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Living By Grace

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Living By Grace

“From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.”
(John 1:16)

Have you ever been around someone who made you feel like you just didn't measure up to their expectations? No matter what you did, it never seemed quite good enough?

In reality, we don't measure up to God's standard either. We aren't good enough. That is why Jesus died on the cross for our sins and has clothed us with his righteousness. God bestows his goodness on us, not because we are worthy, but because he is gracious. “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NLT).

Many people live a performance-based life. What they do determines the rewards or punishments they receive. Because of this perspective, they bring the scales of performance into their relationships. Are you living a performance-based life or is your life characterized by grace? How you honestly answer this question has a profound impact on your relationship with God and with others.

First, let's consider your relationship with God. Are you still trying to earn God's favor through your deeds? The Bible is clear that we will never be good enough to gain entrance into heaven apart from Jesus' saving grace. But even though believers rely on Christ's sacrifice for their salvation, later, like the Galatians, they often try to please God through their self-effort. In Galatians we read these words of challenge: “After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?” (Galatians 3:3).

Certainly, God wants us to live righteous lives and reflect Christ-like character qualities. We need to seek to live as Godly people. But the transformation of our character comes through our surrender to and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Whatever blessings we receive are the result of God's loving kindness.

So, what happens when you bring performance-oriented attitudes into human relationships? Acceptance is dependent upon behavior and rejection is the consequence of failing to satisfy the other person's expectations. As a result, there is

insecurity and tension in these kinds of relationships.

“We must appropriate the tender mercy of God every day after conversion, or problems quickly develop. We need his daily grace in order to live a righteous life.” —David Jeremiah

God wants us to freely receive his grace and love. And he wants us to extend that same grace and love to others. In fact, with the help of the Holy Spirit, others may actually sense God’s unconditional love and acceptance flowing through you.

With God, you need to remember that you do not have to be “good enough” to “earn” favor. Instead, believe in God’s goodness and expect him to give you far more than you deserve.

Enjoy God’s goodness and grace. It is really given freely.