



## MENTAL HEALTH, GOD & GRACE - JANUARY 2024

### "Fruitfulness and the Cycle of Works" - Ian France - 4.2.2024



Gracepoint.SA 1 minute ago

4 FEB Fruitfulness And The Cycle Of Works By Ian France

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### Scripture

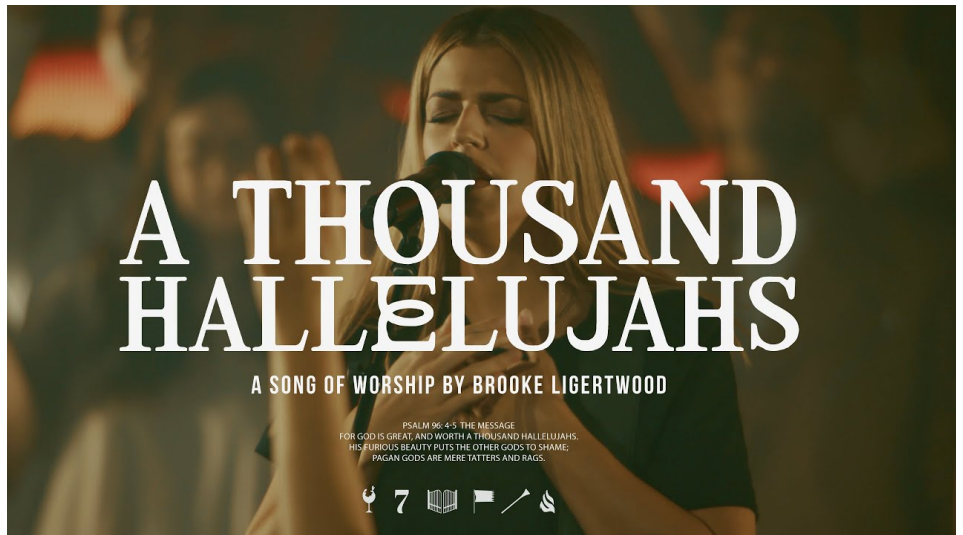
Romans 7:4-6; Ephesians 2:8-10

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

### Observation

#### Romans 7:4-6

Previously Paul had made it clear that anyone who accepted Jesus as their Lord died and rose with Him. He goes on to explain the people also died to the law. Keeping the law does not offer salvation to anyone. It will not make humanity right with God. But believers are not set free from the law so they can live as they want to live - they are set free to be linked ('married') to Jesus so that they can bear fruit for God. Bearing such fruit for God was not possible under the law. It is only as believers are set free from the law and the sinful passions it arouses that they are able to be fruitful for God.



Spend some time in worship.

The law neither sanctifies nor justifies people. It does not make us right with God. When believers are freed from the domination of the law over their lives they are set free to serve God in an enhanced way, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not under any legalism the law produced.

#### Ephesians 2:8-10

Paul reminds his readers that the work of salvation God does in all believers is a gift of grace. No one can do anything to earn it. People are saved only by grace through faith. Paul's language here emphasises that the gift of God refers to salvation, not faith. (Yet even our faith is a gift of God. Without the grace to believe no one would ever be able to do so; yet the act of faith - the believing - is up to the person themselves.) As a result, no one can boast about anything they have done to be saved - God's gift and His plan for salvation means that He alone can receive the glory.

God saves people from the wrath that lies ahead if they reject Him; but He also saves them to transform those who accept Him into beautiful beings. Each person is His workmanship - His *poiema* (Gr) - His work of art. His love changes lives and makes people new creations who will willingly do the work God has designed for each one. Works play no part in salvation; but when a person has received salvation through Jesus' work on the cross, they will demonstrate their faith by their works.

### **Icebreaker:**

What is your favourite fruit? Why do you like it so much? Do you eat it often or is it a treat to have it? How do you like to eat it (raw, peeled, stewed, mashed etc)?

### **Application**

- As you look back over the last three weeks, how have you grown in knowing your identity, in nourishing your soul through time spent with God and in understanding that you have a unique song to sing and ministry to undertake as you shine God's light to others in your world? How do you feel about any changes that have taken place?
- Who do you know who exudes grace? What makes you say this about them? What do they do, say, or behave that sets them apart from other people? How do they make you feel when you are with them? (Or if they are someone you do not know but have heard their teaching or watched their ministry, how do you feel when you are listening/watching them?)
- What fruit do you want to produce for God? Is this your own idea or is He leading you to do this work? How productive are you? How long have you been ministering in this way? Do you still feel energised or depleted? What is God saying to you in this regard today as you consider these things?
- You are unique. Only you can do the work God has planned for you to do. How does this make you feel? What does it inspire you to do in the future about your unique song and ministry that He has planned for you?
- What do you have to change (if anything) to ensure you are living in the Cycle of Grace rather than the cycle of works?

### **Prayer**

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

### **Service**

This week make an intentional effort to use the Cycle of Grace in your life. What challenges does it present and what difference does it make to you and those around you? Be ready to share with the group next week.

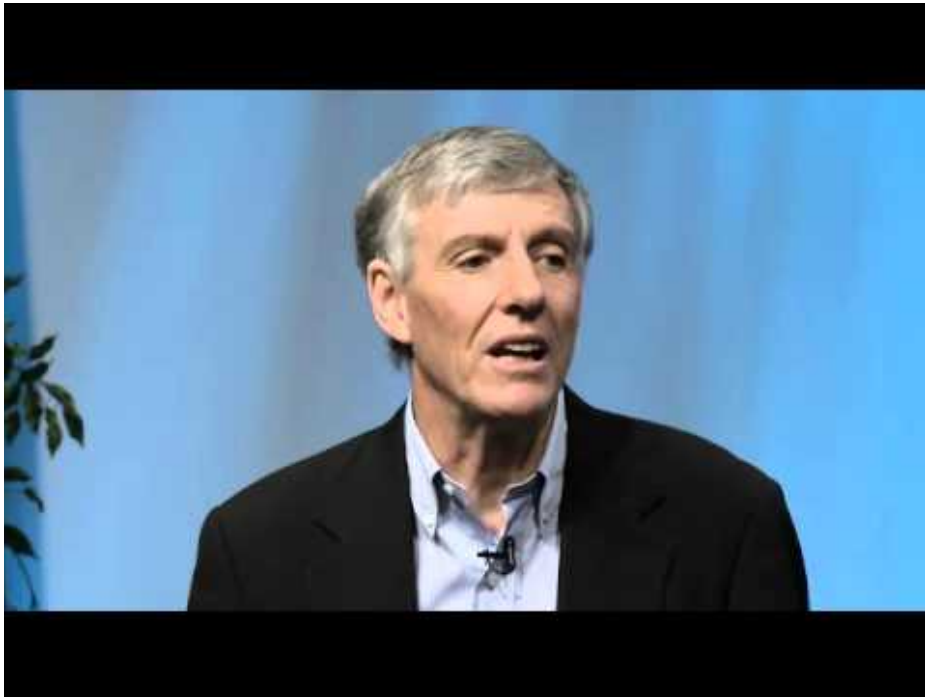
### **\*Notes from the video clip:**

*Grace flowed from Jesus to those around Him in a variety of ways:*

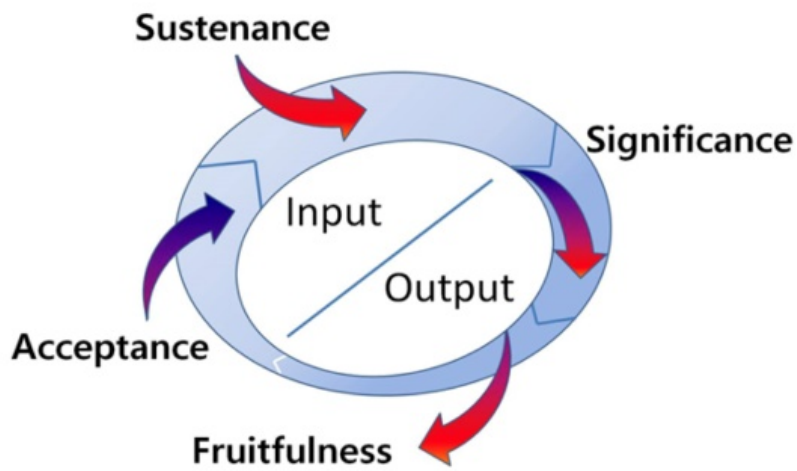
- *Through His ministry with children who felt valued and cherished in a society where they had no place*
- *Through the transformation of the lives of the people who encountered Him*
- *Through the acceptance of those who were marginalised*

*The Cycle of Grace addressed burnout and lethargy for those in ministry. It was found that they were often living in a cycle of works, seeking acceptance from those around them, hoping this would sustain them. It is important to discern when this is happening in life and change our lifestyle to one of a Cycle of Grace.*

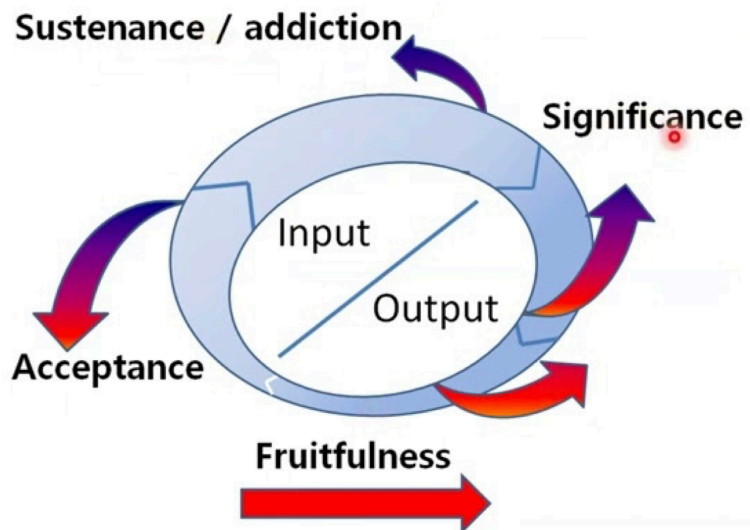
If possible watch the video clip for week 4 this week\*:



### CYCLE OF GRACE



### CYCLE OF WORKS



**Bibliography**

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-7/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/ephesians-2/>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtQzjRxFUwyEeNibVB-GFiyISDow0U1mA>