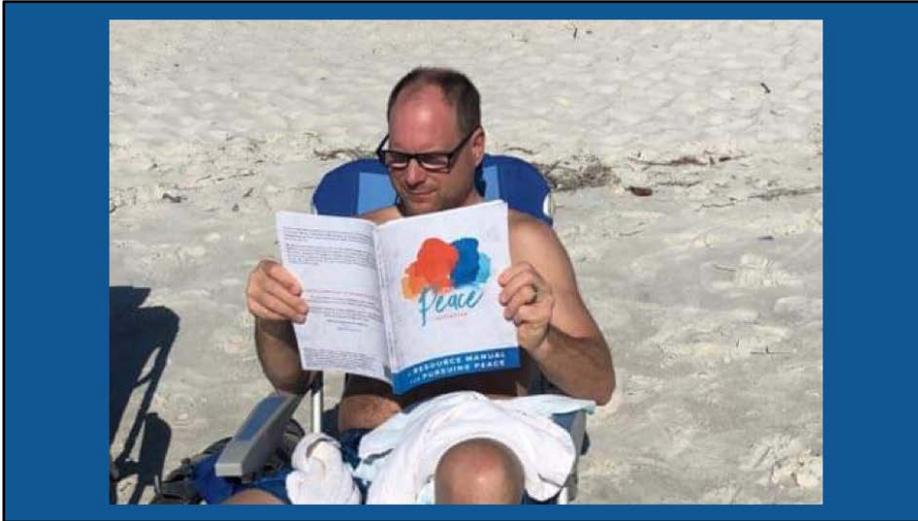


**(Title Slide)**



**It brings joy to a pastor's heart when folks, like Rodney, don't take a vacation from seeking peace, even when they vacation from Michigan's snow and ice.**

**TR: But, pursuing peace is hard. Almost all of us feel like we are on one side or the other of a critical issue . . .**



3

**the tension between accountability and grace.**

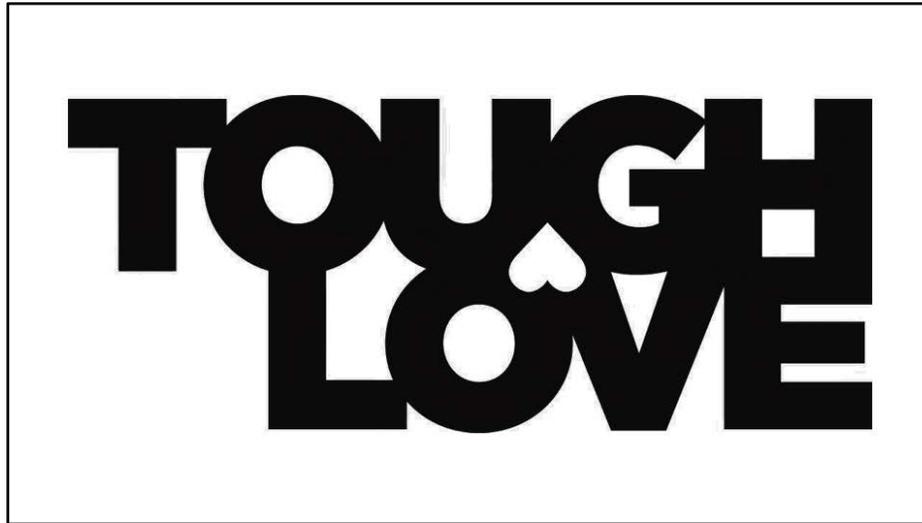
**TR: I'm not just talking about our fallen proclivity of . . .**



4

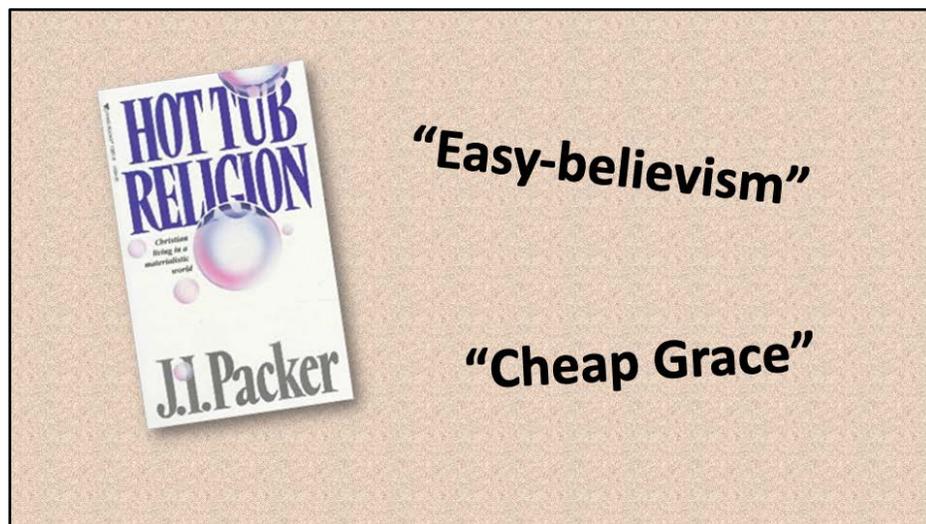
**blaming others.**

**TR: But, also, the challenge of exercising what has been called . . .**



**tough love.**

**TR: We want to show gracious love to others. We know that is what God wants. But how do we not slip into . . .**



## READ SLIDE

**TR: This is not just a struggle for our day and age. During WW2, one pastor-theologian defined and addressed cheap grace.**



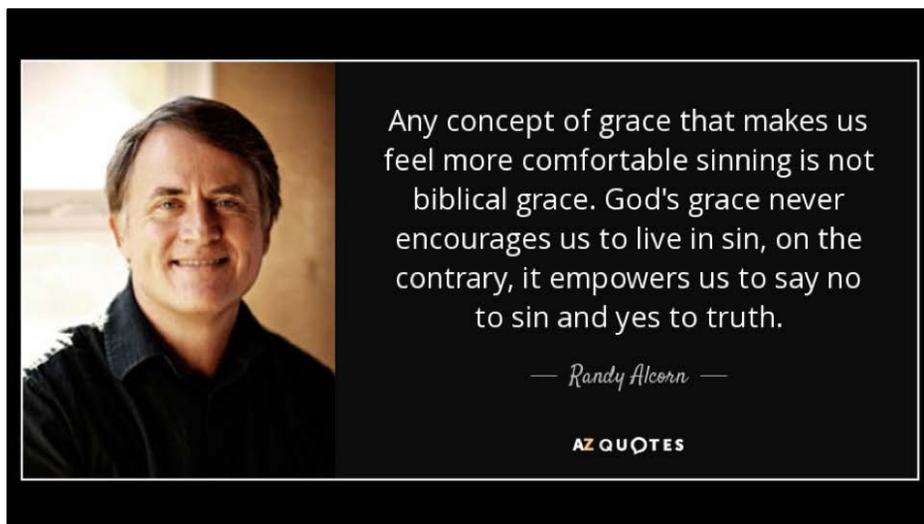
*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession . . .

Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

## READ SLIDE

**TR: In our day, another thoughtful author has said . . .**



## READ SLIDE

**TR: We find ourselves agreeing and yet still confused. But we must make some progress because . . .**

***This impacts  
parenting and all leadership roles,  
including in the church, school,  
government.***

**READ SLIDE**

- Do we show grace or do we hold accountable?**
- Do we bail them out or do we let them stay in jail?**
- Do we pay off their bills or do we force them to take a loan?**

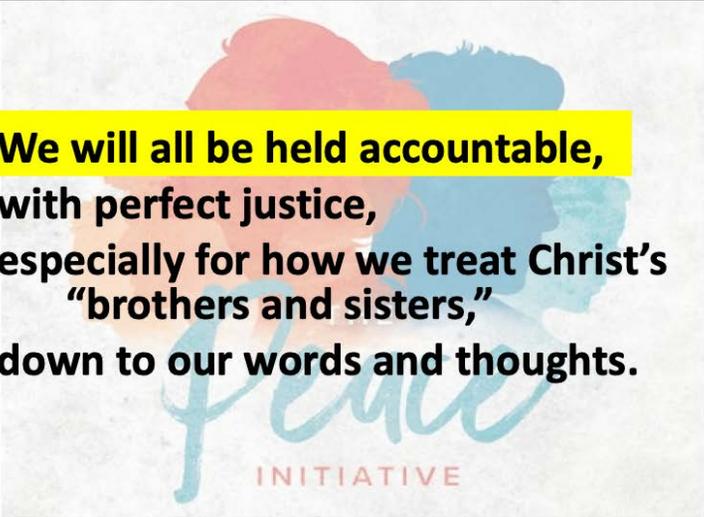
**TR: Let's address this seeming tension between accountability and grace.**



10

**Let's begin by taking in hand the idea of accountability.**

**TR: In our sermon notes you can follow along and access my logic and reasoning as I've pondered this.**



**We will all be held accountable,  
with perfect justice,  
especially for how we treat Christ's  
"brothers and sisters,"  
down to our words and thoughts.**

**First . . . READ SLIDE (highlighted)**

**TR: The Bible says . . .**

**Romans 2:6-8**

**He will render to each one according to his works:** <sup>7</sup>to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup>but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

*ESV*

12

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: This is true for Christians as well, as 2 Corinthians tells us . . .**

## 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

So whether we are at home or away,  
we make it our aim to please him.  
**<sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the  
judgment seat of Christ,** so that each  
one may receive what is due for what  
he has done in the body, whether good  
or evil.

ESV

13

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Looking to the end of the timeline of this earth as it now stands, John the Beloved Disciple writes of Jesus' revelation . . .**

**Revelation 20:12**

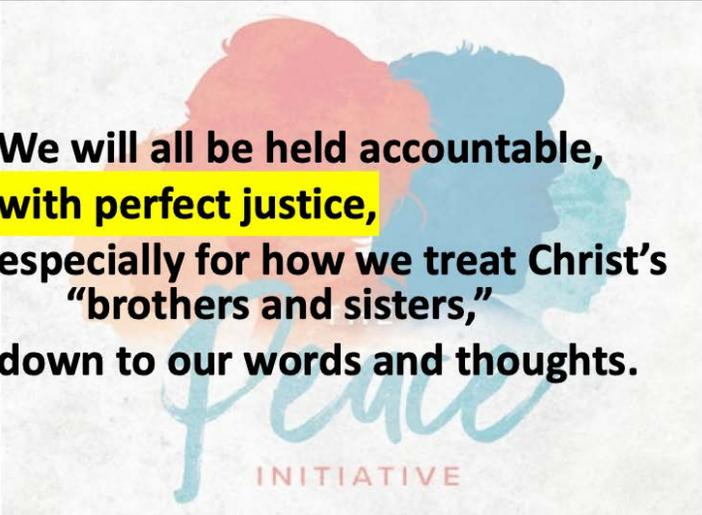
And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, **according to what they had done.**

*ESV*

14

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: So . . .**



**We will all be held accountable,  
with perfect justice,  
especially for how we treat Christ's  
"brothers and sisters,"  
down to our words and thoughts.**

**READ SLIDE (first two lines)**

**TR: Some complain that it is not fair or just that all sinners go to hell. Aren't some folks much worse than others?**

**Luke 12:47-48a**

And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a **severe beating**.<sup>48</sup> But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a **light beating**.

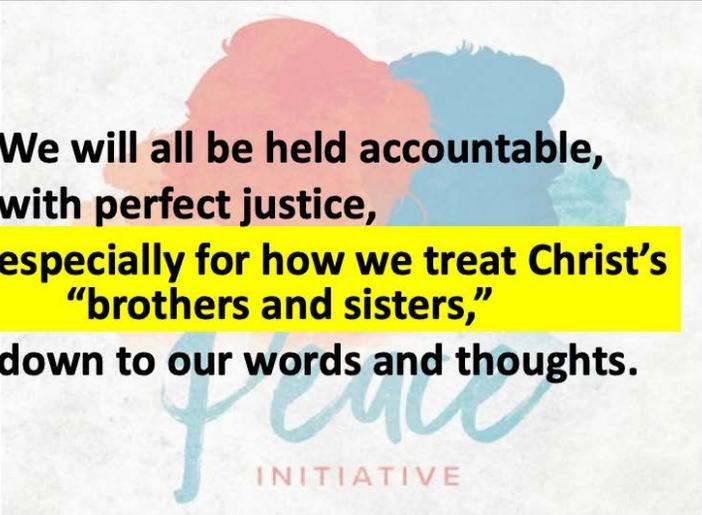
*ESV*

16

**But Jesus says . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- There are levels of punishment in hell, even as we'll see in a moment that there are levels of rewards in heaven.**

**TR: We must firmly grasp accountability, even as Christians, because . . .**



**We will all be held accountable,  
with perfect justice,  
especially for how we treat Christ's  
"brothers and sisters,"  
down to our words and thoughts.**

**READ SLIDE (first three lines)**

**TR: One of the critical passages that address this is Matthew 25 . .**

.

**Matthew 25:31-33**

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

<sup>32</sup>Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will **separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**

<sup>33</sup>And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

*ESV*

18

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 34**

**Matthew 25:34, 40**

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . .

<sup>40</sup>And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to **one of the least of these my brothers**, you did it to me.'

ESV

19

**READ SLIDE (top)**

-- The reason the King gives for this inheritance is found down in verse 40 . . . **READ SLIDE (bottom)**

-- It is essential that we see that it is not just how we treat “the least” but “the least of my brothers”, which strongly implies the followers of Jesus.

-- We are told to go the extra mile and love even our enemies, but critical to separating the sheep from the goats will be how we treat those who profess faith in Christ.

**TR: Likewise, Jesus then goes on to tell the fate of the goats in**

**verse 41 . . .**

**19**

**Matthew 25:41, 45**

"Then he will say to those on his left,  
'Depart from me, you cursed, into the  
eternal fire prepared for the devil and  
his angels . . .

<sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, saying,  
'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it  
to one of the least of these, you did  
not do it to me.'

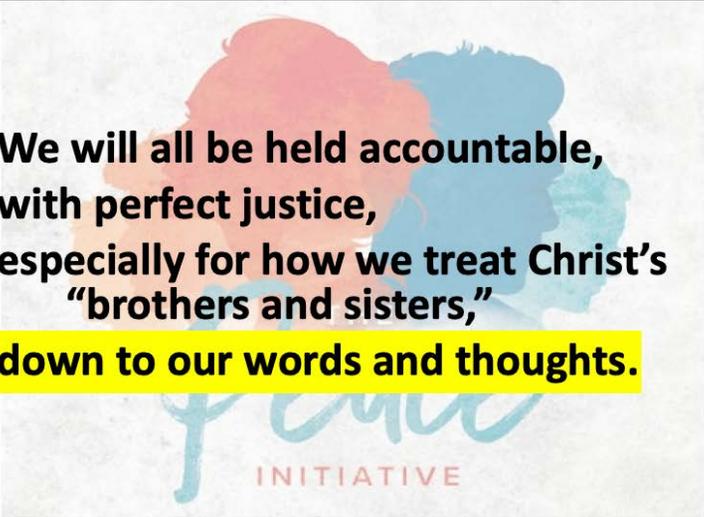
*ESV*

20

**READ SLIDE (top)**

**-- and the reason for this is captured in verse 45 . . . READ SLIDE  
(bottom)**

**TR: This accountability is strong . . .**



**We will all be held accountable,  
with perfect justice,  
especially for how we treat Christ's  
"brothers and sisters,"  
down to our words and thoughts.**

**READ SLIDE (all lines)**

**TR: Our accountability level is so deep, no reasonable person can imagine that they could stand before a holy God and be declared to be free of sin.**

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup>For God will bring every deed into judgment, **with every secret thing, whether good or evil.**

*ESV*

22

**Solomon said . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Jesus said . . .**

**Matthew 12:33-35a**

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, **for the tree is known by its fruit.** <sup>34</sup>You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup>The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good . . .

*ESV*

23

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 35 continues**

**Matthew 12:35b-37**

. . . and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. <sup>36</sup>I tell you, on the day of judgment **people will give account for every careless word they speak,** <sup>37</sup>for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

*ESV*

24

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Our Savior also said . . .**

**Luke 12:1b-3**

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. **2Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.** **3Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.”**

*ESV*

25

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: It seems clear to me that we have to hold fast to . . .**



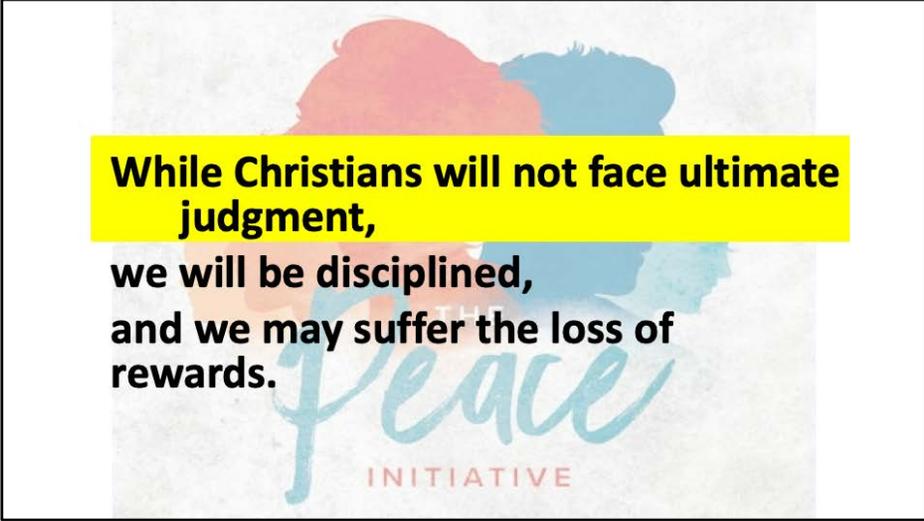
**READ SLIDE**

**TR: But what about . . .**



**... holding fast to Grace?**

**TR: In our notes we move down to the second section . . .**

The image shows a slide with a background featuring the 'Peace Initiative' logo. The logo consists of two stylized figures, one in red and one in blue, with the word 'Peace' written in a light blue script font and 'INITIATIVE' in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it. A yellow rectangular highlight box is positioned over the first line of text on the slide.

**While Christians will not face ultimate judgment,**

**we will be disciplined,  
and we may suffer the loss of  
rewards.**

**READ SLIDE (first line)**

**TR: The Gospel, or good news, is all about Jesus coming and paying our debt through His death on the cross. Because of what He did, we won't face ultimate judgment.**

**John 5:22-24**

For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. **He does not come into judgment,** but has passed from death to life.

*ESV*

29

**Jesus teaches in John 5 . . . READ SLIDE**

- One cannot honor God if one does not honor the Son whom He sent.**
- But if we hear and believe the good news, we pass from death to life.**

**TR: The result of this is that . . .**

### **Romans 8:1-3**

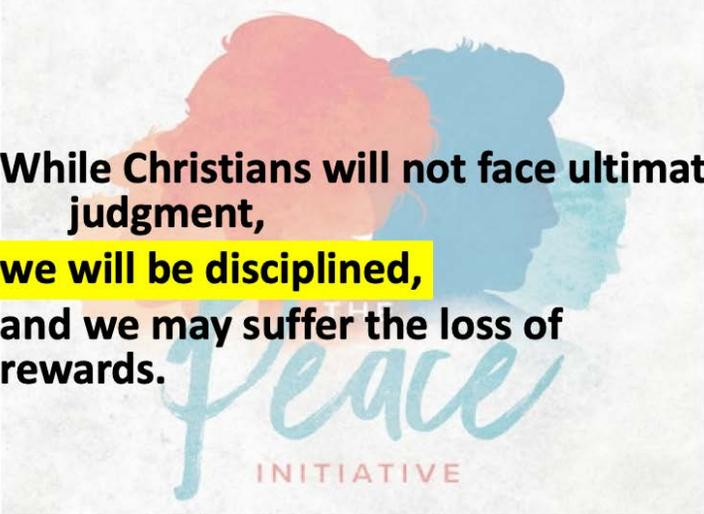
There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh . . .

*ESV*

30

### **READ SLIDE**

**TR: So God's grace, giving us what we do not deserve, paying the debt for which we are accountable, means . . .**



While Christians will not face ultimate judgment,  
**we will be disciplined,**  
and we may suffer the loss of rewards.

**READ SLIDE (first two lines)**

**TR: Grace means no condemnation, but that doesn't mean no accountability and discipline.**

**Hebrews 12:6**

**"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.**

**<sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."**

*ESV*

32

**Quoting from Proverbs 3:11-12, the author of the letter to the Hebrews says . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: A few verses later he continues talking about our parents as models of those who love and yet discipline . . . .**

**Hebrews 12:10-11**

For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

*ESV*

33

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The Biblical evidence tells us that . . .**



**While Christians will not face ultimate judgment,  
we will be disciplined,  
and we may suffer the loss of rewards.**

**READ SLIDE (all lines)**

**TR: We will not face punishment, having to pay the price for our sins. But we seem to be able to lose rewards.**

**Revelation 11:18**

The nations raged,  
but your wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be judged,  
**and for rewarding your servants,**  
the prophets and saints,  
and those who fear your name,  
both small and great,  
and for destroying  
the destroyers of the earth.

*ESV*

35

The time will come, according to the last book of the Bible, when .  
.. READ SLIDE

TR: Probably the most important text on this issue is found in 1  
Corinthians . . .

### 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup>**each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it,** because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

*ESV*

36

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 14**

**1 Corinthians 3:14-15**

If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**

*ESV*

37

**READ SLIDE**

-- Salvation is by grace but there is still an accountability for Christians, as revealed by the discipline of God and the rewards He will give.

TR: As I put these together it seems to me . . .



**THEREFORE, accountability and grace  
are not mutually exclusive.**

## **READ SLIDE**

**TR: Accountability and grace are not in a tug of war, even though it may feel like it sometimes. They go . . .**



**... hand in hand, if we welcome all of God's truth.**

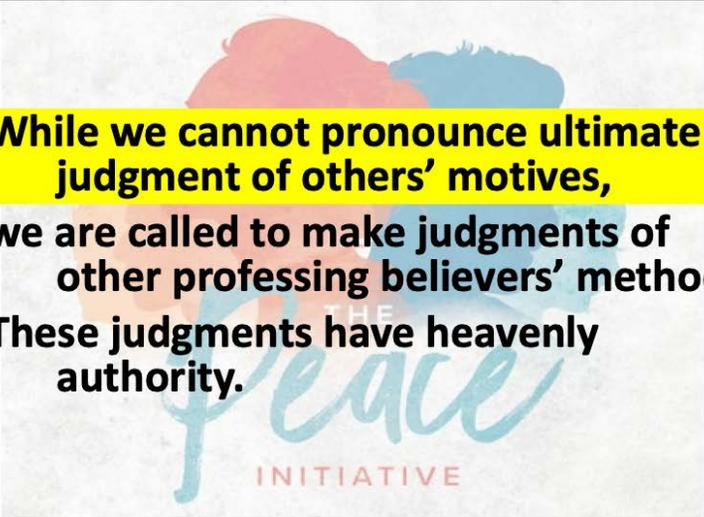
**TR: If you agree with this, then there is a critical question for those of us who want to be good parents and good leaders, whether formally or informally in the lives of others.**



## READ SLIDE

-- How can we become, as some have called it, “a velvet covered brick?”

TR: Let’s keep tracing the thought-flow in our notes.  
Accountability and grace are **NOT** mutually exclusive so . . .



**While we cannot pronounce ultimate judgment of others' motives, we are called to make judgments of other professing believers' methods. These judgments have heavenly authority.**

**READ SLIDE (first line)**

**TR: When we pronounce judgment about another person's motives, we become "judgmental."**

**1 Corinthians 4:5**

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will **disclose the purposes of the heart.** Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

*ESV*

42

The Apostle Paul teaches us not to do this when he writes . . .  
**READ SLIDE**

TR: Like, Paul says . . .

**Romans 14:10-12**

**Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; <sup>11</sup>for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” <sup>12</sup>“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”**

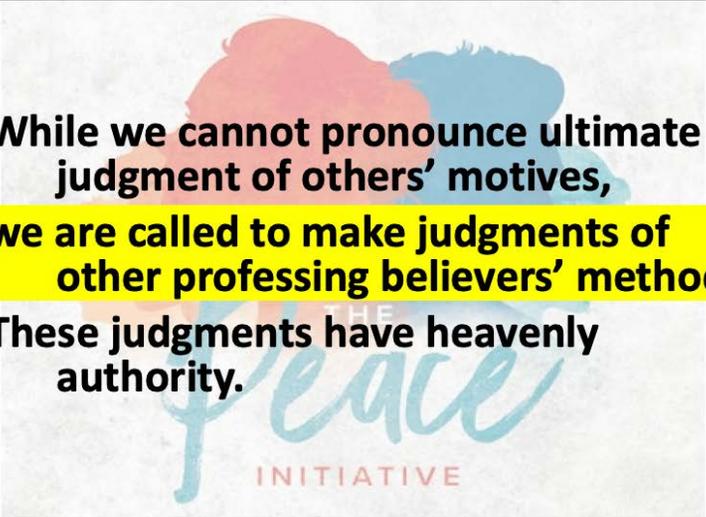
*ESV*

43

**READ SLIDE**

**-- We will all give an account, but judging others' motives is not the kind of accountability God wants us to take in hand.**

**TR: Rather . . .**



**While we cannot pronounce ultimate judgment of others' motives, we are called to make judgments of other professing believers' methods. These judgments have heavenly authority.**

**READ SLIDE (first two lines)**

**TR: Many professing Christians spend a lot of time judging the world around us, those who are not believers. But that is not our job either.**

### **1 Corinthians 5:11-13**

But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup>For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?** <sup>13</sup>**God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."**

ESV

45

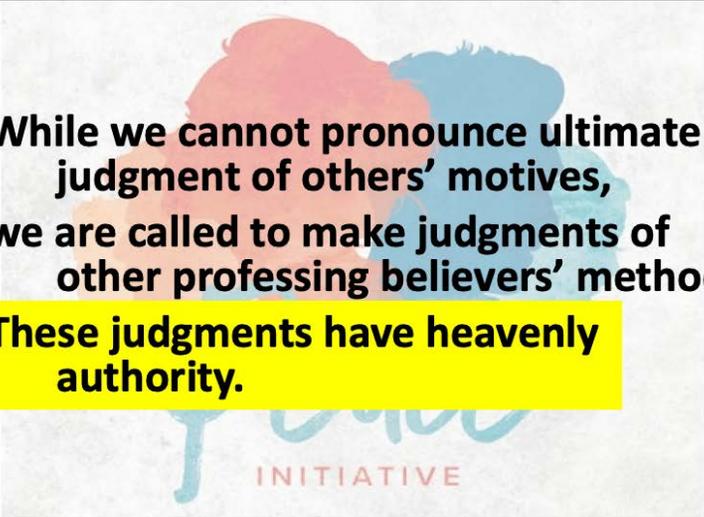
### **READ SLIDE**

- Grace within the church does not mean we forget about accountability for our methods, for our behaviors.
- As a parent, when we discipline a child, it should be for specific methods of what they did or left undone. We are not in a position to judge their hearts.
- Certainly we yearn to shepherd their hearts but that doesn't mean we are the ultimate judges of them.
  
- But we are told to judge those inside the church. I don't think this is "judgmental" because it focuses on observable methods

**and not on what we assume are their motives.**

**45**

**TR: We may want to throw up our hands and say, “Who am I to judge?” but this command of Scripture carries a profound weight with it.**



**While we cannot pronounce ultimate judgment of others' motives, we are called to make judgments of other professing believers' methods.**

**These judgments have heavenly authority.**

**READ SLIDE (all lines)**

**TR: Near the end of John's Gospel, Jesus says this . . .**

**John 20:21-23**

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."**

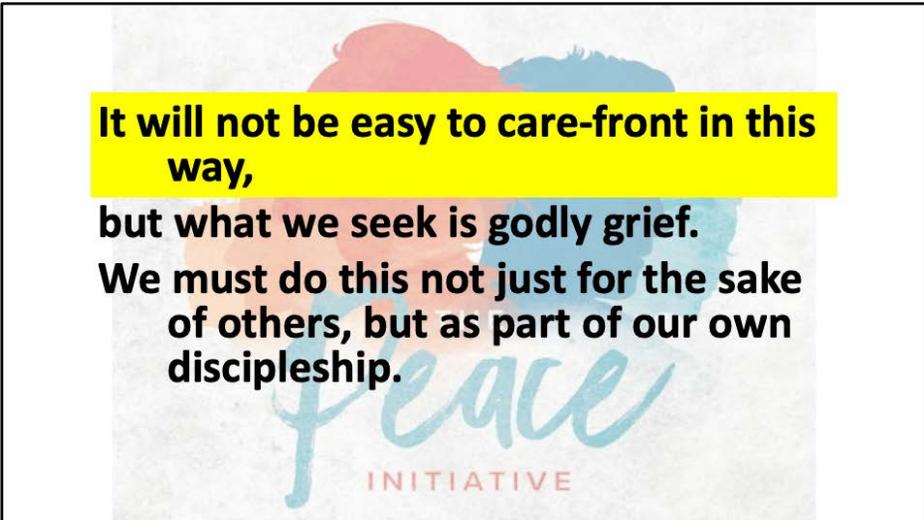
*ESV*

47

**READ SLIDE**

- Accountability and grace are NOT mutually exclusive . . . they are not having a tug of war.
- They go hand in hand, even for those who profess faith in Jesus, who have said they have believed and received salvation and are therefore no longer under condemnation.

**TR: Still, we need more details of how we are to take in hand BOTH accountability and grace.**



**It will not be easy to care-front in this way,**

**but what we seek is godly grief.**

**We must do this not just for the sake of others, but as part of our own discipleship.**

**I think we have to admit . . . READ SLIDE (first line)**

**TR: It certainly was not easy for the Apostle Paul in dealing with the folks at Corinth . . .**

## 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—**though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you,** though only for a while.  
⁹As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

ESV

49

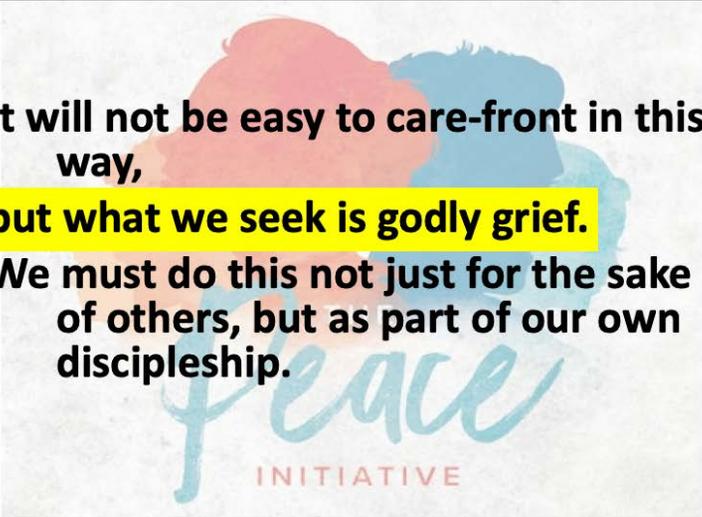
### READ SLIDE

- Paul wrote the painful letter, he even regretted it because it was stern.
- Perhaps he feared that it might be too much accountability and too weak on grace.
- Holding another believer accountable is hard . . . can we just admit that?
- Many of us would rather just be the favorite uncle with candy in his pocket . . . sweetness wrapped in cheap grace.

TR: But we are called to love stronger than that. We need a tough

**love.**

**49**



**It will not be easy to care-front in this way,**

**but what we seek is godly grief.**

**We must do this not just for the sake of others, but as part of our own discipleship.**

**READ SLIDE (first two lines)**

- When we hold accountable, we are not seeking to punish.**
- What we seek is godly grief.**

**TR: The verses that follow-up Paul's statement, regretting the painful letter for a time, reads . . .**

**2 Corinthians 7:10-11**

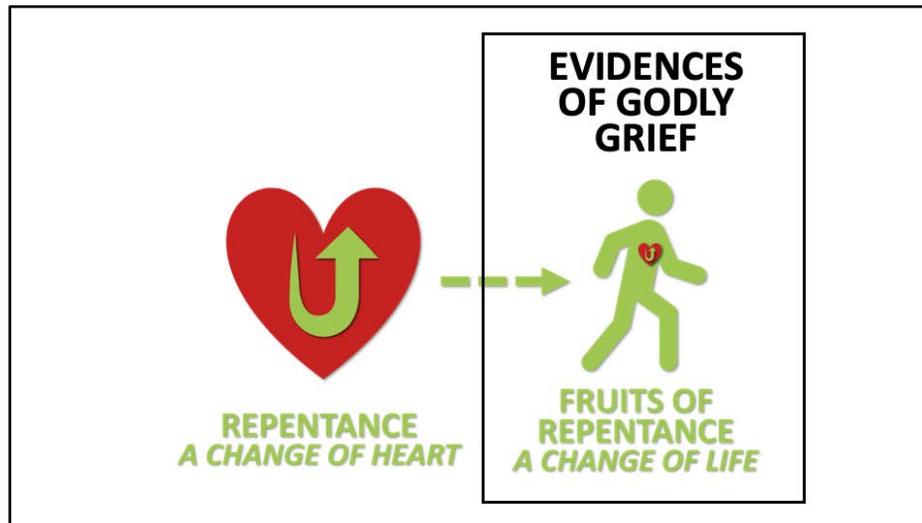
For **godly grief** produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas **worldly grief** produces death.  
<sup>11</sup>For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

*ESV*

51

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Paul addressed the professing Christians who were publicly sinning, seemingly without even any shame. His brief regret, wondering if he had been too strict in accountability, turned to joy when . . .**



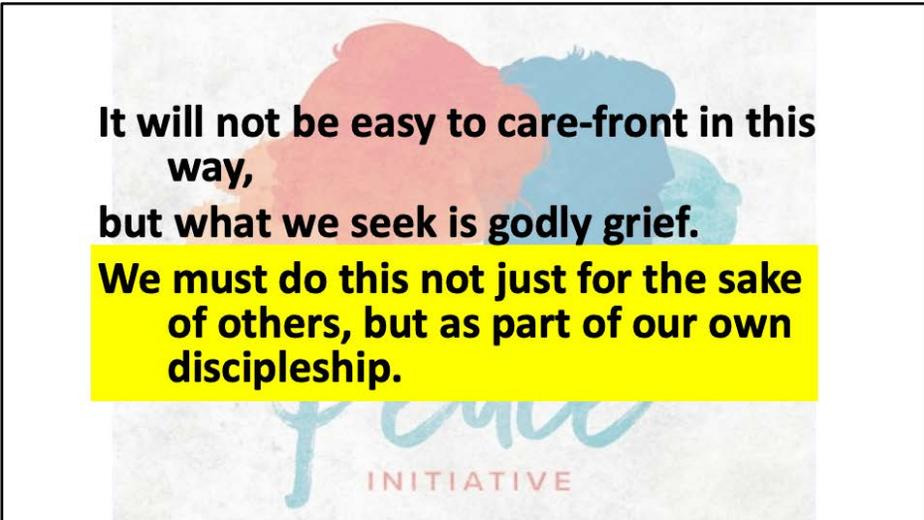
**... he saw the evidences of godly grief.**

**-- Worldly grief or sorrow is a remorse of getting caught, of facing accountability, of losing privileges.**

**-- Godly grief starts with the repentance of the heart that only God can see ... but ALWAYS becomes evident through a changed life.**

**-- In seeking peace, we must keep the fifth commitment and EXPECT ACCOUNTABILITY for these fruits.**

**TR: Our holding each other accountable is ...**



**It will not be easy to care-front in this way,**

**but what we seek is godly grief.**

**We must do this not just for the sake of others, but as part of our own discipleship.**

**READ SLIDE (just third line).**

**-- We may want to imagine that holding others accountable is a bonus step of obedience for super-Christians.**

**TR: But, in that same passage in 2 Corinthians, Paul says . . .**

## 2 Corinthians 7:12-13

So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, **but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God.**  
<sup>13</sup>Therefore we are comforted.

ESV

54

### READ SLIDE

- Certainly Paul wanted the person publicly sinning to repent and demonstrate that in the fruits of repentance.
- Certainly Paul wanted the one who suffered wrong at the hands of this other believer to be vindicated.
- BUT, Paul says that his key objective was to give a way for the Corinthians to reveal their heart for him by submitting to him.
- We must parent and lead with accountability AND grace, not just for the sake of our kids and others, but for our own sakes.
- Remember, we do not control others' responses. We can't MAKE our kids turn out OK. We can't MAKE others repent.

**TR: But we can take in hand . . .**

**GRACIOUS ACCOUNTABILITY**  
*IS AT ITS BEST WHEN IT IS . . .*

- **focused on methods, not motives.**
- **specific, not vaguely generic.**
- **written, not just remembered.**
- **tracked, not merely assumed.**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Let me review briefly . . .**



... as we consider how accountability and grace go hand in hand.

TR: What we have seen tells us that the answer is NO to both of these questions ...



Does **grace** wash away **accountability**?

Does **accountability** undermine **grace**?

## READ SLIDE

**TR: The end of Romans 5 and the beginning of chapter 6 point to the error of answering yes to either of these . . .**

**Romans 5:20**

Now the law came in to increase the trespass, **but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,**<sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*ESV*

58

**READ SLIDE**

- Accountability by itself means that we get what we deserve, and that means hell for all of us.
- But “where sin increase, grace abounded all the more.”

**TR: Does that now mean we can just hold on to this abounding grace and let go of accountability? Chapter 6 begins . . .**

**Romans 6:1-2**

59

What shall we say then? **Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?** <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

*ESV*

**READ SLIDE**

- If our parenting or our leadership roles as teachers, bosses, team captains, coaches, elders, small group leaders . . .
- . . . are marked by a tug of war between accountability and grace . . .

**TR: . . . someone will end up . . .**



**... in the mud hole.**

**TR: To wrap up, let me give you five fingers of truth that can help us go hand in hand, full of grace and truth, like Jesus.**

**The sinner who truly receives  
Christ's grace is willing  
to be held accountable.**

61

**First . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- If we won't submit to accountability, it is a method that revealing something wrong within us.**

**TR: Second . . .**

**The sinner who truly receives  
Christ's grace is willing  
to be held accountable.**

**The sinner who presumes upon Christ's  
grace as an excuse to not be held  
accountable is in bondage still.**

**READ SLIDE**

**-- If we run from accountable while shouting "no condemnation,"  
we are probably just running around in our prison cell of sin.**

**TR: Third finger of truth . . .**

**The sinner who truly receives  
Christ's grace is willing  
to be held accountable.**

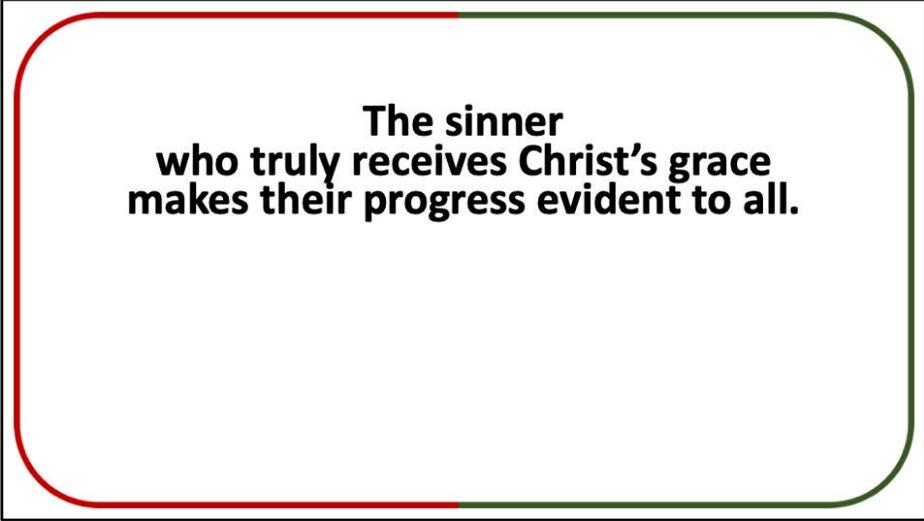
**The sinner who presumes upon Christ's  
grace as an excuse to not be held  
accountable is in bondage still.**

**Both will fall short of perfection.  
The first will humbly confess their sins.  
The latter will arrogantly excuse theirs.**

## **READ SLIDE**

**-- When we have fallen short of the accountability . . . do we  
humbly confess or arrogantly excuse?**

**TR: Fourth finger . . .**



**The sinner  
who truly receives Christ's grace  
makes their progress evident to all.**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: And finally, the opposing thumb to that last statement . . .**

**The sinner  
who truly receives Christ's grace  
makes their progress evident to all.**

**The sinner  
who presumes upon Christ's grace  
remains stuck in the vicious cycle  
of controlling sin.**

### **READ SLIDE**

- Those who presume upon grace are in bondage and stuck in their mud of sin.**
- Those who do not take in hand BOTH accountability and grace towards themselves and others, that is, they don't expect accountability . . .**
- . . . will almost certainly not have lasting biblical peace in their relationships, whether at home, at church, in their ministries, and elsewhere.**

**TR: Oh, God, help me to be a humble sinner who truly receives**

**Christ's grace. To be willing to be held accountable. To make  
my progress, though imperfect, evident to all.**

**65**