

The Importance of Grace

Alfred C.W. Davis
MBA, M.Div.

Philip Yancey, in his book ***“What’s So Amazing About Grace”***, says, “God’s grace is so great that we do not have to achieve righteousness. By striving to prove how much they deserve God’s love, legalists miss the whole point of the gospel, that **grace is a gift from God to people who don’t deserve it.** (p. 210) I know nothing that represents a greater threat to grace than legalism.” (p. 195)

He goes on to say that, like any gift, grace needs to be received. The prerequisite for grace is the realization of our imperfection. What blocks grace are our pride, judgment and unforgiveness.

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” James 4:6

It is our human destiny on earth to be imperfect, incomplete, weak and mortal, and only by accepting that destiny can we escape the forces of the world and receive grace. God needs humble people to accomplish his work.

David Seamands in his book ***“Perfectionism”*** (p. 29) says, “Many years ago I was driven to the conclusion that the two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are these:

- 1) the failure to understand, receive and live God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness,
- 2) the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness and grace to other people.”

As a counselor, I am also driven to similar conclusions. I constantly see that the greatest need in every human being is to know deep in their core that they are accepted, loved and valued. When a person is not unconditionally loved, a wound is created that produces a variety of emotional and mental problems. As Christians, we are so fortunate that Christ is the source of “grace”.

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
John 1:17

He sacrificed himself on the cross for us. This unconditional gift of forgiveness and love for us goes to the core of what we all need. Not only does receiving his grace and love heal our souls, but it frees us and empowers us to be able to offer grace, mercy, forgiveness and love to others.





As Philip Yancey refers to Mother Teresa, "She understands that sacrificial love is one of the most powerful weapons in the Christian's arsenal of grace. (p. 245)

What is this arsenal of grace? I see grace as part of the tree of life.

Tree of Life

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Grace

Ungrace

Unexpected, unearned and undeserved gift

The Law and legalism

Sacrificial love

Selfish and self-centered

Acceptance

Judgment, criticism & condemnation

Apologize and forgive

Remember, hold onto and accuse

Magnanimous, free, generous

Conditional, by the rules, limited

Merciful and compassionate

Punishing and cold

Respectful, personal, kind

Disrespectful and negative

Humble

Proud

Prayer: Lord Jesus, it is my prayer that I lay down my pride, judgment, legalism and unforgiveness now and replace it with your grace, mercy, forgiveness and unconditional love.

