

THE “PERFORMANCE” GOSPEL OF RAY COMFORT

RAY COMFORT’S “WORKS” GOSPEL
AS PRESENTED IN HIS BOOK
REVIVAL’S GOLDEN KEY

(**Bold** and [brackets] added for emphasis and clarification)

In a conversation with Ray Comfort concerning his book *Revival’s Golden Key*, Ray was asked if the book dealt with **eternal security**. He said it was in there. When asked where **eternal security** was mentioned specifically, he said:

“When I said it was in there, **it was the “good-soil” hearer, the genuine convert, sealed by the Holy Spirit, who has the assurance of salvation.** It’s usually a subject I don’t try to get into. I try and stay free from subjects such as prophecy, Calvinism, Armenianism, **eternal security**, Christian music. Because my ministry is so trans-denominational, I have the privilege of preaching in all denominations, it seems, and so I’ve found that if I keep my mouth shut doors open, and when I open my mouth, doors close. So it’s wise for me to keep my thoughts to myself when it comes to **that issue [ETERNAL SECURITY] that is so divisive among so many.** Do you know what I’m saying?”

WHAT IS RAY COMFORT SAYING??

GOLDEN KEY OR SKELETON KEY?

Jesus died for ALL our sins. He purchased the free gift of ETERNAL life. Assurance, or ETERNAL SECURITY, is just that simple, and there is NO SALVATION without it. In contrast, Ray Comfort gives assurance to only the good-soil hearers. In his book, *Revival's Golden Key*, he reveals his deadly “performance” gospel in his common, but misguided, interpretation of the Parable of the Sower. He states on p. 16, “This parable speaks of the thorny-ground, the stony-ground, and the good-soil hearer—true and false converts.” Ray also states erroneously that the foolish virgins were false converts. He probably believes that the servants or slaves that buried their talents were also false converts. Similar to John Calvin’s “perseverance of the saints,” Ray obviously believes that salvation is assured by performance rather than by belief. He might say to the person he judges as a “false convert” something like, “Your sins prove that you don’t believe what you say you believe!” The Bible teaches that we are saved by faith in the promises of God and, although we *should* have good works, our assurance, contrary to what Ray Comfort presents, is in the sacrifice of Christ for the penalty of all our sins, not in our level of obedience.

SINNING CONVERTS

Ray continues to point out his way of thinking under the heading of “Sinning Converts,” pp. 191-192, by saying that the “sinning convert” is actually one who has “had a spurious conversion” and is a “false convert” who needs to be awakened. Although it is true that the Bible teaches clearly that there always have been false Christians, their “falseness” is determined by what they believe, not how they behave. We all know Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses and Buddhists who are kind, wonderful people, according to the world’s standards. Yet we do not embrace them as brothers because of what they believe. In addressing certain false Christians in the Galatia region, Paul says in Gal. 3:3-4, “*Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?*” These people were suffering for Christ, and were not even saved!

RAY’S PERFORMANCE GOSPEL

Ray believes that a “true” convert “cannot produce bad fruit.” On p. 192 of his book Ray explains how a pastor should evangelize one who is judged as a “false convert,” because of his sin: “He [the pastor] would say, ‘A good tree cannot bear bad fruit,’ and ‘No spring yields both salt water and fresh.’ He would gently inform his hearer, ‘It sounds as if you have had a spurious conversion and you need to repent of your lawless deeds and make Jesus Christ your Lord.’ Then, using the law of God, he should show the ‘exceeding sinfulness of sin and the unspeakable gift of the cross.’” Ray also teaches that if you are not “good soil” and do not produce “fruit” (how much, no one knows), you cannot be sure

you are a true convert. Therefore your “faith” ends up being in your “works” (not Christ’s work) as the “proof” of your salvation.

YOU WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS

Ray Comfort, Kirk Cameron, and many other perhaps well-meaning but misguided people, believe that the phrase, “you will know them by their fruits” refers to Christians. The words of Jesus Christ put that phrase in its proper context, “*Beware of the **false prophets** who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know **them** by their fruits . . .*”-- Matt. 7:15-16a. Jesus is teaching that you will know “**false prophets**” by their doctrine; e.g., Mother Theresa had good works, but false doctrine.

ALL CONVERTS ARE SINNING CONVERTS

Although there are those deluded into believing that they have reached sinless perfection, a true believer would readily admit to being a sinning convert. The spiritual Christian is identified by how he responds to his sin, not by his claim of “sinless perfection.” Paul, in Romans 7:20, declares his struggle with sin, where he says, “*But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*” His solution, in verses 24-25, is, “*Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand, I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*” The Apostle John states in I John 2:8, “*If we [John included] say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*”

THE CATEGORY OF LUKEWARM “CONVERTS”

The letters written in the New Testament were sent to the saints in the churches. Jesus, when instructing John concerning the Revelation, told him to “*Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches.*”—Rev. 1:11. He did not say, “to the two pure churches and five problem churches,” or “to the six real churches and one false church,” as Ray Comfort would have us believe. Ray states on p. 192 in his book that “the category of lukewarm ‘converts’ doesn’t exist.” Yet Jesus says that the church that He “loves” in Laodicea is “lukewarm!” Hebrews 12:5-11 tells us that God disciplines “His” children whom He “loves.” Revelation 3:19 tells us that God “loves” the Laodicean “lukewarm” Christians and is going to “reprove and discipline” them.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SINNING CHRISTIANS

Although a Christian who continues in sin may bring question to his conversion, the biblical solution to the question is to examine his faith—what he believes, not his “works.” We are saved by what we believe. I John 4:1-3 teaches us to test the spirits to see what people believe in order to determine if they are truly

saved, always keeping in mind that the Bible also teaches that it is possible for a true Christian to practice sin. Jesus gives us clear direction regarding a “sinning convert” or “brother” in the following verses. *If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector*—Matthew 18:15-17.

We saw earlier that God loves and disciplines His “lukewarm” children. God uses the faithful local church to discipline “sinning converts.” The above verses communicate clearly that it is the church discipline of separation that is applied to the sinning Christian. In I Cor. 5:11 Paul also instructed the saints in Corinth not to fellowship or even eat with a sinning brother. In I Cor. 11:30 we see that God also disciplined the sinning Corinthian saints with weakness, sickness, and even death. In I Cor. 5:5 Paul delivered a sinning brother in the Corinthian church “over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.”

FALSE GOSPELS

In false Christianity, there are three types of “works” gospels: Jesus plus works to *get* saved; Jesus plus works to *stay* saved; or Jesus plus works to *prove* you are saved. Ray Comfort, Kirk Cameron, John MacArthur and many other Calvinists who believe and teach this performance gospel, that is, working to *prove* you are saved, are themselves lost--unsaved! In Gal. 2:4 Paul called the “believers” of Acts 15:1, 5 who were teaching an accursed “works” gospel, “false brethren.” Paul’s letter to the Galatians, the first letter he wrote, was to stop this “performance” error which was being spread by “false” Christians.

SORROW, NOT COMFORT, FOR RAY

In Rom. 9:2, Paul writes concerning his “sorrow” for his lost countrymen. In Rom. 10:2 he says “they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” In Ray’s book, *Revival’s Golden Key*, he gives excellent anecdotes, pointers, and examples drawn from his experience in evangelism, but like Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses who also have an impressive evangelistic zeal, Ray has polluted the truths of God’s gracious gift by the leaven of “works,” creating a gospel that demands performance for assurance of salvation, thereby turning his golden key into a skeleton key, a subtle key of spiritual death.

Matthew 7:22 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?*