

deepening your encounter

The Biblical call to godliness is a challenging one, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed in light of what we're called to. God never compromises his standards of righteousness, but he extends his grace to the least of us to empower the obedience he commands. Take some time this week to reflect on these scriptures. May the Holy Spirit speak into your heart, revealing the magnificence of Christ and his grace and holiness to you.

Resting in Christ ... responding in Christ-likeness

Tension sometimes gets a bad press. But not all tension is the bad kind that needs to be relieved with pills or massages! Some tensions are necessary and healthy.

'One year on our family vacation, I tried to set up a volleyball net by myself. Fortunately, no one had a video camera. I set up the first pole with guidelines attached to stakes in the sand. Then I ran as fast as I could to the other side before the first side fell down. I didn't make it. I tried again. I repeated that process three times before realising I was an idiot. Yes, it took me that long. I needed someone's help because the net could be set up only when there was a healthy tension between both poles.' (Bob Kauflin)



In calling us to Christ-likeness, the New Testament seems to be calling us to hold a *healthy* tension between...

Resting...

Resting in the peace of what Christ has done for us, not having to earn our acceptance with the Father...

...Responding

...while at the same time **responding** to his work in gratitude, not to repay, but in love, not out of debt but from delight.

Consider the following verses. What do they teach us about this tension? Write down or pray through your observations as you read.

1 Pet 2:5 we offer 'spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'

Heb 13:28 '...let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire."

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this 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 workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared before-hand, that we should walk in them.

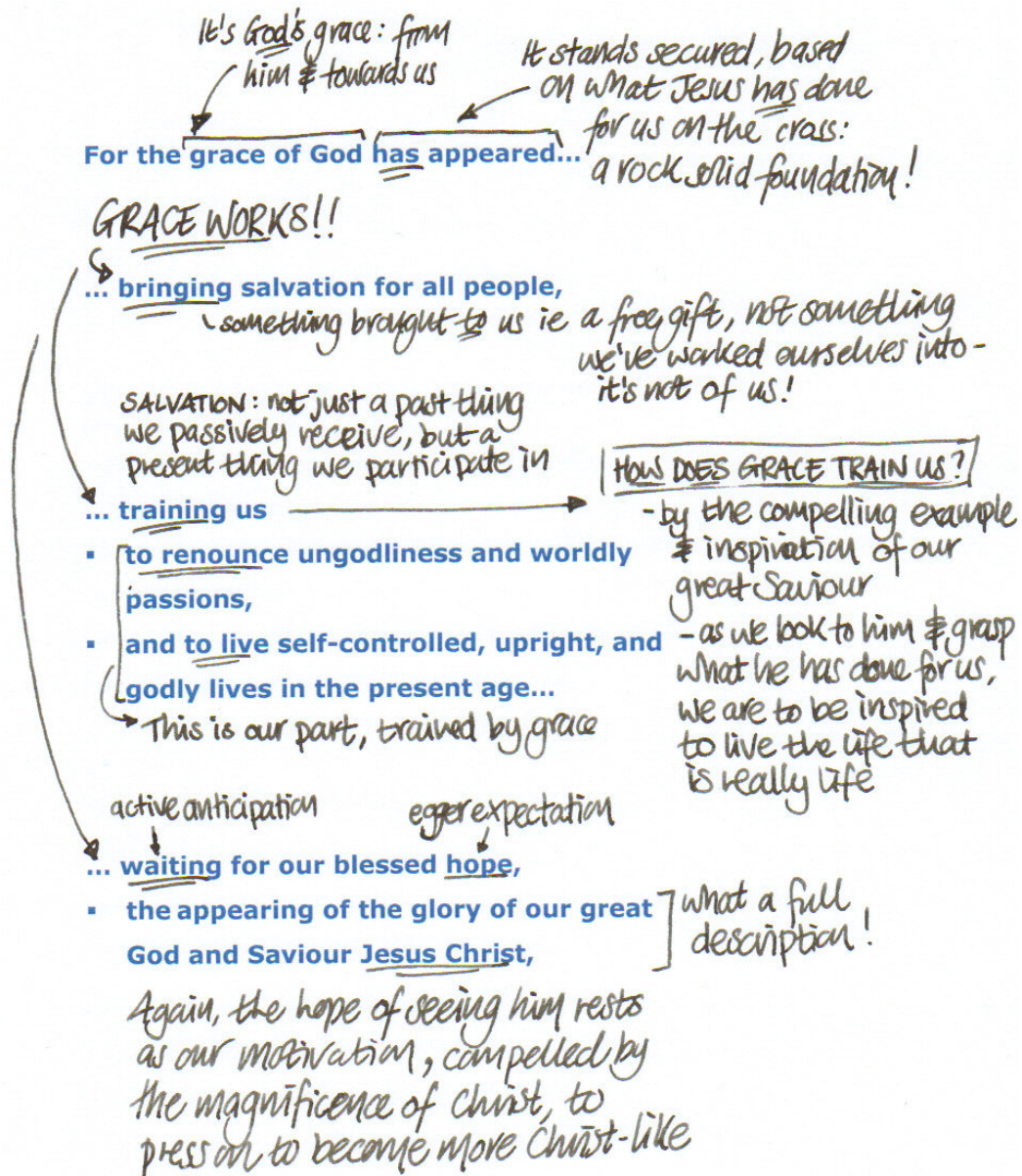
Phil 2:12 ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling...

13 ...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

The order is foundational – God initiates, we respond. God empowers, we respond. God enables, we respond. Remembering this saves us from:

- Pride - because even our most pure moments are tainted by sin and only acceptable to God through Jesus
- Paralyzing self-criticism – because even our worst failures are covered by Jesus blood.

Take some time in **Titus 2:11-13**, seeing what it teaches about God's grace in our lives.



As worship leaders, those taking the challenge of holiness seriously, we must work to magnify the beauty, glory and majesty of our holy God of grace in our *own* eyes. Then our striving for godliness would be the natural overflow of a heart captivated by the excellencies of Christ, won over by his wonderful example, not because it's our duty, but because he is delightful in our eyes. Continue to feast on the beauty of Jesus!

Slowly read **John 8:1-11**, trying to enter into the story, feeling with the characters, imagining yourself in their situation.

- What do you learn about Jesus and his character from this story?
- How does Jesus balance grace and holiness in how he treats the woman?
- What areas of your life is Jesus challenging you with at the moment?
- Where do you need his grace to extend into your life?