

A Mind that Thinks "Never Desiring; Always Chosen"

"Our brains are incredibly agile machines, and it's hard to think of anything they do more efficiently than *recognize faces*. Just hours after birth, the eyes of newborns are drawn to face-like patterns. An adult brain knows it's seeing a face within 100 milliseconds, and it takes just over a second to realize that two different pictures of a face, even if they're lit or rotated in very different ways, belong to the same person. Neuroscientists now believe that there may be a specific region of the brain, on the *fusiform gyrus* of the temporal lobe, dedicated to facial recognition." *Facial Recognition*, Ben Austen, Wired Magazine, 07.15.11

Do you recognize "The Face of Grace" as quickly? We've said grace thinks, "Never worthy, always loved." Grace will *choose to pursue* the one who intentionally hides or turns away *for the good of the one running*. *Fatal Attraction* is not grace. To need someone so desperately you pursue them for your good is a sickness. To pursue for another's good is grace. You choose to pursue because your heart's filled with amazing love. God is love. He declares His love for His people is without conditions; "*I will love them **freely***" (Hos. 4:4).

I. God moves toward you even when you are moving away from Him.

God doesn't move toward you because you move toward Him, or because of anything you say or do. "*There is no one who seeks after God, no not one.*" (Romans 3:11). You may say, "But I do love Him!"
 "We love Him, *because* He first loved us." (I John 4:19).

God says, "*I've loved you with an everlasting love; with lovingkindness have I drawn you*" (Jer. 31:3).
"He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters" (Psalm 18:16).
"This is love: not that we love God, but that He loves us and sent His Son to rescue us" (I John 4:10).
 Do you want a description of God's pursuit of you? Read **Psalm 139**. He knows you, yet He loves you.
 "How precious (rare) are your thoughts about me, O God. They can't be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!" (vss. 17-18).

II. The greatest hindrance to resting in God's free love is *human* relationships.

God's love is not like the love expressed by our culture today. Love is actually about convenience and ego. That is, "*I will love you as long as you add value to my life and please me. When that ceases, so does my love for you.*" This is a conditional love. The conditions are different depending upon the relationship, but there many things that must be met in order to earn another's love and favor.

A. What one feels by touch (flesh) is easier to believe than what one hears by teaching (faith).

That's why New Testament writers wrote some of their greatest prayers about God's love.
 "I pray that you, *firmly fixed in love yourselves*, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of God—and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension ... that you will be filled with God himself!" (Eph. 3:17-19).

B. Once you come to believe God's choice is to pursue you for your good, you are captivated.

God's love is so captivating, so alluring, so charming, so dazzling, so enthralling, so mesmerizing, so spellbinding (gospel is *good spell*), so magnetizing, so enrapturing, so gripping, so compelling, so hypnotizing, and so absolutely "sweep me off my feet" enamoring that I cannot, will not, and must not refuse. It's impossible. Free, unconditional love effectually *changes* the one loved.

III. An understanding of God's free love for me empowers me to love others in the same manner.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. *As I have loved you*" (John 13:34).

Grace is loving the unworthy and pursuing the undesiring. As we saw last week, there's a difference between "good judgment" and "living in judgment." Can you forgive? Can you pursue? Grace can.