



# Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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## Living in Grace

Currently, we in the United States are in a season of presidential politics. Candidates boast, shake hands, and make promises in an effort to win votes. They question their opponent's ability and wisdom, pointing out perceived weakness or failure in an attempt to appear more competent and trustworthy. Slogans are launched, rhetoric is rehearsed, and appearances are staged to stir our emotions ... and win our vote. It's all about winning and losing. And while most of us like some of what we hear, few of us believe all of what we hear, and we quickly grow tired of the dance. So it is with politics.

Yet, how similar it is to the way we often live our lives. We compete and struggle to gain an advantage over others. We posture, challenge, and work hard to create our desired image. Whether in our business, our relationships, our finances, or our casual discussions, we seek to win, to "be on top". We substitute power for intimacy, and hope to prove we have "the right stuff". And while most of us achieve some level of success through our efforts, we eventually grow weary of the battle and long for a path of peace and connectedness.

Fortunately, such a path exists.

It is the path of grace. Grace is best described as "unmerited favor", the giving (or receiving) of what is not earned or deserved. It is an expression of love without conditions. It is often contrasted with judgement. Judgement is "an opinion or an evaluation". It can be a legal decision, or, as in this case, an attitude or approach to life. A judgement approach to life focuses on right and wrong, achievements, and success or failure. It also has a clear bias toward criticism, competition, and conquest.

The lifestyle of judgement is what we typically encounter in today's competitive society. The perspective of grace, however, offers an appealing alternative. Let's compare the two life approaches to better understand them.

1) Grace values people more than success or things. It allows room for differences and respects the role of failure as well as success, while still promoting excellence.

Judgement values correctness, measured both by given standards and by personal opinion.

2) Grace forgives.

Judgement keeps score.

3) Grace gives second (and third) chances.

Judgement knows that second chances are not deserved.

4) Grace gives freely.

Judgement believes it must be earned.

5) Grace seeks to help others.

Judgement seeks to win.

6) Grace empowers others.

Judgement takes power and seeks to dominate.

7) Grace encourages.

Judgement threatens.

8) Grace rejoices with others.

Judgement rejoices with victory.

9) To live in grace, we must have experienced it in relationship with others or with our God.

Living in judgement also likely reflects earlier relational experiences.

10) Both grace and judgement can partner with wisdom, though with different outcomes.

Is grace weak or soft? Quite the contrary! To live in grace, we must be clear about what we believe and value, have the courage to share it in the way we live, and still stay open to growth and change. We must also trust the providing hand of a loving God that frees us to reach out with care to others. And we must be willing to risk being wronged by others seeking personal advantage.

So, we do have a choice! We can approach our family, our spouse, our business, our friends, and our neighbors with the attitude of judgement, or with a heart and attitude of grace.

Let's decide today!



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work..

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## Grace In Business?

One of the challenges of adopting a value system and an approach to life is to apply them across the broad spectrum of life. Such is the challenge of living in grace.

We might honestly question whether there is any place for grace in business. Business has long been a bastion of competition (both internal and external), performance pressure, and profit motivations. Yet, if we truly believe in the value of grace, then it must apply to all settings of our life ... even business.

What might business grace look like? Perhaps it might appear as:

- a business owner who loves his family, and treats his employees as family.
- employees who support each other and work together as a team.
- patience and efforts to work with an unreasonable customer.
- retraining rather than replacing.
- expressions of confidence and encouragement.
- mutual integrity, respect, and trust.

Grace in business? Perhaps it's more of an asset than we ever imagined!



"Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected."

- Jonathan Edwards

Do you have thoughts on this issue? Please send them to: john@freetobelifecoaching.com Thanks!