

Is Grace a License to Sin?

Have you ever gotten a continual message from God over and over and over again, in as many different ways as you can imagine?

Lately that has been my experience with the gospel. Every book I pick up, every sermon I hear, every quote I find and every verse I read points me to the gospel—or at least it seems that way.

And although I've heard the concept of preaching the gospel to myself daily and understood it to some degree, I haven't got it as profoundly as I'd like.

I'm praying for understanding, for application and for ability to live out the gospel daily.

I just read these verses and again what struck me was the gospel!

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (Gal. 1:3-6, ESV).

God truly has been reminding me over and over again about His relentless, passionate and unconditional love for me—for all of us.

The first word, *grace* (love that word, BTW), is defined as "an undeserved act of kindness." It represents all that we have received as a result of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

And then that other lovely word, *peace*, is a result of the grace we have received because of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

That sounds a little bit repetitive, but I'm trying to get that gospel message into my head and heart more deeply than ever—that the grace and peace that God gives us is because of Jesus, not us.

Isn't that freeing?

It was God's will for Jesus to die for our sins so that we wouldn't have to, so that we could have a relationship with Him, so that we would know that He loves us more than we could ever imagine.

I don't know about you, but I need to know that—I mean, really and truly know that.

I have recognized lately that I really struggle with thinking I'm worthy of anything. I wonder if everything happened because I really am a complete mess—because a lot of times I really feel like one.

Sometimes I feel like I'm such a failure. I wonder if I'll ever get things right with parenting, home management and my career (whatever that may be). I wonder if anyone would truly be able to deal with my life—really. I wonder if I could ever truly be a blessing of a wife to someone; my first time around didn't end so well.

The funny thing about my fears and my feelings is that know they are bogus. They don't reflect who I am in Christ. And I know who I am, so why do I struggle so?

Why is it so difficult to see my value as a child of the King? Why am I so impacted by my successes or failures in this sin-ridden world?

I think the key word is *sin-ridden*. Stuff is just gonna be a struggle here.

Fear is gonna assail us, but it doesn't have to defeat us.

Doubts are gonna rain down on us, but they don't have to drown us.

Failure is gonna happen, but it doesn't have to define us.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-35, 37-39).

More than conquerors! Seriously, how can we be *more than* conquerors? That's crazy!

Crazy good, though.

God didn't send Jesus to live and die for me so that I could live a life of defeat. He's not even content with me living a life of mediocrity. I'm free from the power of sin and death. I'll struggle, to be sure, but God has already given me all I need to live a life of freedom and victory.

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

I'm free to live without fear of condemnation. Free to live without fear of failure. Free to live without fear, period.

I'm not a slave to sin, to fear, to anxiety, to past mistakes, to expectations, to failures, to successes, to anything.

I don't have to fear because God loves me perfectly.

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

But that love—that perfect love—that is God. That is the gospel. That is what Paul is talking about—the source of our grace and peace.

I want grace to impact me daily, to speak to the way I think about myself, others and life. But how do I make grace not just something I know about, but something I live for and by and with constantly?

Is it as simple as waking up and reminding myself of who I am and who He is? Is that it? I guess that's a definitely step in the right direction!

Time in the Word—as always, that's part of the answer. It just is! When I look for it, I see the gospel everywhere in Scripture. God's relentless and loving pursuit of His people is all throughout the Bible.

Prayer—yup, prayer. Who would have thought of this?

I'm asking God to show me how the gospel of grace should impact me and my children. And God is showing me in little ways—in my parenting adventures, in my interaction with friends, in my attitude about things, in how I do what He's called me to do, in everything.

I'm getting it, slowly. I don't get things easily. I gotta work for it. But God is working with me!

I believe that God is showing me the huge amount of grace I need so that I can be a grace-filled person toward others.

My prayer is that grace would spill out of me all over everyone around me.

As God shows me how to live this grace-filled life, this gospel-centered life, I will share and we can grow together in our walk with the Lord!

Sue Birdseye *is an author and single mom of five kids that range from 4-years-old to 17-years-old. Her book, When Happily Ever After Shatters is in bookstores. This article is adapted from her blog, .*