

One Thing is Sure About Life

Even if we are where we want to be,
we won't stay there without
thought, work and effort.

That is why marriages fail, health declines, progress made with God is lost, knowledge and talent seem to disappear, children withdraw . . .

We have impossible demands on our emotions, time and money – we try as hard as we can, do the best we can, balance the best we can, do better than others . . . but we still fail!

Other than Christianity, ALL religions, at their heart (currently and going back as far as the jungles) focus on doing what they can to please their god(s) – they are based on the superstition of trying to appease god(s) by not doing certain defined things while doing others. Unfortunately, there are analogous “Christians” – in fact, even the best and most advanced Christians have the inclination and WILL fall into this “pit” if they are not seeking and growing – we are either growing or decaying; no one, for any significant period of time, is standing still. There is no spiritual gravity that holds us in place – just the opposite, the Bible says we live on a slippery slope, and unless we do SOMETHING we will find ourselves at the bottom:

“Return, faithless people;
I will cure you of backsliding.” Jer 3:22

The question is not IF we have to do something, but what? If it is true Christianity, and not simply superstition, if it is unique rather than based on the common notion of appeasing a god, then what must we do and how is it unique?

Why we follow the world's models for happiness, success, fulfillment, hope . . . defies logic, and any semblance of commonsense, when we clearly see (if not before, certainly when we attend any funeral) that all the world's models fail.

We fall for a new diet every month (even as we know all diets have failed), and even if we found one that worked, it still would accomplish little significant besides losing weight. In fact, the result of researchers and scientists finding a diet pill (which they surely will) will certainly be the single greatest cause of decline in health we have ever witnessed. Now, one great step in our war against exercise! Why waste the time, make an effort, another magic pill to solve all my problems! Heart and blood pressure medicines are just two, of many, medicines that, on a macro basis, have done more damage than good! They are good and helpful for the relatively few that, in spite of a reasonable life style, need them to control unusual conditions. But the vast majority of people that take them do so because they don't want to make the changes they should to battle the underlying causes resulting from aging – a battle best fought, not by masking the problem, but by exercise; the results of which will normally mitigate this and myriad other problems resulting little physical activity! So, they add pill to pill until they die.

These magic pills have accomplished just what we should expect when foolishness reigns. By sleight of hand they drain old people of their (and the government's) money, make great promises and USUALLY do MORE damage

than good! Medicines should be taken after (and only AFTER) we have done what we should do to be healthy – get proper rest, eat reasonably well, exercise (the amount required increasing as we age), . . . Yet, we find, as people age, few increase exercise, the only way to fight the predictable decline in health. In Third World Countries, they just get old and die. Not in America! We use medicines to mask declining health the way some use plastic surgery to disguise aging! As long as we think we are fooling others, we take this as success – as if others will take our place in hospitals and caskets!

Yes, we have impossible demands on our emotions, time and money – we try as hard as we can, do the best we can, balance the best we can, do better than others . . . but we still fail! And we will continue to fail (even if we profess to be Christians – talk is cheap and meaningless) until and

UNLESS

we as Christians struggle with, and begin to grasp, the uniquely Christian truth of grace – it being where we put our effort and attention so that we are finding and growing in the grace.

Any religion, at its heart, is defined by how it “saves” its adherents. All religions, other than Christianity, reward those who best keep their defined key rules – there is a passing “mark” by which their gods are appeased and maybe even pleased.

Living in a “Christian” nation, you can either accept the “Christian” version of this false teaching or you can

. . . be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. ^{2Pe 3:17}

True Christianity (as taught in and by the Bible) is clear, unequivocal, unmistakable and unambiguous in there only being one way to be saved. I don’t care how many false preachers, bishops, philosophers, politicians, professors, TV talk show hosts, peers . . . say otherwise, the Bible gives one and only one way to be saved:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins [and this is the first reason we reject this “way” – we refuse to accept we were among the walking dead], in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world [still enamored and living by the world’s ways?] and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. [We are doing our best aren’t we? – This can’t be right!] Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. [Well, I can see some should be objects of wrath, but isn’t God bigger than these petty feelings? I have a bigger more loving god!] But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. ^{Eph 2:1 - 9}

And here is the Christian “rub,” grace is the key to and uniqueness of Christianity – we are either growing in grace or “losing” it. Every day is a struggle against what the world proclaims as hope and help and what Christianity offers – we “naturally” decline unless through thought, effort and time we progress. There are only two options – growing or declining and decaying. As is true with physical exercise, we grow by “doing” – to grow in grace we must be increasingly exercising grace. In short, to hope to be saved by grace we must live by grace.

Therefore it should come as no surprise that if Christianity is real, if the Bible states the truth, if there is an “evil one” doing all he can to mislead and destroy us, his number one focus is on misleading us about grace. And he has done a real good job!

Combine the natural human desire (and tendency to fight) for security, our pride and these false leadings and you see why “grace” is so little understood and valued! Grace says: “You are helpless, hopeless, doomed, condemned to failure. Your best, even your very best, is not good enough! You don’t need a ‘little boost’ to get you over and through your difficulties and challenges – at your core and base you are lost! Nothing you are or can do can save you from destruction. Look around and be realistic, see the evil, decay and decline – even among the best, brightest and richest! Money is of transitory help, looks are superficial and fleeting, a good personality only takes you a little way, intelligence and cunning are ineffective for any period of time or in facing significant hurdles, there is no lasting hope in trying your best – you are being crushed, not helped and supported, by the world’s ways, even their best ways. There is no real security, nothing to hold on to assist us permanently!” All this is surely true – and understood when/if people really sit and think. They are obvious and inevitable truths.

So some people feebly grasp for the hope of grace, while holding on to the pitiful little security that they have, and find grace doesn’t help or work! And it won’t work as long as we try a one-handed grip – grace is like a Whopper, you can’t hold it with one hand! Or, at least, we can’t grow by trying to exercise it with one hand and holding the world’s ways in the other. We grow by looking the world’s ways up one side and down the other, by trying them and seeing them fail and then wisely rejecting them!

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15 minutes a day – one year – and you will read all that God has said to man about being lost and being saved, sin and goodness, hope and helplessness – grace!

Where else can I expect to find hope and help?