

Book Review

The Lying Promise

Daniel LaLond, Jr.

Fox Lake, Ill: DTG Books, 2005. 392 pages

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This book may not catch many people's attention, but the subject is important. I share the concerns it expresses and have discussed them at length with another concerned brother in the Lord. The book is well done and contains a bibliography and Scripture and subject indices. The back cover gives a good background and summary of the book, though its manner is more confrontational than LaLond is in the book.

The lying promise to which LaLond refers is Satan's words to Eve: "You will not surely die" (Gen 3:4, NIV). LaLond's point is that many of the popular preachers/writers in the United States today, especially those of the Reformed theological background, tell people they will not be lost for eternity if they simply "believe" in Christ, even if they may still be practicing various sins. He says it is a confounding of the nature of grace. I agree, but would add it is the age-old struggle to understand God's sovereignty and human responsibility in salvation. From our limited human understanding, many have viewed James (and Jesus too) as teaching the opposite of Paul on this. However, God does not contradict himself. LaLond reminds the church of all the major biblical passages that refer to the importance of human actions flowing out of faith, such as James 2:14-26. I believe both James' and Paul's teachings are true. Each

emphasizes different concerns to deal with different situations.

LaLond singles out three contemporary leaders whose teachings he believes supports the lie—Erwin Lutzer, Charles Swindoll, and Anthony Evans—for consideration. LaLond carefully, kindly and firmly, goes through their teachings and shows how they support this error. He presents his personal interactions with these men with his arguments. In my opinion, LaLond is not too critical of their writings but has accurately shown their inconsistency in this crucial understanding of grace and salvation. I believe these leaders are not crass about believers sinning, but they are so focused on one side of the truth they set people up for the wrong conclusions. Christians in the United States need to realize the Reformers generally were more biblically balanced than their followers. The leaders LaLond cites don't believe they have taught that Christians can go on willfully sinning. However, they need to change some of their wording because this has led to a major problem of Christians excusing their sins.

LaLond is thorough and well read on this issue. He keeps a gracious spirit throughout. The book is well organized and written. I did not find anything significant with which I disagreed. On

the contrary, this is a timely and effective treatment of an issue vital to the gospel. I wish every Christian would come to a healthy, biblical perspective on this issue. LaLond has made a very good contribution to this concern, and I recommend this book to all who want to avoid the devil's lies and are willing to think deeply about the Christian life.