

The Sense of Undeservedness

"Grace, like water, always flows downward, to the lowest places." Author Philip Yancey



A number of years ago my son, Seth, and I were on our annual summer backpacking trip that went terribly wrong. We were soon off course, disoriented, and our water gone with no stream in sight. A ravenous thirst and fatigue settled in our weary bodies. We became dehydrated and physically sick from the heat and growing uncertainty. After miles of hiking, we found it. A tiny, four inch stream that intersected our trail brought shouts of great joy! In our dirty, exhausted and sickened condition, we both felt it was more than just the water. It was grace.

I have often thought of our trip as a metaphor for people on their own life journeys that likewise get terribly lost. Their maps and well developed plans for life simply fail them. They too become profoundly disoriented, lost, sick, and dying from a lack of God's grace in their own lives. They need to be redirected to the Source.

Undeserved. Grace has fundamentally had this meaning for me. It is not earned. It is not getting what you deserve. It is a gift. Grace is what only God in His mercy and kindness brings to redeem and heal us (Ephesians 2:8-9). So when we consider life with God, this *sense of undeservedness* describes God's humbling work in our lives when grace flows into us in our lowest places in life.

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We all are captivated by stories of God's grace that works in the human heart to transform us. Yancey records the dramatic conversion of British slave trader, John Newton, on the high seas that set him on a path to grace and his ministry that would reach beyond belief. In his journal Newton describes what occurred in him as the direct result of God's grace as a chief of sinners: *"Thou has given an apostate a name and place among Thy children-called an infidel to the ministry of the gospel."* It was when Newton, a traitor, a disbeliever, was placed amongst God's children that he was able to realize his own thirst, his own brokenness. Only at this point of brokenness can people truly receive the life giving flow of grace that gives both a new identity and purpose in life. As in Romans 5:1-3: "Because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we live at peace with God. Christ has also introduced us to God's undeserved kindness on which we take our stand. So we are happy, as we look forward to sharing in the glory of God."

We are privileged daily at Genesis to counsel and guide disoriented, lost people into the headwaters of God's grace, Jesus. God's radical goodness of grace abundantly flows, like water, into their wounded souls and supernatural healing occurs. Every time we witness God's grace flow into the lowest places of a human soul, it humbles us. Grace is still amazing, and has that wondrous sense of undeservedness.

Warmly in Christ,

Dave

Executive Director

