

# Getting into the Groove of Grace

## ♥ Seeking and Finding the Heart of Grace

- ♥ If we have become aware that we are in war with the 1<sup>st</sup> Five Seconds being critical to how successfully we react in specific battles (trials and temptations) . . .
- ♥ If, even when we fail in the 1<sup>st</sup> Five test, we embrace repentance as a friend (instead of holding on to the notion “How dare anyone say I’m not perfect . . .”) . . .
- ♥ If we realize we can and must (if life is to be a success) refuse to retreat to and live in a bunker; rather, instead by grace, take the offensive and meet trials and temptations head-on . . .
- ♥ If we confront and overcome battle fatigue through proper pacing and focusing . . .

We still haven’t won (and will not win) without finishing the war; which requires good and consistent offensive strategies and execution.

The universal tendency, after grace has worked for us, is to fall back on ourselves – “Grace – I don’t need you for this – I can do it myself! . . . This is a little issue, I can handle it . . . This is something I like and am good at – I don’t need grace.” But, at what price do we refuse grace? And how large is a task we can better handle ourselves rather than depending on grace? Is the bird in hand (our ability to do) worth the two (or 1,000) in the bush (the success we have through the faith of grace)?

The devil (even through using shallow and false religions) is more than happy to have someone make a good start, talk big and then return to his own power to live day-by-day. For he knows when our grace guard is down we are easily attacked and conquered. Maybe the most rampant caricature of Christianity is that of the war of life and death being fought and won in a few seconds when we “accept Christ.” “I am now saved! Isn’t that great?” Others look at this foolishness and think (if not say): “And you are still living like the devil? I am as good and nice as professing Christians!”

The Bible knows of no instant conversions and salvations except those evidenced by and through continuing, not one-time, imperatives – “humble yourself,” “submit yourself to God,” “resist the devil,” “draw near to God,” “work out your salvation” . . . all necessary on a continual basis for eternal salvation just as continuing to love a spouse is necessary to make and prove a good marriage.

The devil is not, in the least, threatened by and concerned with one-time professions of faith – for he knows how few of these professions result in anything. His fear? That we see this as a starting point, an awakening to our weaknesses in the face of life’s many trials and temptations, for finding and embracing grace more and more and more; that we:

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>1Pe 2:2 – 3</sup>

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. <sup>2Pe 3:18</sup>

God’s blessings (grace) are necessary on a continuing basis for Him to become our salvation. Otherwise, we will find Him saying to us:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. <sup>Gal 1:6 – 7</sup>

I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? <sup>Gal 3:2 – 3</sup>

Or worse yet, if this does not wake and cause us to repent and return to God, we can expect at death to be surprised, like so many others, by being told:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **Many** will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Mt 7:21

Jesus provides the continuing imperative as an antidote to this possibility and reality of many:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Mt 7:24 - 27

Many in Churches try to thread the needle between the world and grace, finding the best of both worlds – with, again, the devil and many false religions (even masking as “Christian”) supporting this approach. They see grace as an evidence of weakness (and they are right)! What could be wrong with finding and clinging to the safety, comfort and “fun” the world offers (money, possessions, education, health, “good” jobs . . .) while seeking and finding the best that God offers – help and comfort in times of crisis?

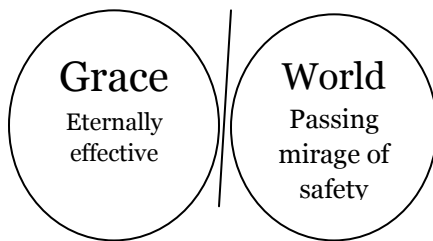
Rather than trying to thread the needle between grace and world, however, our objective should be moving into the heart of grace far from the dangers of the world; for, while the world can offer fleeting safety and security it is a safety and security inevitably eroded by time and death. This “best of both worlds” philosophy could work, except the One who holds the key to eternity says He will not accept those that take this route:



Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. 1Jn 2:15 - 17

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Mt 10:39

“Those who cling to worthless idols  
forfeit the grace that could be theirs.” Jnh 2:8



Even with good intentions, our tendency is to retreat to safety – living within our abilities and means (using grace only in emergencies – as a last resort).

We will not win the war of life without successfully finishing it; which requires good and consistent offensive strategies and execution – finding, growing and staying in the heart of grace is the foundation of all successful offensive tactics!

