

**GRACE** According to Dr. May

Grace is an outpouring, a boundless burning offering of God's self to us, suffering with us, overflowing with tenderness, and it is God's passion (Rev. 22:17).<sup>1</sup>

The immanent (내재하는) God in us becomes wounded with us, suffers, struggles, hopes, and creates with us, shares every drop of our anger and sadness and joy. The reality of this intimate God is inseparable from our own hearts. Grace is the active expression of God's love. God's love is the root of grace; grace itself is the dynamic flowering of this love; Grace is love so abundant, so selfless, so endlessly overflowing.<sup>2</sup>

Grace itself cannot be possessed; it is eternally free, and like the Spirit it blows where it will. We can see it and try to be open to it, but we cannot control it. Similarly, grace seeks us but will not control us.<sup>3</sup>

It is a gift that we are free to ignore, reject, ask for, or simply accept. And it is a gift that is often given in spite of our intentions and errors. At such times, when grace is so clearly given unrequested, uninvited, even undeserved, there can be no authentic response but gratitude and awe.<sup>4</sup>

**Can we receive this grace at all times ?**

Saint Augustine answered well by saying that God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them. Our hands are full of the things to which we are addicted. And also our hearts, minds, and attention are clogged with addiction. Our addictions fill up the space within us, spaces where grace might flow. It is most important to remember, however, that it is not the objects of our addictions that are to blame for filling up our hands and hearts; it is our clinging to these objects, grasping for them, becoming obsessed with them.<sup>5</sup>

**Jesus** was the profound love gift of God entering the world to effect a reconciliation of humanity with God, to restore a right relationship to those who were unfree, who had aligned themselves away from God, who had been crippled in their love. He came for the sinners who had missed the mark of responding to God's love. God became incarnate to save the addicted, and that includes all of us.<sup>6</sup>

**For Christ**, the way to abundant grace and forgiveness is through himself, away from all possible objects of attachment. "I am the way;" "Follow me;" "I am the bread of life;" "I will give you the living water;" "Whoever comes to me will never hunger;" "Come unto me all you who labor .... "<sup>7</sup>

**Jesus** spoke of God as being our intimate, loving parent, and he wished for us to receive God's love like little children....Mother loves her baby, just because he is her baby. We are God's children, so we are simply loved. Ideally, an infant does not earn her parents' love; they love the baby first. God's "grace" is in similar ways. ... God spontaneously give us beauty and breath and touches of love, just as parents give their children food and warmth naturally, almost automatically.

- And there is grace in the steady self-giving of God that protects our freedom and keeps us yearning.

There is also flowering of grace that seem more eventual and surprising as when children find unexpected presents for no special reason or receive extra hugs at times of failure and frustration.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 118.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 120.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 114.

God attends to us in this way too, surprising us with undeserved, unexpected goodness and empowering us when all seems lost.

Grace is not earned. It is not accomplished or achieved. It is not extracted through manipulation or seduction. It is just given. Nothing in our conditioning prepares us for this radical reality.... We all have trouble accepting the radical giftedness of God's grace, no matter what our childhood experience. God's grace is simply not part of our conditioning. Nor can we make it so, because grace will not become an object of attachment. Because grace is a pure gift, the most meaningful of our encounters with it will probably come at unintended times, when we are caught off-guard, when our manipulative systems are at rest or otherwise occupied.

But still we can pray for grace, actively seek it, and try to relax our hands to receive it. Prayer for a true gift is a very simple thing - just expressing our desire with no making of deals, no marketing, no manipulation. As the giver of grace, God deserves a straightforward request. As children of God, we have the right to make that request. We can also search for grace, in both obvious and hidden place.<sup>8</sup> Grace's empowerment is present in all true healings, in deliverance of all kinds, and in any movement toward wholeness and love and freedom, however great or small.

It is present in physical and psychological healing, in social and political reconciliation, in cultural and scientific breakthrough, in spiritual deliverance from evil, in religious repentance and conversion, and in the ongoing process of spiritual growth. It is present wherever love really grows. In every such situation, grace enables us to make necessary initial changes and to continue, over time, to nurture those changes in creative, constructive ways.<sup>9</sup>

There is also grace in the rougher side of things. God lets us make our own decisions, even at times when we would much prefer to be taken care of. God blesses us with responsibility and the dignity it contains.<sup>10</sup>

#### Dr. May talks about responsive grace:

There is a particular dimension of grace that is interactive, in which God and person respond mutually to each other's love. Responsive grace is somewhat like a child desiring to please her mother, and the mother responding with special tenderness. The mother responds not to the child's actual behavior, but to the simple love that prompted the behavior. This is the most tender flowering of love.<sup>11</sup>

The parent-child metaphor also is inadequate when we consider the control parents upon exert upon their children, especially through punishment and restriction. To some extent, human parents control their children's behavior as a means of protecting and training. God does not act in precisely this way. Although the Old Testament includes many references to God's punishment of humankind, and the New Testament in no way belittles (과소평가) the reality of judgment, God's activity with persons is not *controlling*. Without exception, God preserves and protects our precious edge of human freedom. Without this imperative for final love and freedom, God explains, "The spirit would give way before me, and the very souls I have made (Is. 57:16)." *For I will not continually accuse, nor will I always be angry; for then the spirits would grow faint before me, even the souls that I have made.*" Thus God calls us, invites us, and even commands us, but God does not control our response. We alone bear responsibility for the choices we make.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 126.

<sup>9</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 154.

<sup>10</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 120.

<sup>11</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 121.

<sup>12</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 122.

The eighteenth-century evangelist, John Newton, speaks simply of the protection and guidance of grace for individuals and of the glory of grace in the community. It is the most famous folk hymn of modern times, "Amazing Grace."<sup>13</sup>

If I try to live in accord with grace, then I will be relinquishing the gods I have made my attachments. Grace threatens all my normalities. In defense, I am likely to try to distort what I know about the facts of grace or forget them entirely. Thus I must make conscious efforts of will; I must struggle with myself if I am going to act in accord with those facts. Living into grace requires taking risks of faith.<sup>14</sup>

God does not flash into our lives to work a piece of magic upon us and then disappear. Instead, God's grace is always present intimately within us, inviting and empowering us toward more full, more free exercise of will and responsibility. Grace is not a pill we are given or a method applied to us so that we can simply go on about our business. Grace always invites us forward. Every liberation requires continued attention, every healing demands continued care, every deliverance demands follow-up and every conversion requires faithful deepening. If we do not respond to these ongoing calls, if we deny our empowerments for continued growth in freedom and responsibility, our healings may well be stillborn.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. May repeatedly emphasized the role of human will in deliverance because it is all too easy to see deliverance as entirely God's business. Similarly, Dr. May emphasized the role of grace in asceticism and reformation because we can be tempted to see them as depending entirely on human effort. Every authentic movement toward freedom involves both grace and will, but it is impossible to describe just how grace and will interact. If we were to look only at God's transcendence, we could develop an explanation based on God's actions and our responses. Similarly, if we concentrated only on God's immanence, we could develop a psychological explanation based on our journey toward individuation and discovery of the True Self.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 125.

<sup>14</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 127.

<sup>15</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 155.

<sup>16</sup> Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 155.