

Extreme Grace

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

You may be well indoctrinated in the Law of God. You're probably convinced that the Law is holy, righteous, and good. You've read in Luke 16:17, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." But have you ever wondered if one Law of God ever supersedes another? Is there ever a time when you might break one of God's Laws and not be guilty of sin? Do you think that if you have such a sterling relationship with God, that it could gain you favors when you face a difficult decision? Could it make a difference in the way God looks on your actions?

It had been a hard three days. David and the handful of young men with him had left in a hurry and had taken no food. By the time they got to a place called Nob, they were in a bad way. They needed food and there was only one place David thought they might get something to eat.

"Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me,

Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place" (1 Samuel 21:1-2).

Do you think that if you have such a sterling relationship with God, that it could gain you favors when you face a difficult decision?

David lied to the priest. Should he have done that? Wait just a minute, and you will see David compound his lawbreaking.

"Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is

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present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him hallowed bread:

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When Things Get Tough . . .

We've all watched the news showing how Obamacare is causing the cost of health care to soar. Our first thoughts are, "Where is that money coming from?" This is time to ". . . commit thy way unto the LORD" Psalm 37:5. It is also said in Psalm 37:25 "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." When things get tough, it's time to do what is right before God and put your trust in him to take care of you. Our Father is there for you. He will not let his children down.

Where's Your Blind Spot?

By Richard Glasgow

Any time you get in a car, you'll probably notice the blind spots peculiar to that particular vehicle. An inattentive passenger may not be aware of the blind spots, but the driver has to be aware of them and must know how to compensate for them if he wants to avoid a collision.

People have blind spots too: metaphorically and quite literally. Ophthalmologists call them *scotomas*, which are obscurations within the field of view. They also occur on the eyeball itself as anatomical blind spots, known as optic discs. These are actual spots on "the specific region of the retina where the optic nerve and blood vessels pass through to connect to the back of the eye."

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These "blind spots" are "also known as the physiological blind spot, or, the specific scotoma in the visual field that corresponds to the lack of light-detecting photoreceptor cells on the optic disc" (*Wikipedia.com*, "Blind Spots"). We don't notice these scotomas, because the brain "fills in the blanks" with what it *perceives*

should be in those blind spots. Kind of like neurological "Photoshopping."

This subject picqued my interest after watching an episode of *Perception* on the TNT television network. The principle character in the show, Dr. Daniel Pierce, is an eccentric professor of neuroscience who suffers from schizophrenia and regularly assists the FBI in solving complex crimes. This particular episode involved the theorem of "Inattentional Blindness." The case he was investigating involved several murders that were committed in the midst of large crowds—yet there were no witnesses. Even though the murders happened in front of scores of people, no one noticed. According to *Scholarpedia*, Inattentional Blindness is "the failure to notice a fully-visible, but unexpected object because attention was engaged on other task, event, or object."

We can easily take this to a spiritual level. The blind spots in our lives are characteristics we don't see in ourselves, but may be clear to others. In fact, Jesus made that analogy in Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV): "And why do you look on the splinter that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull the splinter out of your eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First cast the beam out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to cast the splinter out of your brother's eye."

Jesus doesn't mince words

when it comes to our blind spots. He makes it apparent we need to recognize the fact that we *do* have blind spots and must overcome them. Overcoming is what's important in life; and it's often our most difficult task.

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If you look at the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, God will reward the one who overcomes. We can't earn salvation, because it is the gift of God by grace (Acts 15:11), but we are rewarded according to our works (Romans 2:6).

Are you blind to your blind spot (or spots)? The solution is easy, though it may be uncomfortable. Ask someone close to you if there's something you could do to become a better person. Better yet, ask God to *gently* point out your blind spots, and at the same time, ask him to help you overcome them.

Sunset Times

Come Friday night, do you wonder what time the sun sets? CEM wants to make that easier for you. Simply go to CEM's website and click on Sunset. We'll provide you with this information from the US Naval Observatory.

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for there was no bread there but the showbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away” (vv. 3-6).

Now this is a real classic of rationalization, of reasoning your way around the Law. If you were the judge, what would you do about this infraction? Because it was an infraction of the Law—this is beyond dispute. Only the priests were allowed to eat the holy bread. How do you think God would judge it?

Fortunately, we have a clue. Jesus himself evaluated this instance. “At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were ahungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was ahungered, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?” (Matthew 12:1-4).

It is plain enough that Jesus is ready to let David off for this infraction. But why? And on what basis? There is the “give ‘em an inch and they will take a mile” school of thought on this kind of thing, exemplified by the Pharisees. “We have to spell these things out. We must build a fence around the Law lest one of us accidentally step over the line.” There is a strange fear that if we begin to let the barriers down, people will take liberties and abuse

the Law.

Plainly, Jesus and the Pharisees were on opposite sides of this fence. Someone might well have walked up to Jesus right after this saying and quoted him this Scripture: “And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy” (Exodus 29:32-33). And the person would want to know how Jesus could justify the actions of David and the priests when the Law is so plain. How do you suppose Jesus would have answered that question?

Ron will answer that question for you in some detail, and in the process, he will explain one of the most important things you will ever learn about God and his Law. Continue to read. If you can grasp the explanation, it may revolutionize the way you read the Bible, the way you relate to God, and the way you relate to one another. If that sounds a little presumptuous to you, you can judge after you not only finish reading this, but after you order the CD and listen carefully to it.

First, let’s get a few things clear: The Law of the showbread was not superseded or set aside by any actions of David. He did not have that kind of authority. The Law of the showbread was not unimportant. It was just as important as any other Law of God. It was the Law then, and it will be the Law when there is a tabernacle once again. Ron is a radical believer in the Law of God. He takes Jesus at his word when he says that not one jot or tittle shall

pass from the Law till everything has come to pass.

All rationalizations considered, David did break the Law. Jesus said he ate the bread which it was not lawful for him to eat. Why, then, does Jesus use this example in reply to the accusation that his disciples were breaking the Sabbath? How is it possible for him to justify David? And how can he justify David when there is not a hint of repentance on David’s part, nor anything done to make up for his error?

The answer comes in one word. A familiar word, one that has been used so much, that no one seems sure what it means anymore. The word is grace. And here is a sentence so important you may want to write it down: Grace is an Old Testament doctrine. David was justified, not because what he did was right, but because God is gracious.

What does it mean to say that God is gracious? There is a beautiful example of the graciousness of God right in the beginning of his relationship with man. God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. And the man and the woman were naked, and were not ashamed. God told them to be fruitful and multiply, and then he left them alone.

People usually fall into two categories: Those who believe that God is all seeing, that he knows everything that is happening, that nothing is hidden from him, and those who believe the Book of Genesis, which says otherwise.

There is a charming account in Genesis of God doing what a gracious man would do. He created these two perfect physical specimens, put them in a gorgeous

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outdoor garden, totally naked, and then granted them total privacy. God did not hide in the bushes and watch. Why? Because he is gracious. Graciousness is that character trait that responds to awkward situations with grace.

There are those who believe that God is like a computer. If you press the delete button, things disappear. Automatically. Remorselessly. They believe that God enforces the Law like a computer. You break the Law, the Law breaks you. That is not what happened to David.

God is not a computer, he is a person! Not only is he a person, he is a kind person, gentle, compassionate, forgiving, and above all—gracious.

Now it is true that God can be very strict at times, because he is also just. Without justice, you have only caprice, and there is a great gulf between a God who is gracious, and one who is capricious. And because there was justice, Adam and Eve were eventually shut out of the Garden and denied access to the tree of life—because of a choice they had made. They could have had either tree, but apparently not both.

Time passed, and two sons were born; Cain and Abel. And in a fit of anger, Cain killed his brother. And then he lied about it. Justice would have called for the death of Cain as well. Why did God not kill Cain? Why did he merely exile him and even set a mark on him to protect him? Because God is gracious.

More time passed, and things really deteriorated on planet earth. The earth was filled with violence, and things got so bad, that God was sorry he ever started the project. Yet, this runs counter to the idea that God knows everything in advance. As human beings, if we want to know God, we had better take him as he is, not as we want him to be. Remember, God is not a computer.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Genesis 6:5-7).

Somehow, it seems foolish to go around apologizing for God and finding explanations that sound good to the modern mind. Does it upset you to learn that God does not control everything? By his own choice, he does not!

So God decided to end the whole earth project, to just wipe it out. And except for one thing, he would have. That one thing is found in verse 8. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” Mind you, Noah was a good man. He was righteous in his generations. But if you think that is the reason he and his family survived the flood, you have it all wrong. Noah was a good man, but he was not that good. He survived because God was gracious to him.

This is only a short introduction to the many thought-provoking and life-changing things you’ll learn from this *Born to Win* broadcast. You need this to fill in the blanks that will help you gain a better perspective of God and grow spiritually. So order now—don’t delay. Order this *FREE* CD, titled *Extreme Grace*, and make these ideas a part of your Christian life.

In Memory

Christian Educational Ministries is especially grateful for the generous donation made in memory of the very beloved Maureen Linacre. After fighting a very courageous battle with cancer for eight years, she passed peacefully and quickly with her closest relatives around her in the Noosa Hospital in Australia. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Michael Linacre, who pastored an independent Church of God in downtown Chicago several years ago. Maureen was known for her warm and caring spirit. If you’ve been to Australia, more than likely you shared her gracious hospitality. Maureen had a heart as big as all outdoors and was also known for caring for abandoned baby kangeroos. Our prayers and deepest sympathy go out to Dr. Linacre and Maureen’s family. She will be greatly missed.

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*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*