

Grace Orientation and Forgiveness

Understanding Grace Leads to Forgiveness

Pastor Cliff Beveridge

- Introduction
 - Having a proper orientation to grace is one of the fundamentals of proper Christian thinking.
 - Because the true gospel is a message about the grace of God [Acts 15:11; 20:24; Eph 2:8-9], everyone who comes to faith in Jesus Christ starts the Christian life with an orientation to grace.
 - As a believer grows in understanding God's grace, the proper orientation to grace results.
 - When we are properly oriented to God's grace, the ability to forgive ourselves and others follows.
- Grace in the Old Testament
 - The grace of God was well understood by Old Testament saints.
 - In his prayer of confession, Ezra recognized that God had extended His grace to the people of Israel by preserving a remnant of believers [Ezra 9:5-15].
 - The sons of Korah understood that the Lord extends His grace to those who walk uprightly in Him [Psalm 84:9-12].
 - Solomon wrote about God giving grace to the afflicted (humble) [Proverbs 3:34].
- Grace Principles
 - Our Savior Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth [John 1:14].
 - When we believe in Jesus, we are justified as a gift by His grace [Rom 3:21-24; Titus 3:4-7] and are the recipients of grace upon grace [John 1:16].
 - The forgiveness we receive in Christ is according to the riches of God's grace [Eph 1:7].
 - If you add works to the concept of grace, grace is no longer grace [Rom 11:6; Gal 2:21].
 - The teaching about the grace of God is able to build believers up in the faith [Acts 20:32].
 - It is through the grace of God that we can properly function in ministry [Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 3:10].
 - While we must diligently labor in whatever ministry we have been called to, it is the grace of God that causes our ministry to be effective [1 Cor 15:10].
 - God will give us all grace that is needed so that we have an abundance for our good works [2 Cor 9:8].
 - God lovingly gives us comfort and hope by grace to strengthen us in every good work [2 Th 2:16-17].
 - To enable each of us for our specific ministries, the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to believers as a function of God's grace [Rom 12:6].
 - No matter what we might face in life, God's grace is always sufficient [2 Cor 12:7-10; 2 Tim 2:1].
 - When we find ourselves in need, we can petition God before the Throne of Grace [Heb 4:16].
 - In making our petitions, we should clothe ourselves with humility recognizing that God gives grace to the humble [1 Pet 5:5; Jas 4:6].

- As we learn more about God through the study of His word, we must also recognize that we need to grow in the grace of Christ [2 Pet 3:18].
- One way this will be manifest in our lives is that our speech will be seasoned with grace [Col 4:6].
- As we mature in the faith, we learn how to stand firm in the true grace of God [1 Pet 5:12].
- Conclusion
 - If we are truly oriented to grace, we understand that we can never earn nor deserve God's grace.
 - Grace orientation teaches us humility so that we will not think too highly of ourselves [Rom 12:3].
 - The number one reason believers struggle with forgiveness is due to an overinflated sense of self.
 - If we are unable to forgive ourselves, it is often because we think that we are "better than that" and fail to recognize the forgiveness we have in Christ.
 - If we are unable to forgive others, it is often because we think they do not deserve forgiveness, forgetting that we did not deserve the forgiveness we have in Christ [Col 3:12-17].
 - When we begin to understand the abundance of grace upon grace that has been extended to us by God the Father through Jesus Christ, it begins to become easier to demonstrate grace in forgiving ourselves and others.