

FOUR MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF GRACE

Romans 6:1, 14-15

Introduction: Our normal thing is to "do what comes naturally" and by that is to control ourselves and others by using rules, regulations and laws. We have our own opinion about right and wrong and have often made remarks such as: "there ought to be a law..." or "I'm going to give him/her a piece of my mind..." and in making new year's resolutions "I've decided to turn over a new leaf, I'm going to/not going to do such and such this next year."

It's natural for us to want to control ourselves with our own laws. However Christians are no longer to live by laws, but by God's grace and doing that is unnatural for it is against all human nature. There are a lot of things about GRACE we don't understand and here are four misunderstandings a lot of people have.

I. FIRST LAW AND GRACE DEFINED:

1. Law (legality) is an attempt to control outward actions by means of rules, enforced by penalties.
 - Traffic laws, Income tax laws (filing dates, forms, etc.)
2. Grace is the control of inward attitudes and outward actions by means of love, without penalties.
 - What causes a guy to bring his sweetheart a gift? Did she demand it? If not then why did he bring it? Love! Care! Concern!
 - Grace controls by LOVE.
3. Legality deals with outward actions or words, while grace deals with inward attitudes and motives of the heart.
 - The law is totally unconcerned about how a person feels about the law, as long as the law is not broken.
 - Grace cares about how a person feels about the law. Grace wants the heart to be filled with love, benevolence, instead of unconcern, bitterness or hate. Grace controls from within.
4. Law deals with the surface. Grace deals with the center.
 - Law appeals to fear, the fear of penalty. Grace appeals to grateful love.
 - Law prescribes what one ought to do. Grace creates a "want to" from within.
5. People prefer grace for themselves, but law for everyone else.
 - *1 Timothy 1:8-11* *Romans 7:6* *Galatians 4:9*

II. FOUR MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF GRACE

1. "Grace" really means that there is NO control at all.
 - The idea is that once under grace, there are no restrictions, rules or regulations.
 - In the Christian life there are two extremes:
 - License - plain old lawlessness. Free to do anything, there are no limits.
 - Legality - self-imposed laws, rigid rules, lists of do's and don'ts which prevent us from doing anything other than eat, sleep, and read the Bible.

- Everything we like to do is either immoral, illegal, or fattening.
 - Grace represents real control, but from within, a middle path between legality and license.
2. "Grace" has NO commands, rules or regulations of any kind.
 - "I'm under grace therefore I don't need any rules for my life." "The law is not for me for I'm under grace therefore I'm not subject to any rules."
 - Jesus said, "***This is my COMMANDMENT, that you love one another as I have loved you.***"
 - Paul said, "***Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.***" "***Be not drunk with wine..***" "***Pay taxes to whom taxes are due...***"
 - All these are commands - commands of GRACE! Grace has it's commands just as sure as the Law does.
 - The difference between law and grace is that the Law commands without a motive to obey and often creates a feeling of rebellion within. Ever tell a little child to NOT do this or that? What does the little child usually do?
 - Some have put up warning signs such as: **KEEP OFF THE GRASS! and PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GROW.**
 - Each sign meant the same thing, don't get on the grass. However the second sign awakened a desire within to comply with it, it was grac-ious.
 - Grace has its commands, rules, regulations, as the Law does, BUT grace alone has the ability to create a DESIRE to comply.
 3. The standards of "Grace" are lower than that of the Law.
 - Christians are often seen doing and saying things that some have decided that are against their principles and therefore, the standards of Christians (grace) are lower than those of the Law.
 - Legal standards always concern themselves with outward acts. As long as a person keeps the outward aspect of his/her life adjusted to the Law, it is alright.
 - Grace goes beyond the outward act and says the heart must be right as well.
 - The Ten Commandments represent only the minimum standards. Nothing is said within them about evangelism, missions, walking in the Spirit, the Fatherhood of God, fellowship with the Saints, salvation or Jesus Christ.
 - Legalism is concerned with the OUTWARD things only.
 4. The Christian can decide which to live by, the Law or Grace.
 - If grace is found too difficult or demanding, "the Lord will understand" some might say.
 - A deliberate failure to live under grace is called "falling from grace."
 - It is impossible to please God by trying to live under/by the Law. God can be pleased only by the Christian living by God's grace.

CONCLUSION:

1. The supreme illustration of grace is the Lord's Supper (***2 Corinthians 8:9***)
 - God gave first, we are invited to come as we are. That is GRACE.
2. ***1 Corinthians 6:19-20*** - God has made the believer in Jesus a saint and he/she is to live by GRACE!