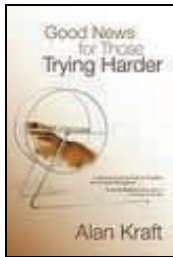
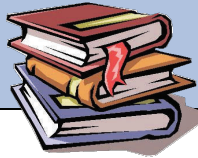


Library News



Book Review by Dan Benson *Good News for Those Trying Harder* by Alan Kraft

The basic point of *Good News for Those Trying Harder* is, as author Alan Kraft writes, that “the gospel is not only for the lost but also for the found.” It is easy for Christians to believe that while the gospel saves us from the consequences of our sin, successfully living the Christian life depends on our deeds. The more deeds the better, we seem to say, forgetting Paul’s charge against the Galatians: “You foolish Galatians ... After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” (Galatians 3:1-3)

Instead of trying to please God though lots of hard work, we should learn to trust God. “For many of us, ... we tend to think of the gospel as the entry point into Christianity, the wedding music of our spiritual lives,” which we soon forget, Kraft writes. “(The gospel) is to be a life-giving song that is heard in our souls every moment of our spiritual lives - a beautiful sound track that plays from beginning to end.” When we forget our “first love” and equate spiritual growth with activity, “what we are actually pursuing is a spiritual growth path in which we need Jesus less and less,” Kraft says.

Instead, our goal should be to rely on Jesus more and more. The first step in achieving this is to realize our need, just as was necessary when we first came to Christ. Our need is to stop relying on

our own deeds and our own righteousness and to trust in what Christ has done for us.

“Sin is the deeply rooted tendency in all of us to live with self as the center of our lives, rather than God,” which we do when we rely on our own “spiritual activity” to please God. “Trying to be good doesn't get us any closer to God. In fact, it tends to move us in the opposite direction - away from living the gospel,” Kraft writes. “Although we know we are saved by grace, a part of us still believes that by doing good things, God will like us more.”

Reading this book helped me realize more deeply the truth that God already likes us, loves us, immeasurably. We cannot get him to love us more. He has already demonstrated the extent of his love. How egotistical of me to believe that some act of mine can add to what Christ has already done and make God love me more. Kraft says, “A lot of Christians live their lives as if they need only a little Savior and as a result experience only a little of the gospel's power.”

*“Good News for Those Trying Harder”
is available in the Friedens library.*

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