

GET A GRIP!

Joe Slater

Indentations of my fingers probably remain to this day on every roller coaster I have ever ridden. From the first big drop until the ride was over, you couldn't pry my hands off of that safety bar. Why? Because I prefer to stay inside the car – it's important to me!

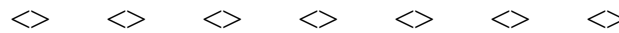
Did you know that if you are a Christian, Jesus has a grip on you? Paul wrote: "I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me" (Philippians 3:12). Paul heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ, just like you (Acts 9:18 & 22:16). Paul's sins were washed away, and Jesus "laid hold of" him as one might pluck a drowning man from the water. He has the same grip on you. He will not ease up on His grip; you are important to Him, and He does not want to let you go. Comparing His followers to sheep, Jesus the Good Shepherd said, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

Does this mean it was impossible for Paul to fall away from God's grace? Not at all, for he said he pressed on so that he might lay hold of that for which Christ had laid hold of him. Why did Christ lay hold of him? It was so Paul could be saved and go to Heaven. Why is Paul pressing on? So that he may lay hold of (get a grip on) eternal life. In the very next verse, he states, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have laid hold of it." Paul knew he wasn't there yet. But he was pressing on!

What does "pressing on" involve? First, let the past be the past. In Paul's own words, forget "those things which are behind." Paul had a rich heritage in Judaism which he gave up for Christ – but he didn't bemoan it. He had also committed unspeakable offenses against Christ and His church. All of that, however, was

in the past. Instead of dwelling on the past, Paul reached "forward to those things which are ahead." He pressed "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (v. 14). Likewise he instructed Timothy, "Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Jesus has a grip on you. You must strive to get and keep your grip on eternal life. While it is possible for you to surrender your grip and fall away, you certainly need not do so! Should you fall, it won't be because Jesus lost His grip. It will be because you surrendered yours.



Respect the Original Meaning of the Author

An important rule of walking with God is to know Scripture within its context. Avoid misusing verses of the Bible. It is God's word and will for our faith and life. We must respect the original meaning of its author. (This is a concept that many reject today, but twist something *they* say and listen to them how!!)

If we make Scripture say something the Lord did not intend, we make ourselves gods. We create an idol. We form out of new cloth a tradition (or justify an old sin) that negates and cancels out what God says.

We will lose our souls over such twisting of Scripture ("twist to their own destruction" [2 Pet 3.16](#)). And we may well be responsible for others being lost eternally who follow our example and listen to our reasonings.

We may even have a right conclusion based upon a wrong reading of Scripture. But when others discover that our reading of a passage is wrong, they may discard the right conclusion as well. And God will hold us accountable.

"Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this." Mark 7.13
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<http://randalmatheny.com/respect-meaning/>

"My Church"

"The church I attend is MY church." Yes, I said it, and I'm waiting for the usual response. "Hermann, it is not YOUR church, it's the Lord's church." Which means a Kansas City high school wasn't MY school, and graduating from Pepperdine didn't make it MY college or MY alma mater. "Good grief, Charlie Brown," that means the USA is not MY country! By using possessive pronouns did it mean I own those places?

Language wise, the dictionary gives two meanings for "my," one being "belonging to me, in my possession." The other means "relates to me." Imagine meeting a new neighbor who asks, "Do you have communion every Sunday at your church?" and you reply, "Oh, I don't own the church I attend, it belongs to God," while not answering his question.

He ought to answer, "Are you kidding? You thought I thought you owned it?" You lost your chance to teach him the truth, because he thinks you don't speak his language. Let me give you four examples of Paul speaking for Jesus Christ when he said, "MY gospel." Romans 2:16 ". . . on the day, according to MY gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ." Was it Paul's gospel?

Romans 16:25: "Now to him who is able to establish you according to MY gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ." In 2 Tim. 2:8, Paul again exhorts, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to MY gospel." Finally, 2 Cor. 4:3, ". . . And even if OUR gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing." It's not a gospel of his own making, but in relationship to what he knew Jesus taught.

Saying "MY church," or "OUR church" is no more a claim of ownership than "MY mom," or "YOUR house" still under a mortgage.

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