

Published based on [5 Indicators of Grace-Based Living -- Devotional](#)

# **5 Indicators of Grace-Based Living -- Devotional**

In this post I will cover 5 indicators (and there could be dozens more) of what it means to have a grace-based heart in our daily lives. I may share others later, but try these on for size now. Okay? Let's go...

**1. You only compare yourself to Jesus and not other people.** A works-based religious person always sizes his/her self up by comparing his/her self with other people. It's easy to come out on top by calling attention to someone who has bottomed out. Want to get the true picture? Look at how Jesus reacted and interacted with people and use that as a gauge. What was his attitude toward the person who sinned? We all agree that sin is sin, but we still build our lists that categorize people in a way that we are not on the *really bad* list. Is it or is it not true that all of us deserve eternal judgment in the lake of fire? If so, what difference does it make what someone else's sin is? Apart from grace, we would all cook in the same kettle. If it is not true, what are you doing reading a post about grace—you don't need it.

**2. Focuses on the true heart of God toward people.** God's heart is so filled with love and compassion for sinners which means all of us. When we assume He quickly moves in judgment to punish the sinner, we will do the same. The Bible is very clear that He is very longsuffering and patient. By the way, sin carries its own judgment. Wherever and whenever sin is committed, the dynamic of death and separation is at work. The seed in the sin produces the result that has the weight of judgment in it. Yes, God is the judge of all the Earth, but if He was as quick as we often are in judging people, we would all be toast already. You know this is the crusty truth! The greatest truth for us all is that God is love! This is the divine motive that enables all of us to receive His grace through Jesus. If we are grace-based, we will seek the same motive in our attitude toward people in need of it. Yeah, it's hard to give grace to the folks who are throwing the stones. It takes grace.

The "Father, forgive them..." kind of grace.

The "Lay not this sin to their charge..." kind of grace.

The "He who is without sin, throw the first stone..." kind of grace.

**3. You are aware of your true condition apart from God's grace.** This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the church in Galatia concerning restoring a fallen brother. "You who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." (Gal.6:1) Paul knew that if the spiritual leaders forgot their own true condition in the process of restoration—

They would become harsh instead of meek.

They would ostracize instead of restore.

They would mete out judgment instead of mercy and grace.

We do the same when we forget who we are without grace. Jesus taught we are not qualified to remove the speck until we deal with our own log pile. Being aware of this is an indicator that you are living a grace-based life.

**4. Your list of rules is growing shorter.** I find it interesting that Jesus seemed to reduce things to their true essence. He summed up the entire law with two short and simple statements:

Love God!

Love people!

He exposed the Pharisees who made their many lists in order to achieve holiness. By the way, what does true holiness look like? Correct answer = Jesus. Use all the scripture texts you want, but at the end of the day, it boils down to the fact that God had to come in the form of a man (Jesus) in order to show us what a holy life lived in a human body looks like. Give our religious bent a list of things to do and a list of behaviors to avoid, and we are happy. We can check off the lists and declare we are holy because of what we have done and not done.

God says, "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

He looks at the heart.

Man looks at outward actions.

He looks inside the cup.

Man looks at the outside of the cup.

If the lists of do's and don'ts would work, Jesus could have stayed in heaven and spared himself a lot of pain. Our goal should be to have the heart of Jesus toward the Father and toward others.

We have become experts at complicating the simple truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It seems that the meek and lowly of Jesus day were the ones who caught on first, while the religious elite argued with him while they tried to figure out how to kill him. Love sums it up.

Love sums it up. When we behave in an unloving way that does not reflect God's heart toward someone else, we are missing the mark. I have missed the mark far too often. I need grace to love the way Jesus loves.

**5. You don't secretly rejoice when someone messes up.** This amounts to being a selfish opportunist. In other

words, someone else's misfortune becomes the means for you to gain something in some way. For example, the second string quarterback that desires the starter to blow out a knee so he will get his chance. The employee who hopes the boss gets fired so he/she can move up.

We can exalt ourselves by showing how other people have done something terrible that we have *not* done. We create categories and put ourselves on the good side of the equation. A grace-based attitude does not do this but realizes that if it were not for grace it would be "me."

Why is this so important?

It is important to me, because of the pain I have experienced by choices I have made that were not based on grace but selfish desires. The result is that a lot of people have been hurt deeply.

It is also important to me because I have been able to view things from the other side of the tracks so to speak and I can tell you that judgmental religiosity is about as ugly as it gets. Having been pummeled by it, I have decided I do not want any more of it in my own heart. It breaks God's heart when a person falls into sin and creates a mess in their life. He always stands ready to help that person turn everything around. He will even bring good out of the disaster. He will use it for His glory. He will provide tons of grace so that person can be restored and use their life for His purposes. All that the person has to do is ask Him. He requires no long list of religious works before He pours out His grace and love. He only requires a humble heart that knows "I need God, I can't do this myself!"

Wow! I've got to tell you this. I am typing this post from the balcony of a condo in Destin, Florida. When I typed in the words, "I need God. I can't do this myself." A dove flew onto the balcony and landed just a few feet in front of me. I sat in amazement and watched it for a minute or two before it went on its way. What a picture! This is really the way it works. When we get desperate and honest with God and cry out to Him that we need Him in our lives, the dove comes flying in. We can rely on the list or we can rely on Him. By the way, they are not the same thing!

Let's review:

- 1. You only compare yourself to Jesus and not other people.**
- 2. Focuses on the true heart of God toward people.**
- 3. You are aware of your true condition apart from God's grace.**
- 4. Your list of rules is growing shorter.**
- 5. You don't secretly rejoice when you someone messes up.**

How you doing?

I know, I've got a ways to go, too! By the grace of God, we'll grow in that direction. I think God may often allow the thing that needs to be rooted out of us to be confronted by the same thing in someone else. Now that's a mirror to think about.

More later.....

You can also find this article published on [5 Indicators of Grace-Based Living -- Devotional](#), and on the tag pages [christlikeness](#), [Grace](#), [loving others](#), [mercy](#).