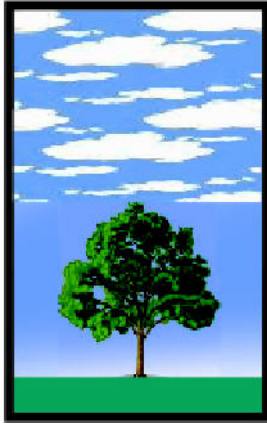


# another gospel



## The New Antinomians and their "Gospel-Driven" Doctrine

Descriptive Essays by Paul M. Dohse Sr.

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# The Gospel According to Paul Tripp: Saved But Still Dead

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If you have a problem with a theology that teaches Christians are responsible to uphold the law, you might come up with a doctrine that teaches Christians cannot gain benefit from law-keeping in sanctification anymore than they can in justification (i.e., antinomianism). As we shall see, Paul Tripp clearly teaches that we are functionally dead as Christians. That is certainly one way to exclude any possibility that we can uphold the law as Christians. The following is an excerpt from the workbook that coincides and restates pages 64 and 65 of "How People Change" (*Statements in brackets [ ] are my comments*):

Colossians 1:21-23; 2:1-15

## The Blessings of Our Union with Christ

"When a couple gets married, they often start to wonder how their spouse will respond when he or she 'really' gets to know them. What makes a marriage truly enjoyable is when your spouse really knows you and loves you anyway. So it is with our marriage to Christ. We cannot fully appreciate the blessings until we see ourselves as we truly are [*present tense*]. In Colossians 1 and 2, Paul's description of Christ is set against a realistic description of who we are [*again, present tense*]. At least these three things are true of us apart from Christ [*So why mention them here in regard to being "in" the marriage with Christ? Because any effort on our part to obey the law is to separate ourselves from Christ, obviously, if one takes this to its logical conclusion*]:

1. We [*"we" in regard to humanity? Or in regard to being Christians?*] are [*present tense, so one must assume he means this in regard to being Christians*] guilty of sin and alienated from God (1:21-23). This passage says that we are sinners who are guilty and full of shame. Paul uses two powerful words to describe our position before God: We are [*present tense*] alienated and enemies of God (1:21-23). Sin stains us and separates us from him.

2. We [*Christians*] are [*present tense*] foolish and blind (2:1-5). One of the terrible things sin does is reduce us to fools. We are easily deceived, attracted to hollow philosophy, and easily enticed by fine-sounding arguments that lead us away from Christ.

3. We [*Christians*] are [*present tense*] powerless and enslaved (2:9-15). Paul uses the best possible word to describe how trapped and helpless we are. He says that we are dead (v.13). When you are dead, you are unable to do anything [*emphasis by underscore mine*]. You are in a condition you cannot correct or improve. [*This seems pretty plain; as Christians in the present tense, we cannot do anything to correct or improve "our condition"*]. Sin makes us incapable of being and doing what God intended.

Consider these facts and imagine yourself sitting alone, the night before your wedding. You are filled with guilt and shame over your own foolishness, and very aware of your inability to be the spouse you need to be. What are your options? You can either run away, overwhelmed by the prospect of failure, or you can comfort yourself as you consider the character of the person you are marrying."

A careful reading (really, not even a careful reading would be necessary) reveals what Tripp believes about our role in the sanctification process. The fundamental blessing of our union with Christ is his character of mercy and the fact that He knows us and our weaknesses.

But the key is this: 1. We are unable to do anything about the weaknesses that we bring with us that were indicative of us as unbelievers. 2. To attempt any effort on our part to change, is to attempt change apart from Christ. To rely totally on Christ recognizes the attributes we bring with us into the marriage, which is nothing apart from being "alienated," "foolish," "blind," "powerless," "enslaved," and "dead".

Therefore, saved but still dead. This view by Tripp can be further substantiated by what he writes on page 28 in "How People Change," when he says sanctification is a "faith that rests and feeds on the living Christ." This is an incredibly concise statement that summarizes gospel sanctification.

We merely rest and feed on the living Christ ("Living" Christ is stated because we are still dead. It goes without saying among Christians that Christ is presently living). One stands in awe while reading how Tripp brazenly uses a pre-salvation text to make a post salvation point, as if he thinks his readers are brain dead. No wonder then, the newest teaching floating about is that Christians are "totally depraved." Obviously then, Christians are not obligated to uphold the law of God since we are unable, still being dead. We have a name for this: antinomianism.