A lifestyle of Grace

Ross Wakeley
Australian people usually give the ordinary person a ‘fair go’.

Are we really a country that lives grace in everyday life?

Even among Christians reaction to the death of Michael & Lindy Chamberlain’s baby at Ayer’s Rock in 1980 ranged from compassion to harsh words and judgment.

So what is a lifestyle of grace?

“Authentic Christianity is a love affair of growing intimacy with our Father. It begins with us experiencing Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Then we move from our intellectual knowledge of Him to an experiential awareness. ...

... This is a long and dangerous journey from the head to the heart: where the compassion, grace and forgiveness of Christ are experienced not as the reprieve of a Judge, but as the embrace of a Lover.”

Brennan Manning
The Ragamuffin Gospel
The **lie** our culture believes:

God is angry with us. He’s waiting for us to fail so He can punish us.

The truth: **God’s nature is grace.**

The proof of God’s grace:

**Jesus** said,

*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.*

(John 3:16,17)
Grace is a core feature of God’s character and is expressed in the actions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God’s Word is a record of the amazing grace that Almighty God has chosen to lavish on us.

God’s Creation is an act of His grace, so we can know and experience God.

Jesus’ intentional coming is God’s grace response to our rebellion.

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us ... who came from the Father, full of grace and truth ... to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12,14)
Jesus modelled grace. He accepted people, healed all who asked, showed compassion to the hurting and powerless.

Jesus shows us how to receive grace we need for daily life through His example of total dependence and intimacy with the Father, day by day. (see Luke 6:12)

The sacrifice of Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of grace. He surrendered Himself to the spiritual, emotional and physical suffering of the Cross for our reconciliation to God.

At one time we all had our backs turned to God … But now, by giving himself completely at the Cross, actually dying for us, Christ brought us over to God's side and put our lives together, whole and holy in His presence. (Colossians 1:21,22 The Message)

The resurrection of Jesus, shows the power of grace. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)
Pentecost is the initial release of God’s Spirit.

As we ask the Holy Spirit He provides the power, for an ongoing grace transformation in us: mind, body, spirit and life style. Rather than just knowing about grace, we experience it in everyday life and give it away.

Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God’s Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God ...

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first. (1 John 4:15-19 Message)

The apostle Paul discovered grace at heart level. Brought up religious, he experienced God’s grace initially on the Damascus Road.

The relentless grace of Jesus transformed him and his letters capture revelations about God’s amazing grace.
Grace was God’s intentional choice to give us through Jesus, before time began. (2 Tim 1:9)

It is by grace we are saved, through faith in Jesus. (Ephesians 2:8)

Grace comes to us totally as God’s costly initiative through Jesus’ death and resurrection, due to our rebellion. (Romans 3:23,24)

Grace is actively reaching people and drawing them into God’s kingdom. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

Grace stands in opposition to religion and works: they lack any power to save or transform us. (Romans 11:5-6, Ephesians 2:5-7)

Christians are not under the law, but God’s grace. (Romans 6:14-15)

God lavishes His glorious grace on us in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:6)

The surpassing grace of God is within each Christians. (2 Corinthians 9:14)
Experiencing grace is seen in the ministry of Jesus.

In John 8:1-11 we have the story of a woman caught in adultery. The religious heavies parade her before Jesus. The religious men spoke of justice. His response is, "I don’t condemn you! Go, and sin no more," Jesus said. God had forgiven her. Grace triumphed!

Now imagine it’s us in the story. We’re at the feet of Jesus. We’ve been caught in an area of failure. Feelings of humiliation and shame well up within us. Our friends and work colleagues bring their condemnation in looks and words. We feel a failure.

Satan is injecting his poison into our spirit: “you’re hopeless, a hypocrite, a miserable excuse of a Christian.” Seeking to rob, kill and destroy us.

Jesus turns to our accusers and invites those who are without sin to cast the first stone. They slink off, leaving us with Jesus. His hand reaches out. We feel His embrace. We hear His words, "I don’t condemn you. Receive My grace. Go on your way. From now on, don't sin.” (John 8:11 Message) We’ve experienced grace.
Held in **God’s hands of grace**, the sovereign King of the entire universe has given us His grace so we may be transformed day by day.

“**God** sits outside of time. He has never not been full of glory. He is altogether glorious. Everything He touches carries the fragrance and the passion of His manifest presence. He is wonderful, awe-inspiring, and magnificent. Our meetings must reflect the glory of His unchanging nature. He is kind hearted, gracious, loving, good-natured, and benevolent.

He is generous, approachable, and thoughtful. He is slow to anger and swift to bless. He sees the good, and He acknowledges the treasure and the worth in people. He inspires confidence, renews our self-worth, and puts a smile on our hearts. He is captivating, beautiful, and completely lovely. He is strong, powerful, a force to be reckoned with, a conqueror and overcomer.

He is a paradox a fierce and mighty warrior dressed as a lamb; the king of glory and a bruised reed; a son, a servant, a prophet, a priest, and a king. The fear of Him is the beginning of wisdom, yet His laughter makes us wriggle with pleasure. He continually reveals to us points of vulnerability and weakness so that His sheer grace can be our source of strength.” *Graham Cooke*
At some stage in that rebellion, we discover that every other option is not only empty, but we get trapped in bondage and become defeated.

What’s God response to our rebellion? He’s the waiting Father, who comes down the road, with arms of grace outstretched, ready to enfold us.

He sees the real us, with all of our failures.

He knows our heart and He goes far beyond the justice that we deserve to what we don’t deserve: unconditional grace. No wonder our response is worship!

In Luke 15:11-33, we have Jesus’ story of the Prodigal son. Each one of us has, at times, tried to live without God, being seduced by the lie that what the world offers is better than the Father’s grace.
God’s wholistic grace transformation of us begins on the inside and works its way into actions.

The process begins with us accepting that we are loved and accepted by God.

Accept this declaration in 1 John 3:1—How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are.

God’s grace means our identity is secure in who we are in God, not the externals of life.

From this place of a secure identity in the Father’s grace, we can allow the Holy Spirit to help us examine our defense mechanisms and the emotional hiding we engage in.

We’re freed to become more real. More honest about who we are and allow God’s grace to progressively deal with the internal issues we need to face.
Transformation comes as we rest in the Father’s arms of grace, rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and know that Jesus is walking with us in each step of the journey.

Paul shares this insight from Jesus: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Secure in such grace, and with God’s power to be transformed, our Father enables us to recognise how the combination of lies we accept in our mind and the enemy conspire to defeat us. God’s Spirit gives us a revelation of where we are using avoidance, denial or self-reliance and then provides the courage and spiritual resources for inner renewal.

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)
A **lifestyle of grace** only comes into fullness when we **live grace in everyday life**. Grace is shown to be real when it is lived, not talked. **God gives us the capacity**, the position, the authority and the calling to **demonstrate the grace of Jesus**.

**God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.**

**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.**

**For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** (Ephesians 2:5-10)

**Our nation is wanting to see Christians walking in a lifestyle of grace in everyday life.** As we do that—in God’s power—then people will see Jesus and be drawn to Him.
Now forgiven, we **forgive others**.

Having received mercy, we become **channels of mercy**.

Now grace-filled, we become **grace givers**.

Having received God’s Spirit, we **share that gift**.

Now healed by God, we become **agents of healing**.

Loved by God, we **choose to love others**.

Live each day in the **assurance of the relentless grace of the Father**. Experience every day, the reality of Jesus’ unique grace to you.

**Receive** from the Holy Spirit the power to live a **grace-filled life**.

True spirituality is living moment by moment in the **transforming grace of Jesus Christ**.
A lifestyle of Grace—personal meditation

My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth.

I ask Him to strengthen you by His Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite Him in.

And I ask Him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love.

Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!

He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us. (Ephesians 3:14-20 The Message)
In a *A Lifestyle of Grace* you’ll discover:

- God perfect example of grace revealed to mankind
- Biblical truths of God’s grace we may experience
- The transformation grace makes in our lives
- Living grace in the reality of life
- Scriptures for the journey

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