

Agreeing With Grace

a Devotional Series

by Beau Garrett

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello,

I am excited you decided to read this book! I wanted to take a moment and introduce myself to you, so that you know a little about me and how this book came to be.

My name is Beau Garrett, I live in Atlanta, GA with my wife and son. I am not a professional minister. I've never been to seminary, and I don't have a full or part-time position at any church. However, I have volunteered regularly at my home congregation for the past several years.

Many years ago, the Lord changed my world with a revelation of His Grace. I have found that it has been like a seed; at first small and compact, but over time its continued to grow and bloom in ways I never could have imagined.

I have been very fortunate to be part of Northlands Church in Atlanta, where the concepts of Grace are taught regularly. The teaching I have garnered from Northlands, coupled with the passion God placed in my heart, has helped me to learn how to articulate these concepts of Grace scripturally.

A couple of years ago I decided to run a small group called "Agreeing With Grace". This book was simply intended to be a take away for those in the group; something they could go back to for study and personal reflection. Shortly after it was distributed to those in the group, requests for more copies began to pour in. I'm humbled to see how many people have been, and continue to be, encouraged by it.

It is my prayer that when you get through reading it, you are more aware of Christ than you are of any sin, shortcoming, regret, or failure. I pray that you can rest in the work He finished on your behalf, and receive the inheritance of righteousness He died to give you.

Blessings!
Beau

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INTRODUCTION

Underneath the banner of the cross there is only one atmosphere that God creates, and that is an atmosphere of love. The scriptures are filled with His love language toward us and His thoughts about us.

The thoughts of God are a place of rest for his children. In them there is no strife, no condemnation, no lack, no inadequacy, and our brokenness is embraced by His love and replaced with His Holy nature.

The thoughts of God over us go deeper than the scars of our lives, or the mistakes we've made. They are an ever-present reality of love and acceptance and favor. Inside of them we are our truest selves, and at peace, at rest and at home.

This book is simply a compilation of sayings that reflect the language of God's love and acceptance. The sayings are followed by their scriptural reference and a short explanation of the verses offered. Included also are common objections you may have heard to these sayings and the scripture that puts these objections to rest.

I pray that the Lord blesses you as you become more aware of His thoughts of love and acceptance, and as you begin to - Agree with Grace.

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IDENTITY

When the Lord first started revealing His Grace to me, He blessed me with an abundant knowledge of my identity in Christ. As I began to understand His unconditional acceptance, my life began to take on new meaning and purpose.

The first twenty-four days of this thirty day devotional series are intended to agree with what God says about you and how He thinks about you. If you are anything like me, you may have been buffeted by winds of religious doctrine that would have you believe you have to do certain things in order to be “pleasing” to God. The reality couldn’t be further from the truth.

As you will discover in the scriptures illustrated in these first devotionals, you are already one hundred percent pleasing to God right where you sit. There is nothing you can ever do to make Him more pleased with you, more in love with you or more captivated by you. The cry of His heart, as illustrated in scripture, is simply for you to rest in that reality.

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DAY ONE

Grace Says: **The God who never lies, calls me Holy.**

Where: Hebrews 10 : 9b&10 - God ends the first system of sacrifices so He can set up the New System. And because of this, we are MADE Holy through the sacrifice Christ made in His body once and for all time. (NCV)

The writer of Hebrews didn't say – by the sacrifice of Christ and by our service in the church, our work in the mission field, our sinless lifestyle, and our eloquent prayer language, we are made Holy. No! He affirms explicitly that our Holiness is a matter of Jesus's sacrifice and nothing more.

We are Holy because of who He is, period. We are made Holy once and for all time through Faith in Jesus name, and by a system God put in place with His son. Therefore, Holiness is not a lifestyle that is attained, rather a condition that is received. Letting go of our own efforts to live a Holy life is perhaps the greatest challenge. But this, in essence, is the work of Faith.

The work of faith is not what we do for the kingdom, rather it's what we believe about our condition in Christ. Why is this work? Because it goes against our nature to surrender something that we feel we can accomplish on our own.

With blood Jesus exchanged a great and eternal reward for us in God. He exchanged our curse for His blessing, our sickness for His health, our poverty for His inheritance, and our sin for His holiness.

Jesus desires for us simply to get out of our own way, and believe in what He died to give us. His holiness is something we can never achieve on our own, but it is also something we can never lose on our own. The scandal of grace is that the holiness of God rests on those who are covered by the blood, and does not come and go based on our behavior.

Common Objections: I don't feel very Holy when I sin.

Answer: WE LIVE FROM COMPLETE HOLINESS, NOT ON OUR WAY TOWARD IT.

Ephesians 1:4 - For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to BE holy and blameless in His sight. In love.

The reality is that sin is not designed to make us feel righteous or at peace. The very fruit of sin is in fact death, so its not a huge mystery that when we sin, we feel rotten or ashamed. This happens because we realize we have agreed with something that is against our life giving nature. Instead of allowing life to come from our lives, we have allowed death to sprout. Does this mean we are any less Holy, Blameless or Righteous? By no means! God's life giving nature is not that fickle, He doesn't qualify us one instant and disqualify us the next.

The awareness of His love, of His kindness, patience and peace are the very things that counteract the effects of sin in our lives; emotionally, spiritually and physically. The easiest way to come out from underneath the condemnation that comes with sin, is to agree with His spirit of grace, and He says we are Holy in His sight, as described in Ephesians 1:4 above. We are Holy and blameless in the sight of the Lord based on the Son and never based on our actions.

Consider the temple of God for a moment as described in the old testament. The Holy of Holies inside the temple, is where the spirit of the living God would dwell, and it was a fearful place revered by an entire nation of people. In order for the priest to enter, his sins had to be atoned for with sacrificial blood.

By his own righteousness a priest could never enter into that most sacred place, he was never perfectly righteous and therefore always required a sacrifice to enter into the most Holy place.

Now consider for a moment what happened at the cross. When Jesus went to the cross the sins of the world, for all of mankind, for all time, were atoned for and God no longer counted man's sin against him (2 Corinthians 5:19, Hebrews 8:12). Since there no longer remained any sin to be atoned for, there remained no barrier between man

and God. When the sacrifice was made, the veil that had separated man from the Holy of Holies, was torn in two. When this happened it testified that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ had indeed taken away the sins of the world, allowing all to enter into the presence of God through the blood of the perfect lamb. Therefore, there was and is no longer any sin in all of creation that keeps mankind from the presence of the living God. "With His own blood he entered the most holy place once and for all, having obtained ETERNAL redemption." (Hebrews 9:12)

God has not changed, and He still reserves His presence for the most of Holy of Holies. The only thing that has changed is that the Holy of Holies is no longer an extrinsic place by which you or I must commune with God. No, the Holy of Holies is now much closer and much more intimate, and this is our great privilege as New Covenant believers. You and I, as believers in Christ Jesus, are the Holy of Holies, in which He rests His presence. We are the very temple of God, the Holy place in which His spirit dwells!

Because all of our sins past present and future have been atoned for, we have an ever abundant reality of Holiness in our day to day lives, not taken away or given on the basis of our sin or behavior, but gifted solely on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God.

I AM THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND HOLY IN HIS SIGHT!

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DAY TWO

Grace Says: **There are no “sinners” in the Kingdom, only sons.**

Where: Galatians 3:26 You are all SONS of God through faith in Christ Jesus (NKJV)

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are CHILDREN of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is.

The subtleties of scripture amaze me. With the weight of the written word, we can claim things about ourselves that have everything to do with the realities of Heaven. Namely that we are ALL sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and not “sinners” saved by Grace, or in the hands of an angry God.

What does that say about us, what does that mean exactly? It simply means that we are part of God’s family. It also means God has NOTHING but GOOD thoughts about you all the time. They are permanent, infinite and GOOD. Imagine what life would be like if you actually believed about yourself what God thinks about you.

My wife and I recently had our first son, at the time of this writing he is only nine weeks old, but I can already see the tenderness in his spirit and the wonder in his eyes. I know that his mom and I will do everything in our power to help him discover his path and to walk on it with strength. It is beyond my paradigm to look at him and ascribe poor character qualities, or a propensity to make mistakes, or fall short.

I realize my heavenly father sees me the exact same way. He simply doesn’t look on His children with disappointment. God’s only mode is to look on his children with Love, that goes for each and every one, from the worst sinner to the most humble saint.

Instead of focusing on mistakes I’ve made, or wrongs I’ve done, He is always reminding me of what is possible with Him. I am thoroughly convinced that Romans 11:29 means what it says, that the promises and the callings of God are irrevocable. God does not waste time endlessly reminding us of what we could be doing better, or where we are not doing so great, He reminds us daily however of His future and His hope for our lives.

Common Objections: If there are no sinners in God's kingdom, then what should I repent from?

ANSWER: The short answer is: Self Righteousness.

It's amazing to read what Paul repented from. He does not repent from murder, blasphemy, or accusation, he repents from something much simpler. Paul's repentance was a repentance from dead works. So it raises the question, if he was the chief of sinners and his repentance was from dead works, then dead works must be some pretty bad stuff. This is exactly the point, all work inspired by self-righteous motivation, is a dead work and Paul was the king of that hill.

He's simply saying, "no one was more self-righteous than me". The idea that you are just a "sinner saved by grace", or "a lowly beggar showing other beggars where to find bread" ultimately robs you of boldness and truth. If you are just a sinner saved by grace, then the expectations you have for yourself, will be below the Lord's view of who you really are. In believing this about yourself, you accept a condition of something that is broken, that always needs to be fixed, and that this is done so by God's grace. If you truly believe you are just a sinner, your life will follow those beliefs. Proverbs clearly says, as a man thinks in his heart, so he becomes (Proverbs 23:7). But, you aren't broken! You are redeemed!

If on the other hand you believe the truth, that you are a saint, holy and blameless, then you are empowered by that truth to live above the influence of sin. Your expectations become aligned with God's truth about you and your actions follow.

Truth is always harder to believe than fiction, and in this case the truth we can claim is that we are never seen as poor beggars, or branded as "sinners saved by grace". Our truth in Christ is much more profound! That is, that we are co-heirs with Christ himself. (Romans 8:17)

Moses is one of the best examples in Scripture of someone who understood their identity in God's sight. "Moses was the most humble man on the earth" (Numbers 12:3). Guess who wrote Numbers? Moses!

I love this because he wrote about himself that he was the most humble man alive. In modern Christian circles, that statement would immediately disqualify someone from the "humility" status. So what's the disconnect? Somewhere along the way it became okay to embrace, as an

identity, our own weaknesses instead of His truth. So how could Moses legitimately make that claim? He was able to claim this about himself simply because it was true.

Not only is it okay for us to claim about ourselves what God claims, but it is incredibly prideful not to. God's thoughts over us are no different than His thoughts of Christ. Everything we are, every way God sees us, is filtered through the person of Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. Jesus became the poor beggar on our behalf so that we could be called His co-heir, anything less ignores the power of the Cross.

To disagree with our own righteous status is to presume that the beggarly idea of ourselves is more true than God's idea of our acceptance. Ultimately this creates in us a sense of behavioral justification that is cyclical and will never be satisfied. We pander to the pre-conceived notions of piety, surrounding ourselves with others who share similar self-righteous convictions. Entire denominations are built on this kind of thinking, and it is false.

Real humility in the Lord inspires boldness and rest, and opens our souls to encounters with God that renew our identity, strengthen our faith and galvanize our purpose. We are a Kingdom of Priests and carriers of the Lord's authority (Revelation 1:6, Luke 10:19)! Believe it today!

I AM A PRIEST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Agreeing with Grace

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DAY THREE

Grace Says: **I am pure and spotless, without blemish and above reproach.**

Where Colossians 1:21 & 22- And you who once were alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless and above reproach in His sight-if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I Paul, became a minister.

When adopted into the family of God, we no longer share in the bloodline of first Adam but in the bloodline of Christ. As a result, the origin of our very nature is no longer found in the line of Adam's sin condition but in Christ's righteous condition. Purity then becomes the fruit of our relationship with Christ as co-heirs. It is an inheritance imparted to us by the shed blood of Christ and is not a state of body or mind, nor is it a condition attained by my self-control.

In this balance lies the struggle we all face; why do we have impure impulse or desire? Where does it come from? How do I get rid of it? Is there any hope in escaping the other foot that must fall?

These fears have the potential to shelter us in a room where we don't feel, or engage in life. They can rob us of joy, peace and purpose, and ultimately cause us to replace our very lives with a system of checks and balances, that if followed, will save us from temptations we are ashamed of, or that we fight against. The reality is, is that these fears are a ghost. They are not real and have no real authority in your life, only the authority you give it.

Whether its sexual temptation or the temptation to gossip, get drunk, lie, cheat, steal, etc., these things are not worthy of being memorialized. And that is exactly what happens to each of us when our lives become about avoiding certain temptations. The sin becomes the focus, and the goal becomes avoiding that thing that we are focused on. Its a bit of a paradox when you think about it.

The good news is that you are not weird, alone, addicted, or without hope! Jesus offers us the opportunity to feel something beyond the impulse of sin, which is His acceptance. Despite the impulses to sin that come and go, He accepts you beyond all of these. He accepts you beyond your impulse for sexual immorality, He accepts you beyond your impulse for too many strong drinks, He accepts you beyond your impulse to lie, to steal from your boss, or cheat on your spouse, etc. The point is not to be afraid of these impulses but to submit them to His love and acceptance. Being afraid of them gives them more fuel. This is exactly why, "perfect love, casts out all fear," (1 John 4:18) so that we can live free and without the fear of being or becoming something that we are not.

After all, where sin increases, Grace increases all the more, (Romans 5:20) and it is the great equalizer. It ushers us into the place where we find ourselves beyond our shame, or perceived inadequacy. It inspires purity, holiness and a rich peace in our lives. My effort to be pure will never make me as pure as the gift of purity given to me in Christ.

Common Objections But doesn't scripture say to throw off the sin that so easily entangles us and run with perseverance the race marked out for us?

ANSWER It does, but that is not the entire verse!

Hebrews 12: 1-2 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance that race marked out for us, **FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS**, the author and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its **SHAME**, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The question is not, should we throw off sin, of course we should. The question is how? This is perhaps where the waters become cloudy. As I mentioned above however the answer is simple and is given to us in the rest of the passage from Hebrews - **FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS**.

Stop focusing on what you aren't, where you've messed up, your shame or your mistakes. Also, stop being afraid of sin, Jesus isn't, neither should you be. It is not your condition or your master, and merely a distraction from the truth which is found in His eyes. He accepts you, when you look to Him you will never see eyes that look back with disappointment or embarrassment.

I love 1 corinthians 15:34 - Awake to Righteousness and sin no more.

It doesn't say, "sin no more, THEN awake to righteousness." No! What this shows us is that our identity remains, despite our behavior. When we realize this we can awake to our righteous condition, which empowers us to stop sinning. The way we awake to righteousness is simply to let our selves be aware of His acceptance. You may wonder, "is it really that simple?" "All I have to do is realize that Jesus accepts me no matter what, and I'll be free from my impulse to sin?" The answer is that this is the first step. Without the knowledge of our complete acceptance in Christ, every other block we build with, is subject to the foundation we have set as our guiding truth. If your foundation is set in anything but His unconditional acceptance and love, then everything you build on top of that is false. Why is this so important? Because ultimately what you are dealing with when attempting to avoid the impulse of sin, is not sin at all but something much more powerful.

According to Scripture, the thing that gives sin all of its power is not the flesh, its not evil desire and its not the devil, its something much more powerful than all three of those combined. The thing that gives sin all of its power is in fact, the Law of God.

1 Corinthians 15:56 - "The sting of death is sin, and the POWER OF SIN is THE LAW. So why does something that is so pure and holy and righteous empower the things that we are fighting against? Why do the very standards of morality as set by God cause us to fight against immoral thoughts, feelings and behaviors? The answer to this is unraveled in the manifest wisdom of God.

The reason is because God never intended for the law to be kept perfectly by anybody but Christ. Its sole function on this planet is to expose the sinful condition we all inherited from first Adam. It was designed to show us the nature we inherit from the consequence of self-righteous fruit. Essentially it is designed to lead us to the only place we can find justification and to the wonderful discovery, that our justification is not found in ourselves, but in Christ. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by Faith - Galatians 3:24.

The key to being set free of impure impulse, whether it is sexual sin, hatred, rage, incessant worry, take your pick, is to remove the power of the impulse. The only way designed in all of creation to do this is to rest in the justification found in Jesus Christ. Christ's justification makes the authority of sin null and void in your life. It removes the deepest root in us, which is condemnation, and replaces it with the eternal truth of His name in you, His love for you, and His seal on you. But blessed is the man whose sins God does not count against him (2 Corinthians 5:19), therefore there is now no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1). The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, is that sin is not counted against you.

Romans 6:5 – For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin - BECAUSE ANYONE WHO DIED HAS BEEN FREED FROM SIN

All of man's sin, from the garden to the consummation of the age, was summed up in Christ's body on the cross. God will not count your sins against you, because he counted them all against His son. For believers, there remains no law against us and where there is no law, sin is not imputed (Romans 5:13). Where sin is not imputed, there is no condemnation, and where there is no condemnation there is complete acceptance. Knowing that you are completely accepted by Jesus Christ removes all of the impulse of sin, because everything that gives sin its power was made powerless at the cross.

Therefore, perfect purity, wholeness and joy are yours in Jesus Christ. He loves you and gave himself to your sin, so that you could have His purity.

JESUS IS MY PURITY!

Agreeing with Grace

part one: learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY FOUR

Grace Says: **I have been circumcised of the condition of Sin.**

Where Colossians 2 : 14 - He forgave us all our sins, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Sin is a condition, not a behavior. When you were born you inherited the condition of Adam. When you were born again you inherited the condition of final Adam, who is Jesus. (Romans 5:19) Therefore, we are forever separated from the status of sin, regardless of our behavior. We are altogether transformed in Christ. This is why sinning becomes so silly once we've accepted Jesus. It's simply not who we are anymore. Our identity changes, and we are able to engage in an eternal relationship that fills the emptiness left by the removal of the sinful condition.

The blood of Christ was the filter for our sin condition. It is impossible to work our way back through this eternal sacrifice and pickup a condition that was destroyed when it came in contact with the blood. It would be similar to working your way back into the womb, you can't. You have been born again, nothing will ever take away that birth.

To say that we can once again inhabit the condition of sin is to say that our behavior is greater than His sacrifice. To believe this is to believe we have to perform, act, behave, and think a certain way in order to stay in the bloodline of final Adam.

If this condition we inherited is a condition of perpetual and cooperative salvation, then the sacred, Holy blood of Christ is diluted and of no more effect than that of bulls and goats.

Thank God for the truth, though. His blood was more powerful than the condition of sin that first Adam brought into the world and His sacrifice was greater than the punishment we deserved!

Common Objections: So are you saying it doesn't matter if I sin?

ANSWER: Sin will always have adverse affects in our lives, but once we are redeemed by Christ's blood, it no longer remains on our eternal balance sheet.

Rom 6 : 1 -2 - What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

When we are born again and receive the new nature of Christ, we are given the most powerful tool in all of existence to help us move away from a sinful lifestyle, which is Grace. Grace has been made known to all men according to Titus 2, but only takes affect in our lives once we choose to receive it through faith in Jesus.

When this Grace takes hold, it teaches us to say no to sin. Saying no to sin is not a behavior change but a heart change that occurs the more aware we become of our unconditioned acceptance and favor as a co-heir with Christ.

The truth is this, sinful behavior does not constitute a sinful condition. Sinful behavior is merely the rags of an old life. These rags only have the power to be there as long as the person wearing them allows them to stay. The quickest way to remove these rags is to renew your mind to your new identity in Christ.

Likewise, righteous behavior does not constitute a righteous condition. Just like we inherit the sinful condition at birth and there is no amount of good behavior that can pull us out of this condition, so it is with our righteous condition inherited at our re-birth. There are no amount of bad things you can do, or good things you can do to make you any more or less righteous than you are right now in Christ. All the doing has been done, and under Christ your condition is righteous, and your heart is clean.

I AM FREE FROM THE CONDITION OF SIN!

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DAY FIVE

Grace Says: **I am complete in Christ and lack nothing.**

Where Colossians 2:10 - And you are COMPLETE IN Him who is the head of all principality and power .

I'm so glad the scripture doesn't say, "And you are 'BECOMING LIKE' Him who is the head of all principality and power."

So often in my life I dwelled in a place of frustration because I wanted to do the most I could for God and I felt as if I wasn't having the right effect for His Kingdom. I served in the youth ministry, I volunteered at community centers and with non-profit organizations because I wanted my life to be a light. Oddly however, I remained frustrated and eventually burned out and shrunk back.

One day when I was listening to Rob Rufus, a pastor in Hong Kong, discuss Abraham's justification by faith, the Lord dropped a picture into my spirit. He showed me a picture of my work in youth, my work at non-profits etc. and then he showed me that I was working in a field of self effort. I remember feeling as if my legs had been taken out from under me because I knew He wasn't behind any of the things I had been doing, because my motivation to do those things was to gain His pleasure and acceptance.

He then showed me a picture of when I first came to love Him and how sweet and romantic and amazing it was. It was then that I realized, all of my attempts to gain His pleasure were attempts to get to a place that I had actually started at. I knew then, that I was no more and no less pleasurable in God's sight than when I first received Him as my savior. Immediately I realized I could be myself, could have joy in the desires of my heart and rest in Christ and His finished work. I began to live out of response to His unconditional love and acceptance and have seen how resting in him is the only place of real change in my life and in the lives of the people around me. His pleasure over you and I, is without condition. We became qualified for His pleasure the moment we exercised faith in the name of Jesus Christ. Our qualification, from that moment forward, is solely based on the worthiness of His son and our faith in His name.

Common Objections: If you're saying we are not required to do anything, then why does James say faith without works is dead?

ANSWER James uses the example of a man with real faith; Abraham.

The most important thing to understand when reading the book of James is that we are justified solely by our faith in Christ's name and nothing more. Interestingly, Paul uses the exact same example of Abraham, in his writings to the Romans, that James uses to justify works and faith.

The difference lies between faithFUL works and faith FILLED works. Clearly James is talking about the latter. Abraham filled with faith, exercised that faith by attempting to sacrifice his son. A "faithful" work is a work inspired by duty, or obligation and does not carry with it the invitation to exercise real faith in Jesus, rather only to fulfill an external pressure to perform.

Galatians 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

In effect, what Paul is saying is that if you go back into the field of self effort, you will make Christ of no effect. The benefits of His grace are not yours simply because you can't get out of your own way to receive them. Modern day circumcision is the belief that you have to do something in order to grow spiritually. The reality is that you simply have to receive something. Once you have received and experienced the unconditional acceptance of Christ, your life takes on new meaning, purpose and passion. Simply lean back and rest in Jesus and His finished work in you, and you will see the kingdom of heaven spill out in your life.

I BEGIN WHERE I FINISH AND AM COMPLETE IN CHRIST!

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DAY SIX

Grace Says: **All of Christ is united with all of me.**

Where Colossians 3:3 - For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

1 Corinthians 6:15 - Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

We are tri-part beings. We have souls, bodies, and spirits. Our new nature isn't limited to our spirit alone. It is a new and living nature, not just imparted into our spirit, but also imparted to our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:15). Becoming aware of what we have is the key. If you or I were to walk around with the keys to a mansion in our pocket, but we lived on the streets, there is something drastically wrong. Either we aren't aware of the key that we hold, or worse, we are aware, but are too convinced of our unworthiness to access what is rightfully ours.

Sadly, I think a lot of Christians are the latter. Finding ways to keep believers from their inheritance is the work of religion, and unfortunately, it's done a great job. Religion keeps you occupied with fine sounding arguments and historically rich traditions, but does little in the way of showing you who you are and what is rightfully yours under God. Namely, the complete righteousness of your body, soul and spirit. If you are constantly convinced of your sinful nature and your impurity, your life will reflect those expectations.

But guess what? Your whole mind has been redeemed, your whole body has been sanctified, your whole spirit has been made righteous. Your new and living nature carries with it the benefits of sonship, of joy, of peace and of purpose. Jesus is not subject to our carnal nature, or our cerebral understanding, but we are subject to His imparted nature and His infinite love.

Common Objections: I thought my spirit was made Holy and the rest of me was in the process of sanctification?

ANSWER: SANCTIFICATION IS NOT A PROCESS, BUT IT IS A PERSON WE HAVE BEEN MADE COMPLETE IN.

1 Corinthians 6:17 & 19 - But He who is joined to the Lord is one SPIRIT with Him. vs. 19
- Or do you not know that your BODY is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,
who you have from God, and you are not your own.

It is impossible for us to sanctify ourselves. It is not the process by which we sin less, and therefore become more "sanctified." Sinning less is not sanctification. Complete sanctification of your mind, body and spirit came the instant you exercised faith in the name of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:9&10). When we accept Jesus we become one with sanctification, because Jesus is sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), and we have been made complete in Him. It is our great reward to discover this mystery, imparted by God, within ourselves and to allow it to move from the inside of us to the outside of us. It is not a process of behavioral modification.

I am so thankful that when Jesus went to the cross he didn't just allow his hands and feet to be nailed to the cross. When Jesus went to the cross, he spared no part of himself. Every ounce of Jesus' body, soul and spirit was sacrificed. The whole man was sacrificed on the cross so that the whole man might be saved. Jesus spared no part of himself on the cross, so that He could spare no part of himself in us. We share in his nature, in the desires and pleasures of his soul and in the intimacy of His spirit with the Father. There is no part of us that still needs to be sanctified, since no part of Jesus was left without sacrifice.

THOU IN ME DWELLING AND I WITH THEE, ONE!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY SEVEN

Grace Says: **Our shame was His, and His victory is ours.**

Where 2 Corinthians 2:14 - And thanks be to God who ALWAYS leads us in Triumph in Christ.

At one time there was a man so shameful, so stricken with sickness and disease, so hideous, that God himself refused to look on him. This man was despised above all others, rejected, hated, and torn. That man was in fact, the personification of the entirety of sin and sin itself. That man was not Adam, it wasn't the devil and it wasn't you or me. That man was Jesus Christ.

Jesus became like the snake in the desert that Moses lifted up to save Israel(John 3:14), which is to say he became the condition of sin that was destroying mankind like a cancer. Jesus inherited this cancer and in so doing became neglected, rejected and forsaken by His own Father.

Included in the inheritance of sin that Jesus took on himself, was the weight of shame. His body, naked and exposed to the world, was ravaged and torn leaving him with no dignity. The shame of mankind rested squarely on his shoulders.

Then as we all know the story, this man, the man who had become sin, died; taking sin and its fruits, including shame, to death with Him. So what was left? What was it that remained beyond the cross? Absolutely nothing! With his final breath what did he say? "It is finished".

Sin is finished, and shame with it. All that is left, all that remains is the eternal rest, security, acceptance, favor, love, joy, peace and purpose of Christ Jesus dwelling in us. To offer to ourselves, or to anyone else the idea that God looks on us with shame, is to offer the possibility that the man who became all of those things has not died.

Common Objections: When I Sin I break fellowship with God until I confess my sin. (1 John 1:9)

ANSWER God doesn't want your perfection, He already has Christ's. He simply wants your friendship; warts, scars, bruises and all.

1 John 2:1,12 - My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.... I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name.

The word confession in 1 John 1:9 is used in an ongoing tense. In other words, it's saying that this is something that continues to happen. This does not mean however, that we must continually confess our sins to be cleansed from unrighteousness. This is true because the scriptures clearly communicate that we are forever righteous once we have come in contact with the blood of Christ(2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 10:17). 1 John 1:9 is speaking to Gnostics, people who believed there was no such thing as sin. They were unrighteous because they believed there was no need for a savior since there was no such thing as sin. John is reminding them here of their inadequacy without Christ. So why does the scripture use an ongoing tense with the word "confession"? Because, as believers who have already been made righteous, we have the opportunity to confess sin but not the obligation.

Confession certainly has benefits in that it deflates the power of shame and reminds us of our acceptance. It does not, however, act as a barrier between myself and my accepted state in Christ. Vertically, I am one hundred percent righteous one hundred percent of the time. Horizontally, I may not feel that way and confession is a mechanism through which I can take the pressure off of my soul.

The reality is that shame, guilt, and behavior not consistent with our identity as Sons, are all absorbed by Jesus. He stands before the Lord and says, "I know what they did, but they are with me father, and I love them." Not only are we not rejected, but we are much more, in fact he calls us Co-Heirs. Love that went deeper than His pain and deeper than the grave, lifts us up and makes us His trophy and His portion. He isn't now and will never be ashamed of us or embarrassed by us. He isn't trying to hide the fact that we are part of his family, or afraid of what we might do to misrepresent His name.

The safety in that is mind boggling. He is a king so secure in His love for His children that He doesn't change who He is or who He loves based on their actions or behavior. We remain His trophy throughout the breadth of our walk with Him and are received as such when we enter into our heavenly consummation.

SIN IS HIS FOOTSTOOL AND I AM HIS TROPHY!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY EIGHT

Grace Says: **I am loved by God because He promised to love me, not because I earn His love by my lifestyle or behavior.**

Where Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

Who is the New Covenant with? Did God make it with you? Did God make it with Israel? Who did God choose to make the New Covenant with?

The Abrahamic Covenant was made with Abraham, the Mosaic Covenant was made with Israel so if God made those covenants with men, then the New Covenant is made with us, His children by faith, right? Wrong.

The New Covenant is not about you. God did not make it with you and never planned to (1 Peter 1:20). In it God chose Jesus to atone for the sins of the world, not you. Jesus Christ was the only one who could meet the standard of sinlessness. The New Covenant therefore, is between the Father and the Son Jesus Christ.

So what does this mean? It means that when you accept Christ, you step into an agreement between God and His son, and all of the legal rights within that agreement are credited to your account. All of the rights of the Son are your rights. All of the Son's authority is your authority. All of the promises of the Son are yours. All of the inheritance of the Son is all of your inheritance. All of the righteousness of the Son is all of your righteousness. All that Jesus is, becomes all that you are when you are reborn of the Spirit. These benefits in grace are not dependent on your abilities to earn them, but are solely dependent on God's love for the son.

Therefore it is His love for us that saves us, and not our love for Him. Because God will never reject Christ, He will never reject those whom Christ has sealed. Therefore we walk in a reality and in a love that has nothing to do with how good or bad we are, but solely on the basis of our perfection in Christ.

Common Objections: Doesn't the Bible say we should love the Lord with all our heart soul and strength.

ANSWER: IT DOES AND IT IS THE GREATEST COMMAND IN THE ENTIRE LAW

Matthew 22:36-40 - "Teacher what is the greatest commandment under the LAW? Jesus replied 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the LAW and the prophets hang on these two commandments."

Ultimately, when He responded to the question about the greatest commandment, Jesus was telling the pharisees what was necessary in order to live perfectly, since their question was how to keep the entire law. It is often overlooked that when Jesus gave this command, it was in response to a man who was an expert in the Law. It was a law-based question and therefore Jesus gave a law-based answer.

But guess what? We are not under LAW but under Grace (Romans 6:14). Therefore, since we are not under LAW but under GRACE, we are free from having to keep the greatest command in the Law.

Does this mean we don't have to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind? Yes, it does mean you don't "have to" but more importantly, it means that it is impossible for you to do so. To assume you can accomplish this is to assume you can keep the entire LAW.

You may wonder then, "so if I'm not supposed to love God with everything I have, what am I supposed to do?" The answer is that you are "supposed" to rest from trying to keep this command. The moment you do this and believe that you are just as accepted by God as Jesus is, you will begin to really understand His love for you. Receiving His love for you is the only way you can hope to know what His love looks like, and therefore, know how to emulate that kind of love in your own life.

If you're still not convinced, consider for a minute what the Law's purpose is. God gave the law to tutor us to Christ, but now that faith has come, we no longer have to answer to the law (Galatians 3:24 & 25). So, as outlined in scripture, when you try to love God with your entire heart, soul and mind, you will ultimately fail and be tutored back to Jesus, since that is the purpose of the LAW and its greatest commandment. You may ask, "yeah but wasn't I focused on Jesus the whole time I was trying to love him with all of my heart, soul and mind?" The answer is no, you weren't. You were focused on someone else entirely.

The road to love God with all your heart, soul and mind, will always demand more from your life, it will never be satisfied and it will always cause you to doubt yourself. You will always ask, "Am I really living a sold out life?" You will feel threatened by people you see that seem to love God more than you and you will carry a pit of insecurity in your gut that you try to fill with doing more, working harder and sacrificing more of your time, energy and potential. Ultimately, the focus for you to love God with all of YOUR heart, with all of YOUR soul, and with all of YOUR mind is a focus on guess who? YOU. This is precisely what the Law is designed to do.

It is designed to perpetually remind you of your unworthiness and inadequacy, thereby keeping your attention, time and energy devoted to fixing yourself. If loving God with all of your heart, soul and mind is the greatest commandment under the law, then the attempt to do this is the most life-robbing, self-righteous attempt any believer can make.

So where is the Good News in this? Again, it's in Jesus. There was only one man on the entire planet through which a perfect love was manifested, Jesus Christ. If loving God with all your heart, soul and mind is the fulfillment of the law, then guess what, it's been fulfilled, nullifying the requirement at the Cross.

Jesus brought the New Covenant into existence by keeping this Law. Now, as beneficiaries of that New Covenant, we are loved in the exact same way as Jesus is loved, not based on our love for God or anything else we can do for Him, but based on God's love for Jesus and our eternal benefit of the Father's Covenant with the Son.

HIS LOVE IS ALL I NEED!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY NINE

Grace Says: **I am my Beloved's and He is mine.**

Where Song of Solomon 6:3 - I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

God wants lovers not workers. It's so beautiful to read the Song of Solomon. It is a book filled with the language of love. The bride can hardly contain herself when describing her groom. It's as if she's floating. She is completely enraptured by his very presence; "His head is like the finest gold; his locks are wavy, and black as a raven, his eyes are like doves, his hands are rods of gold, his legs are pillars of marble," and on and on.

In the throes of love, who can contain the joy in their heart, who can hide the wonder on their face or the weakness in their knees? The bride in the Song of Solomon is so taken and overwhelmed by her groom that the world knows it. There is no pretense in her posture, she is simply swept off her feet under the banner of His love and her entire being expresses amazement and joy. The pleasure she takes in him is infectious and it spills out of her - Song of Solomon 2:4 - "He brought me to the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love."

This is the love we have with Jesus. We have ravished His heart and captured His gaze, we are to Him the most fair, the most lovely, the most beautiful bride and His banner over us is love (Song of Solomon 6:4-10)

Common Objections: What about feeding the hungry, healing the sick, housing the homeless, taking care of widows, etc.

ANSWER: ONLY BY GOD'S SEED IS DESIRABLE FRUIT PRODUCED.

Romans 4:4&5 - Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt, but to Him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

John 13:35 - By THIS all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Every action by the Bride in the Song of Solomon is an action produced by a love in her heart that simply refuses to stay contained. There is a thought that DOES NOT exist in her mind and that thought is, "what SHOULD I do for my love?" It's beyond her awareness to even conceive such a thought. The idea supposes that something is required in order to be loved, and therefore dependent on fear, not on acceptance. The Bride in the Song of Solomon has no doubt of her acceptance, therefore is not concerned about what she "should" do.

The thought that she cannot escape from however, the one that refuses to be silent and that stirs her heart is "what CAN I do for my groom?" It's as if she can't do enough, she can't tell about him, or sing his praises enough. She is bound by the inescapable reality of the all encompassing passion of her groom toward her, and so taken that this incredible King would love her, her life becomes the vessel through which his love is known.

Lovers are not bound by duty, rather they are empowered by God's passion toward them. To know who you are in Christ and to know His incomparable love for you is the only way you can produce kingdom fruit that is pleasing to Him. Every other motivation to work is prompted by self-righteousness and gains you nothing on the scale of eternity.

When we are in love we don't care what we look like, or how we are acting. Our only work as the Bride of Christ, is to rest in this reality. No more, no less. Simply rest in His love and the reflection of Jesus will shine through your entire being and spill out in your life. His love will stir passion and joy in your spirit, from which will flow an attitude and language of admiration, thankfulness and peace. Let your mind rest from thoughts of what you "should" be doing for God and simply rest in how He loves you. It's ok to take a vacation from dutiful ambition, in fact it's ok for it to be a permanent vacation.

Being in love with Jesus is the only way to transition from the mind-set of dutiful ambition, to an empowered joy that spills out of your life into the work of the kingdom. Simply yield to this love, lay the ambition of service down and pick up the mantle of identity and acceptance.

I AM THE BRIDE OF CHRIST!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TEN

Grace Says: **I am perpetually rewarded with Holiness.**

Where: Romans 6:22 - But now since you have been set free from sin and have become the slaves of God, you have your PRESENT reward in HOLINESS and its end is ETERNAL LIFE.

We live from Holiness, and not on our way toward it. It is a gift you have right now where you sit. To achieve "holiness" is to attempt to be something that we already are. The secret is not to achieve at all, but simply to receive. As Sons and Daughters of God, we are created to BE LIKE GOD in true righteousness and HOLINESS (Eph. 4:24). Which means the status is imparted and not earned.

The simplest way to experience this reality in Jesus is to turn on the faucet and let who He is flow through us. We are not the source of the water, simply a vessel through which it flows. So what does that mean in Monday morning non-poetic terminology? Simply put, agree with God about who you are and stop trying to live in a way you think equals His holiness. We are already Holy, nothing we do can make us more or less so; end of story. In fact, the quickest way not to experience the benefit of this status is to set standards of "holy" living in our lives. That'll turn the faucet off quicker than anything else.

I once heard an evangelist call any attempt to act Holy, Righteous etc., "Fig Leaf Religion". The phrase has stuck with me ever since. How silly is it that we try and hide things that God not only sees but accepts. We serve a God who sees our nakedness and frailty and inadequacy and sin, and doesn't count these things against us (2 Corinthians 5:19). Thankfully he counted these things against Christ, so we are free to walk around completely naked before God, in total acceptance, favor and love with an imparted perfection paid for by the actions of Jesus.

Common Objections: So can there be Holy murderers?

ANSWER: THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, OUR IDENTITY UNDER GRACE TRUMPS OUR BEHAVIOR.

Romans 5:20 - Where sin increases, Grace increases all the more.

Imparted Holiness, just like every other attribute of Christ in us, is no different than receiving an immunization from a disease. It is injected into our bodies, becomes a part of our blood stream and walks with us everywhere we go, in everything we do. The immunization doesn't care what I do or how I behave, it protects me regardless. In the case of God's children, our immunity is from the law, and our present reward is Holiness and Perfection. It is impossible to be a Holy murderer, just like it is impossible to be a Holy worrier. God does not define me by my actions (i.e. I'm not defined by the laws I break).

You may say, "but what if I am no longer casting my life in the direction of Christ and I am willfully sinning?". My answer to you is that God's faithfulness is stronger, and reaches farther than your sin. He does not leave you, He does not stop pursuing you, He does not relent. He is a jealous God and He jealously pursues your heart. He leaves the 99 to go after the one. If you find yourself in this kind of situation even now, take heart in knowing:

Ephesians 1:13&14 - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the GUARANTEE of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His Glory.

This is not a license to sin..."shall we go on sinning, by no means!" (paraphrased Romans 6). Scripture just makes the point that you are sealed in Christ forever once you have been marked by His blood. Ignoring this truth and embracing that part of you that has died, will only damage your life. Carrying a dead body around in your arms is sure to give you infection, disease, odor, and many other unpleasantnesses. Let that thing go and embrace the life that is yours in Christ.

The point is this, the holiness of Jesus and yours and mine, are the same. There is no barrier between the two, the curtain was torn and our Holy stature before the Living God was restored. The standard of the law was fulfilled at the Cross and we get to begin our walk with Christ where the law requires-Which is in Perfection, Holiness, Justification, Sanctification, Joy, and Peace. Accepting this is the key to change that is motivated by the heart, and not by the external pressure to perform.

MY PRESENT JUDGEMENT IS HOLINESS AND FUTURE JUDGEMENT IS
ETERNAL LIFE!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY ELEVEN

Grace Says: **Christ's nature, is the only nature inside of me that is recognized by God.**

Where 1 John 4:17 - Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

As children of God, we are privy to an imparted nature that renews our lives to their original design (2 Peter 1:4). No matter how many banners we took up in our lives before Christ, no matter what their names or their motivations, they all came to rest underneath the banner of our new nature in Christ.

When coming in contact with the nature of Christ, we come in contact with the original design for our lives. We come in contact with all of our soul's original passions because we transform into the original intent of our Heavenly Father; a child of God and a Co-Heir with Christ. We finally realize we can stop trying to be what we think He expects us to be, and then simply breathe easy and rest in a nature imparted to us that is already one hundred percent accepted.

I love the story of Simon's first meeting with Jesus. Jesus said to him, "now you will be called Cephas (Peter)." It's a beautiful picture of our new name and new nature under Christ. Peter didn't do anything to receive his new nature, he simply came to Christ and the new nature was imparted to Him. All that Peter was before coming to Christ, died when he came in contact with Jesus. He was given a new life and a new purpose. Simon was a fisherman. Peter was a fisher of men, and the rock on which Christ built His church.

One of the reasons it can be so difficult to receive our complete acceptance, is because it means we have to let go of pre-conceived notions, no matter how subtle, that disagree with our new nature. Anything that disagrees with our completeness in Christ and new imparted nature is a lie.

What we believe about ourselves does not define us before God, but does define how we experience life and what we expect about our future. Jesus' nature is not a prescription for a complete personality change, but is a prescription for everything in our personalities that is in

direct contradiction to His truth. The wonder of it all, is that this nature is already inside of us and not something we have to assume into our routine. Rather, it is something we have to allow to be fruitful in us.

Common Objections: I am fighting the sinful nature so I still do wrong things.

ANSWER: SIN IS NOT THE STICK WITH WHICH WE ARE MEASURED.

1 John 3:5-6 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and IN HIM THERE IS NO SIN. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him or known Him.

Jesus never sinned and to spend time in His presence is to spend time with the Sinless nature of Christ. The more time we spend with Jesus, the more His nature rises from our souls and spills into our lives. Therefore, not sinning is not a contrived behavior. Rather, it is something that is the natural result of spending time with Jesus, experiencing His love and believing in His acceptance.

That all sounds nice and pretty but what happens when we actually sin? What does it mean? Since scripture clearly states that whoever abides in Christ does not sin, how do I respond to the Lord when I know I have sinned?

Sinning is merely agreeing with something that is not true about yourself or your new nature. It is an act outside of your God-given nature. To spend time with Jesus is to understand more and more about who you are and how you are loved. The easiest way for me to think about it would be in terms of marriage.

If, when I come home, my wife has prepared this amazing meal that has all of my favorite foods and dishes and she rubs my shoulders as I eat and tells me how great I am and how much she loves me; the last thought in my mind would be about another woman!

But, imagine the exact same scenario, the food, the massage, the words of love, and despite all of this, I choose to ignore her love and indulge myself in an adulterous affair.

From the outside looking in, any fool could see that such behavior would be completely ridiculous. They could see the selfless love of a beautiful, confident woman showered on me

daily, and would see complete disregard for it. I imagine they would think I was incredibly prideful and foolish! They would be right!

Now, in this hypothetical situation, let's take it a step further. Let's say that my wife knew I had broken my marriage vows and committed adultery. Then, what if I came home to the exact same kind of love she showed me before? Imagine if when she looked into my eyes, she was smiling from ear to ear. All of the fruits of her love for me would be in the house; my favorite music, a warm meal and so on. Before I could even get an apology out of my mouth she would say to me "I knew you were going to do this before I even married you, and you know what, I loved you then and I love you now!" It's hard to imagine that kind of love.

This kind of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and favor are truly divine. That kind of love is the love of Jesus Christ! It is a love that supersedes anything we can ever do to harm it. It is the kind of love that goes deeper than our sin, so that if our sin increases, His grace increases all the more (Romans 5:20b).

Who wouldn't want to be in that kind of relationship! Not that we take advantage of His love and sin all the time, but in fact the exact opposite would be true. Such love prompts tender intimacy and adoration. It causes us to fall even more in love with Him and galvanizes our spirits with worth. There is no sin that gratifies or fulfills as deeply as the worth we find in the eyes of Jesus. Therefore, to indulge in sin is to indulge in shallow, tepid water. When we've experienced the depth and the wonder of His love for us, sin becomes a novelty we can easily ignore.

All he wants is for us to believe in who He is and what He thinks about us. So to stay in sin is simply to stay in a place you have not yet yielded to the love of Jesus. Really, to stay in sin means that you don't truly believe He accepts you. The Good News however, is that He does. He accepted all of you two thousand years ago and testifies of your acceptance before the Father (1 John 2:1). Again, such love does not inspire more sin, but rather it inspires more intimacy with Him.

When we are in a relationship with Jesus Christ (i.e. when we have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior) sin is no longer the stick with which we are measured, because when God sees us, He sees His son; a sinless, spotless, perfect lamb. He sees the nature of His son in us and in that nature sin cannot exist. Sin, therefore, is subject to our new nature and not the other way around.

Understanding our new nature and therefore our complete acceptance is to understand who Christ really is and what He really represents. To know complete acceptance is to know no

condemnation. Finally, to know no condemnation, is to be without the impulse of sin. Becoming aware of His complete acceptance is the quickest way to disentangle ourselves from sin and to see our trees begin to bud with His fruit.

I AM OF IMPERISHABLE SEED AND A TWIN OF CHRIST!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWELVE

Grace Says: **I am a new creature with new desires and new pleasures.**

Where: 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Inevitably, after having received the nature of Christ, His nature will rise in your spirit and inspire joy and pleasure in ways that you had not yet conceived. The more you allow yourself the new pleasures you have in the Lord, the more they will replace those forms of pleasure that are life-robbing, instead of life-giving. One of the easiest ways to tell if a desire or pleasure you are having is part of your new nature, is that it will never disagree with your identity as imparted by Christ and will always impart peace. This goes for sinful indulgence as well as self-righteous behavior. Grace nullifies both, and brings life and freedom to your new nature.

There is a seed that has been planted inside of you that is imperishable (1 John 3:9). The seed of Christ is your new nature. It doesn't matter if you've been one way your whole life, you are new the instant you come to know Christ. The instant you come into Christ, you are perfect in God's eyes. Agreeing with this is the quickest way old habits, which are dead branches, fall off of you. Replacing these branches will be branches of your new nature and eventually the fruit from those branches.

Common Objections: What if I still find pleasure in Sin?

ANSWER: A GREATER AWARENESS OF MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST CAUSES MY PLEASURES TO CHANGE

Romans 8:15-17 - For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry out. Abba Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are Children of God, and if Children, then-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

The more aware you become of Jesus and His unconditional favor and love over you, the more you will find yourself feeling foreign to sinful habits. You will begin to realize that the truth about you is the same truth about Jesus. YOU ARE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD! YOU ARE ADOPTED INTO HIS PERFECTION AND HOLINESS! Our Spirit's bear witness to who we are in Jesus. They do not agree with Sin and Death, rather they agree with Righteousness and Life.

If you are harboring something that you know is sinful, God is not going to throw you out of heaven because you won't let it go. You are however, indulging in something that is life-robbing instead of life-giving. For some reason, you have become convinced that the pleasure you gain in sin is worth missing out on the pleasure you could have with your new nature in Christ. Ultimately, whatever the sin is, it will reduce your life to a fraction of what it was designed to be in Jesus.

Speak it out to the Lord, write it down on a piece of paper, tell a trusted friend about your struggle. Whatever you do don't isolate yourself. Confessing these things to the Lord will not change the fact that you are forgiven. In other words, once you believe, confessing or not confessing your sin doesn't shift the gates of heaven or hell one way or the other. Those gates have been shifted for all eternity and are fixed. All who enter carry the mark of the blood, the only requirement to enter. Confession simply helps us to remove the fogginess from our minds, or the blurriness from our vision. God's only response to your confession is, "what are you talking about" (Hebrews 8:12, 2 Corinthians 5:19), and "I love you."

Confession simply reminds us of these realities and helps us to know that we are alright and never alone. Ultimately a believer's confession is not a sum of weekly sins, or skeletons in the closet but of something much more profound and life giving. A true confession, is agreeing with our own identities in Christ. When you confess, confess what God says about you, "I am righteous, healed, cleansed, pure, favored, blessed, loved, and accepted" (just to name a few!)

Simply believe in His Grace, and agree with His words over your life. This is real confession! When our thoughts and our words come into alignment with His words over us, our new natures will spring up and we will find ourselves drawn to new things and new passions. Old habits will fall off because they simply have no place to rest inside of our new nature. You will look back on your old life in amazement and wonder that you ever gave up one day of God's Grace for Sin. His love really is that Good. PRAISE GOD!

I CAN HAVE JOY IN THE PLEASURES OF MY HEART!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY THIRTEEN

Grace Says: **My rejection died with Him, and His acceptance lives with me.**

Where Colossians 1:21 & 22 - And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you HOLY, and BLAMELESS, and ABOVE REPROACH in His sight.

1 John 4:17 - Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

I am loved by God because He chooses to love me. I for one am so thankful for that. His choice supersedes everything else, there is no barrier between myself and His love. If our hearts convict us He is greater than our hearts (1 John 3:20). His great pleasure is to see me take hold of this love and rest in it. To say to him that I don't deserve this kind of love is to disagree with His spirit of Grace. Thankfully what I deserve is not up to me, or anyone else. Its up to Him and He has chosen that I deserve His unmerited grace and righteousness. The reason you and I get to enjoy this status is because we believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God. As a result we are marked with the blood of the lamb and are seen no differently than the son.

The identity and gifts we have in God: Above Reproach, Spotless, Blameless, Righteous, Holy, Favor, Blessing, Love and Sonship; are free because of what Jesus did. What an incredible reality we have in Him. Because God's love is not generated from our ability to create it, it creates a security of eternal measure in our spirits. Because God's love will never be taken away from Jesus, it will never be taken away from us, since we are complete in Jesus. I consider our present sufferings not worth comparing to the Glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18). The glory of the son is in us, it is in our spiritual DNA. We are reborn into the image of our savior and walk as His twin on this earth.

Common Objections If you tell people this they will become lazy or even stay in sin because they feel there are no consequences.

ANSWER GRACE TEACHES US TO WALK IN GODLINESS

Titus 2:11-"The grace of God has become known to all men. It (GRACE) teaches us to say no to ungodliness and to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives.

Grace is the only thing that will teach people to live lives that accurately reflect the nature of Jesus inside of them. When Jesus came to fulfill the law it offered us an opportunity to start where he finished. In His perfection, in His holiness and in His righteousness. The great mystery of the gospel is that we shared in a mystical death with our Lord (Romans 6:11) so that we can share in His tangible life.

We are beyond the grasp of the sin condition because that condition has been chopped off of us. It is without life and simply not part of who we are. The new covenant, more than anything else is about our identity and not our behavior. The identity we share as believers is the identity of Christ, who is our redemption, justification and sanctification. This identity will never be rejected, or alone and is our eternal hope. It is our promise from God and the anchor for our soul.

AS HE IS, SO I AM IN THIS WORLD!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY FOURTEEN

Grace Says: **I am free to be myself.**

Where Ephesians 2:10 - We are GOD's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The first thing that comes to mind when I say "I AM FREE TO BE MYSELF" out loud, is how silly I feel that I have ever tried to be anything but myself. Exactly who was I trying to be? I guess the obvious answer to that would be that I have tried to be like Jesus. I tried to be patient, I tried to be loving and humble and have all the answers. Ultimately though I felt like a sand castle against the rising tide. I felt as if all of my effort was in the end, pointless. It was pointless actually.

Probably the best example of failure in scripture that illustrates someone trying to be like God that failed miserably, would be Adam. It was Adam's attempt at Godliness that drove him from the garden, and nothing else. Adam was already like God, which is why the original sin was Pride. He thought he could become more like God by his own effort and strength, and he chose to ignore the fact that he was already perfected by God's strength.

I eventually stopped trying to be Christ like, when I finally realized that I already am like Jesus. Not because I have attained it in my life-style (Philippians 3:12) but because all that He is, has been imparted to me (Colossians 1:22), and from that imparted status begin to flow the actions of his lifestyle in me.

This leaves me with the simple truth that I am free to be myself. I am free to have dreams and to take risk, to have fun and enjoy life. The more I realize that I AM (not "going to be") like Christ, the more I find that the attributes I had so diligently worked to craft into my character, start to flow from me naturally.

I am free to be myself, because I am His workmanship and not my own. He crafted me, He imparted His nature to me, He set me up for success, wholeness, joy and abundant life. So what else is there for me to do? Believe! I am free to follow the inclinations of my heart because my heart is pure and I think, feel and respond with a redeemed mind.

Common Objections Doesn't James 1:14 say we are drawn into sin by our own desire. How is it possible to "Be Myself" when I have desires that draw me toward sin?

ANSWER SIN AND DESIRE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS

Romans 6:12 - Do not let SIN reign in your mortal body so that you obey ITS evil desires.

Desire and sin are two separate things. Our desire may draw us toward sin, but there has to be something that we do not yet have, for us to have desire for it. By definition desire is an emotion aroused by things not yet owned, or obtained. If Sin were part of our natures how could we desire it? Sin is not something we have "naturally" since we are given a new "nature". Sin is not who you are, it is a separate entity and has an agenda for your life.

The good news in all of this is that there is a very powerful, easy to understand "Key" in learning to avoid sinful desire. But to understand how to use that key its important to understand where the power of sin comes from.

Sin is fueled by an eternal strength that is wholly outside of ourselves to defeat. It is impossible for us to defeat sin, because the power of Sin is THE LAW OF GOD (1 Corinthians 15:56).

God's law gives sin all of its power. How can we ever fight against that? Its a losing battle. So if the power of sin is the law of God, then how can it ever be overcome? Simple, stop living with an awareness of the law. We are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14).

The easiest way to stop living with an awareness of the Law, is to replace it with an awareness of Christ. Simply stop trying to become like Jesus and instead, agree that you already are. You begin where he finished, in perfection. By listening to our true nature in Christ and agreeing with it, we ignore the agenda of sin and embrace the agenda of Grace.

Our desires ultimately transform because the power (God's Law) used to arouse the impulse of sin is of no effect under Grace. We are God's righteous, perfect and Holy children, we need do nothing else to obtain this status. Don't fall for the same lie Adam did. Live in the truth of your imparted status in God and-

JUST BE YOURSELF!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY FIFTEEN

Grace Says: **His sacrifice was greater than the judgement due to me.**

Where Luke 23:46- Father into your hands I commend my spirit. Having said this He breathed his last.

Whenever there was a sacrifice under the old covenant it was merely a ticket to avoid God's wrath. It never really took His wrath away. This is why the Levitical priest, year after year, endlessly for centuries, spilled blood on the altar of God. It was the only way they could be spared from the ever present reality, that without their ritualistic sacrifices they were without mercy. Their's was an existence of performance based justification. God's judgement always outlasted the blood that was spilt under the old covenant, so there was never any rest or safety from it.

But praise God, that same judgement, that stood opposed to the world and that outlasted centuries of spilled blood in ritualistic sacrifice, finally found a place to rest and be satisfied. When Jesus went to the cross His entire being absorbed every ounce of punishment required by God's judgement. His body sustained every mark of God's judgement, so that when his torture was complete he was recognized only by the condition he assumed on our behalf, the condition of sin.

Jesus became sin in every sense of the word, in His body, in His spirit, and in His soul. But something happened at the cross that had never happened on the earth before. The sacrifice endured the wrath of God in its entirety before dying. All other sacrifices until that time, had been completely consumed in God's wrath.

But Jesus remained alive until all of the wrath of God, all of the judgement of sin, all of the consequential punishment had been absorbed into His being. Finally after the immeasurable weight of punishment was exhausted, the sacrifice turned His eyes to heaven and said - Into your hands I commend my spirit.

When it was done, when the entirety of man's fallen state had been absorbed into the body of the perfect lamb, then and only then did Jesus die. And why did he die? He did not die

because sin killed him. He was greater, and more powerful and had longer lasting endurance than the sin of man!

The only reason Jesus had to die is because without a death, a Will cannot go into effect (Hebrews 9:15-18). Jesus died for God's New Covenant to be ratified. And what was part of that Will? Eternal security, heavenly inheritance and permanent perfection.

Common Objections The only way I can access this benefit is through my ongoing confession of sin.

ANSWER THE BELIEVERS CONFESSION IS ONE OF AGREEMENT AND IDENTITY.

JOHN 19:30 - IT IS FINISHED.

With His final breath He freely gave up His spirit and proclaimed - IT IS FINISHED! Jesus survived God's judgement, then released His spirit into His fathers hands, AFTER THE WRATH WAS NO MORE, so that we could gain our rightful inheritance in the Kingdom of God as prescribed by God's Will. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NO MORE WRATH FOR THOSE IN JESUS, ONLY THE WRITTEN PROMISE SEALED IN BLOOD FOR AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE!

Therefore, our sin is no greater than His sacrifice. The blood of Christ is an eternal filter through which no sin, no condemnation, no judgement can pass, because all of these things were satisfied at the cross. To assume otherwise is to assume that my imperfect ability to keep the law is a means that exceeds the power and finality of the sacrifice. Just as the world walked in perpetual imperfection and judgement before the cross, so believers walk in perpetual acceptance and grace after the cross. There is no middle ground, no hybrid doctrine of ritual or sacrifice that is more powerful, or more effective than the all encompassing sacrifice of our savior Jesus Christ.

JESUS IS ENOUGH FOR ALL OF MY SIN, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY SIXTEEN

Grace Says: **Forgiveness is permanent and not based on my ongoing request.**

Where Hebrews 7:25- Therefore He is able to save COMPLETELY those who come to God through Him, because He ALWAYS lives to intercede for them.

Just like I can't saint away my sinful condition, its impossible for me to sin away my sainted condition. How many good acts are required in order to receive eternal life? ZERO! Conversely so, how many sinful acts are required to lose eternal life? ZERO! Another way to think about it would be to consider Jesus himself. How many sinful acts did Jesus commit to become sin? Even if your not great at math, that one is easy to figure out-ZERO! So if Jesus committed no sin yet BECAME SIN, as a believer how many righteous acts must I perform in order to BECOME RIGHTEOUS? Are you picking up the pattern? ZERO!

We are forgiven once and for all. I know that may be hard to believe, but consider the alternative. If we are not forgiven once and for all then our forgiveness is conditioned on our ability to keep the law perfectly, remember all of our sins, then ask for their forgiveness.

If our forgiveness is dependent on asking for forgiveness for every sin we commit, then by default, if we forget just one sin to ask forgiveness for, we will not be forgiven. It's all or nothing (James 2:10). This becomes a real problem when you consider that everything that is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). How many things have I done this week out of selfish ambition? How many decisions have I made based on conceit?

So where does that leave us? It leaves us helpless without the Savior. The point is that you and I do not have more authority than the authority of the Cross and the imparted status it secured for us. To assume that my salvation is dependent on asking God's forgiveness every time I sin, is to assume that my request has more authority than the Cross. It is saying to God, "Even though you cancelled the written code that was against me (Colossians 2:17), and even though you don't remember my sins (Hebrews 8:12), and even though based on your son's sacrifice I am counted righteous (Romans 10:4), I know I am not really saved or forgiven, unless I ask you to forgive me of every sin I commit". How prideful is this!

Law is the only thing that measures sin and it was taken away at the Cross. How could we not be forgiven forever if the only thing that stood in the way of our complete forgiveness was fulfilled forever by a sacrifice not our own? Stop asking for something that is already yours and agree with your forgiveness in Christ today!

Common Objections Jesus taught us to pray, "Lord forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." (Matthew 6:12). So God does tell us to ask for forgiveness.

ANSWER JESUS BROUGHT THE LAW TO A HIGHER STANDARD SO THAT WE WOULD BE TUTORED TO HIM.

Colossians 2:13&14 - He FORGAVE (past tense) us ALL OUR SINS, having CANCELLED THE WRITTEN CODE, with its regulations that WAS AGAINST US and that stood opposed to us; He TOOK it away, nailing it to the Cross.

Jesus's emphasis in Matthew 6 was not on our forgiveness, but on how important it is that we as His co-heirs, forgive others. The fascinating reality however is that because he had not yet gone to the cross, he did not yet tell his disciples "because you have been forgiven, forgive others". Rather he told them that unless they forgave others, they themselves would not be forgiven. So the issue is not with whether or not we are forgiven, that is a moot point altogether since our forgiveness happened on the cross, as illustrated in Colossians 2:13 & 14. The issue rather is about what motivates us to forgive others.

Forgiving others is such a huge deal to the Lord because the cost of our forgiveness before the Father was incomprehensible and any injustice that we hold against others becomes a whisper compared to what Christ has done. Jesus Christ represents the greatest forgiveness in all of creation, and we are His co-heir's, His righteous children and His close friends. We represent Christ to the world and un-forgiveness is a gross misrepresentation of who Christ is, therefore a signature issue for us as Christians. So the key to understanding these scripture is in what links them, which is the emphasis on what motivates us to forgive others, and not on our status as forgiven or not forgiven.

In Matthew, the motivation is judgement. In Colossians, the motivation is acceptance. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus wanted to motivate His disciples to forgive others and used the Law of God to do it, since the law had not yet been fulfilled in its entirety.

In Colossians however, we are motivated to forgive others because of the forgiveness that Jesus has already given. We can now give forgiveness because we have it. Instead of giving forgiveness to attain it, we give forgiveness because its something we have and are empowered to give it freely, since it was given freely to us.

The New Covenant was a transition from forgiveness based on what I do, to a forgiveness based on what He did. When we are convinced we must do something before God in order to receive His forgiveness, this same kind of attitude defines our relationships. We hold others to the same standard we hold ourselves, and they must say they're sorry, ask forgiveness and work their way back into our good graces before we forgive them. If, however, we understand our forgiveness before God, we are able to also forgive others freely.

I dare you to take a few breaths under the banner of His all encompassing forgiveness and see what it does to your spirit. If I had to guess, the loudest injustice in your life will melt to a whisper.

I AM FORGIVEN FOREVER IN CHRIST JESUS!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY SEVENTEEN

Grace Says: **My rest in Him releases His power in me.**

Where John 5:19 - I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing. Because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

When God whispers to our hearts and beckons us toward Him it creates a lasting residue in our spirits that we never forget. Those moments of intimacy are what we long for as His children, just to be near him. I have found that those moments are also the moments that I feel most inspired to live for Christ, to lay everything else aside, throw caution to the wind and swim hard in the direction that He is.

I have found though, that after many attempts to swim toward the Lord, I'll get to where I think He has invited me out of breath and worn down. It's brought me to the realization that the invitation of Jesus is never one to toil toward Him, but to thrive with Him. Just as Jesus told the Pharisees that He did nothing in His own strength, we can also rest in God's strength and trust in His provision timing and purpose for our lives. I think the best picture from scripture to illustrate this, is the one of Peter.

Something happened in Peter's spirit when he saw Jesus on the water. He knew where Jesus was, he knew he wanted to be there but he also knew there was no way he could get there in his own strength. Peter's only option was to rest in and keep his eyes on Jesus. When Jesus invited Peter out, he didn't invite him to start swimming within the waves, He invited him to start walking over them. Peter's rest in Jesus caused the Lord's power to thrive through Him and Peter started walking.

Common Objections What about our spiritual disciplines, like prayer, scripture reading etc.?

ANSWER When following His invitation to rest, "discipline" becomes passion.

John 6:28 &29- And they said to him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God. Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Why is that the work of God? Because it is only by believing in Jesus that the Kingdom manifest in the world. He really has invited you to do great things, but not on your own. Jesus's invitation is never one for us to accomplish anything in our own strength. What would be the point? Anybody can start another homeless shelter or orphanage. But He is the only one who could unite every orphan in the world with a loving family. Resting in Jesus is surprisingly restful and incredibly productive, it activates the leverage of his strength and promotes passion in our lives. Spiritual disciplines then become the mechanism through which we enjoy Christ. This rest produces in us the awareness of Christ and activates productivity in our lives that supersede what we can create in our own strength.

The invitations from God will always cause us to know him better and rely on him more. Ultimately the invitation of the Lord is meant for our lives to reflect His strength and His Glory. When Peter walked on the water it was a testament not of his own strength, but the strength and the Glory that his eyes were focused on.

I AM INVITED TO WALK ON THE WATERS INSTEAD OF
SWIMMING WITHIN!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY EIGHTEEN

Grace Says: **I am transformed by my awareness of Christ, not my lack of sin.**

Where Colossians 3: 9 & 10 - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge of the image of its creator.

I am so glad the scripture doesn't say: "which is being renewed in my knowledge of my lack of sin." Proverbs says that as a man thinks in his heart so he becomes (Prov 23:7). If my greatest aim in life is to be transformed by behavioral modification then the most I'll ever be, is good at ignoring or controlling my impulse to sin.

Ultimately this lifestyle leads to a place of passionless routine and perpetual fear of judgement. The law is an endless reminder of sin and when I become accustomed to controlling one impulse another inevitably makes itself present in my life and requires my attention. To focus on controlling these impulses, is to strip myself of pleasure and joy and boldness. The attempt to hide from the impulse confines me to a life of shallowness and bondage. In other words I can make my whole life about never telling a lie, as the scripture directs me to above "do not lie" but guess what sin I will struggle with the most....Lying!

The quickest way to walk away from the impulse is simply to stop fighting against it and to fill our hearts with a greater reality. It's almost like saying to yourself that it's ok to take a vacation from keeping up with your sins. All that is required is that we fill our minds with the knowledge of His image. This knowledge will inevitably destroy the root that causes sin to begin with, which is condemnation. Once we become aware of who He is and what He says about us (Perfect, Righteous, Holy), the ground we gain back from sin in our lives becomes a matter of miles as opposed to inches.

Common Objections Doesn't our sin separate us from Christ?

ANSWER SIN SEPARATES US FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR IDENTITY, NEVER FROM CHRIST.

Romans 8:38 & 39 - For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers, no things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 2:1 - Dear Children I write this to you so that you will not sin, but if you do sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense.

I love that in Colossians 3:9 & 10 Paul first states an imperative: "Do not lie." If you are predisposed to behavioral modification, you can hide behind this verse and easily make it a pillar in your life that keeps you from the truth found in the indicative part of the verse.

Why shouldn't you lie-Because its wrong? No. Because its a sin? No. Because it hurts other people? No. Paul gives us the answer in the very next sentence. Because, ITS NOT WHO YOU ARE! You shouldn't lie, simply because you are not a liar. Just like you are not a pervert or an alcoholic or a drug addict and the list goes on. You have put on a new self that is being renewed by not lying....sorry typo...is being renewed in the KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMAGE OF ITS CREATOR.

Encounters with Christ will always, only and ever remind us of who we are. When Simon heard his brother say, 'I have found the Messiah' he went running and the moment he met Jesus, Jesus said, 'You shall be called Cephas'. Hearing Jesus is hearing your true name. In His image you will never find a reflection that shows you a sinful nature. You will never find a reflection that shows you a past filled with mistakes or doubts. In His image the only reflection you will ever find is unadulterated glory, beauty, and majesty. In His image your eyes will be filled with the reflection of legendary worth.

I AM AWARE OF MY RIGHTEOUS IDENTITY IN CHRIST!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY NINETEEN

Grace Says: **Jesus is the final destination, not spiritual gifts, teachings, miracles, or service.**

Where 1 Corinthians 13:12 - Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Everything we experience in the Lord on this side of eternity, is a reflection of the Kingdom, and a poor one at that according to the scripture above. The reflections; miracles, healing and other gifts will eventually fade away since they will no longer be needed when Christ returns. Ultimately what this means is that spiritual gifts are not a lasting resource that follow us into heaven. There is however a lasting resource that follows us into heaven, and the more we foster and nurture it, the greater miracles, sings and wonders we will see. The resource I am talking about is our relationship with Jesus. It is the only thing that will follow us from this life to the next.

One of the most beautiful illustrations in scripture of a man investing into this resource of relationship is Peter. I love the story of Peter when he saw Jesus on the water and said "Lord if it is you tell me to come out of the boat." Its a story that reveals the key that unlocks the power and purpose behind spiritual gifts and service in the Kingdom.

The intent of Peter's heart and the motivation in his mind when he asked this question was to know Jesus. Peter's aim was to know Him and to be with Him and nothing else. As a result the instant Peter's weight transferred from the planks of the ship to the waves of the sea, every ounce of Peter's existence became a reflection of Jesus Christ in that moment. The point is that the manifestation of the miraculous in Peter's life was merely a reflection of someone altogether greater that Peter was focused on.

As a result of this greater focus, when Peter stepped out on the water, the moment he did so his entire being reflected a power wholly outside of his strength to create. He wasn't trying to walk on water more than he was trying to see Christ. Walking on water was merely a small glimpse of the Glory that Peter was fixated on. Learning to keep our hearts and minds on Jesus, ultimately causes His power to flow through us in increasing measure. The Kingdom will spill out of us simply because our lives are reflecting something greater than ourselves.

This is the entire purpose of spiritual gifts to begin with. They all reflect a power completely outside of our strength to create. I believe God gives us these so that by them deposits of faith can be made in the lives of the people that surround us, and more importantly so that the world will know His love. It is the work of the Holy spirit to convict the world of faith, we merely get to agree with this conviction by resting our eyes on the savior, who is our final destination.

Common Objections Shouldn't we desire spiritual gifts? Like prophecy for instance?
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

ANSWER Practicing any spiritual gift, is simply practicing time in His presence.

Spiritual gifts are designed with the power of God in mind so that a person's faith might not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5). Only by having His power, His name and His glory as our ambition can we hope to see His kingdom manifest in the world around us. When this kind of power is encountered by us and reflected off of us it lifts the name of Jesus. The conviction of faith in people's hearts, then becomes a matter of power, instead of just words (1 Corinthians 4:20).

If you are a prophet its not because you prophesy, but because that is the gift given to you by Jesus that manifest when you are focused on him. Again, Peter's ultimate ambition was never just to walk on water. It simply happened because of his fixation with Jesus. Why would anybody study how to walk on water and not on the power that manifested the gift? Jesus is the final destination, with Him as the goal everything else becomes a reflection of His power and His name.

RESTING IN JESUS UNLOCKS HIS STRENGTH IN ME!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY

Grace Says: **All Hindrances to Intimacy are IMAGINED.**

Where Romans 8:38 & 39 - For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you've ever heard or used the expression "Heart on a platter", then you probably know what it means to have all that you are, completely at the mercy of someone else. You've given them the gift of complete vulnerability and trust and you know that they have tremendous opportunity to lift you up, or to tear you down. This is why so many of us guard our hearts closely, sharing only the most intimate parts of it with those we cherish and love. Its the most we can ever give another person and its the most precious gift anyone can ever receive, outside of Christ.

A time existed on this planet when God offered the same to mankind. Adam and Eve walked freely in the garden of intimacy with their Lord. God was completely vulnerable and open to His children. The garden of Eden was a paradise of undiluted proximity to the creator of the universe. Then as we all know, that picture changed. Man was tricked to believing he had to do something in order to be like God. The sad truth is that He already was like God but was tricked into performing for Godliness. This was the birth of pride.

Just to reiterate. Adam's sin was not murder, drunkenness, debauchery, slander or any of these things. The sin that cast man out of the original garden of intimacy with his creator was the sin of trying to be like God. Think about that for a minute. All Adam did was say "Oh Lord, I Just want to be like you!"

This very notion gave birth to the first attempt in human history to be self-righteous. That same sin, committed at the dawn of the age is still prevalent today in most of the church. The reality, is that trying to be like God, is sin. Its self-righteousness creeping into your life. Its you holding up the mirror of the Law and seeing a reflection that is unworthy, and trying to fix this image yourself. As long as you look in that mirror, you'll always see the same picture, it will

never change. When man fell, he realized what he really looked like outside of God's grace, shameful and naked.

After Adam's sin, the garden was shut up, closed off and guarded with a flaming sword. It is a profound picture of what happens to anyone who ever experiences heart break. God was heart broken not just because of man's betrayal but because He could no longer commune with man the way He originally had. He was bound by His own perfection and Holiness to a place of separation from those he loved. He could have no communion with the impurity of pride. God cast man out of the garden because man cast himself in the same light as God.

The amazing thing though is that even after the worst adulterous act in the history of creation, God opened himself up to mankind again, offering the opportunity of relationship by faith. Abraham was the father of this new status. An imparted righteousness that was by faith and that carried the same intimate opportunity as was enjoyed in the garden. So even though man was no longer in the Garden of Eden the benefit of an intimate relationship with the creator of the universe was made possible again. And this status was not based off of what man could do for God but based off how God loved man. This new status was enjoyed for 430 yrs. But amazingly something happened that cut this status of relationship off a second time.

Mankind eventually said to God again "we can DO all you require of us." Incredible! After Adam and Eve had fallen for the same lie in the Garden and God opened himself up again to intimacy, here the Israelites were saying to God "we can DO, with our own strength, everything required to bridge the gap between our imperfection and your righteousness!" What were they thinking?!? Instead of relying on God in faith and relationship and intimacy they preferentially chose to trade this status for a relationship with Stone. In their rebellion they were given cold, hard, calculated Law. So now all they had to do was follow the law perfectly and they would have the same righteous status that they could have previously enjoyed under the covenant of Abraham. Ultimately this required more effort, and more sacrifice than was ever required before the law came.

Once the law was given, the entire existence of the Jews became wrapped up in what the law said. Everything about their culture, and their society in general was based off of a relationship with stone. How absurd, especially when you consider the alternative they could have enjoyed. They wanted to rely on their strength to be perfect instead of His strength to make them so. Even after this though, intimacy with God was still available, but on a conditional and fatalistic basis. The difference between the intimacy enjoyed in the garden and the intimacy feared in the holy of holies is staggering.

God went from being completely open and accessible in the Garden of Eden, to conditionally available under the law. To be in intimacy with God in the garden was to be exactly as man was created to be, which was in God's image, whole and free. To enter intimacy with God under the law was to enter on the basis of man's attempt at perfection, instead of God's acceptance, and to enter in perfectly every time or die.

But praise God that He did not give up on His original plan! Even though, every invitation to intimacy by faith had been met with betrayal God would not give up. He would not let himself be separated from those He loved. So what did He do?

DEMONSTRATING HIS OWN LOVE FOR US IN THIS- HE DIED WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS (Romans 5:8). God did not stop loving us. But before time began, he decided that there was nothing that could keep us from His love, not even man's continual rejection and betrayal. He made every first move toward intimacy and beyond that decided that He would make His intimacy a permanent condition for us to enjoy, with no guarantee that we would even care, as it points out in the scripture above (Romans 5:8). God's love did not fail, is not failing and will never fail. Before time began He decided that intimacy with us was so important to Him, that He was willing to put to death for all time, every barrier to that intimacy in the blood of His own son. When Jesus died the veil was torn and INTIMACY WITH FATHER GOD WAS RESTORED FOREVER!

Common Objections I don't feel the presence of the Lord very often so I must be doing something wrong!

ANSWER GOD DOESN'T OPEN OR SHUT HIS INTIMACY WITH US BASED ON HOW WE FEEL

Hebrews 13:5 - "I will never leave you nor forsake you." -GOD

God is not conditionally available. He is infinitely vulnerable and open! There is no condition by which we must enter the holy of holies (Hebrews 10:19-22). There is no ritual of petitions for forgiveness, or confession or sacrifice that must be performed to enter into His rest and His intimacy. Done away are the barriers between you and God. They simply do not exist. Our inadequacy does not remove his vulnerability. How humbling to ponder that the King of the universe still allows himself to be vulnerable to his children. Its astounding!

Yeah but-"I'm a pastor and I just had an affair with our church secretary?" -God will Never leave you.

Yeah but-"My husband just found me in an adulterous relationship?" -God will never leave you.

Yeah but-"My wife just found out I have an addiction to pornography?" - God will Never leave you.

The list goes on. His ability to be vulnerable in intimacy is greater than our ability to betray that vulnerability. He is greater. He is stronger. He is love. He will always love us first and He will always love us last. Everything that attempted to betray His vulnerability was put to death through the death of His son. He is ours to enjoy, ours to cherish, ours to have, and ours to hold. He loves us beyond compare and will always be willing, ready, and able to offer His heart completely to His Bride.

GOD'S HEART IS ALWAYS OPEN TO ME!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-ONE

Grace Says: **God has forgotten all my sin but has remembered all my faithful works.**

Where Hebrews 10:17- Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God.

When was the last time God reminded you of your sin? When last did he convict you that you needed to ask for forgiveness for your sins? Does He give you these reminders daily, weekly monthly? Is that feeling you have of guilt and shame and unworthiness after you sin, from the Lord? The truth may surprise you.

The last time God ever convicted you of your sin was before you came to believe in Jesus and were covered with his blood. After you were sealed with Him in the promise guaranteeing your inheritance (Ephesians 1:13&14) God permanently forgot all of your sins, past present and future. He cancelled the written code that was against you (Colossians 2:14) and cast your sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). The conviction of your sin stopped forever at the Cross. God doesn't remember your sin beyond the Cross. To do so would nullify the blood.

Under the One Thousand and Five Hundred or so years that encompassed God's LAW covenant, blessing was conditional on man's perfection. Whereas curse was guaranteed by man's imperfection. So the reality Israel endured was one in which they worked against a LAW that was opposed to them. This meant that if they sinned just once, it didn't matter if they were perfect their entire lives under God's law until that point, they were guilty of the entire LAW and ritualistic sacrifice had to be made to save them from the curse. In short, a lot of flesh was mutilated and innocent blood was spilled for the sake of man's imperfect ability to keep God's entire LAW. But praise God when the New Covenant came, the implications of the LAW were nullified, leaving God's blessing open on the basis of Jesus' perfection and not our own.

Therefore, the exact opposite is true for us under the shed blood of Jesus. We have nothing working against us and everything working for us. We have no condemnation in Christ and no obligation to God's law. Our reality is that if we live our entire lives steeped in sin, but are

faithful once, we are qualified for salvation and all of God's blessing. Just as the Law was an open pit ready to swallow anyone who fell off the tight rope, so God's Grace is the warm hand that catches us every time we make a mistake and lifts us up in every moment of faithfulness. So what does God remember? Every moment of faithfulness, (Hebrews 11:6) from the moment you accepted Jesus in faith, to every moment marked by a faithful decision. If you fall a thousand times, and are faithful once, you will have a positive balance in your heavenly bank account! Now that is GOOD NEWS!

Common Objections What about the unpardonable sin, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Luke 12:10

ANSWER ITS TRUE. THERE IS ONLY ONE SIN THAT IS BEYOND THE CROSS

The only sin that provides the opportunity for a person not to enjoy the benefit of the cross, is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. So it is incredibly important to understand what blaspheming the Holy Spirit actually means.

The word blaspheme means to speak or confess something slanderously about someone. So in order to misrepresent or slander the Holy Spirit, we first have to know what it is He represents.

The answer to what He represents is found in John 16:8-11, when Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit's purpose.

“When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.” (Jn 16:8-11)

The purpose of the Holy Spirit and His work on this planet is clearly illustrated in Scripture. The Holy Spirit's purpose is to convict the world in regard to their sin, believers in regard to their righteousness and the devil in regard to his judgement. The easiest way I have found to discern the message in these scriptures, is to consider what they are NOT communicating.

The scripture DOES NOT SAY-the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sinS (plural) because the world lies, cheats, steals and commits sinS. So the first thing to notice is that the scriptural context of "Sin" is singular, in this verse. The second thing to notice is that the "Sin" the Holy Spirit convicts the world of is unbelief.

God does not count man's sin against Him (2 Corinthians 5:19). Sadly, even though this is the case, even though the world does not stand condemned or judged before God (only the devil stands condemned and judged before God according to the scripture above) many people will not experience that freedom because of one thing, and that one thing is Unbelief.

This is why the Holy Spirit comes to convict the world of unbelief. It is the only thing that stands in the way of a person's eternal justification.

1 John 5:9-13, says it best:

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in Himself; he who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony; that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (NKJV)

So back to the original question-How do you blaspheme the Holy Spirit?

Well, let me ask you this-Do you believe you are eternally pardoned and redeemed through the spilled blood of Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Hebrews 9:12)? If not, you are ignoring His conviction and calling Him a liar (1John 5:9&10). If anyone chooses not to believe the conviction of Christ placed in their heart by the Holy Spirit, then they are blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they cannot be pardoned because the sin of UNBELIEF is truly unpardonable since it keeps people from the Blood of Christ, and is the equivalent of calling God a liar.

So what does this mean? It means, that no good acts, no good intentions, no benevolent gifts will save anyone. Conversely so, no murder, no lust or strife will condemn anyone. The only thing that hangs in the balance is whether or not people believe in Jesus. Spend more time remembering what God remembers, and less time remembering what God has forgotten.

MY FAITH IN HIM IS ALL THAT COUNTS!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-TWO

Grace Says: **God designed rest, with me in mind.**

Where Mark 2:27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

The eternal nature we enjoy in the Lord is a nature that is SEATED in heaven. We partake in a nature that doesn't get frazzled, or worried or overworked. Instead, the nature of Christ is one in which every ounce of our energies are productive, worthwhile, and move us downfield in life. Jesus never walks back and forth in heaven biting his nails analyzing what we may or may not have done in the past, or the bad decisions we made yesterday. Living from a Sabbath place of rest will always leave you on time, well-equipped, and able to function excellently in the opportunities God has waiting for you to discover. After all, we are His workmanship and not our own (Ephesians 2:18).

The incredible truth in this inspires rest. I love the literal translation of the word "workmanship" in Ephesians 2:18. The word in Greek is "poiema" and literally translated to English it means "Poem." We are God's poem and not our own. He gives our lives rhyme, rhythm and harmony. He balances our steps and causes the story of our lives to transpire with eloquence and choreographed timing. It really is true that God has prepared in advance work for us to do, but it is work inspired by Faith (1 Thessalonians 1:3), not work inspired by the motivation to please Him. And this is the secret to living in the Sabbath.

Working to be what you already are (righteous, holy, blameless, purposed, destined) will only cause you to get in the way of your own rest. However, working from the awareness of who He is and who He says you are (righteous, holy, blameless, purposed, destined) will cause your steps to be more sure, and passion will naturally flow from your life, causing you to stumble upon opportunity and favor that is hard to imagine. He is already pleased, rest in that. The work of our new nature has been completed and its reward is now blessing and provision.

Common Objections Aren't we perfected by our struggles and suffering, as it says in James 1:2 & 3?

Answer: WE WERE PERFECTED BY HIS LOVE AND MANIFEST THAT PERFECTION IN HIS PRESENCE, WHICH IS ENJOYED IN REST.

Genesis 2: 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

God designed human beings to live in the Sabbath day. He purposely set aside this place of rest, not so that we wouldn't do anything but so that we would enjoy Him, and not be focused on anything else. From this place of rest and intimacy, faith and passions are stirred, visions are cast, and empowerment begins. God wants us to walk in a productivity absent of our own strength. It is a productivity that is endowed with glory and authority from God.

To be made perfect through struggle and suffering doesn't mean that we ought to welcome or seek out difficult circumstances. It also doesn't mean that all of the circumstances we go through are God's way of perfecting us. The qualifier to struggle and suffering as prescribed in scripture, is that both are by-products of a life lived in faith. This can sound like a turn-off to walking by faith and not by sight, but not when you consider the Biblical examples.

The struggle of faith is never without a vision, or a purpose. Joseph is the perfect example. God gave this man an incredible dream about his life then days later he was sold into slavery. Without the awareness of who he was in God, Joseph never would have survived the struggles of his life.

Similarly, the struggle and suffering we are invited into in Jesus is a by-product of believing something he has said and not letting go of it. Another great example in scripture where this is illustrated is when Jesus told his disciples to sail to the other side of the sea. I love this picture because it is the exact representation of life lived in faith.

Jesus told the disciples to go to the other side of the sea so in obedience they went (Matthew 8:18-27). Halfway there, a major storm descended on them. God did not engineer this storm per se, he only pointed them in the direction they should go. He neither created, nor prevented the storm that transpired while they were on the water.

So, in obedience, the disciples ventured across the sea and encountered trial. Their response was to wake Jesus and what did He do? He got upset with them. He reminded them that He

was there with them. It makes me wonder what would have happened if the disciples had kept their heads down and soldiered through the storm.

Instead of trusting that they would be safe simply because Jesus was with them, they called on Jesus to change the circumstance due to their fear. In His kindness, He did. It was a moment of great relief for the disciples but had they not feared, it is my belief they would have made it to the other side safely. They would have had the opportunity to trust only in the fact that Jesus was with them and could have built their faith muscle a little more.

The opportunities we have as His children to walk in Faith and believe Him are as many as we say yes to. When the circumstances become stormy, the lesson in the scripture above, is not to call on Jesus to change the circumstance, but to believe you will reach the other side simply because Jesus is with you. His callings and promises are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

Saying that we are perfected by our struggles, without the qualifier of faith, is the language and the work of religion. Without the qualifier of faith, struggles become character building exercises that rely on our ability to get through them, instead of our faith in His strength. As illustrated in scripture, believing who we are as spoken by Jesus and believing that He is with us no matter what, are the conduits through which Godly faith struggles arise.

These beliefs about our identity, and confidence in our savior will be tested. They will be tried because the winds of unbelief, false doctrine, and accusation, that all naturally work against the grace of God are going to try and do anything they can for us to give up on His truth.

Struggle and suffering in the sense of harder work that cost our lives everything and leaves us with nothing but heartache and disappointment was never designed by God. We were meant to thrive in the fruits of the Spirit and have an abundant joy filled life. Our struggle, our battle, is one of faith. Our struggle is one that will always lead us back to His rest, back to the place where we can only say "Yours are the words of life, where else can we go" (John 6:68).

I AM DESIGNED TO WALK IN REST!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-THREE

Grace Says: **God is not interested in what we do for Him, only what we do with Him.**

Where Hebrews 11:6 - And without Faith it is impossible to please God.

After the fall of man, God cursed the ground and it would only produce fruit that required back-breaking toil and buckets of sweat. When God required a sacrifice, Cain brought to Him the fruit of his labor. It was marked with effort and diligence and toil. It was the most Cain was able to produce on his own, yet it wasn't pleasing to God.

Cain presented to God fallen fruit, from a fallen earth, based on fallen toil. It was the aroma of everything man had become, which was "Separated". Abel, on the other hand, decided to sacrifice something to God that cost him no effort, no toil and no sweat. He presented innocent blood, for which he did not toil and he did not create, a sacrifice wholly outside of himself that was pure and innocent. Abel sacrificed to God from a place of REST, while Cain sacrificed to God from a place of SELF-EFFORT.

It is the picture of self righteousness verses imparted righteousness. Cain's sacrifice had everything to do with Cain and what he could create for God in his strength. Abel's sacrifice had everything to do with what he knew was pleasing to God, and was a sacrifice not on the basis of his effort but solely on the basis of his faith. Abel knew he could never create anything in his own strength that was good enough and pure enough to be pleasing to the Lord. So in faith he rested, and purchased his sacrifice with a purity and innocence outside of himself, instead of purchasing it with the toil of his hands.

The point is that you can stop trying to do things to please God. Things produced by your attempt to please Him will never equal a pleasing result in the Lord's eyes. Martha and Mary are the perfect example. The only thing that will ever be pleasing to God is faith (Hebrews 11:6) and exercising its works. Believing you are completely pleasing in the Lord's eyes already, and offering your life to the passions and dreams this reality inspires, is what pleases the Lord.

Common We must work out our own salvation with
Objections fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12)

Answer: Salvation is what we work out from within us. It is the gift already deposited that we get to discover anew every day.

Philippians 2:13 - For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Instead of learning what was pleasing to God and humbling himself, Cain got upset that all of his effort did not equal a pleasing sacrifice and that all of his work didn't matter. So instead of choosing to change his mind (repent), and believe God, he chose to eliminate the one who received God's pleasure. Why? Because the pleasure of God was not dependent on Cain's strength. In other words, he was mad that he couldn't purchase his justification with his own hands (self-righteousness). He could not handle the fact that all of his effort to please the Lord was less pleasing than his brother's faith.

Working out our salvation is not a matter of planting the seed, tilling the ground and harvesting the fruit. All of this work has already been done. Working out our salvation is a matter of discovering what deposits are already a part of our new nature, agreeing with them and working them out from within us. It is a work of faith and rest. It is Faith in who you are in Christ and resting in that belief. From this place flows productivity from our lives that is marked in faith. Everything we touch carries the aroma of faithful diligence and restful sacrifice. From faith, the abundance of passion and purpose brings hope and provision back to your life.

GOD LOVES MY SACRIFICE OF REST!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-FOUR

Grace Says: **We enter rest through Faith and its works. We stay in striving and self-effort through unbelief.**

Where Hebrews 4:9&10 - There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself ceased from his works, as God did from His.

All that is required is for you to rest in the Lord. To rest in the Lord means to fill your mind with His acceptance, love and pleasure and to believe that He wants to bless you. He will tell you what you are capable of and invite you into intimacy. He will show you His Glory and transform your life with His presence. He will deposit in you the seeds of heaven and you will find yourself bursting at the seams to see them manifest in the world around you. You will find yourself full of joy at the thought of being used by Him to see the kingdom manifest through your hands.

To not enter His rest is to stay in a place of judgment consciousness. "If I don't do this or that, God isn't pleased." "If I don't tithe, God isn't pleased." "If I don't give all of myself for the sake of others, God isn't pleased." "If I don't live a sold-out life, God isn't pleased." "If I don't take care of sin, God isn't pleased." "If I don't ..." All of this is language designed with one person in mind and it isn't God. It's You.

This language and this mindset are all about you and what you can do to please God. It has nothing to do with the truth of your identity in Him or your posture before Him. It is a mental prison keeping you from the reality of His pleasure in you.

In this language, the assumption is that you can please God by what you do, or accomplish. This is the mentality of the original sin of pride. It is self-righteousness and of the bloodline of first Adam. You can never be like God, or please God on the basis of what you can do. You will only ever Be like God or please God on the basis of what you believe (Hebrews 11:6).

To know this is to know His Rest.

*Common
Objections*

What about James 1-“I’ll show you my faith by what I do.”

Hebrews 4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

The religious mindset is that your faith should manifest good deeds. In other words, if you have faith then you should be serving in the church, tithing, never sinning again, be attending church every time the doors are open, etc.

This couldn’t be further from the truth. Faith’s aim is not to manifest good deeds, or “right” living. Faith’s aim is to manifest fruit from Heaven that changes the planet and transforms your life completely into becoming a reflection of Jesus Christ. The work of faith is to believe in your heart and with your actions what God has said.

And this is the intent of James’ message to begin with. James uses the example of Abraham in saying, “you see that his faith and his actions were working together and his faith was made complete by what he did.” So what did Abraham do? He believed God and followed through with his actions. In other words, believing God is not serving to serve. Clothing yourself with acts of service that are motivated by “what you should be doing,” is a cheap excuse for real faith. You’ll rob yourself of life and the real opportunity to walk into work that is authorized by God and that you have been invited to be a part of, if that is all you do.

The mark of work done in faith, is that it fills your time, fulfills your mind and produces wine. Faithful work empowers us and puts ambition and purpose into our hands. It leaves us with a sense of fulfillment and produces something we could not produce in our own strength. Faithful work is work inspired by an awareness of Christ, and His acceptance of us.

It is work marked by the question “what can I do?” and never by the question “what should I do?”. It is prompted by love and never selfish ambition or by the attempt to find pleasure in His eyes. Faithful work is born in us when we are sure about our identity and when we accept an invitation to something that God is already doing.

Therefore, faith without works is dead. How can it be any other way. If God told Abraham he was going to have a son through his wife Sarah, yet Abraham refused to have sex with his wife, then it would have been impossible for Abraham's faith to be given life. If he refused to do the only thing through which God's promise could manifest, then by his willful disobedience his faith is without effect in the world.

The religious way of thinking is that only by our work does our faith matter. The reality is however, that under the New Covenant the exact opposite is true. It is only by our Faith that our work matters.

Imagine if Abraham tried killing his son because it's something he felt like might please God. How absurd. No! There was a prompting in his heart by God to sacrifice his son. God gave him a very clear, very real opportunity to exercise his faith. He knew who God was, He knew what God had promised and He believed God to be faithful to His promise.

Serving in the church just to serve because it's something you should be doing, is a far cry from the Faithful works James is referring to. So the reality is, whether it's leading a football team down the field, or working in a soup kitchen, as long as the effort of your hands is being prompted by His love for you, His life in you and His acceptance of you, then you are working in faith and in rest.

HIS KINGDOM IS MANIFESTED BY MY FAITH!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

GRACE VS. LAW

Possibly one of the deadliest languages to a believer's spirit is the one laced with a mixture of Grace and Law. Few things are more damaging to believers than hearing the liberating freedom of Grace, soon followed by language of Law based conditional acceptance. When this is preached, our spirits testify to the truth of grace but are then yoked by our mind's conviction that we aren't "really" unconditionally accepted. This entanglement causes a battle in us that tears our souls apart.

When our spirits sing, experience freedom, and testify to the truth, but then are yoked with religious precepts, they are left longing for more of that freedom, believing they will only find it through law based attempts. Ultimately, this causes God's grace to be diluted to a "law" that is kept for the sake of experiencing freedom. Sadly, this problem is systemic and cyclical in the church today.

Fortunately, God gave us flags in Scripture to know when we are hearing grace and truth and when we are not. These last six devotionals are designed to give you a tool that will help you to discern when you are hearing law, and when you are hearing grace, and how to distinguish between the two since they are so often coyly mixed together.

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-FIVE

Grace: **Makes me more Christ-aware and less self-aware.**

Where Colossians 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

I once accepted an offer to be a leader at a weekend youth event. It didn't take long to figure out what kind of weekend it was going to be. The guest speaker was convinced that all of the kids were in need of his religious prescription for right living. During one of the sessions he said to the kids, "If I go out to your car right now what would I find in your CD player?" After he said this he began to fill in the blank, assuming what he would find, and drawing conclusions about his assumptions.

This guy was beating up on these kids for what he thought may or may not be in their CD player and equating the music they listened to with God's wrath. He also equated their music preferences to offering up a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord. Shortly after this he said "May God strike me dead if I ever offer up a sacrifice that is not pleasing to Him."

If this guy's prayer had been answered, God would have struck him down that instant. The reality is that this speaker was equivocating "good" living, and "right" behavior with acceptable sacrifice before the Lord. He was indulging in a self-righteous standard of living, ignoring the finished work of the Cross and counting the blood of Christ worthless, for the sake of what might be in a teenager's CD player. This speaker was positioning himself between Christ and a very tender part of the Lord's heart, the youth.

The reality is that conquering sin, modifying behavior, and striving to live right bring no fulfillment, because you shouldn't be fighting sin or aiming for perfect behavior to begin with. Sin has been abolished and that which gives it power, the law, has been fulfilled. Therefore, to fight against sin is to resurrect a judgment that has been satisfied.

Focusing on what you aren't, what you've failed at, decisions you wish you had made, wrongs you wish you could right, and impurity you've indulged in will keep you very busy and ultimately leave you where you started, nowhere. It's the equivalent of a dog chasing his tail.

You may say, "but I do sin, and it's a struggle for me to avoid temptation sometimes." Then you and Paul share the same struggle. Just as Paul's struggle was not against sin, neither is yours. Paul's struggle was against the law. He struggled against the handwriting of requirements that was against him. In this struggle, there is no victory by your strength. There is no finish line or summit of excellent living.

You may come to a place where you can "control" the impulse, but wouldn't you much rather not have the impulse to sin to begin with. The good news of the gospel is that sin becomes powerless in your life the instant you take your eyes off that which is against you and embrace that which is for you.

The root of sin is condemnation. Therefore the impulse to sin comes from a condemned mindset. But as we know, there is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Your impulse to sin is born in a place of misunderstanding your complete acceptance before the Father.

His grace is the only thing that will utterly eradicate the impulse to sin. Grace will remind you continually of your complete acceptance in His eyes. To become more aware of Christ is to become more aware of unconditional acceptance and love. To become aware of these things will never cause you to sin more. In fact, it's quite the opposite (Titus 2:11). Placing your eyes on the extrinsic reality of God's Grace over your life will ultimately remove all of your sin impulse, and replace it with the truth that is already inside of you, that you and Jesus are one (1 John 4:17).

You can never fix yourself. All focus designed with yourself in mind ultimately depends on your strength, and not the extrinsic strength of Jesus Christ. The Grace of God is an extrinsic reality that we walk in. It is not of us or by us, but we are included in it.

Grace teaches us to let go our of attempts to live better or more righteously because when focused on His grace, we are focused on Christ's righteousness and not our own. It is Christ's righteousness in us that frees us, that sets us apart and causes us to live above the impulse of sin. It deposits a seed in our hearts of complete acceptance and the actions of our lives begin to take on new shapes. It leaves us with the sense that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and something more important than our sins. Grace teaches us to see ourselves in light of His view and not our own. Grace only makes us more aware of Christ, because Christ is the only name by which all accusation, condemnation, and inadequacy come to rest.

I AM ADEQUATE, WHOLE, AND ACCEPTED IN GOD'S EYES!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-SIX

Grace: **Only convicts me of my identity, never of my sin.**

Where Colossians 2:20-23 - Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack ANY VALUE in restraining sensual indulgence.

Man's attempts and religious precepts designed to steer people away from sin, are actually the best road maps toward it. Why? The Law was given so that Sin would increase (Romans 5:20) and such regulations designed with the LAW in mind, have an APPEARANCE of wisdom- but they lack ANY VALUE in restraining sensual indulgence!

The Grace of God will only ever convict me of my identity because this conviction of Grace is the only mechanism under Heaven by which all flaming arrows of accusation, inadequacy and religious condemnation are extinguished. The scripture goes even further than this though. Not only does it illustrate that religious precepts have no value in restraining sensual indulgence, but it says that anyone found trying to keep righteous standards as a way to be righteous, has fallen from Grace (Galatians 5:4).

Grace sheds light on the hopelessness and of self-righteousness (i.e. all my attempts to be like God). The fragrance of acting Holy to be Holy, acting patient to be patient, and acting righteous to be righteous, wafts toward Heaven with the pungent tinge of excrement (Philippians 3:8-9). It is not pleasing to the Lord and leaves nothing built on the foundations of Jesus but mud and straw, which will burn away in the Glory of God.

A preacher I know of once said to his church, "All God sees when He sees you is Jesus, not your sin," when I heard this my spirit leaped up and testified to the truth of his words. Then, without hesitation and from the same man's mouth came these words, "but if for some reason you think you have arrived, you need to get on your knees and ask God to reveal your sin to you, and He'll show you your sin and show you, you should have done this and not that." I couldn't

believe it. Where does it say God reminds us of our sins in the New Covenant? Nowhere! The endless reminder of sin, man's perpetual sacrifice required by the law (Hebrews 10:3) was fulfilled at the cross, and where there is no law, sin is not imputed (Romans 5:13). This preacher mixed the GOOD NEWS of Grace with the JUDGEMENT of the LAW!

After this man offered the Bride the truth of her posture before the Lover King, he shamelessly stepped between them and exposed her nakedness. He romanced the Bride to uncover herself and in her vulnerability, reminded her of the "reality" of her disgusting, sinful nature before Jesus.

This type of mixed language exposes the innocence and naivete of our spirit's hope in Jesus, only then to molest and impale it with the spear of religious precept. It is my opinion that there is nothing more vile under Heaven than to romance the Bride to vulnerability, only to take advantage of her nakedness with the religious doctrine of shame and unworthiness. Such language in the church today is nothing short of pre-meditated murder. It is rape and molestation of the Bride of Christ and it leaves her terrified to be vulnerable in the eyes of Her lover, Jesus Christ.

Such language is not in agreement with God's grace. God's grace will only ever remind us of our identity in Him. It will only ever cause us to understand who we are and what we are capable of. It inspires security, rest and freedom. God will never, I repeat GOD WILL NEVER, count your sins against you (Hebrews 8:12, 2 Corinthians 5:19). For God to remind you of your sin is against a covenant He planned before the world began and that He made by Himself and by the blood of Christ. God does not falter in His covenants.

Accusation comes from one place alone and it's not God! It comes from the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). If you ever hear anyone accusing you of your unworthiness before Christ, they are in agreement, not with God, but with the devil. If anyone was to tell you that God is not pleased with you, is disappointed in you, or that He reminds you of your sin, they are telling a lie and it is from Hell.

God's promises are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). Such promises we have in the Lord are, "You are Righteous, You are a Saint, You are Favored and You are COMPLETE!" The reason religious precepts have no value in helping to restrain sensual indulgence is because they are an endless reminder of unworthiness. They are an endless reminder of sin, brokenness and shame. God's grace on the other hand, is an endless reminder of His acceptance over us and His pleasure with us.

I cannot imagine the pain God experiences when the most beautiful Bride in all of creation is convinced of her inadequacy before Him. It leaves me perplexed and amazed at the majesty and depth of God's love. A love He has, even for those who molest His bride.

The reality is that the thoughts of God over His bride are always good, all the time (Psalm 139:17). You cannot escape the reality of His love or His acceptance. As much as religious precepts try to get between you and the Lord, they cannot go deeper or higher than His acceptance.

Jesus Himself testifies on our behalf before the Father that we are accepted, Holy and blameless. He says that we are without fault and destined to reign with Him in Glory. We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, from now to eternity. We are all Sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26). Now that is GOOD NEWS!

I AGREE WITH THE VOICE OF JESUS. I AM RIGHTEOUS, PERFECT AND BLAMELESS!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN

Grace: **Is good news not just good advice.**

Where Romans 10:15 - How beautiful are the feet of those that bring good news.

Isaiah 52:7 - How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

I can remember the first time I ever heard about "Grace" in a way that I actually understood it. I was at a friend's house. During the visit, I found myself in a theological discussion with my friend's father, who is a skilled lawyer.

He asked me, "Where does the power of sin come from?" Logically I thought, 'sin was introduced by the deceiver' so the answer was obvious, "The Devil" I replied. In response to my answer, he got out a Bible and turned it to 1 Corinthians 15:56.

He then handed the Bible to me and invited me to read from the passage. I still remember what it felt like in my mind when I realized the truth about where sin's power actually comes from. It was as if a giant boulder slowly moved out of the way revealing a secret chamber that had been locked up my entire life. The words came out slowly as I read the scripture "The sting of death is sin AND...THE...POWER...OF...SIN...IS...THE...LAW!?! My mind couldn't quite accept what I had just read so I looked up at my friend's father and then quickly looked back down at the scripture, "wait, what!? THE POWER OF SIN IS THE LAW? IS THE LAW?"

As my mind raced to make sense of everything, I quickly came to another question, "So why does the Law of God give Sin its power?" I asked my friend's father. In other words, why is the law of God, something so pure and Holy, used as the fuel that empowers me to lust, to hate, or to lie?

My friend's father responded to me with Galatians 3:24 & 25 "Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER A TUTOR."

The world changed for me in that moment. I felt like I had just been given the keys to a secret that no one else knew and I felt new for the first time. I felt shackles of religious ambition fall from my back and I received the freedom in Jesus that was always mine to begin with.

It was as if I'd been holding my breath until that moment, believing I had to live "just and so", and in a moment everything I believed I had to do to progress in my faith was eradicated. The distance between myself and my ambition in Christ was breached and I realized I was exactly where I had been trying to get to, perfect in His sight, completely accepted in every way and free.

As I look back on that night, I remember why I was at my friend's house to begin with. I had just finished college and was looking for some direction on what steps to take next. I knew I wanted to be a pilot and was very interested in missionary aviation. My friend's family was close with a well-known missionary pilot who lived in Florida. So on my friend's suggestion, I travelled down from Alabama to meet with the missionary pilot and, while there, I stayed with my friend's family.

I wanted to know about the experiences this missionary pilot had and gain insight on how to do what he did. I can remember going and meeting with him and spending time in the hangar at his private airfield.

It was all very wonderful and inspiring. Late in the day he sat with me and talked about the steps he'd taken to get to where he was. He shared his experiences with me and helped me create expectations for the lifestyle I would face in the profession. I remember his advice being helpful. Unfortunately, to this day, I can't remember any specifics of our conversation. His advice, though seasoned and bought with years of experience, I have to admit embarrassingly, I've forgotten. I realize now, that there is a very good reason I forgot.

The reason I can't remember the advice isn't because it wasn't good, but because it was only advice. And while good advice is hard to come by and worth the years of experience it takes to gain, it does little in the way of competing with good news.

It was later that night once I left the airfield, that my friend's father shared with me the GOOD NEWS of GRACE. It was the first time I experienced hearing the good news of the gospel instead of just good advice on how to live a Godly life.

Grace will always be more than just good advice on how to live right, or how to treat others. Grace will always be good news that changes your life and deposits in your spirit a desire for others to know what you know and experience the truth you have experienced. Language

telling you how to “live better”, or how to live “more righteous” based on what you can do, is only advice and does not carry with it the weight of heaven. Language that makes you more aware of Christ and convinces you of your righteousness, is Good News and is the Grace of God.

Though I can't remember the good advice I received from the missionary pilot, I will carry with me to the grave the GOOD NEWS of Grace shared with me on that warm summer night.

GOOD ADVICE HELPS ME WITH DECISIONS, BUT GOOD NEWS CHANGES
MY LIFE FOREVER!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT

Grace: **Inspires righteousness, godliness and right living, and brings rest, freedom and peace.**

Where Titus 2:11 & 12 - For the GRACE of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It (GRACE) teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives in this present age.

People cling to bondage because it is predictable. In bondage, there is no need for risk or vulnerability because it creates layers of false protection that supposedly guard us from hurt or shame. In effect, the Stockholm syndrome dominates people's lives. They don't know who they are without the stronghold, whether it's incessant worry, anxiety or addiction.

Worry, for example, causes people to do everything they can to avoid getting sick, falling down, getting stung by a bee, etc. The reality is that their lives are stolen by the very worry they use to guard themselves. They are afraid to be vulnerable to anything, and therefore live in shallowness, eventually surrendering completely to worry for worry's sake. They begin to search out things to be worried over and to guard themselves against. This problem, however, has a deeper root.

There is truth in the phrase "once bitten, twice shy." When we've been abused, manipulated and crushed, we build walls, accept isolation, and ultimately, we surrender to strongholds and bondages. Our vulnerability is shut off from the rest of the world and we are convinced that who we really are is not acceptable, and that the only way we will "be OK" is by guarding ourselves.

This, in effect, is exactly what has happened to the Bride of Christ. Religion has taken the Bride in her vulnerability and convinced her that her nakedness is unacceptable before her lover, that she is not ok, and that she might as well cover her nakedness in her own bed chamber. Religion has said that her ugliness is profound, but fortunately for her sake, her groom is loving enough that He looks past her hideous nature. Just so long as she remembers how much she owes her lover since He so mercifully looks past her hideous nature. Only then will she stay in His good graces.

The reality however, is that any language that causes you to doubt your own acceptance in Jesus Christ, is a lie straight from Hell. Either there IS condemnation in Christ or there IS NOT (Romans 8:1, John 3: 18). There is no middle ground! But many Christians today are nervous about their unconditional acceptance. As if this truth is only trying to trick them into sin, or away from Jesus. So they maintain a distance behind the clever mask of "principle".

To them, there is safety in living a principled life on the code of what is right and what is wrong. Knowing what is right, and becoming better and better at it as the years go on, leaves people with a sense of security and pride, and they don't have to "worry" about their right standing before God because they feel they are "doing" everything right. But as all of us know (as I have experienced in my own life) in this state of mind, worry never really leaves. Anxiety floats subtly below the surface of every good deed and every good intention.

The reason for this is because there is always another sin to be dealt with, or another more perfect way to live that has not yet been attained. So the perpetual cycle of perfecting a principled life continues year after year until one's spirit becomes completely crushed and eventually abandoned for the sake of right living, or it surrenders and indulges in a sinful lifestyle.

The truth however is that just as worrying adds zero hours to your life, doing right for right's sake adds zero credit to your heavenly bank account. Living on principle and concerning yourself with what is right and nothing else is still eating from the wrong tree.

The tree in the garden was the tree of the "knowledge of GOOD and evil." Busying your life around good principles is no less wrong than indulging yourself in evil principles. We were not meant to live in the knowledge of GOOD or evil. We were always destined to live above both of them, where our righteousness exceeds that of the most pious saint (Matthew 5:20) and that of the most heinous sinner.

There is a reason that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist, the greatest prophet to walk the earth. It's because John was sanctified by his behavior and ritualistic sacrifice. We, on the other hand, are sanctified, justified and made Holy on the basis of Jesus' behavior, and our belief in His name (John 6:29) and nothing else.

We get to live in the garden of intimacy with Jesus and walk with Him freely, openly and accepted. We are twins of Christ on this planet and enjoy the benefit of an imparted heavenly status (1 John 4:13-17). Our nature is heavenly, while John, at his best, still carried a carnal nature.

Another lie perpetuated by religion today, is that if you hear your righteousness is exactly like Christ's righteousness, regardless of your behavior, you will go out and sin more. This couldn't be further from the truth as is illustrated in Titus 2:11.

If, when a believer becomes aware of their freedom, the first thing they do is go out and sin, then their relationship with the Lord is no different than a man who says to his wife, "I want to have sex with a lady at work, but I'm not going to because that would be wrong and I am a GOOD man." How impossibly stupid! The big question then remains, why was that sin in their heart to begin with?

The answer is simple. The very thing so many people clothe themselves with to become righteous, their "good" behavior, isolates them from God and His acceptance and is actually causing sinful passion to arouse in them more.

So what does that mean? It means that the tree of the knowledge of GOOD and evil, is ultimately one road with one destination, DEATH! The self-righteous road has the same destination as the road paved in sinful indulgence; A STOLEN LIFE.

So then, how should we live? 1 Corinthians 15:34, gives us the answer - "Awake to Righteousness and do not sin." This scripture doesn't say, "do not sin, then awake to righteousness." No, it is a reminder to remember who you are, and because you remember who you are, do not act contrary to your own identity. Realize you are righteous! And from this belief, do not sin!

How do you awake to righteousness? Start by believing what God says about you. Believe in His acceptance, believe in His mercy, believe in His finished work, believe in His unfailing love, believe in His Grace. Believe that your nakedness is incomparable beauty in the eyes of Jesus. Really believe that there is NO Condemnation for you in Christ!

Grace is the only thing designed by God that teaches us to say no to ungodliness, and live self-controlled upright lives, period! This is because Grace is the only thing by which we understand our complete acceptance, our whole status and our incomparable beauty. With an eternal guarantee, the more you believe about yourself, the truth you have in Jesus, the more you will see His nature flowing from your life. These things (Godliness, Self-Control, Purity) are not the destination and they were never designed to be under the New Covenant. They are simply the fruit of a lovesick Bride whose destination is Christ, His Glory and His Grace!

HE IS MY DESTINATION AND I AM HIS PRIZE!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY TWENTY-NINE

Grace: **Is inevitably followed by the Glory of God.**

Where Colossians 3:4 - For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, WHO IS YOUR LIFE, appears, then you also will appear with Him in Glory.

I love how this verse does not say “when the LAW, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with IT in Glory.” You could easily substitute “The Law” in this example with “good behavior”, “right living”, “avoiding sexual immorality”, “not lying”, “not stealing”, and the list goes on. Imagine if this were actually the case, that by “avoiding sexual immorality” you will appear with God in His Glory.

If that were true, then God’s glory would be solely dependent on what I could or could not do that was “right.” It immediately supposes that I have the means, through my behavior, to conjure the incomparable magnitude of His eternal Glory. How fickle would that be? This assumes that our lifestyle is the conduit through which His Glory is manifest on this earth. What an incredibly prideful proposition!

The reality is that there is no Glory in right living. Just like there is no Glory in sinful indulgence. Both of these lifestyles lack the only thing by which God’s Glory is made manifest, Jesus Christ and His imparted righteousness in our lives.

Jesus is not interested in how many things we do that are “right”. He could not care less. What He is interested in is how many “right” things we believe, and the course our life follows based on those beliefs (Galatians 5:6).

Jesus didn’t die so that the world would stop sinning, he died so that the world’s sin would not be counted against it (2 Corinthians 5:19). He is far less concerned with Sin than we are, because He nullified the only thing that gave it power; the LAW. To fight sin is to resurrect the law, to resurrect the law is to make Jesus of no value in your life.

Christ died so that HE COULD BE OUR LIFE, AND WE COULD BE HIS. He died so that we could live the life He was entitled to. He died so that we could sit with Him in heavenly places, so

that we could walk on this planet as He is (Above Reproach) and so that we could usher in the Glory of Heaven through Him.

Our right or wrong living has nothing to do with any of that, it is only by our Faith in the gift of righteousness that the Glory of God can be made known. Because God's glory has nothing to do with our performance, a glorified lifestyle of right living will never invite His presence. Instead, since His Glory has everything to do with who He is, only by surrendering to His life in us (which is our imparted righteousness) can we hope to see His Glory manifest in the atmosphere around us.

Jesus and His Grace are always followed by His Glory. Completely accepting who you are in Jesus Christ, without question or doubt, and standing solidly in the faith of your identity in Christ, creates a dwelling place in your spirit for His Glory to rest. Forgetting the mistakes of yesterday, dying to the attempts to be what you think He expects you to be, and embracing everything that you already are in Christ, is the real beginning. This is where we begin to really experience "Christ, who is our life" and the only way in which His Glory is revealed in our lives.

I AM A CONDUIT OF GOD'S GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS!

Agreeing with Grace

learning His language about our identity in Christ

DAY THIRTY

GRACE: **Is a man named Jesus Christ!**

Where John 1:14 - We have seen His Glory, the Glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of **GRACE AND TRUTH**.

John 1:17 - For the law was given through Moses; **GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**.

Agreeing With Grace is nothing less than Agreeing With the person of Jesus Christ.

Who He is, what He has done, and what He has given to us freely, constitute the message of Grace. It's as simple as that. Jesus loves you because of who He is not because of what you have done (Titus 3:5). Jesus says you are Beautiful, Spotless, Sanctified, Holy, Blameless, Justified, and Righteous on the basis of HIS LOVE.

When Jesus hung, nailed to a Roman cross, and looked out to the crowd before Him, the love in His eyes was greater than the pain. Looking at the men gambling over His clothes He said, "they are worth it". Looking at His disciples He said, "they are worth it". Looking at you and me He said, "they are worth it." Jesus said then and testifies now, You are WORTHY.

When Jesus sees you He never sees someone who isn't qualified, who hasn't been made perfect, who isn't completely sanctified, or who has any further to go to be complete. Jesus does not see the opinions of others, and He doesn't see any veil between Himself and you. He doesn't see any distance between Himself and you either. He's not afraid of your mistakes or your fears.

His authority makes all of this true! It was an authority endowed by His father and confirmed on the third day. He purchased your pardon, by His stripes you are healed, by His love you are made complete, by His power you stand confident before God. He has given us everlasting boldness, everlasting peace and everlasting riches. You and I are a Kingdom of priests in Christ, made perfect forever on the basis of His sacrifice and cleansed for all time from unrighteousness. Any voice that tries to convince you otherwise is not in agreement with the

King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. It is an illegitimate authority trying to gain validation in your life. Ignore it! Respond only to Jesus.

Jesus never says "you could do a little better, love a little more, try a little harder or work a little longer". Jesus always and only says "you are WORTH it, you are capable, you are strong, you are pleasing, you are loved, you are favored and you are blessed, and for you the impossible is possible." Jesus is the great lover King and we, His Bride, are His great and everlasting reward.

When judgement day comes, there will be nothing between you and the all-knowing gaze of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). Absolutely nothing and one one will stand between you and Him. All that will be there with you on that day, is the King and you, His bride.

Live in response to Him and nothing else. Live in response to His love, to His acceptance, to His favor, to His Glory and to His Grace. I dare you to Agree with Grace. I dare you to Agree with Jesus Christ!

THE GRACE OF GOD IS JESUS CHRIST!

Recommended Resources

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Escape to Reality- Paul Ellis

www.escapetoreality.org

Twitter: @paul_ellis

MY HOME CHURCH

Northlands Church, Atlanta GA

www.northlandschurch.com

411 Foundation's- "The Gospel of Grace" with Pastor Rob Rufus

Available at: www.4-11.org

Twitter: @SpeakingGrace

Joseph Prince Ministries

www.josephprince.org

Twitter: @JosephPrince

City Church International, Hong Kong

www.ccihk.com

Dr. Andrew Farley Ministries

www.andrewfarley.org