

Compelled by Grace

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I. Introduction.

- A. The outworking of God's grace means that we are fully loved and accepted by God and there is nothing you can do to make Him love you more or less because He loves you through Christ. (John 15)
- B. All of the blessings we receive are through our organic relationship with Christ.
- C. If this is the case, why do we do the spiritual disciplines?
- D. Text: Romans 5:20-6:1-end.

II. If we misunderstand God's grace, we are tempted to live however we please. (Romans 5:20-end; Galatians 5:13ff; Jude)

- A. The solution to this temptation is not legalism; it is to correct our understanding of grace.
 - 1. Obedience should be a response of gratitude, not obligation.
 - 2. The spiritual disciplines do not earn God's favor; rather, they are gifts from God to help us grow. (Psalm 119:11)
- B. Jesus is the merit by which we have God's grace. The spiritual disciplines allow us to appropriate the grace that is already available to us through Jesus.

III. Obedience is our irrevocable dedication of our bodies to God and our continual reaffirmation of that decision. (Romans 12:1ff)

- A. Obedience is a natural, loving response to God's mercy. A reluctant or fearful obedience is not true obedience- it's legalism. (Romans 12:1)
- B. We need to teach the limitless grace of God to others, without fear of the abuse of grace it could lead to, so that obedience is real. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 4:7-8)
- C. When you understand grace truly, the natural response to it is to desire holiness and obedience.

Application questions:

1. Do you find yourself afraid to believe that God's grace is limitless? How does your perspective on grace influence how you live out your Christian life?

2. Is your natural tendency to abuse grace or become legalistic? Do a little soul searching and try to understand why you have the tendency that you do. How does this teaching impact the issues that you wrestle with?

3. How does your understanding of grace play out in your relationships? In your expectations of your loved ones? In the training that you do? How can you ensure that your relationships/teaching reflect a true understanding of God's grace?
