

An Ornament of Grace

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

Most of us who celebrate the true meaning of Christmas view this time of year as commercialized, exploited, and in desperate need of redefining in our culture. Yes, I realize there are many who enjoy the hustle bustle of shopping and the colorful lights that adorn neighborhoods, not to mention the decorating of the tree. This girl happens to be one of them. In fact, I participate in the decorating of three trees! Aside from this, the focus on these details, however appreciated and enjoyable, is far from the reality of God's Son coming to impart grace to the sinner. It is in accordance with the precious entrance of God's grace into the world that Proverbs 3:21 – 22 jumped off the page of my Bible.

“Do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck.”

I have never thought of my life in the context of the Lord's grace being an ornament. As you know, a Christmas tree is made beautiful by the varied lights and ornaments that we place on its boughs. Each ornament is typically designed to express or reflect the light around it. In this manner, each Christmas tree expresses the personality of its creator. Pondering these thoughts, I realized that Christ came to ornament each one of us with His grace, the impact of which reflects and expresses characteristics of who He is. Jesus Christ came that we might receive His love and be influenced by His grace. In turn, we become expressions of His love and grace to those who don't know Him.

Therefore, being influenced by His love and grace, we begin to manifest its impact in our character. Here is a definition of grace that was new to me.

Grace is "The divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life."*

God gives His love and grace in reference to developing characteristics in harmony with God's character. When we allow His grace to influence our thoughts and behaviors, we are enabled to experience the character changes we long for. I am so grateful God's grace is plentiful and His mercy never comes to an end. My own stubbornness and pride has often kept me from seeing the purpose of His steadfast manner. God has been attempting to adorn me with His ornaments of grace.

I trust that through this Christmas season, we continue to allow the love of God and the reality of His grace to influence our inner selves. For out of this truth comes the reality of what He came to provide for us to begin with.

Lord, you have been so good to us. Give us the courage we need to allow the impact of your grace and love to do their work. Let it be known through our behavior that we have been with you; may we wear your ornament of grace well.

*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, MacDonald Publishing Company, McLean, Virginia. From the Greek dictionary of the New Testament, entry number 5485.

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