

## Grace

### *Enough?*

Don't tell my husband, but I'm thinking of getting a tattoo. Neither of us have any because we can't imagine any word or image that we would want permanently displayed on our bodies. But I think I've come up with something I need to be reminded of daily:

"You're not enough."

Controversial I know. It goes against the current positive self-image culture we live in.

A couple years ago at a VMX conference, I attended a wellness seminar. Usually, I appreciate interactive sessions, but this time the speaker had participants chanting such self-help mantras as "I am good enough." I don't know if it made others in the room feel more confident, but it just made me feel sad.

We are all so far from good enough. Only Jesus is good enough. Instead of alleviating mental health battles, this mindset would lead to more reliance on self, when only reliance on Jesus can bring us true peace.

As long as we're trying to measure up on our own, we will always fall short. Our own abilities, our own strength, our own efforts, our own brains, our own best intentions, are often better than the person we are comparing ourselves to, but are never perfect, pure, and holy like God.

Our own struggles at balancing the stresses of vet life and family will leave us stuck in the tension and feeling like we're letting everyone down. Our own attempts at controlling our attitudes and words in the pressure cooker of a difficult case going south, or in the heat of a raging disgruntled client will leave our witness with something to be desired. Our plans to sidestep the staff's gossip, refuse to speak negatively about others, and avoid temptations both in and out of the office will leave us feeling defeated and deflated regularly.

My four-year-old son, Paul, had a really rough day. It involved tantrums, defiance, stealing, and lying. So obviously it wasn't my favorite day on record either. In my own efforts, I read books, talk to other parents, and try all the different parenting strategies about keeping my cool and leading him well. But my own efforts are filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and fail me most every time in the heat of the moment. The only method I've found effective is to submit to the Lord first thing in the morning and beg Him to help me, because I am weak. Because I am *not* enough. I am not able.

The Lord said to Paul (in the Bible, not my four-year-old), *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*" -2 Corinthians 12:9

After few days of submitting and letting Christ's power rest on me and then I start to think "I'm doing pretty well," and the urgency to seek and submit to God subsides. Thus, the need for the tattoo, because clearly another thing I am not enough of, is smart enough to remember that I'm not enough. Irony...

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God's grace is the most incredible gift any of us could ever receive. Maybe we're not stealing, lying, and rebelling every day like my children, but we're misbehaving in more mature civilized manners.

*"So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding." – Ephesians 1:6-8*

The tantrum that started our day off in the wrong direction this morning was about pancake syrup. Paul had three pancakes and poured himself a lake of syrup about an inch thick. When I took the bottle away from him, the meltdown ensued with repetitive passionate insisting that it wasn't enough. "Enough for what?!" I asked but never got an answer. It was definitely enough for 3 pancakes, or 13! So, it made me ponder how "enough" is a really a relative term.

I am not enough to keep my cool on my own when things are crashing down around me. Even my best works are not sufficient to earn eternal life and intimacy with God. But His grace is *more* than enough. And my weakness is *exactly* enough to showcase Christ's power. So maybe I am enough after all, and maybe I won't have to get that tattoo. I'm sure my husband will be relieved.

- **How does the popular self-help phrase "You are good enough," make you feel?**
- **Do you have a thorn in the flesh or weakness that can help you display God's grace to others through his sufficiency?**
- **Does God's grace toward you help you show grace toward others?**



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