

Being Grace-Based

There are six ideas that I think we need to have a good understanding of if we want to have a grace-based Christianity

1. What Grace Is

- Unmerited Favor
- Enablement & Empowerment (Acts 18:27; Hebrews 12:15; James 4:6; Hebrews 13:9; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Peter 3:18)

2. The Means of Grace

So, grace can also be divine empowerment that we don't deserve. We are told that we are to grow in that divine empowerment. So how we do that? Well, God has given us means or ways in which we can access that divine empowerment, and thereby grow in it. I want to point out four things that I would call "means of grace"

- The Word (Acts 20:32; 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 4:12-13)
 - God's Word convicts us of sin
 - God's Word gives us wisdom (Psalms 19:7)
 - God's Word strengthens us spiritually (Deuteronomy 8:3)
- The Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-23)
 - The Spirit empowers us (Acts 1:8)
 - He gives us wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8; Luke 12:11-12)
 - He convicts us of sin
 - He helps us pray (Romans 8:26)
- The Church (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 18:20)
 - The church convicts us of sin
 - The church encourages us (Hebrews 3:13)
 - The church helps us in time of need
 - The church edifies us spiritually
 - God even works the difficulties of the church to turn out for our growth
- Prayer (Matthew 26:41; Colossians 1:9-12)
 - Prayer gives spiritual strength
 - Through, God's answers, prayer leads to grace in all kinds of different ways

So, if we want to be growing in Grace as the Bible instructs us, (that is, growing in divine empowerment) we need to know how to access God's divine empowerment. And the primary means we access that empowerment by, are the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and Prayer.

3. Grace is Not Licentiousness

- A common false doctrine is the idea that grace is opposed to the law, or that because we are under grace, it doesn't matter how we live, but that view is thoroughly unbiblical (Jude 1:4)
- The Bible teaches that the opposite is true; that if we have truly received God's grace, we will seek to follow God's law from our hearts (Romans 6:14-15)
- It's true that under grace we don't have to keep the law to be righteous before God, but the idea that therefore it doesn't matter at all how we live is a total lie.
 - Firstly, because if we actually received grace, we will want to obey God (1 John 3:9; James 2:14-17)
 - Secondly, because disobedience to God still has consequences (Hebrews 12:6; Galatians 6:7)
- So grace is not a license to sin, rather grace is God's unmerited favor, and is also the divine empowerment to overcome sin and live godly in Christ

4. The Christian Life is Initiated by Grace, and it is Continued by Grace

It's a huge pitfall for Christians to believe that the Christian life is started by grace while failing to see that it is continued by grace. There are two main lies we fall for in this area:

- 1. The idea that God adopted you by grace, but if you want Him to keep having favor on you, you need to do the right things
 - We ought to instead believe that God adopted us by grace, and He will continue to accept us day-to-day by grace and not by because of works
- 2. The idea that God converted you by grace, but now that you're converted, you have the strength in yourself to conquer sin
 - Our attitude needs to be an attitude of reliance
 - God gave us divine empowerment to move from spiritual death to spiritual life, and He will continue to give us the spiritual empowerment we need for day-to-day walking in obedience, if we choose to rely on Him for that grace

5. The Importance of Grace Alone

It's very important that we believe that we are initially saved by grace alone and faith alone, and that we continue to be saved by grace alone through faith alone

To see just how important it is, I want us to examine the book of Galatians

- The Galatians were starting to think that circumcision was necessary for salvation along with faith in Christ
- Galatians 3:1-6, 10
- Galatians 5:2-4

Whether or not we trust God to save us by grace alone through faith alone is a matter of eternal importance. It has to do with whether a person is true believer or not.

6. Applying Grace-Based Thinking to Our Lives

- 1. We should respond graciously to the sins of others
 - Understanding that we are not better than they are
 - Forgiving them as Christ forgave us (Ephesians 4:32)
 - Rebuking them as appropriate per situation (Leviticus 19:17)
- 2. We should respond graciously to our own sins
 - Understanding that God doesn't love us any less
 - Not beating ourselves up over it
 - Repenting of our sin and seeking to learn from it
- 3. We should be looking to rely on God for enablement and empowerment in every area of the Christian life, and we should expect to not be able to succeed apart from reliance on Him