

Assume • Faith – From One to the Other

The objective of the prior eight Posts in this *Assume? Faith?* Blog Post series has been to highlight the issues, challenges, dangers and suggested steps for moving from a shallow, “assuming,” faith to one that is more Biblically sound.

In this regard, there are three major types of people (and their most common feelings) related to God and the things of God:

The Legalist: Burden • Dread • Obligation • Guilt • Frustrated in seeing more they must do • Discouragement • Bondage • Draining • 10% (“tithing”) mentality • in truth “cold” to God . . . Seeing themselves as “Good.”

“Inoculated.” In a daze • On Auto-pilot • Getting by • Satisfied • Comfortable • Rather lukewarm (neither hot nor cold) to God . . . Consider themselves “Better than most others.”

Blessed by Grace: Anticipation • Annoyed because can’t do more • Excitement about what they are seeing and hearing • Encouraged • Comfort • Freedom • Invigorated • Joy • Fervent to the things of God . . . Strongly feeling they “Need and must get Better!”

These are three primary and common mind-sets when thinking about, for example, reading the *Bible* and most things God. Which is yours? Which will be productive to Better and most rewarding in life and death?

Those who are at all honest with themselves will probably agree the following is maybe the best one-sentence condition of man when we find ourselves wanting to improve and get Better:

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” Ro 7:15

So much for “free will” (the ability to act at one’s own discretion and choice)!

As a result, the Legalist will always be frustrated until/if they become inoculated to the things of God (and God Himself) by doing just enough (all they can do as a result of feeling “How much more could God expect or demand?”) and enter the daze/auto-pilot of supposed “faith” (really just assuming).

The Blessed by Grace, on the other hand, become aware of their great need and their TOTAL inability on their own to seek, much less find, God and all (ONLY) He offers for life and death. There is a growing desire and related motivation to know and experience Him. And through this increasing developing familiarity they begin, more and more, to understand the truth personally that:

- “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do,”
- likely, then, to fall into a desperation of: “What a wretched man I am!”
- finally asking: “Who will rescue me from this body of death?,”
- and then find the only answer, hope and help: “Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”
- setting themselves on a firm path of understanding and finding comfort and hope in: “So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law of freedom.” Ro 7:24-25

The saved understand that the great benefits of seeking God only come by and through God’s Grace – that for all things, both important and good for us (that we can’t do on our own), we must have help. And as one important example, reading God’s Word regularly and productively so that

we can read, see, understand and do what He will show us is for our good – not perfectly, but certainly as a steadily improving and beneficial discipline.

And the sad reality? Most people who regularly attend church (much less those who don't) have never been told how we receive/who gets God's Grace: Everybody? No. Those who need it most? No. Those who ask for it? No. Those who sit around and wait for it to happen? Certainly not! Those who go to church, give to the church, help other people, are nice and kind, have been baptized, take communion regularly, pray, tithe? . . . NO, NO, NO . . . NO!

The three-times (and only) *Bible* stated basis (therefore the only answer we can depend on) for receiving (what "primes the pump" of) God's Grace?

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Pr 3:34, Jas 4:6 & 1Pe 5:5

which could probably be stated (a little more clumsily, but maybe helpfully):

God opposes the proud because they foolishly cling to their pride and, in doing so,
refuse to acknowledge their need or
seek and accept His Son and the Holy Spirit and their abundantly offered gifts.

And this humility is not simply a state of mind so that I have it and then wait for God to shower me with Grace. Godly humility is one that is driven, like never before, to find and see what conditions "surround" (what is compatible with and support vs. that which is incompatible and thwart) God's Graces in their various forms and purposes. Like a little child at a Christmas tree, looking at many packages with their name on them and being overwhelmed as they open one gift after another, the *Bible* (and *Bible* motivated and inspired prayers along with other Christian "disciplines") is like the largest of "gift" trees waiting for us to open, read, hear, see, feel, taste and smell God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the heart, eyes, ears and other senses of the Holy Spirit, for the gifts of eternity and here and now. Like the little child, we will not be passive in waiting for these gifts to "come" to us – we will "tear" through them to find the next expression of God's love for us in these gifts of provision, protection . . . and, most importantly, Himself!

As we have intimated in the prior *Assume? Faith?* Blog Posts, reading the *Bible* is not an end unto itself. But it is a necessary, and the purest, "gateway" into the "things of God" – showing and telling us His truth, promises of Grace, necessary compatibilities with Grace – His hope, help, freedom, insights . . . to navigate the dangerous and treacherous waters of life and death. Yes, we must have God's special and personal Grace to comprehend, and then use what we read in, His Word.

And if doing so by Grace – Grace – Grace (to read – to understand – do what we read), we should then expect and seek God's Grace over and over and over (make it a discipline) to find and grow in:

Anticipation • Productive annoyance because can't do it more • Excitement about what we are seeing and hearing • Encouragement • Comfort • Freedom • being Invigorated • Joyful . . .
Feeling the very positive and motivating: "I need and must get Better!"

Assume to Faith? Only and always by Grace!

Seek God's Grace!

The needs never end – just as the gifts (Graces) are never exhausted.