells us, “Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:7-8, NIV).

I am not a “good” person; neither are you. But God loves us, anyway. And as we continue to acknowledge our true condition, He will ensure that by His grace—not by our own efforts —we are transformed into the image of His Son.

Prayer Power for the Week of Oct. 8, 2017

In the wake of last week’s mass murders in Las Vegas, pray for those who suffered loss of loved ones, survivors, and those working around the clock to save lives and re-establish security. Continue to pray for our president as he faces the

multiple challenges of the office. Ask God to give him wisdom and surround him with godly counsel. Remember those recovering from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and Nate as well as those in the gulf states bracing themselves for another storm. Continue to pray that revival fire would ignite in our nation, and bring salvation, restoration, love and unity. 2 Chron. 7:14