

A Mind that Thinks "Never Perfect; Always Embraced"

Why did sinners want to be around Jesus, but not so much around us? Are we loving people right where they're at? Are we displaying the same radical grace to others that we ourselves need from God? We'll see in this lesson that the mind of grace continually thinks: *"Never perfect, always embraced."* This embrace of grace is a radical concept." In the Bible, God is called *"The God of all grace who called you..."* (1 Peter 5:10). Our calling is of grace, our Father is the God of all grace, and we are commanded as Christians to *"live consistent with our calling (of grace)"* (Eph. 4:1). Grace always embraces the imperfect.

I. Perfection is the standard that we strive to obtain in all aspects of our lives.

Perfection is defined as "the condition, state, or quality of being as free from all flaws or defects." We want a perfect vacation, a perfect job, a perfect hobby, a perfect marriage, and perfect kids. What happens if something isn't perfect? We throw it away and start over or we blame other people for why things aren't perfect. That's in our nature. The pursuit of perfection disrupts relationships. *"You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). This verse causes us to view God through the lens of One who is perfect (true) and One who demands perfection from His kids.

II. We'll will never meet God's standard of perfection, but He always embraces us.

"Here's a trustworthy saying worthy of full acceptance, Christ came to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Remember, that Christ came "because He was sent by the Father's love" (John 3:16). Remarkable! *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son for us"* (1 John 4:10 NIV). *"It is **God who is working in you**, both to will and to work to fulfill His good purpose"* (Phil. 2:13). How can a holy, perfect God embrace me, spending His time, effort, and energy working in me?

III. God *embraces us* in our imperfections because He absolutely needs nothing *from us*.

"I have no need ... of your sacrifices...or your gifts" (Psalm 50:9-12). Grace embraces the imperfect. That can only happen when one has no need of the one being loved, favored, and graced. If you desire to know real love, then find your soul full of the love of the One who needs nothing of you. And if you want real relationship, learn to find your needs met in the Creator and rest in His love. *"I have learned (unlocked the secret) of being content (satisfied) in **who I am**"* (Philippians 4:13). *"I am who I am* by the grace of God (1 Cor. 15:10) for "His grace is sufficient for me" (II Cor. 12:9).

IV. There is nothing in this world that comes close to the feeling of being embraced by grace.

Most love is self-love. I'll love you *when... if.... since...* and every other conditional preposition. *"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness"* (Jer. 31:3). You'll never be embraced by grace for work. A job is a contract of employment of performance. But when you begin to discover what it means to be loved without conditions, accepted without Contributions, and embraced without caveats, then you'll find yourself filled "with all the fullness of God." It helps if you've been rooted in family relationships built on grace, but it's not necessary.

V. Until we comprehend God's embrace of grace, we'll struggle embracing imperfect people.

The longest 18 inches in life are those from the mind where you think to the heart where you feel. I can tell you that God embraces you, but what you want is tangible evidence – blessings, comfort, no problems, no sickness, no turmoil, no struggles. Everything in your life happens *for your good*. *"Out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given"* (John 1:16 NIV). God is working within us, around us, and for us to *"conform us into the image of His Son"* (Rom. 8:29).