

Salt and Light 2016
Grace Teaches
Godliness in a Godless World

Think of the millions of tiny, nearly subconscious decisions you make on any given day. You dress, you eat, you scan your phone, you listen to the news, you check and respond to messages, you post on social media, you exercise, you listen to some music, you eat again, you engage in conversation, you make plans with your friends, you read a book, you watch a movie, you look at Youtube, you eat again, you write a paper for school, you engage in a friendly debate, you think about your favorite guy/girl, etc. Now, think about something else. What guiding principle informed those decisions? In other words, why did you decide to do whatever you did in each scenario? You might be thinking that this is a ridiculous question. Each decision was made independently. But actually, they were not so independent. If you probe far enough, you will find that there is one basic belief, or conviction, that informs all the small decisions of life. For a professing Christian, there are three beliefs that usually govern behavior.

Antinomianism – without law (Romans 6:1-2)

Guiding Principle – Salvation is by grace alone, forgiveness is mine through Christ, and heaven is secured for me. (So far, so good) Therefore, I'm free from any obligations. My way of life is not a matter of great importance because there is plenty of grace to cover my sins.

Antinomianism Applied:

- Ruled by feelings – I John 2:15,16; Ephesians 2:3
- Heavily influenced by the world – I John 2:15
- Give little thought to anything, especially pleasing God – Hebrews 12:28-29, Ephesians 5:14-17
- Are easily seduced by Satan – I Peter 5:8; Romans 12:1-2
- Have little concern for their influence on others – Romans 14:12-19, Matthew 5:13-16

Ultimately, this guiding principle is not at all Christian.

Legalism – bound by law (Colossians 2:20-23)

Guiding principle – Be ye holy; for I am holy. (So far, so good) The legalist tends to see his righteousness as contingent on his own works, failing to rest in the righteousness of Christ. My way of life is of great importance because my standing before God depends on it.

Legalism Applied:

- Ruled by lists – Colossians 2:21
- Find their rest in rules – I have achieved suitable righteousness.
- Paralyzed by excessive self-examination – I have not achieved suitable righteousness.
- Highly critical of others – They have not achieved suitable righteousness.
- Disassociation with the world

- Lack of compassion on sinners
- Driven by fear instead of peace – cannot enjoy God until I am perfect

Ultimately, this guiding principle is not at all Christian.

Grace the Better Teacher – Titus 2:11-14

Grace Defined

Grace of the Father-Titus 1:1-3 A Real Hope

- Salvation is by promise, not merit. It is solely the result of:
 - Hope in Father’s faithfulness, not mine.
 - Hope in Father’s choice, not my merit.
 - Hope in Father’s commitment, not mine.
 - Hope in Father’s love, not mine.

Grace of Jesus – Titus 2:14 A Real Rescue

- Jesus voluntarily gave Himself up to endure God’s wrath against my sin. His death has purchased my freedom from the enslavement and guilt of sin forever.
 - My freedom is in Christ.
 - Freed from lawlessness
 - Freed from impurity
 - Freed from possession of sin to be His possession
 - Freed to love and do good

Grace of the Holy Ghost – Titus 3:3-6 A Real Change

- In mercy, the Holy Spirit has transformed my life with the gift of a new life, a new heart, new desires, and a renovated mind.
 - Changed from serving pleasure to serving God
 - Changed from living in envy to live at peace
 - Changed from hate to love

Grace Teaches

God’s grace in providing a secure hope, bringing a real rescue, and producing a dramatic change is designed to teach us how to live in this present, ungodly world. “Teaching” in Titus 2:12 is a word that describes the training of a child. It includes all the elements – instruction, training (practice), correction, chastisement, discipline. The Holy Spirit’s work in our lives is to convince, provide the ability, and bring needed conviction that we might listen more to the voice of grace than we do the voice of our flesh. Grace teaches us to run from ungodliness, to be sound thinkers, and to live in anticipation of a better hope than is found in this present world.

What Grace Teaches

Regarding God - Love

- Grace teaches us to love God above all else – I John 4:19, Matthew 22:37,38
 - My hope is in God
 - My freedom is in God
 - Life's meaning and purpose is found in glorifying God
- Grace teaches us to fear God – Hebrews 12:28,29; Psalm 130:4
 - God's hatred for sin is displayed in full at the cross
- Grace teaches us to seek God's wisdom – Colossians 2:3

Regarding Self - Humility

- Grace teaches humility – Romans 12:3
 - I am a fool without Christ.
 - I cannot trust my own wisdom.
 - I am prone to prioritizing my agenda over God's.
 - Through grace, I can:
 - Walk wisely
 - Bring glory to God
 - Love God more than I love myself

Regarding the World – Temporary

- Grace teaches us to desire a better world – Titus 2:13
 - Our loyalty is to the world to come.
 - Our mission in this world is to love God and love others.
 - Our awareness is heightened by the knowledge of our tendency to be deceived.

How Grace Teaches

It is important to understand how grace teaches. It is not a one-time lesson; it is life-long training within the context of family and church life.

- **Instruction** – Preaching, Bible reading, memorization, parental guidance
- **Training** – Trials, disappointment, prayer, counsel
- **Discipline** – Sin, confession, repentance, restoration

Grace Every Day

The challenge is to learn how to apply the teachings of grace to the millions of little decisions we face every day. The constant temptation is to either dismiss the challenge because it is too hard (antinomianism) or to create a list of hard and fast rules (legalism). The better challenge is to live according to grace, **loving** God and others, living in **humility**, and maintaining a **temporary** mindset to this present world. Here are some of the specific decisions of life we must be guided in by grace:

- Clothing and fashion
- Money
- Entertainment
- Friendship
- Alternative Lifestyles
- Dating and relationships
- Athletics
- Career Choices
- Church Involvement
- Music
- Social Media
- Interaction with Parents