

# CITY CHURCH DNA DEVOTIONAL – WEEK 1

## **DNA Day 1 - Grace for you part 1**

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Welcome to DNA, a series of devotionals that are all about the values and beliefs that shape City Church Bristol – it's great to have you with us! We intend to post six devotionals each week, which will follow on from the value taught at each fortnightly DNA teaching session. For the next two weeks we'll be looking at the value of grace. Across the two weeks we'll explore what grace means for you, your friends and family, your workplace, our church, our city and the wider world.

In this first day's devotional, we'll be asking the question: **How does a biblical understanding of grace affect your sense of identity?**

The truth of the Bible says that you are valuable because God loves you, not because of anything you do or have done. It doesn't matter where you are from, what your parents believe, how intelligent you are, or anything else! You can't earn God's love – you just need to believe and receive it for yourself. In the letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul writes:

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **Romans 5:8.***

If you have put your faith in Christ, believing that He died on your behalf and rose again to give you life, you are acceptable to God. You don't need to prove yourself to God. You are accepted as you are, and yet He is committed to changing you to make you more like Jesus.

### ***Pray***

**Father, I thank you for your grace, in sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the price for sin, so that by grace through faith I can have a restored relationship with you. Help me to live each day in the good of your grace.**

## **DNA Day 2 - Grace for you part 2**

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Yesterday we considered how grace affects our sense of *identity*. Today, I want us to consider how a biblical understanding of grace affects our sense of *purpose*.

Reflect with me for a moment: everything you have – your gifts, your characteristics and your strengths – are all a gift from God. Think about the gifts you received at Christmas. They were given freely, you didn't need to earn them. Likewise, God's gifts to you, and even life itself, are a free gift of His grace. Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, saying:

*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. **Ephesians 2:8-10.***

The reality of God's grace shapes my sense of purpose. I don't need to strive to find some great purpose in order to give my life meaning. Rather than striving, I simply need to understand the purpose that God has made me for and given me grace and faith for, and to receive grace for the good works which He has prepared for us to do.

### ***Pray***

**Lord God, help me by your Spirit to understand what you've given me the grace to do. Teach me to rest in your grace knowing that you give me all I need for the things you've called me to be and do.**

## **DNA Day 3 - Grace for friends & family part 1**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023

On our third day of looking at the value of grace, let's turn to how can you have grace for the people you are closest to.

When I really understand God's grace for me (his unmerited favour), I can demonstrate grace to the people around me. I don't need to treat people on the basis of what I can get from them, but rather on the basis of what I can give to them. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about what God had said to him:

*But he said to me, '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.***

God's grace is the foundation for transforming my relationships and making them healthy. For Paul, understanding grace was a paradigm shift in his thinking. Rather than covering up his weaknesses, he could be open about them because it only demonstrated the wonder and power of God's grace all the more.

### ***Pray***

**Lord Jesus, please let your grace and power rest on me. Let your grace transform my relationships with the people I am closest to. Rather than hiding my weaknesses, help me to be honest and transparent, so that your power would be made perfect in my weakness.**

## **DNA Day 4 - Grace for friends & family part 2**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Let me ask you: **How does a right understanding of grace change your perspective on what the people you are closest to are called to be and do?** You might want to write down some ideas – here a couple of thoughts from me:

Grace means I can allow people to be who God has made them to be rather than trying to make them how I expect or would like them to be. Grace also means I can help the people I love to find out what God's made them for and encourage them to grow in that.

The apostle Peter, who had spent so much time with Jesus, wrote:

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **1 Peter 4:10.***

Isn't that amazing? God has given us responsibility to help nurture the people around us, particularly those we are closest to: wives, husbands, children, best friends, housemates...

Grace frees me to be generous with money, encouragement, affirmation, praise and in every way, without expecting something in return.

### ***Pray***

**Holy Spirit, make me like a gardener who cultivates other people. Make me a faithful steward of all you have put in me, to minister Your grace and blessing to the people I love.**

## **DNA Day 5 - Grace for your workplace part 1**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Whether you work from home, in the home or some other place of work (including school, college, university, volunteering or anything else), **how does grace change your sense of value and worth in that place or work?**

The place where you primarily work, serve or study is a gift from God and he will use it (both the good and the bad) to grow and develop you. That is part of His grace to you.

In different relational contexts we can be tempted to play games in order to feel more secure or appreciated. Because of grace, you no longer need to get involved in gossip or relational politics in order to look good. Because of grace, you can be authentic and secure in who you are. The apostle Paul helpfully reminded the Corinthian church,

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. **1 Corinthians 15:10.***

I need to be reminded of that truth again and again. I'm not valuable because of what I do or produce, but because I'm precious and loved by God I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

### ***Pray***

**Lord, I thank you that you are with me and working in me wherever I live and work. Help me accept who you've made me to be and to rely on your grace at work in me, rather than my own strength.**

## **DNA Day 6 - Grace for your workplace part 2**

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023

### **How does grace impact your perspective on achievement and success in what you do?**

Genuinely grasping grace means that your purpose is as much about being a good colleague and friend as it is about getting a job done or completing tasks. And God has put you where you are to model what a grace-filled life looks like: peaceful, kind, gracious, forgiving, generous. Paul tells the church in Ephesus:

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. **Ephesians 4:7***

We are each given grace for different purposes. So, don't expect to receive grace for things to which you haven't been called to. Instead, ask for grace for the purposes God has given to you. And remember: success isn't just about results, it's about people being flourishing in the life that God has called them to, and lives being changed for the better.

### **Pray**

**Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for giving grace specifically for the things you have given me. Help me to remember that your grace works through many people to bring about your purposes. And help me, by your grace, to play my part.**