



COMMUNITY OF GRACE

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Journey to the Center of Grace: A Four Week Prayer Adventure

Week 4

*How we understand and articulate the Christian story
will always determine how we act.*

--J.R. Daniel Kirk

Hey, Grace'rs,

During the month of August, I am inviting you on an adventure of prayer...an adventure of following Jesus into the center of grace. Fall is a time of new beginnings and new schedules, and provides a chance for us to align our lives with God's grace. I hope you will use this as a "family dinner time" discussion this week with your kids, your spouse, with a group of friends, or even as a meal time devotion by yourself.

Spend some time together talking about how you understand the Christian story—the story of God's grace lavished on us through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

(Take turns reading the following devotion. You may want to come back to this again in a few days at another family dinner to see what new insights God has inspired in you.)

Jan and I dated for almost 5 years before we were married. During one of our hours-long land-line phone calls, I remember her rather nonchalantly saying, *I love you*. If I hadn't been hanging on her every word, I might have missed it. But I heard it. Those three words changed my world! I was loved. Of all the available males on the planet at that time, Jan loved me!

Thirty-nine years ago, on August 25, 1975, Jan and I were married in Minneapolis. That moment changed everything. In that moment, Jan pledged her love to me. I pledged my love to her. And in that moment of grace, our priorities changed dramatically. Life was no longer about me but about us. Everything we did and contemplated was done in terms of our love for each other. It was not about fitting marriage into my needs and desires. It was about fitting my life into what was best for our marriage together. Jan's love for me shaped the way I lived my life.

How we understand God's grace changes everything. How we understand God's grace shapes our actions, our priorities, our values, our commitments, and our lifestyles.

Because God loves me...because God accepts me...because God is always for me...because God forgives me...because God will never leave me nor forsake me...therefore my life is shaped by following Jesus, the source of God's amazing grace.

God loves you. Period. God forgives you. Period. God calls you his son. God calls you his daughter. God invites you to follow Jesus, the source and power of grace. That's the story of Christianity. That's your story. Therefore...

Prayer Time:

How does the grace of God shape your life? Your decisions? Your values?

Are there times when you find yourself trying to fit Jesus into your life rather than fitting your life into Jesus? If so, what are those things that tend to distract you from God's love for you?

How does the story of God's grace re-inspire you and empower you to follow Jesus in your everyday life?

What might it look like for your household to live out the story of God's grace as you understand it?

Pastor Tim

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