

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings

A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings”

Conclusion

In our concluding comments, we will briefly cite twelve false accusations that Tillin has made in her reasons to reject faith teachings. Most of these have already been discussed within the body of our refutation.

Fifteen False Accusations by Tillin:

1. Falsely accusing faith teachers of incorporating New Thought, Christian Science, and Gnosticism into their theology and being used as pawns by Satan to trap believers into the New Age Movement. James Spencer, who is an authority on cults, writes the following:

Sometimes the Word-Faith Movement is called the “Positive Confession Movement.” It is often likened to the New Age practice of positive confession. I will admit that some Christians have stepped over the line that divides legitimate Faith Teaching from perversions of it. But I do not believe that the heresy hunters have proved that Copeland, for example, teaches what New Agers teach.¹

Certainly the critics of faith teaching have made numerous accusations to this effect, but have never proven any legitimate connection. They simply make the false association in order to scare people away from the movement in the same manner that the Pharisees associated Jesus’ work with Beelzebub.

2. Falsely accusing Faith Teachers of promoting “elitism” concerning revelation knowledge, when in fact, faith teachers have taught that the Holy Spirit is willing to reveal the truth of Scripture to all men, especially His children (Eph. 1:17, 18; Deut. 29:29). Hagin said, “We must have this spirit of wisdom and revelation of *Christ and His Word* if we are to grow. It is not going to be imparted to us through our intellect, either.”² (Italics are mine). Kenyon wrote:

The Creator has understood man’s need and has given to to him a revelation of Himself. He has brought that revelation down to the level of man’s senses that spiritually dead man might contact this revelation and through it come to a knowledge of his creator – the Bible.³

3. Falsely accusing faith teachers of teaching that the blood does not atone for sin. This is true only if one would say that the faith teachers believe that the word *atonement*

¹ Spencer, James R. **Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church** (Boise, ID: Huntington House Publishers, 1993), p. 113

² Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Believer’s Authority** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1984), p. 3

³ Kenyon, Essek W. **The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1969), p. 295

is a term limited to the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is used in reference to covering our sin. The faith teachers do not believe that the blood of Jesus (in contrast to the blood of bulls and goats) merely *covers* our sin but that it *cleanses, sanctifies, reconciles, remits, gives life, victory*, and has purchased our *eternal redemption*. They believe very strongly in the saving power of Christ's blood. Kenyon wrote:

Then He carried His blood into the Heavenly Holy of Holies, poured it out before the Father on the mercy seat, and made an eternal redemption for us. All that Jesus did, He did for us.⁴

4. Tillin falsely claims that faith teachers teach that, "...believers do not depend on God's own power, nor submit to His will, but feel they have the right to develop their own powers, and to discover the laws governing creation and dominion on the earth." This is a totally false statement. Faith teachers teach no such doctrine. Hagin Sr. relates a conversation he once had with Jesus. He says that the Lord spoke the following:

I bless all of My people as far as I can. But the reason there is not the move of God and the depth of the flow of the Spirit, and the fullness of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost today is because men do not take the time to hear from Me. And they do not take time to follow My plan set forth in the scriptures. The more closely you follow My plan, the more My power will be in demonstration and manifestation.⁵

Kenneth Copeland writes, "Do you want God to put a shotgun of spiritual power in your hand, so you can blow the works of the devil to kingdom come? Then focus on love. Pursue it. Practice it. Study it. Grow up in it. Then you'll see the power of God operating through you."⁶ Here is proof that these men teach believers to depend on God's power as well as submit to His will.

5. Falsely accusing faith teachers of teaching that man has the same attributes as God. Tillin wrote, "Thus, he is entitled to use the attributes of his divinity, such as creative powers and domination of the environment etc." Faith teachers have taught no such thing. They teach that God empowers man by delegating authority to Him (Luke 10:17-20; Eph. 2:6) and by the gifts of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-11). They teach that our faith can tap into God's power (Mark 9:23; 11:23; Eph. 1:19) and that we can do the same works that Jesus did (John 14:12; Matt. 21:21, 22). They do not teach that man is like God in His power attributes. In defense of his alleged "little gods" teaching, Casey Treat said:

I think that if they listen to the whole message, they would understand that I teach, and I believe, that without God, we are nothing. We are going to have to be born again, if we want eternal life, and come to Jesus. And *we will never be divine*, we will never be God, or the Father.⁷

⁴ Kenyon, Essek W. **The Two Kinds of Knowledge** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1966), p. 63

⁵ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Plan, Purposes, & Pursuits** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1989), p. 9

⁶ Copeland, Kenneth **From Faith to Faith** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990). November 1 devotional.

⁷ Passantino, Bob and Gretchen **Witch Hunt** (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), p. 152

As noted by Treat, faith teachers do not teach that man becomes *divine* as Tillin claims. Referring to the “little gods” teaching, Word-Faith critic Robert Bowman had to concede that, “they do not mean that *human beings are omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent.*”⁸ The accusation that Tillin presents is not only false, but ridiculous.

6. Falsely claims that “Word-of-Faith teachers stress the loss of dominion over the earth, *not sin*, as the root problem.” This is a false accusation. Kenneth Copeland said the following in one of his sermons:

God's wanting to treat you on the same level. He's wanting to treat you like you'd never sinned. Your sin has been washed in the blood of the Lamb. That Lamb sacrifice that Jesus poured out His blood on that cross has taken care of the sin problem. God's not saying, "Get away from Me, you sinner!!" He's saying, "Come to me!! I have forgotten it and wiped it out." No longer holding it against you.⁹

7. Falsely accuses the faith teachers of giving worship to Jesus out of gratitude (for going to hell) only. Not sure how many Word-Faith books Tillin has read, but worship of the Lord is not limited to gratitude. Faith teachers teach their listers to worship God because He is God. Teaching on Matthew 6:9, Hagin writes:

Jesus is saying here that the right approach to God is to come to Him because He is our Father, and to come in praise and in worship: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name ...” (v. 9). Come into His presence first with praise and worship because He is our Father.¹⁰

8. Falsely claims that faith teachers miss the point that life and salvation is through union with Jesus Christ. On the contrary, identification is a doctrine that is emphasized in Word-Faith circles. Hagin writes, “When one is born-again he comes into Christ. That is the only way you can get ‘in Him.’”¹¹

9. Falsely insinuating that the faith teachers disregard the “scriptural warnings of apostasy and increasing wickedness in the end-times.” Tillin confuses faith teachers with Reconstruction and Kingdom Now theology. Contrary to Tillin’s accusation, men such as Hagin, expounding upon end-time scriptures, affirm that in the last days there will be disobedience to parents, a form of godliness while denying God’s power (cessationism), distress of nations, wars, increase in homosexuality, believers departing from the faith increase in false teaching, etc.¹²

⁸ Bowman, Robert M. **The Word-Faith Controversy** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), p. 129. Bowman claims that no one has actually made this accusation against the faith teachers. Perhaps he needs to read Tillin’s tract.

⁹ Copeland, Kenneth **Following the Faith of Abraham I** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1983), audiotape #01-3001, side 2. Special thanks to Gail Fischbein for transcribing this tape.

¹⁰ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Prevailing Prayer to Peace** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1987), p. 63

¹¹ Hagin, Kenneth E. **In Him** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1984), p. 14

¹² Hagin, Kenneth E. **Signs of the Times** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries), pp. 5-30

10. Falsely claims that the faith teachers have replaced prayer with “confession.” This is ridiculous in light of the numerous books and tapes by faith teachers on the subject of prayer. On the contrary, the faith teachers have proven to be the staunchest advocates of this practice. Nevertheless, confession is a necessary component to prayer and sometimes, we must speak the word of authority rather than just offer a prayer (Ex. 14:13-16; Mark 11:23). Dr. Price wrote:

Through prayer, you can change things in your own circumstances. If you do not like what is happening to you, you start changing the circumstances by your praying, by your confessing, by your believing, and by your acting on the Word.¹³

11. Falsely claims that faith teachers deny the reality of sin and sickness. Faith teachers do no such thing. They recognize that these things are real, but they also recognize that they have been defeated in Christ’s redemptive work. Concerning a tumor that Dr. Price endured before being healed, he writes, “I never said the pain was not there. The pain was there. The tumor was there. But I never gave it any credit for having any authority in my body. I talked about the cure instead of the problem.”¹⁴ Faith teachers do not teach “denial.”

12. Tillin falsely claims that, “...the reality of sin, and the need for forgiveness is glossed over by teaching that a simple confession of the Lordship of Jesus will effect a change of lifestyle.” Contrary to this false accusation, Copeland writes, “... when I finally made Jesus Lord of my life and got delivered from all that, I found I couldn’t stay delivered.”¹⁵ Copeland’s statement proves that he does not just “gloss over” sin by confessing the Lordship of Christ. Copeland goes on to say, “... if you’re going to live a godly life, you’ll have to restrain the desires of your flesh.”¹⁶ Copeland believes that victory over sin comes from the discipline of the flesh by the help of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. Kenneth Hagin Sr. Concur:

God doesn’t have any “quick fixes,” ... If you want to experience a triumphant Christian walk over the devil, the flesh, and the world, then it costs the same price as it always has. You’ll have to be thoroughly Word-based, living by the principles in God’s Word. And you start by crucifying your own flesh and learning to walk in the God-kind of love!¹⁷

13. Falsely claims that scripture confession takes preeminence over guidance by the Holy Spirit. Hagin disputed such a belief:

... you can make all the faith confessions you want to, but if the Holy Ghost has already told you to do something, you’d better obey Him. If you don’t, you’re in disobedience, and your faith confessions won’t do a bit of good.”¹⁸

¹³ Price, Frederick K. C. **The Way, The Walk, and The Warfare of the Believer** (Los Angeles, CA: Faith One Publishing, 1994), p. 402

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 354

¹⁵ Copeland, Kenneth E. **How To Discipline Your Flesh** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), p. 10

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 11

¹⁷ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Triumphant Church** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1998), p. 53

¹⁸ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Classic Sermons** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1992), p. 100. Hagin also says, “This is where ‘faith’ people miss it: They haven’t understood the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

If anyone has ever received that impression, they could NOT have received it from the faith teachers.

14. Falsely claims that faith teachers teach that adversity is the result of failing to confess God's Word. Tillin writes, "Any adversity is said to be a 'lack of faith' to confess the appropriate Word." There is absolutely no truth to this statement. Kenneth Hagin writes, "Trouble comes to everyone, but our attitude toward it is what makes the difference between victory and defeat. How we look at the situation makes the difference in whether we get out at all."¹⁹ Faith teachers do not believe that faith prevents adversity, but they do believe that faith enables one to overcome adversity. They teach this because the Bible teaches it (Rom. 8:34-36).

15. Falsely accuses faith teachers of focusing on self and the world instead of God and Heaven. Admittedly, the faith teachers put more emphasis on this life than the after-life, but so does the Bible. Nevertheless, Tillin's accusation is false when claiming that the focus is on self and the world instead of God. Copeland's teachings contrast God's system with the world's system. Copeland writes, "The world's system of healing makes a god of the hospital and a god of medicine. Actually, for the most part, it leaves God out entirely, and without God, it will not work!"²⁰ His teaching also takes the focus from "self:"

When you act on the Word of God, the desires of your heart will begin to grow and line up with God. Then He can cause all grace abound toward you (see 2 Corinthians 9:8). ***The first step is to get your mind off yourself.*** Begin to take up the needs of the Body of Christ as if they were your own. The Word states very plainly that if a man comes to you needing food and clothes, don't just pray for him and send him away cold and hungry. Feed him and clothe him!²¹ (Emphasis mine)

Kenneth Hagin Jr., lamenting the overemphasis on selfish confessions and prayers among some in the faith movement sought to bring correction in this area when he writes:

I am tremendously excited about enjoying the prosperity God can give us, yes - but I am more concerned about people being won into the kingdom of God. To me, that's more important than anything else. I wish we could take the same confession and the same faith we're always using to confess and believe God for things for ourselves and band together and believe souls into the kingdom of God!²²

Tillin's Unconscious Lack of Faith In The Power of God's Word:

While I am sure that Tillin believes the Bible to be God's Word, she seems to have little to no faith in the power of God to perform it in the life of the believer today. For example, she claims that due to the faith teacher's emphasis on revelation knowledge

¹⁹ Hagin, *Prevailing Prayer to Peace*, p. 50

²⁰ Copeland, Kenneth **Laws of Prosperity** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1974), p. 17

²¹ Ibid, p. 24

²² Hagin Jr. Kenneth **Get Acquainted With God** (Tilsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1965), p. 16

(of the Bible), that they believe that “it is not sin and disobedience that causes us to fail, but ignorance of the Word.” She attempts to paint a false picture concerning the faith teachers as if they do not believe that sin is the problem amongst humanity. Yet, her statement shows a blatant ignorance and disregard for the place that Scripture has in enabling us to overcome sin in our lives. David writes:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:9-11)

Furthermore, we are told that it is the Word that cleanses us (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26). It is His Word that enables us to ward off Satan’s temptations (Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:17). Certainly there is a failure when we lack knowledge of God’s Word (Hosea 4:6). That is why Satan works so hard to bring such a disdain for God’s Word.

Tillin further shows a lack of faith in the power of God to make His Word relevant when she writes, “They emphasise the word (not the Son of God, but the scriptures) as the power used to operate all these spiritual laws.” There seems to be a total disregard for the power of God’s Word to accomplish the very things He said that it would (Isa. 55:11).

Contrary to Tillin’s insinuation, the faith teachers do not substitute the Scripture with the personal relationship with God. Kenneth Copeland writes, “By Getting into the Word of God and continually feeding on the Word so that faith controls your vocabulary, you come to the place where all your words will come to pass. When your words are words of faith, God will be able to trust you with His power in the words of your mouth.”²³

Copeland certainly does not accept God’s Word as an entity to be separated from God Himself. In Copeland’s theology, it is God who gives power to His Word when spoken in faith (Mark 16:20). Faith teachers do not teach nor imply that the scriptures are a separate “god” from the God who inbreathed them (2 Tim. 3:16).

However, God and His Words are one. Your faith in the *person* of God can go no further than your belief in His *integrity*. ***Your belief in His integrity is measured by your value of His Word to you.*** E. W. Kenyon wrote, “You can’t separate a man from his words; neither can you separate the Father from His Words.”²⁴ Years before Kenyon, Andrew Murray wrote, “God’s promise will be to us what God himself is to us.”²⁵ In another book, Murray expounds further on this theme:

Do not forget that it is one and the same to believe in the Word, or in the person who speaks the Word, or in the thing which is promised in the Word. The very same faith that receives the promises also receives the Father who promises, and the Son with the salvation that is given in the promises. Please see to it that you never separate the Word and the Living God from each other.²⁶

²³ Copeland, Kenneth **The Force of Faith** (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1983), p. 18

²⁴ Kenyon, Essek W. **New Creation Realities** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing), p. 6

²⁵ Murray, Andrew **Believing Prayer** (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1980), p. 17

²⁶ Murray, Andrew **Living The New Life** (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House Publishers, 1982), p. 33

God Himself puts so much emphasis on His Word that to cite all Biblical references would require writing a separate essay. He places His Word above His very name (Psalm 138:2). It is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). God cannot lie (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:1, 2) and it is impossible for Him to do so (Heb. 6:18). God is faithful in keeping His Word and we are to hold fast to it (Josh 21:45; 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56; Titus 1:9).

The Bible teaches us that God's Word has power. Gabriel told Mary, "*For no word from God shall be void of power.*" (Luke 1:37; American Standard Version). Knowing all of these things concerning the Word, it would behoove us to trust in it: "*So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.*" (Psalm 119:42; see also Acts 15:7; 27:25).

Jesus indicted the Pharisaical attitude displayed by Tillin when he exclaimed, "*Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?*" (Mark 12:24). This pinpoints the problems with so-called discernment ministries like the one under dispute in this response. Perhaps they do not believe that the Bible is truly God's Word (liberalism). If they do, perhaps they believe most of its promises are irrelevant to today's believer (cessationism and ultra-dispensationalism).

Either attitude violates the teaching of Scripture (2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 3:16). This puts the individual in error and disqualifies them from reproving others. If web surfers looking for information on the Word-of-Faith Movement rely on heresy hunters, they will not only receive erroneous data, but will also disregard the life and power of God's Word. Pharasaic Heresy-Hunting is dividing the church. It is leading people away from the Word and focuses on criticism of others. Instead of wasting time reading the false reasons for rejecting Christians we don't like, let us instead look to God and His Word for our daily living (Matt. 4:4).