

Eden's Religion

by Steve McVey

Like many Christians are, I was a religious person for many years. I'm not anymore. It shocked me years ago when, for the first time, I saw plainly from the Bible that neither was Jesus. In fact, it was religious people who were His strongest opponents.

The word "religion" finds its origin in the Latin word, *religare*. It means "to bind" as in the sense of placing an obligation on somebody. (World Book Dictionary) That's exactly what religion always does. It focuses on behavioral mandates that are supposedly necessary to satisfy what God expects from us, but nothing could be further from the truth.

The roots of religion go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. There were two trees in the Garden of Eden that were right in the center. One was the Tree of Life and the other was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The latter was "the religion tree." Why would I suggest that? It's because it provided knowledge about what is good and what is evil - the cornerstone of all religion. Eating from that tree brings a person into the religious world of discerning right from wrong in an attempt to do the first and avoid the latter. Isn't that what religion still does today? It tells us the things we ought to be doing and the things we ought to be avoiding? There's just one problem with the religious approach. God told us to avoid it altogether.



Note carefully in the Genesis narrative that our Creator didn't say eat from the *good* fruit on the tree but avoid the evil. He said not to eat from that tree at all - ever. His desire for you is that you live in union with Him, not out of religion. Morality isn't an issue at all when our actions flow from His indwelling Life. At that point, our behavior transcends morality. In fact, it is *miraculous*.

The sad reality in the modern church world is that the religious world of "Christianity" is unwittingly promoting the fruit of the forbidden tree as though it were the answer to our needs. We may say that we are defenders and proclaimers of the gospel, but in reality we are often peddling the poisonous, albeit good fruit the Serpent himself deceived Eve into eating.

The answer for us all isn't to improve our behavior. It's not to stop doing bad things and start doing good things. The fact is that even if we could eliminate all evil behavior and replace it with nothing but good behavior, we'd still have the same problem. *We would still be up the wrong tree*. Our Father is calling us to abandon the fruit from the poisonous tree of religious behavioral modification. He is inviting us to partake from the Fruit of the Tree of Life every day. He invites us to find our Sustenance in the living Christ, who said, "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you." Because of His grace we are able to freely eat from the finished work on another tree that stood on Golgotha two thousand years ago. Eating from that tree, we will never hunger again.





April 9th & 10th Atlanta, Georgia

Join Steve McVey and Paul Anderson-Walsh on April 9-10 at the Doubletree Guests Suites Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia for the *Radically Better Conference*. This year the focus will be on the book of Hebrews as Paul and Steve challenge our thinking and encourage those who attend to grow in their own understanding of how far reaching and impactful the grace of God extended toward us all really is. This conference is designed for those who are grounded in an understanding of their identity in Christ and who have a desire to grow further in grace.

Because of space limitations, the conference will be limited to the first 150 people who register. You may register online at www.gracewalk.org or by calling our office at 800-472-2311. There is no charge for this conference, but an offering will be taken to cover expenses.

If you would like to stay at the Doubletree, a discount rate of \$89.00/night +tax has been arranged with the hotel. The deadline for this discount rate is **March 10th**. This rate includes a full hot breakfast for two. To make your room reservation call 1-888-458-7128. To obtain the discount, use Group Code: Grace Walk Ministries. If you are told our block is full, please contact our office and we can make arrangements for more rooms within our block.

If you know who you are in Christ and appreciate the message of grace but hunger to grow and to know the deeper aspects of God's grace, this conference will strengthen you, will challenge you, and most importantly will cause you to understand the scope of God's love in a greater way. Register today and plan to meet us at the *Radically Better Conference* in Atlanta

Latin American GW Leadership Summit

On March 19-21, Grace Walk leaders from across Latin American will come together in Guadalajara, Mexico for our annual leadership meeting. This meeting is a time for training, vision casting, team building, strategizing for the future and celebrating together what our Father is doing through Grace Walk Latin America.

There are costs associated with this event that we would like for you to join us praying about between now and then. The total budget for the event is \$5600. Will you pray that our Father would meet this financial need and consider how He may want to use you to help? A major part of the expense is travel costs for our Latin American Directors. The flight for our Director from Argentina is \$1600. Airfare for Grace Walk El Salvador's Director is \$650. Bus fare for our Director in Mexico is \$200. Then there are costs for our meeting space, hotel accommodations, meals, etc.

If you would be willing to help reach Latin America with the message of the grace walk, please send your

gift this month for this need.* We know that our Father wants to use friends and supporters of this ministry to help train these national leaders. If you don't help financially, will you pray that those He wants to use will respond? Lives are being transformed all across Latin America because of grace walkers like you who are passionate about seeing the growing grace revolution cover the Spanish speaking countries to our south! You can know that any gift you send will cause people in Latin America to hear the gospel of our Father's unconditional love and amazing grace.

* *Donations can be mailed or made through our website. When making your donation through the website, designate it to the Latin America Leadership Summit. [Click Here to donate online](#) You can mail your donation to: Grace Walk Ministries, P.O. Box 3669, Riverview, FL 33568*



Living In Heaven's Embrace

This series of messages were recorded live at our *Living In Heaven's Embrace Conference* in Atlanta, GA.

Session 1: The Group Hug

In this teaching you will learn about the eternal love relationship that has existed among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all eternity and how He determined to create mankind to include us in this circle of love.

Session 2: The Cold Shoulder

Did Adam's sin in the garden change God's attitude toward man? This teaching will show how our loving Father relentlessly pursued man after he sinned and how He would not give up on us until He brought us back to Himself.

Session 3: The Divine Lover

This teaching will show how that the meaning of the cross had nothing to do with the Father pouring out anger on His Son, but rather was the work of our Triune God dealing with the fatal effect sin was to have upon all humanity apart from divine intervention.

3 CD Set (Approx 1 hour per cd) - \$20.00 + Shipping

[Click Here for ordering information](#)



New Series - Freedom Fighters!

(January 10th - 31st)

Preach Grace

Protect Grace

Practice Grace

Pursue Grace

[Available on CD - \\$15.00*](#) ~ [Download - \\$10.00](#)

**CD's are packaged in CD envelopes*

Grace As A Doctrine

by Steve McVey

Sometimes as I've traveled, people have said to me, "Our church is focusing on grace this year." When I'm told that, I can't but find myself thinking, "What did you focus on last year? What will you focus on next year?" I've even heard some say that grace is a very important doctrine and how important it is that we understand it.

These kinds of statements sound good on the surface, but they completely miss the point of grace. Grace is not an important doctrine. In fact, grace is a Person. His name is Jesus Christ. He is Grace personified. When we talk about grace, we're talking about Him.

Grace is the essence of our very lives in Christ. Grace is the foundation of who God the Father is to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. To say that grace is an important doctrine puts it in a categorical list of other doctrines, which undermines its value and meaning. Grace is not to be put in a list of doctrinal teachings. It is the fountainhead from which every doctrine of the Bible flows.

To suggest that grace is an important doctrine is like saying that breathing is an important part of my life. That would be an understatement of ridiculous proportions. Breathing is not an important part of my life. When Paul said, "For me to live is Christ," he might as well have said, "For me to live is grace." They are the same. John said that Jesus came "full of grace." (See John 1:14) It's who He is.

Yes, grace is as much a part of our lives as is breathing. It is the core and essence of the gospel. In Acts 20:24, Paul showed that grace is the gospel. "I do not consider my life of any account, as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God." Note how the gospel is inseparably joined to grace here.

The word gospel means "hilariously good news." What is this good news that Paul said he had been entrusted to share with those around him? It was the good news of the grace of God. Once we wander away from grace in what we proclaim, we've left the gospel. We might be telling the truth, but we've left the gospel. We might be helping people to some degree, but we've left the gospel. The gospel is the message of grace. It's the only thing that has the power to transform lives. Paul described it as "the power of God unto salvation."

Let's not think we flatter grace when we call it an important doctrine. It's more than that. It's everything.