

The Proper Balance of Truth

We are often think of truth as simple and easy. While that is often true, we must recognize that there is often a *balance of truth*. For example, Jesus said, "...unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins," John 8:24. Some conclude that faith alone will cause your sins to be forgiven. But that would be woefully out of *balance*.

Why? Because Jesus also said, "...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish," in Luke 13:3 (and again in v. 5). Scripture also affirms the necessity of confession and baptism and living faithfully after conversion. That is an example we should all remember, but here we take a different tack.

One need for balance I have seen for many years is the balance of self-discipline vs. grace. What do I mean by that? Many wonderful, good-hearted Christians who were taught the finer points of self-discipline from childhood are often drawn to congregations which emphasize "self-discipline" mentioned in Galatians 5:23. They appreciate spiritual and physical discipline of others, but are sometimes confused by those who need more grace.

Conversely there are always members who did not grow up in a disciplined, Christian home and struggle more than others. Remember the tax collector of Luke 18:9-14, who was forgiven, even as he confessed his sin? Those who have more of a need go grow are often drawn to congregations which emphasize grace but not self-discipline. *Self-discipline vs. grace: either one, without the other is out of balance.*

I am not, at all, comparing self-righteous sinners with unrepentant sinners. I *am* comparing the more mature disciplined members with members who are still struggling more than they had hoped. But we all make up one, precious, humble, Jesus-loving family.

As we remember Romans 3:10, 23, we remember there is none righteous, no not one. And balancing that, we remember Jesus' words, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments," John 14:15.

God calls us to be one, united, understanding, humble, helping family. We are hungry people sharing His bread. We are sin-sick people taking turns nursing each other back to spiritual and spiritually disciplined health. Let's all remember the times we were not quite as disciplined as we had hoped. And lets all strive to balance the family see-saw of discipline and grace in ways that help others "know they are Christians by their love for one another," John 13:34, 35.

-Ray Wallace