

The Gospel of Inclusion

Chapter Ten: The Gospel of Grace

Notes, Questions, and Reflections

In preparation for this week's discussion, please think about the [Basic Homework Questions](#) as you read it. Mark in your copy of the book or in your notebook which paragraphs pertain to these questions for you. Include your thoughts as to how they pertain to it. You'll be ready to engage in discussion with the Group.

Then come back to this page and check out the additional questions and thoughts from past courses that St. John's MCC people have had about the section that are listed below....

Chapter Ten: The Gospel of Grace

"A former pastor on my staff with a master's degree in counseling..., told me that at least 80 percent of his clients had problems that could be traced to bad theology. He said that erroneous ideas about God, Christ, and salvation were affecting people's marriages, families, and their senses of self-esteem and self-worth. They even had difficulty worshipping God and feeling that He was receptive to it. Correcting these inaccurate theologies and images of God is a calling that must not be discouraged by the vicious resistance to the idea of Inclusion.

"Many religions simply interpret their fears of God as faithful reverence of Him. However, they have actually lost their ability to distinguish between faith and fear. They see them as inseparable. They are not. Fear has no place in a relationship where God's grace has already guaranteed our salvation." (p. 222)

Which passages or paragraphs interested or inspired you most from this chapter?

"John 1:29 says, '...Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (p. 205) How does Pearson say that most Evangelical Christians interpret that passage?

On page 207, Pearson says, "*Idolatry* means that anything other than God becomes the center of our lives." Is that the same meaning you have for the word?

Pearson describes some of the things that people "must do to be saved" on page 209. What are they? Are they genuine requirements from God?

Thomas Merton said, "Grace is difficult to believe and difficult to accept. We want so desperately to believe that God loves unconditionally, yet we keep adding conditions. 'Okay, fine,' we say reluctantly, 'but once we accept God's grace, we'd better get our act together. We had better be successful or we won't be worthy of his grace.' We cannot believe God can grace even our

'failures.'" (p. 209) Have you heard similar statements? Have you agreed with people on that in the past? What about now?

I love Pearson's statement near the bottom of page 209: "In many ways, religion in general (and Christianity in particular) has become the number one proponent of bigotry." Please share some specific examples of religious bigotry you have experienced first hand.

"Grace is the gift of empowerment and [of] evolving into our highest selves." (p. 210) How does that work?

What is grace? Pearson gives a good explanation on pages 218 through the end of the chapter.

Why do you think people have held that it is important to believe that God is still keeping score of our sins and shortcomings?

Is this a different God from the one people knew in Old Testament days? (p. 220-221)

How can we help people to understand that God's grace has already been given to them?