

Alpha Counseling Service

February

20730 Bond Rd/Suite 108
Poulsbo WA 98370/360.779.3624
Email go to Website: alphapoulsbo.org

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Dear Friends,

Charles Swindoll

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failure, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitude”.

Continuing on the theme of how important attitude is to our wellbeing I wanted to take a different angle on the topic of love. First, I am sad about the attitude of some for their negative opinion about Valentine’s Day.

Even if Hallmark were the conspirator responsible for the commercialization of the day, and it’s not, that is a poor excuse for not honoring the idea of celebrating a day dedicated to showing love to others. All the bright decorations right in the middle of gloomy February can’t hurt our claustrophobic cabin fever. Right?

I want to look at love using the term **GRACE**.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **ESV.**

Romans 5:8 “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **ESV.**

Now the word love in these verses really is an expression of God’s **Grace** toward us. Webster’s first definition of **GRACE** is: “unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration and sanctification.”

English, as a living language, has developed new meanings from this idea. People are referred to as graceful in movement or graceless in dignity. It is interesting that when a financial obligation is due on the first of the month and no penalty is imposed until the tenth that is referred to as a ‘grace period’. I don’t know about you but I take advantage of this grace all the time.

One of the great problems I see among Christians is that we do not give to others the **GRACE** God has given to us. I am so thankful that our local YMCA sent an email to all staff with February’s weekly spiritual meditations. The title is **GRACE** and here are their thoughts.

Grace is something that we can never repay to God or one another. It often can be difficult to extend, however since we receive it, we should also give it. Is GRACE difficult to give to others?

It is said that, “GRACE isn’t just forgiveness, it is forgiveness fueled by surrender.” How are GRACE and surrender linked together?

GRACE takes you to places that unforgiveness will never see. The depth of our peace is in direct correlation to the amount of GRACE we give and receive. Can extending GRACE in a difficult relationship give peace in the long run?

Holding yourself to a standard of GRACE and not perfection gives you the freedom to learn from your mistakes. Has there been a mistake in the past that you wish you would have given yourself more GRACE?

May God fill you with so much GRACE you shower it on everyone!

Richard