

## CHAPTER 4: SATAN'S Strategies to KEEP SAINTS IN A State of SADNESS, DOUBTING, QUESTIONING & Discomfort

### **DEVICE 4:** Telling believers that their experience of God's grace is counterfeit.

**Satan Says**— Not all that glitters is gold, not everything is free grace that you call grace. **What you call faith is a figment of your imagination.** Your zeal for Christ is only sweat and noise. What you call the light of Christ in your soul, is no different than the experiences of those who are now in hell.

**Remedy 1** – Gain a clear understanding of two different kinds of God's grace: (a) There is a kind of general, grace which God gives to all people, both those who are saved and those who are not, and (b) There is kind of special, saving grace that is given only to those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

**Remedy 2** – Gain a still clearer understanding of God's grace by identifying 10 distinctions between "special saving grace" and "common restraining grace."

- 1) "Special saving grace" changes a person's inner nature, but "common restraining grace" does not. The law is an example of restraining grace. A lion in a cage is not dangerous, but its nature has not changed. Likewise, "common restraining grace" or the law keeps many people from doing what is evil. But this law cannot change a person's wicked heart. Christ's "special saving grace" turns a lion, Saul, into a lamb, Paul (Acts 9), and a prideful sinner into a penitent as in Mary Magdalene (Luke 7).
- 2) A believer's heart is supernaturally and miraculously changed by "special saving grace." On the other hand, "common restraining grace" works on the same principles as natural reason and logic, that every human has (see Proverbs 14; Matthew 6).
- 3) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to be able to take pleasure in doing good (Matthew 11:28-30 -- Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (ESV) ; Psalm 1:2 -- but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. (ESV); Proverbs 3:17 -- Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. (ESV)). But, when "common restraining grace" motivates a person to do good, it is toilsome and unpleasant (Isaiah 58:3 -- 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. (ESV); Malachi 3:14 -- You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? (ESV); Amos 8:5 -- saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances, (ESV)).
- 4) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to guard the condition of his or her heart (Psalm 51:10 -- Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.(ESV); Psalm 119:80 -- May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame! (ESV); Psalm 119:36 Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!; (ESV); May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame! (ESV); Psalm 86:11 -- Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. (ESV)). On the other hand, "common restraining grace" causes a person to judge the condition of other people's hearts as sinful -- seeing the sin in others, but not in himself or herself.
- 5) "Special saving grace" motivates a believer to love the strict holiness of God's purity (Psalm 119:140 -- Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it. (ESV)). But, "common restraining grace" causes a person to do what is right to gain personal credit, honor, and advantages that will come from obedience.
- 6) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to scorn worldly riches and to take up Christ's cross instead, even to the point of preferring their cross above all else. But "common restraining grace" cannot motivate a person to desire a cross at all (2 Timothy 4:10 -- For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (ESV); Matthew 19:19-22 -- Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (ESV)).
- 7) "Special saving grace" provides divine love to motivate the believer to joyously accept his or her work of serving God. "Common restraining grace" can only motivate a person with incentives that provide external pleasures.
- 8) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to follow Christ and turn away from all sin (Numbers 14:24 - But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. (ESV); In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. Luke 1:5-6 (ESV); Revelation 14:14 - Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. (ESV)). "Common restraining grace" can only cause a person to follow Christ partway, only to turn

away from Christ at some point farther down the path (Matthew 23:23 - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. (ESV)).

- 9) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to be able to rest in Christ as the chief good, as well as the highest and ultimate end (John 6:68 - Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, (ESV); And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, (1 Corinthians 1:30 - <sup>30</sup> And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, (ESV); Philippians 3:9 - and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— (ESV)). But "common restraining grace" can only allow people to center their minds on what is lower than Christ (Matthew 6:1-2 - "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (ESV); Zechariah 7:5-6 - "Say to all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? (ESV)).
- 10) "Special saving grace" causes a believer to be satisfied and contented with Christ. But "common restraining grace" can provide no satisfaction or contentedness.

### *Questions*

1. *Sometimes the Law is called "restraining grace". How is the law a form of grace?*
2. *What can "special grace" or "the grace of salvation" do that the Law cannot do?*
3. *How can Satan lead us astray if we can't correctly identify what saving grace truly is?*