

Confronting the Error of Hyper-Grace

The biblical message of grace is wonderful, glorious and life-transforming. We can't live without it for one second of our lives. But there is a message being preached today in the name of a new grace reformation, mixing powerful truth with dangerous error. I call it hyper-grace.

One of the foundational doctrines of the hyper-grace message is that God does not see the sins of his children, since we have already been made righteous by the blood of Jesus and since all of our sins, past, present and future, have already been forgiven.

That means that the Holy Spirit never convicts believers of sin, that believers never need to confess their sins to God, and that believers never need to repent of their sins, since God sees them as perfect in his sight.

It is easy to see how such teaching can be dangerous, especially to a believer being tempted to compromise.

One hyper-grace teacher wrote this: "When God looks at me, He doesn't see me through the blood of Christ, He sees me—cleansed! Likewise, He sees us as holy and righteous. He sees us, and He loves what He sees!"

Really? Always? 24-7? God always loves what he sees when he looks at his people?

Yes, he loves us, but does he always love what he sees?

Did Jesus love what he saw when he rebuked five out of seven congregations in Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3? Did Paul, writing on behalf of the Lord, love what he saw when he warned the Galatians that they had fallen from grace and become

trapped in legalism? Did James, also writing as a servant of the Lord, love what he saw when he rebuked his readers for being “friends of the world” and “adulterers and adulteresses”?

And if the Lord doesn't see our sins, why did James write that if a believer who was sick had also sinned, God would forgive him when he healed him (see James 5:14-15)? And if he doesn't see our sins, why did the Lord discipline believers in Corinth because of their sins (see 1 Cor. 11:27-32)? (And pay careful attention to 1 Corinthians 11:32, “When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.”)

If Jesus doesn't see our sins, why did he say to the church in Ephesus, “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love” (Rev. 2:4, NIV)? And why did he say this to the church in Sardis? “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.” (Rev. 3:1-3)

Does it sound like the Lord was thrilled with what he saw in Ephesus and Sardis?

If the Lord always “sees us as holy and righteous” and always “loves what He sees,” why did he rebuke the believers in Laodicea, telling them that they were “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17)? Why didn't he say, “I see you as beautifully clothed, healthy, and rich?”

If he was so happy with what he saw in Laodicea, why did he threaten to spit the congregation out of his mouth (see Rev. 3:16)? And if believers never need to repent of their sins, why did Jesus say, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.

So be earnest, and repent" (Rev. 3:19)? And how interesting it is that the same Greek word used in John 16:8—where Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of its sins—is the word used by the Lord in Revelation 3:19 (translated there as "rebuke"; and note Rev. 3:22: this is the Spirit speaking!).

It is because God loves us that he rebukes us (not condemns us) and it is because sin is so destructive that he calls us to turn from it. This is the goodness of God, and this is what grace does, as Paul wrote in Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

How tragic it is today when God's people mistake the voice of His correcting love for the condemning voice of Satan, and how sad it is when they resist the purifying work of the Spirit, claiming that there's nothing to purify since God no longer sees their sins.

Has He justified us by the blood of Jesus? Absolutely. Has He has set apart as holy to Himself? Without a doubt. Has He called us to be His sons and daughters, all by His love and grace? Yes He has. And it is because of these things that Paul wrote, "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

What a beautiful, lofty calling. Don't let anyone steal it from you.

*Special note: I'm in the process of writing a major book on "hyper-grace," but you can watch a one-hour teaching video [here](#).

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