

Pt 4 - **God's Liberating Grace**

"How to break the performance trap"

...Theme

There are two enemies of grace. **Legalism** - trying to earn God's approval through rules and **Perfectionism** - trying to prove our worth by being perfect. The enemy of grace is Legalistic Perfectionism! If we can understand how to relax and rest in God's grace, we will find a new level of contentment in our life.

Paul says it's foolish to try to earn God's approval.

Galatians 3:1-3

... What effect does perfectionism have on us?

- **Perfectionism defeats our initiative.**

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (tlb) If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

- **Perfectionism damages our Relationships.**

People who are entrapped by perfectionism are normally harsh and demanding on themselves and the people around them.

- **Perfectionism destroys our Happiness**

Ecclesiastes 7:16 (tev) So don't destroy yourself by being too good or acting too smart!

There is often a gap between the ideal me and the real me.
Perfectionism causes us to constantly criticize ourselves.

... Learning to relax in the grace of God is the antidote to perfectionism.

How can we learn to relax in the grace of God? An acrostic R.E.L.A.X.

R - Realize Nobody's Perfect.

Psalms 119:96 (tlb) Nothing is perfect except your words.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (gnb) There is no one on earth who does what is right all the time and never makes a mistake.

E – Enjoy God's Unconditional Love

1 John 3:1a (gw) Consider this: The Father has given us his love. He loves us so much that we are actually called God's dear children...

When we become a follower of Christ, we're not just a servant of God anymore. We are a child of God.

Here's the difference;

- A servant is accepted and appreciated on the basis of what he does.
A child is accepted and appreciated on the basis of who he is.

- A servant starts the day anxious and worried that his work will please his master.
A child rests in the secure love of his family.
- A servant is accepted because of his workmanship.
A child is accepted because of his relationship.
- A servant is accepted because of his productivity and his performance.
A child is accepted because of his position in the family.

Romans 8:31

This is the essence of the doctrine of grace. Grace can be summed up in four words - God is for us! We don't have to measure up because Christ has measured up for you.

L – Let God Handle Things

At the root of perfectionism is the desire to control.
What do we do when we can't control the uncontrollable things in life?

1 Peter 5:7

The key to casting is letting go. To overcome perfectionism, we have to let go.

If we want to live a long time, we need allow God to ease the burden.

Proverbs 14:30 (tlb) *A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life; jealousy rots it away.*

Things don't have to be perfect for us to enjoy them. We must learn to enjoy life in the middle of imperfection.

A – Act in Faith – Not Fear!

Ephesians 2:8-9

The way we became a believer is the way we continue as a believer. By grace, through faith!

The only way we'll be able to leave the prison cell of perfectionism is through the door of faith in God's grace. Not to fear but to trust in God's grace.

X – Exchange our Perfectionism for God's Peace

Perfectionism destroys peace. God also knows there's no chance we're going to be perfect. So he came up with grace. That's why God sent Jesus because Jesus was perfect. And we get into heaven on His perfection.

... Take home point

Of course, we're going to fail measuring up to God's standard of perfection. The Bible says "All have sinned and fallen short." But we don't have to worry about that if we've received God's grace.