

Chapter 8: Identifying Evidences of Grace

Memory Verse: I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.

-1 Corinthians 1:4

1. In the "Peanuts" Cartoon of Lucy and Linus, Lucy says, "It happens just by looking at you...I can feel a criticism coming on."
 - a. How often do you feel the same way when you look closely at others around you?
 - b. CJ states that we all have that tendency apart from grace to criticize others. Why does the absence of grace make us more critical?
 - c. Describe how this was demonstrated by the Pharisees and the disciples?
 - i. Luke 18:11-14-
 - ii. Matthew 19:23-26-

Criticism is a deeply rooted habit for those who have sown seeds of self-exaltation over the years. – CJ Mahaney

Identifying Evidences of Grace in Others...

2. What does it mean to identify evidences of grace in others?
 - a. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. What were some of the issues going on in the Corinthian church that Paul addresses in his letter to them?
 - i. 1 Corinthians 1:10
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 5:1
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8
 - iv. 1 Corinthians 12:1
 - v. 1 Corinthians 15:12
 - vi. 1 Corinthians 1:1- (hint: why does Paul need to emphasize that He is an apostle by the will of God?)
 - b. Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9. Despite all of the issues in the Corinthian church, how does Paul begin his letter to the Corinthians?
 - c. If you'd been writing this letter, do you think you'd have begun the way Paul did? Why or why not?
 - d. Stop right now and spend time thanking God for those in your life who are "not doing the right thing" or are harder for you to love.
 - e. Are you more prone to 1) find fault with others OR 2) find ways to praise others?
 - f. Is there a difference between the way you speak about others in private and the way you speak to those same people? Should there be a difference?

- g. Why are the proud and self-righteous incapable of identifying evidences of grace in others? (pg 100)
3. Paul saw the Corinthians from a divine perspective. Based on what authority does he command all believers to have this perspective? Look up the following verses and write down the command that is given to believers.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 4:9-10
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 5:18
 - c. Ephesians 5:4
 - d. Ephesians 4:1-3
 4. We can say with confidence that God is at work in all believers. Look up the following verses and summarize what God says about all believers.
 - a. Ephesians 4:7-
 - b. Romans 12:6-
 - c. Hebrews 2:11-
 5. CJ suggests we look for 2 main evidences of grace in the lives of others (pg. 101).

Look up the following verses for each category and write out the lists that fall under each category:

- a. _____
Galatians 5:22-23-
- b. _____
 - i. Romans 12:6-8-
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 12:28)-
 - iii. Ephesians 4:11-
 - iv. 1 Peter 4:11-
6. When you become familiar with the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, you learn to recognize their manifestation and see that God is at work everywhere! What else is needed besides just knowledge of the fruit of the Spirit and spiritual gifts? (pg 101)
7. CJ claims that if you look anywhere, you will see evidences of God's activity and grace.
 - a. Do you agree with this statement?
 - b. Will you see these evidences in the lives of unbelievers? Why or why not?
 - c. Is there any way to cultivate humility in our hearts with respect to unbelievers? If so, how?

Our Calling...

8. The first component of a divine perspective is that we were “called.” What does Paul say about our “calling” in 1 Corinthians 1:2?

9. Paul was more aware of God's prior activity than he was of the church’s present failings. How could this fact sustain you as it did Paul?
 - a. Look up the following verses and write down what they say about God’s calling in every believer including you?
 - i. Rom. 1:7-

 - ii. 1 Thess. 4:7-

 - iii. 2 Tim. 1:9-
 - b. Why does this truth leave no room for self-righteousness and prideful criticism?

10. Does God's work in our lives deny or dismiss human responsibility? (pg 105) Explain your answer.

God’s Faithfulness...

11. The second component of a divine perspective and the true source of our confidence is God’s faithfulness. What does God’s faithfulness have to do with our humility before all believers especially the ones whom we have a difficult time identifying evidences of grace in? Look up the following verses and write down what God says about His faithfulness.
 - a. Leviticus 20:8

 - b. Psalm 89:1

 - c. John 10:29

 - d. 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

 - e. Philippians 1:6

12. If you are having a difficult time identifying evidences of grace in others, what verses should you memorize to correct your view of yourself? (Example: 1 Timothy 1:15)

13. What verses should you memorize to correct your view of others? (Example: Philippians 1:16)

Application...

“only those who are humble can consistently identify evidences of grace in others who need adjustment.”
– C.J. Mahaney

14. Ask someone in your family if you are more prone to criticize other believers or encourage them by identifying God’s grace in their lives. Does their answer suggest that you are prideful or humble in this area?
15. In Exodus 34:6 how does God respond to the sins of people?
16. How should we respond to the sins and failures of other people? Give verses to support your answer.
17. How should you look at people in your church before looking at anything else according to David Prior? (pg. 108)
18. Does our need to identify evidences of grace in others eliminate our need to confront sin or ignore correction? How can these two things work together? (pg 109)
 - a. Matthew 18:15-
 - b. Ephesians 4:15, 25-
19. CJ says that deepening our _____ for others as well as _____ and _____ to them will cultivate authentic humility. How does he define authentic humility in that sentence? (pg 109)

...too many Christians are more readily aware of the absence of God than they are of the presence of God, and they are more aware of their sin than they are of grace. –CJ Mahaney

20. Who can you encourage this week (can be more than one person) by telling them about the evidences of grace you see in their lives?

Indeed, his[Paul’s] ability to give thanks for these Christians probably says much about his own character. In every redeemed person there is evidence of the grace of God, and that brings forth Paul’s gratitude, both to God and for them. To delight in God for his working in the lives of others, even in the lives of those with whom one feels compelled to disagree, is sure evidence of one’s own awareness of being the recipient of God’s mercies.
– Gordon Fee