

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES ON GRACE

Salvation that came by grace must satisfy two components -

- 1) renouncing the ungodliness and worldly passion and
- 2) embracing a self-controlled, upright, and godly live.

The reality is that this renouncing and embracing occurs over a lifetime, hence the dynamic aspect of grace outpouring. The text also suggests that there were people in the church who were not renouncing their old way of life. What will happen to people who insist on living the old lives? In the book of 1 Timothy which was written under similar circumstances to Titus, the apostle Paul described those who do not ascribed to sound doctrine as 'puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth'. I leave you to imagine the eventual fate of such people.

The renunciation is just one side of the coin, on the other side, a self-controlled, upright and godly life. As this is Chelsea Flower Show week, I like the analogy of a well tended garden with trimmed hedges, perfectly symmetrical rows of different types of flowers and absence of weeds. Without the knowledge, effort and dedication, we can be sure there will be no garden at all. Although there is knowledge, great effort and dedication, the gardener is still dependent on God to make the living plants grow. Good works pay.

Secondly, the grace of God gives the people the blessed hope of Jesus' Second Coming. People, who are detached from God, feel hopeless in a world of uncertainty, strife and decadence and ironically, they indulge in sinful pleasures to deaden the pain and deflect from the reality. Those who have experienced God's goodness, look forward to the Second Coming of Jesus when their redemption is complete. All of us know too well that we live a decaying world with a slowly decaying body and one day, Christ will usher in a new world and a new body for those who hope for Him.

What a wonderful message of grace!

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GRACE

I remember my days as a young believer, excited by my new life in Jesus and yet acutely aware of my sinful inclinations. There were periods of desperation and despondency - after the pleasures of sin, then guilt and yet have nowhere and no one else to turn to but God because only He can forgive my sins. How can one escape the frequent cycles of sinning and asking for forgiveness? O, wretched man that I am!

I know now that the struggle with sin is a **lifelong** journey that every Christian goes through. This struggle can only be overcome by a spiritual solution.

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WARMING UP

1. How do you respond when you feel hopeless – sleep, eat, run, watch YouTube, pray, sing or something else?
2. Why do people feel hopeless and what is the antidote to hopelessness?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Titus 2:1-10 - Teach sound doctrine

3. How does one determine what is sound and what is unsound doctrine?
4. What happens to the lives of the people when doctrine is sound and what happens when the doctrine is unsound?

Read Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 - Renouncing and Embracing

5. How do we recognise ungodliness and worldly living? Why is renouncing ungodliness and worldly living needed?
6. What help does God give us in living the self-controlled, upright and godly lives?

Read 1 Corin 13 - Our attitude towards one another in living out this life of grace

7. What is the overarching attitude that we must have towards one another?

MOVING FORWARD

If we are living that self-controlled, upright and godly lives, continue to do so by the grace of God. Mentor or disciple those in our midst who need our encouragement to live this life of grace.

If we are entangled in worldly pleasures, ask God for the grace in renouncing these practices.

LIFE TOGETHER

Let us not be content encouraging those in our small circle, but draw in those in church but not in a small group.

In the words of Paul, 'Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity'.

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Leader's Guide - Grace

These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Titus 2:1-10 - Teach sound doctrine

3. How does one determine what is sound and what is unsound doctrine?

Soundness of doctrine is measured against the whole counsel of the Word of God.

4. What happens to the lives of the people when doctrine is sound and what happens when the doctrine is unsound?

Sound doctrine, in this context, lead to renunciation of godless living and lives that honour God. Sound doctrine glorifies God.

Read Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 - Renouncing and Embracing

5. How do we recognise ungodliness and worldly living? Why is renouncing ungodliness and worldly living needed?

Ungodliness is anything (in thoughts and deeds) that departs from God. Wrong thoughts and deeds are obvious while wrong attitudes and inclinations are more subtle. Agreeing with God's assessment of our condition is the first step towards obedience. When we think there is nothing wrong with our lives, there will not be any repentance.

6. What help does God gives us in living the self-controlled, upright and godly lives?

God has given us His Word (through which sound doctrines are derived) and His Holy Spirit who regenerate and renew us.

Read 1 Corin 13 - Our attitude towards one another in living out this life of grace

7. What is the overarching attitude that we must have towards one another?

Love.

It means being patient with one another, etc...