

Living by Grace

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I. Introduction.

A. Scenario 1: You have a fight with your spouse over breakfast and an hour later, you have an opportunity to share the gospel with someone. How would you feel as you approached this opportunity to witness?

B. Scenario 2: You have a great morning- you treat your spouse well and you have a great quiet time before leaving for the day. Once again, you have an opportunity to share the gospel. How would you feel about sharing the gospel in this situation?

C. Scenario 3: You have a bad day full of failures- you lied to your wife or you had impure thoughts that you entertained for a couple hours. You then immediately die in a car accident. Where will you go?

D. We accept the fact that we are saved by grace, but we tend to lapse into a performance relationship with God after that. This is what affects our confidence in Scenarios 1 and 2 above. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

1. If we have done well, we feel confident in Scenario 2 because our perception is that our performance has been satisfactory.

2. We experience a lack of confidence in Scenario 1 because we've been "bad" that day.

3. How bad do you have to be before God will not help in that witnessing opportunity? How good do you have to be so that God will bless it? (Isaiah 64:6)

E. When we became Christians, we declared spiritual bankruptcy. But many Christians only declared temporary bankruptcy- that is, we began to develop good Christian habits and started to rely on our performance to earn God's favor. (Romans 3:10-12)

II. Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense.

A. God blesses us based on the merit of Jesus. There is no biblical reason why our level of confidence should be affected between Scenarios 1 and 2.

B. Jesus bought and paid for every blessing and answered prayer that you will ever receive. We could never be good enough to receive God's blessing on our own, but because of Jesus, He chooses not to count our sins against us. (Romans 4:7-8; Colossians 1:21-22, 2:13)

III. If this freedom from sin makes us feel we can do whatever we want, then we do not truly understand grace. (Romans 6:1, 5:20ff; Luke 15:21-28)

A. A correct understanding of grace produces gratitude.

B. Works and grace are mutually exclusive. If we are self-dependent, then we are not dependent on the grace of Jesus. (Romans 11:6)

C. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing through Christ Jesus and His merit alone. This is true of our entire Christian life- we never get to the point that we are not dependent on Jesus. (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Samuel 9:7, 10-11, 13)

Application questions:

1. When you look at your attitude toward God's blessings in your life, do you see a performance mentality or a grace mentality?

2. Why does understanding what grace is produce gratitude instead of licentiousness?

3. What does learning to live by grace look like in real life? How can you train yourself to rely on grace rather than performance? What would need to change in your attitude, thought life, words, or actions?
