

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”

Reason 5: It Recognizes That God Has Made Man A Significant Being

Tillin's fifth reason for rejecting the Faith Movement is the claim that this movement makes man a god. In her explanation of this point, she presents some truth with some distortion of facts. First, Tillin broad-brushes the movement by painting all of its advocates with the “little gods” doctrine. Not all consider themselves to be “gods.” Additionally, Tillin goes to an opposite extreme in actually rejecting Scriptural truth, while claiming that the truth that she is rejecting is contrary to Scripture.

For example, Tillin rejects the idea that man possessed God’s nature when he was created and presents the idea as unscriptural. A number of Biblical scholars would disagree with her. Many accept the fact that man being created in God’s “image” and “likeness” (Gen. 1:26-28) is indicative of him possessing God’s nature.

Keil and Delitzsch were respected scholars who wrote an Old Testament commentary. Commenting on Gen. 1:26-28 they wrote, “The image of God consists.... in the fact, that the man endowed with free self-conscious personality possesses, *in his spiritual as well as corporeal nature*, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine life”¹ (Italics mine).

G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), who was a popular pastor at the Westminster Chapel in London, stated that the passage is teaching that man was created to be “like God”:

The final fact as to *the nature of man is that he is made in the image and likeness of God*. That is not the same thing said twice over. By the words "image" and "likeness", two separate ideas are conveyed. "Image" suggests the fact that he is the one by whom God is represented. "Likeness" suggests the fact that he is in himself like God.² (Emphasis mine)

In his popular paraphrase of the Scriptures, Eugene Peterson's *The Message* provides an interesting interpretation of Gen. 1:26, 27:

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth." God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. (The Message)

One can readily see from the evidence provided that not everyone shares Tillin’s perspective on this issue. Neither do many share her denial that man received a satanic nature after the fall. W. B. Godbey, a scholar in the Holiness tradition, wrote, “the

¹ Keil, Johan (1807-1888) and Delitzsch, Franz **Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament**, E-Sword Edition

² Morgan, Campbell G. **The Westminster Pulpit (Volume V)** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1906-1916), p. 329

posterity of fallen humanity having received the Satanic nature through the beguilement of the serpent, or the spiritual children of the devil.”³

A number of scripture passages such as Eph. 2:1-5, John 8:44, Matt. 13:38, 2 Cor. 6:15, and 1 John 3:9, 10 allude to this. Commenting on John 8:44, Vincent Wilson, a New Testament Greek scholar wrote, “Of your father. Very suggestive, implying community of nature....”⁴ The popular Matthew Henry Commentary says concerning the above passages: “They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example.”⁵ The Amplified Bible brings more clarity in its rendition of 1 John 3:10:

By this it is made clear who take their nature from God and are His children and who take their nature from the devil and are his children: no one who does not practice righteousness [who does not conform to God's will in purpose, thought, and action] is of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother (his fellow believer in Christ). (Amplified Bible)

God makes the clear distinction between those who are born of Him and those who are born of Satan himself. We will possess the nature of the one that has birthed us. In spite of Ms. Tillin’s objections, when we receive the new birth, we also receive God’s very nature. The late Bible expositor, R. A. Torrey, wrote, “The New birth is the impartation of a new nature, even God's own nature, to the one who is begotten again.... In the new birth God imparts to us His own wise and holy nature....”⁶

No passage makes this any more clear than 2 Pet. 1:4. In this passage we are told that through God’s promises we “*might be partakers of the divine nature.*” The New Testament in Modern English by J. B. Phillips renders this as, “*to share in God's essential nature*”⁷ How much clearer can this be? There are a number of scholars and respected church leaders who support this understanding of 2 Pet. 1:4.

Nevertheless, does all of the above imply that God created man as a “god” or even a “little god?” Hagin wrote, “In the beginning, Adam had the dominion over this world, and in that sense, Adam was made the ‘god’ of this world.”⁸ Many of Hagin’s critics equate such a statement with blasphemy. On the other hand some more charitable critics of the Faith Movement such as the Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals (ACUTE) are willing to give him a fairer hearing:

However, we should be careful not to overreact to Hagin’s claim that ‘Adam was the god of this world’. On the one hand, there are a number of things that this sort of statement clearly does not mean. It does not mean, for example, that humans were not created or that they possess any of the infinite attributes of deity or that they are worthy of worship. On the other, the statement is connected in Hagin’s argument to the thought of Adam’s

³ Godbey, William Baxter **Godbey's New Testament Commentaries Volume VII** -- Matthew-John (Part 2)(Harmonized) (Spokane, WA: Holiness Data Ministry)

⁴ Vincent, Marvin, **Vincent's Word Studies** (Online version available at <http://www.godrules.net>)

⁵ Henry, Matthew **Matthew Hery's Commentary on the Whole Bible**, E-Sword edition

⁶ Torrey, R. A. **What The Bible Teaches** (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898-1933), p. 327

⁷ For other renditions of 2 Pet. 1:4, read the Contemporary English Version and the Jewish New Testament. Also, the Good News Bible presents an interesting translation of 1 John 3:9.

⁸ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Triumphant Church** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1998), p. 8

dominion over the earth... What Hagin appears to mean by the phrase, therefore, is that Adam's dominion over the earth was derived from and compatible to God's greater sovereignty as creator.⁹

ACUTE understands that Hagin was not saying that Adam or his posterity were deity. In another book Hagin writes, "We're not gods, but we've been given the right to use Jesus' Name and to act on His behalf."¹⁰

Others have made reference to Adam as a "little god." Differing from Hagin, Myles Munroe says, "He has created us to be His offspring. Therefore, He calls us 'little gods.'" Munroe based his statement on Psalm 82:6. Yet, Munroe clarifies his teaching:

Now this does not mean that we are equal to God or that we are deity. Adam and Eve could fulfill their purpose only if they were relying on, and in constant communion with, the God of the Garden.¹¹

Benny Hinn has also attempted to clarify his "little gods" statements. In response to his critics on a TBN broadcast, Hinn said, "We're not God, we're the *children* of God. We're God-like in our spirit man..."¹² It is clear that Hinn is not deifying man, yet some may still be troubled by his belief that man is "god-like" in spirit. The late Baptist preacher, A. J. Gordon (1836-1895) made a similar statement:

But now God comes with the veritable promise that they shall, through faith, be made god-like, sharers of His nature and conformed to His image. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," is the promise of the gospel. And this means not simply that our natural life shall be prolonged into endless duration; but that we shall be endowed with a supernatural life; that God's own immortal nature and being shall be communicated to us through regeneration.¹³

This respected Baptist minister believed that by faith we become "god-like." Whether one agrees or disagrees with this teaching, one should at least recognize that statements of this kind are not an invention of the Word-Faith teachers. Some centuries before Gordon, the great reformer, Martin Luther, preached the following:

This is what I have often said, that faith makes of us lords, and love makes of us servants. Indeed, by faith we become gods and partakers of the divine nature and name, as is said in Psalms 82,6: "I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." But through love we become equal to the poorest. According to faith we are in need of nothing, and have an abundance; according to love we are servants of all. By faith we receive blessings from above, from God; through love we give them out below, to our neighbor. Even as Christ in his divinity stood in need of nothing, but in his humanity served everybody who had need of him. Of this we have spoken often enough, namely, that we also must by faith be born God's sons and gods, lords and kings, even as Christ is born

⁹ Perriman, Andrew (editor) **Faith, Health, & Prosperity** (Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 2003), p. 117

¹⁰ Hagin, *The Name of Jesus*, p. 106

¹¹ Munroe, Myles **Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer** (New Kingsington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002), p. 33

¹² Spencer, James R. **Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church** (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1993), p. 108

¹³ Gordon, A. J. **Partakers of the Divine Nature** This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/>

true God of the Father in eternity; and again, come out of ourselves by love and help our neighbors with kind deeds, even as Christ became man to help us all.¹⁴

It seems that the advocates of the “little gods” doctrine are in good company.

¹⁴Luther, Martin **The Sermons of Martin Luther Vol. II** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), pp. 73, 74