



GRACE AND TRUTH

1. List the qualities of Christ:
2. John 1:14 Two-point checklist
3. Why are grace and truth important?
4. Categorize the following words as describing either grace or truth:
(Check which)

	<u>Truth</u>	Grace
a. Law	_____	_____
b. Forgiveness	_____	_____
c. Mercy	_____	_____
d. Obedience	_____	_____
e. Wrath	_____	_____
f. Justice	_____	_____
g. Gospel	_____	_____
h. Love	_____	_____

Discussion:

5. What does the world's view of apathy and tolerance do to grace?
6. What does the world's view of relativism and deception do to truth?

Paradox

The grace question: Why did sinners want to be around Jesus, but don't want to be around us?

The truth question: Why did sinners crucify Jesus, but have no problem with us?

Grace is unmerited kindness and help towards undeserving sinners. It's unmerited—not based on what a person does or doesn't do. It's unmerited kindness—there's no grudging frown on the face of grace. It's unmerited kindness and help—it takes action; it feeds the hungry and reaches out to the lonely. And does it all towards undeserving sinners—no one ever deserves grace so there's no calculating involved.

Interestingly, the word "grace" doesn't appear in the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, only mentioned once in Luke, and never after the opening prologue of John's gospel (NIV). But that doesn't mean grace is absent from the four gospels. In reality, while the word is seldom seen, the display of grace is on every page.

Then when we come to the epistles, the word "grace" is all over the place. It appears 123 times in the New Testament, with the majority in the epistles. Peter, James, Jude, the writer of Hebrews, and especially Paul use the word again and again.

Jesus is full of grace. And truth, too. What is truth?

Truth is the God-pleasing standard of what is good and right. It is the God-pleasing standard—for God is the One for whose pleasure the universe exists. Truth is the God-pleasing standard— a standard that never changes, so that what's true today will always be true; truth is not relative. Truth is the God-pleasing standard of what is good and right—God's standard is not harsh but good and right, morally good and right as well as good and right for us.

Like the word "grace," the word "truth" is all over the place in the New Testament. It appears 183 times. It's worth noting that one of Jesus' most repeated statements was, "I tell you the truth" ("Verily, verily" in the KJV; 77 times in the four gospels). Jesus made it clear that what came from His lips was the truth. How could it not be so? Jesus is full of truth.

He's full of grace, and He is full of truth. Not grace sometimes and truth sometimes, but grace and truth together in perfect balance all the time. Our text says that Jesus came from the Father "full of grace and truth."

Balance. It's so important in life, and not just for bike riding. I heard someone put it like this, "Balance is the brief experience you achieve every so often when you cross the line from one extreme on your way to another."

We're so prone to go to extremes, to champion one position to the neglect of its biblical counter- balance. It's what a man does when he says to his wife, "You may not want to hear it, but I'm going to tell you anyway because it's true," and then blows her out of the water with a verbal assault. We might call that truth without grace.

Then there's the mother who keeps shielding her teenage son from feeling the painful consequences of his sinful choices, with the justification, "Oh, I just can't stand to see him get hurt. I love him too much." Isn't that a pseudo-grace (at best) to keep your son from facing the truth?

"If we minimize grace, the world sees no hope for salvation. If we minimize truth, the world sees no need for salvation. To show Jesus to the world, we must offer unabridged grace and truth, emphasizing both, apologizing for neither." *Randy Alcorn*

Reflective questions:

7. What does it look like to show grace and truth to those we disciple?

8. What happens if the leader is full of grace... with no accountability to God's commands?

9. What happens if the leader is full of truth...acting in judgement of all wrong without giving compassion and mercy?

10. How can the leader and co-leader hold each up accountable to both truth and grace in the group?

WORKS CITED

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