

Midweek Reflection # 34 ~ "Lean into God's Grace" Wed., Feb. 4, 2009

"Grow in grace and understanding of our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ. Glory to the Master, now and forever! Yes! " (2nd Peter 3:18, The Message, Eugene Peterson, Nav Press, 2002)

Most of us would eagerly accept more of God's grace... "unmerited favor"... if it is on offer. Nineteenth century evangelist and preacher Charles Finney suggests some actions on our part that could make us more receptive to that Amazing Grace :

"By trusting in Christ, we receive an inward influence that stimulates and directs our activity; by faith we receive His purifying influences into the very center of our being; through and by His truth revealed directly to the soul, He quickens our whole inward being into the attitude of a loving obedience. This is the way, and the only practical way, to overcome sin. God works in us to will and to do; and we, accepting by faith His working, will and do according to His good pleasure. Faith itself is an active and not a passive state....Oh that it could be understood that the whole of spiritual life that is in any man is received directly from the Spirit of Christ by faith, as the branch receives its life from the vine. Oh, that men would learn to **look directly at Christ through the Gospel and to close in with Him by an act of loving trust** as to involve a universal sympathy with His state of mind. This, and this alone, is sanctification."

~ Charles G. Finney, (1792-1875), American revivalist, preacher and educator (named president of Oberlin College in 1852)

from Fill Me With Hope, Classic Christian Writings compiled by Paul M. Miller, Barbour Publishing , Inc. 2004

We have a part to play in our own spiritual growth by actively "leaning into God's grace", a phrase coined by Shuyler Rhodes in a commentary on Psalm 111. One way we can lean into God's grace is by, looking directly at Christ through the Gospel ! Could this be part of what Jesus means when he tells His disciples "**Walk with me and work with me ~ watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.**"? (Matthew 11:29, The Message)

I find myself, more than ever before, challenged to pray through the Gospel accounts of Jesus words and actions so that I might lean into and learn the rhythms of God's grace!

John Newton was so right. God's grace is amazing!

Thanks so much for your prayers and responses.

Under God's Mercy,

Howie