

GRACE: UNMERITED KINDNESS



We of the human race deserve death and damnation. We have done things our own way; turned from God and His design and pretty much messed *everything* up. To put it lightly! We've messed up ourselves, other people, the environment, relationships—God's order. It is only by God's *grace* that He just doesn't destroy this planet and start over. When mankind; including you and me, rejected God and His design, He sent His Son to be born of a woman, walk in this uncaring, rejecting world, and be crucified—to die a horrible death for us—for mankind. Yet, we still run around trying to get our needs met through other people, possessions, money, power; anything but seeking God. Yet, God's grace; His unmerited kindness, is still there for us.

How can we *not* extend grace to others? Especially, to our spouse and our family? How can we be harsh and demanding or manipulative and underhanded in our relationships, when God has done so much for us? We tend to want perfection from others, but desire grace for our imperfections. I experience this double standard in my own life - I'm talking about me, not my wife - and I am pretty sure you have some experience with it also. The flesh too easily intrudes on our desire to be Christ-like and we succumb to the temptation of making life about us. Living a life of receiving God's grace and giving grace is more than difficult - it is impossible!

Yet, a life of grace can be lived. The first step toward freely giving grace is to humble ourselves and understand the truth of the statement that we *deserve* a horrible death. Accepting God's grace necessarily means that we must walk humbly before our God and as we do that, we are to love mercy and extend grace to our spouse and those we come in contact with. We must then focus on the good, not the bad things in others. Philippians 4:8 reminds us to dwell on good things - the positive things in others. A few verses later, Paul wrote that he could do all things through Him who gave him strength. We can also do *all* things through Christ - that includes giving our spouse grace. Where do you need to let go, give kindness, and trust God for the results?

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

Seven acts of Grace in a Marriage by Ron Edmondson - erlc.com/resource-library

How to Strengthen Your Marriage with Grace by Whitney Hopley - www.crosswalk.com