

God's Approach to Handle Sin with Grace

Welcome to the next lesson of Step Three: Implementing New or Refreshed Boundaries. Let's jump right in!

The more time we spend with God, the more we learn His nature but there are some things that are just hard for Christians to do. Like, not get angry at *selfish, self-centered, self-seeking, selfishly-selfied-it's-all-about-my-selfie* addiction-related attitudes!

Which is why this lesson is about grace. Don't worry, I won't quote Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

... yet.

One of the things I remind myself of often is that I have to stop comparing my life to other people. If I am not very careful, I can easily fall into the comparison trap: "*That house is nicer than mine, her clothes are more on-trend, their marriage is so much better, even their cat is nicer than mine!*". We all do it. No one is immune to *the green-eyed monster* but it becomes especially difficult when our lives are in turmoil to not get discouraged by comparison. I believe the best way to combat this is with grace.

What is grace, exactly?

And how does God expect us to behave toward those who have wronged us?

Grace is a CORE Biblical quality. Meaning, it's at the center of the message of the Bible and an essential aspect of God's nature. Grace could also be called, "favour". Although we have all done things that deserve "punishment" God shows us His favour- by grace.

Grace is unique because unlike most all other religions, there is no merit system in Christianity. I understand that there are many branches of Christianity and some do teach that we have to earn our salvation, an example would be Catholics who believe in purgatory, but I do not believe in that teaching. The idea of purgatory defiles God's nature and the core teaching of following Jesus.

"Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who keeps his life for himself shall lose it; and anyone who loses his life for me shall find it again. What profit is there if you gain the whole world—and lose eternal life? What can be compared with the value of eternal life?'"

-Matthew 16:24-26 (TLB)

That doesn't sound like earning enough money to pay your way out of purgatory. I would love to teach you more on purgatory but without going on a tangent I'll leave it as this, purgatory is about being purified of your sins and worldly desires before going to heaven. In the Bible, there is teaching after teaching that Jesus purified our sins with His death. **As we learned earlier, Jesus' death on the cross is an essential element of the Christian faith because when everything is said and done, we have been saved by grace Himself- Jesus.**

"For the grace of God (His unmerited favor and blessing) has come forward (appeared) for the deliverance from sin and the eternal salvation for all mankind."

-Titus 2:11 (AMPC)

Also, as we learned before, we are God's children of the promise. Our works do not earn our salvation nor do they take it away. It is only by grace we are saved through faith in Christ.

“And He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith [in Jesus].”

-Acts 15:9 (AMP)

Grace then, is how God loves us. When we are hurt by someone we are called to extend grace to them because grace has been given to us.

Let's see what the Bible says about showing grace:

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

-Colossians 4:6 (NKJV)

“Don't let even one rotten word seep out of your mouths. Instead, offer only fresh words that build others up when they need it most. That way your good words will communicate grace to those who hear them.”

-Ephesians 4:29 (VOICE)

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace”

-1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)

“Be merciful (responsive, compassionate, tender) just as your [heavenly] Father is merciful.”

-Luke 6:36 (AMP)

So, we are to season our speech with grace, build each other up with our words because it communicates grace, use our gifts to be stewards (or give out) God's grace to others and offer grace to others because God gave it to us.

This burden you're carrying, this story you're walking in, you've been called to be there. You have been given unique gifts that make you qualified (in Christ) to not only walk through this moment but to extend grace through it. When it comes to someone sinning against you, remember that you have been given grace for your sins against others as well. And as you consider and struggle with offering grace, tell yourself... *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”* (Ah- there it is!).

Print off your worksheet for this lesson and I'll see you in the next video!