

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY

By Andrew Dow

The other day I ran across a job-search cite specifically designed for church related careers. One of the jobs listed on this cite was for a “*Worship Leader.*” This particular church was looking for “*an elite lead vocalist, next-level performer, forward-thinking, creative, willing to push the limits on the typical church experience... Must be sold out to our vision and core values.*” This description sums up perfectly why more and more “Christians” are looking less and less like Christ!

What if churches weren't concerned about having “*elite lead vocalists*” and “*next-level performers,*” but rather were concerned about getting elite and next-level Bible students? What if churches weren't trying to “*push the limits on the typical church experience,*” but rather were trying to more closely follow the Word of God? What if churches didn't expect people to be “*sold out to [their] vision and core values,*” but rather expected people to be sold out to God's vision and core values?

Paul posed a question that we all need to answer: “**Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?**” (Gal. 1:10). If we want to please men, we will have no problem doing whatever it is that attracts people to our building. However, if we want to please God, we will make sure to do things God's way—as revealed in the Bible!

KEEP YOURSELF WHERE GOD WILL KEEP YOU

By Warren Berkley

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever, Amen” (Jude 24-25).

Who has the power? **"God our Savior."** For me, there is the possibility of stumbling, I would even confess a probability. While I entertain no purpose or intent to stumble, I know I could and probably will. I may nourish a thought that is destructive. I may say something to someone in haste or anger. I may be tempted, and fall into sin in the use of my body. With me, I live with this awareness, this possibility of stumbling. **“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body”** (James 3:2).

Thus I am not the power holder. God is. He is able to keep me from stumbling. He has that power and in His use of that power, I can be eventually presented **“faultless, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”** God has this power to save me. Proof of this is historical, documented by the cross of Christ.

My life as a Christian, therefore, doesn't stand on my power, or my ability to correct my course and keep myself pure (though I must). God is my confidence. Christ is my Savior. Henceforth, deity is worthy of this praise: **“To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever, Amen.”**

How Does This Work? There may be some temptation to think this works through some sort of automatic process, where I remain passive. This approach would be like, you do nothing; you are acted upon; God acts upon you to keep you from stumbling, in such an overpowering way . . . You do nothing—God does it all. Entire theological systems have been built on that premise. He keeps you from stumbling, through some sort of automatic process, that excludes your will; that requires no response; it just happens.

May I take us to another passage that teaches the same truth revealed here in Jude 24.

2 Peter 1:5. Same subject—the power of God keeps us; protects us. Here is 2 Peter 1:5—Christians are **“kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”** We are **“kept by the power of God,”** but this is not an automatic process where we are passive. To enjoy this benefit we must be very much active; for it says, we are **“kept by the power of God through faith...”** God does the keeping—I must do the believing. And of course, the belief commended in the New Testament is never passive; never disobedient—always active; always obedient (see James 2:14-26).

So—back to the problem. The problem is the reality of stumbling. The solution is to believe, to depend upon God, who says He will keep us. This dependence is active trust:

As our faith continues...

As our faith grows...

As our faith responds to the direction of God...

As our faith honors the Christ who died for us...

We are kept by the power of God. **“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory . . .”**

Years ago—when pedestrian traffic was common—at busy intersections, traffic engineers would build what was called *A Safety Zone*. As you were walking across the intersection, if you had to stop to let oncoming traffic pass—there was a little area you can occupy called a *“Safety Zone.”* These zones would sometimes be built inside of heavy steel barricades or bars. The theory was, as long as you stayed in the safety zone, you would not be hit by the passing vehicles. In order to enjoy that safety, you had to stay in this zone!!

In Christ, God has provided something like - a safety zone. As long as we stay where we ought to be - maintaining the activity of our faith; growing; repenting of sin; walking in the light . . . As long as we stay where we ought to be - in this place God, in His grace, has provided, we are kept by the power of God. But we must keep the faith; we must keep ourselves where we ought to be.

Keep yourselves in the love of God (Jude 21).

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NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:

“Why Do We Sing
A Cappella?”

PM LESSON:

“A Jew Named Apollos”
(Acts 18:24-28)

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**