

The Ark Community

107: CHEAP GRACE

The principle of '**submitting to grace**' is a Christian understanding of the love and nature of God. Grace is 'received' by faith... It is NOT IMPOSED on us! Unless we use our faith to receive and continue to allow grace to work in us, God cannot transform us. Thus Christian transformation is the process of submitting and allowing grace to have it's way with us in our lives.

James 4:7 "**Submit to God and resist the Devil**".... The way we resist, the way we fight, the way we are transformed as Christians is by '**submitting**' to God and His powerful grace... "**Not by 'your' might nor 'your' power, but My Spirit, say's the Lord.**"

The scriptural foundation for 'submitting to grace' is Rom 12:1-3. In this beautiful passage, we see that the perfect will of God for our lives is attained by 'submitting ourselves' to God's mercy, which is His Grace. The focus of this Pauline passage is on the nature of God, that He is a Gentleman and He does not impose anything on us, without us giving Him the authority to do so... *He comes only by invitation!* Here, Paul begs Christians to '**present themselves**' to what God wants to do in and through them. Here, we see that God ultimately respects human freewill and is unable to help transform those who do not present themselves to Him.

This is the nature of Grace! It's FREE, but in order to have it's full effect, we have to fully receive it. Humans are able to RESIST and REFUSE God's grace. If it can be resisted it can also be submitted to!

The doctrine of 'Prevenient Grace' speaks of a special Grace that comes upon us, before we believe, to help us to believe. *God's good will unmerited.* Faith before we believe?! With Prevenient Grace we see how God gives us the Faith that we need to believe, this is God helping us at our moment of rebirth... a gentle nudge but the decision is OURS...! Imagine the assisting husband actually helping his own wife give birth to his own son! This is God with us! He helps us even at our time of birth!

This is a wonderful picture of God and His love. But not all accept this teaching, as it makes us think that God is 'convincing' us to convert, almost as if He was 'manipulating' the situation and not leaving us free to decide for ourselves. But He does – the decision is OURS to submit to His GRACE or reject it – this is the LIFE of the Believer – a life-long walk...!

So by the mercy and grace of God, He begs us to submit to His transformational process in our lives which begins by us offering ourselves as a 'living sacrifice' to Him, EVERY DAY, EVERY MOMENT, so that He may change us by His grace with **our permission!** It's His Power... It's Him doing the changing...but we have to submit to His grace to become what He wants us to be...which is the image of His own Son - this is our destiny. To conform into the image of Jesus!

Change often involves struggles and is not always easy, especially when God has to deal with deep-rooted strongholds... **It's soul surgery!** But by grace we need to keep lying down on the operation altar and letting Him tear out our emotional cancers. Unfortunately many Christians can't handle the 'pain of transformation' and run away from the altar to accept nominal Christianity rather than Christ-likeness. Staying on the altar of transformation takes courage, which God helps us with after we decide to stay. **He alone gives us the grace to submit to His surgery.**

Scriptures: Romans 8:29, 1 Co 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18 & Col 3:10