

# The Counseling Solutions Group, Inc.

## Philosophy for Homework

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth. –Second Timothy 2:15*

“The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is to the effect that they whom God has regenerated and effectually called to a state of grace, can neither totally nor finally fall away from that state, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.” –Berkhof

Our perseverance is dependent upon God. Man’s eternal redemption is because of God’s perseverance. Out of a lack of understanding, some object to this doctrine. One such objection is that the doctrine of perseverance leads to indolence and immorality. It is simplistically interpreted by some as, “Oh yeah, once saved always saved. I can get saved and live like I want to.” Berkhof answers this objection:

It is confidently asserted that the doctrine of perseverance leads to indolence, license, and even immorality. A false security is said to result from it. This is a mistaken notion, however, for, although the Bible tells us that we are kept by the grace of God, it does not encourage the idea that God keeps us without constant watchfulness, diligence, and prayer on our part. It is hard to see how a doctrine, which assures the believer of perseverance in holiness, can be an incentive for sin. It would seem that the certainty of success in the active striving for sanctification would be the best possible stimulus to ever-greater exertion.<sup>1</sup>

Some have gone to the other extreme of believing their work merits salvation. They teach, in one form or another, that salvation is a decision made by man who can, of his own free will, extricate himself from salvation if he prefers another spiritual option. This perspective is lacking theological underpinnings as well. This thinking is man-centered and leaves God as an optional, interested, on-looker, third party. Man becomes the authority by determining specifics of his own salvation. This was the very first sin committed. Eve became the one who decided which way to go. God and Satan sat on the periphery of the Garden (if you will) to wait and see what Eve would do. This de-elevation of God is heretical.

A balanced view between the two options of man not laboring (grace) and man laboring (works) is man walking in holiness as God superintends by giving him the grace to do so. God saves and sanctifies. He gives the grace for salvation and He gives the grace for sanctification. If a person receives enough grace for salvation, he will also receive enough grace for sanctification. If you are a child of God, you will be manifesting the works of sanctification. When God plants the seed (Word through faith), the fruit, which

---

<sup>1</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1998) p. 548.

springs from the seed, (works) will grow. If the fruit does not appear, then one must examine the process to see what happened. (See Matthew 13 regarding the parable of the sower.)

Every Christian works because of the grace of God given to him to do so. This is God-centered theology. If we are not laboring from a heart of love, energized by the grace of God, for the Master; then something is wrong with this thing we call salvation. There will be times, when the counselee you are dealing with is not born again. Never assume they are! It would likewise be just as wrong to assume that a person with problems (sin or otherwise) is not a Christian. Again, balanced thinking is a necessity.

We believe Christian counseling requires homework. As a counselor, you are called along side those who are hurting to restore (Galatians 6:1-2) them to maturity. Part of their restoration is to assist them in the sanctification process. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you assist them in this task. Your homework should be specific, practical, and appropriate and it must assist in facilitating growth. When we became Christians, we started laboring for Him. When we get in the side-ditch of life, we need someone to come along side of us and teach us how to labor again. We accomplish this by, through, and with the grace of God. Homework is an effective tool (means of grace) in the hand of a Christian counselor to assist in this process.