

Hypergrace: How Biblical Is It?

Hypergrace, sometimes called *the modern grace movement* or *radical grace*, strongly emphasizes Jesus Christ's finished work, grace, and the Epistles while minimalizing the Old Testament and the Gospels. Adherents claim they are restoring the true gospel of grace. Teachers include Paul Ellis, Andrew Farley, Bob George, Joseph Prince, Andrew Wommack, Ryan Rufus, Ken Legg, and Peter Wilson. They often label mainstream Evangelical views as *mixed grace* (grace and law) without distinguishing Arminian, Free Grace, and Calvinistic positions. Because Hypergrace lacks a systematic theology and its views vary among teachers, the following summarizes its typical teachings compared with Scripture.

The finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross for salvation. Hypergrace teachers rightly affirm salvation by grace alone through faith and reject Lordship Salvation. They teach that all sins—past, present and future—were forgiven at the cross, yet they deny universalism. While the Bible teaches that forgiveness for all sins was provided at the cross (see *GraceNotes* no. 33, "The Extent of God's Forgiveness"), Hypergrace fails to distinguish positional forgiveness (establishing a relationship with God) from family forgiveness (ongoing fellowship with God). Their message is "You are already forgiven; just believe it," which blurs the *result* of salvation (forgiveness) with the *means* of salvation (faith in Christ).

Dismissal of progressive sanctification. Hypergrace conflates justification and sanctification claiming that once justified, believers are fully sanctified. They deny the need for growth, saying holiness is effortless when Christians rest in their identity and focus on Christ. Calls to holiness and discipleship are labeled legalistic. Unfortunately, Hypergrace rejects the biblical distinction between positional sanctification (1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10) and progressive sanctification (Col. 1:28; 2 Peter 3:18; Heb. 10:14). Yet even the Epistles, command believers to pursue godliness intentionally (Rom. 6:19; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thes. 4:3; 2; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:14-15; 2 Peter 3:18; see also *GraceNotes* no. 50, "Sanctification: Whose Work Is It?").

No need for believers to confess sins. Since Hypergrace teachers see believers as perfect in Christ, God is never displeased with their sin because all sins are forgiven. Believers never lose fellowship with God. They cannot sin against God but can do things harmful to themselves and others. Many deny the believer has a sin nature; it is not they who sin but sin that dwells in them. They claim 1 John 1:9 addresses unbelievers; therefore, confession is not for Christians; it denies Christ's finished work, making confession a sin. A better interpretation of 1 John is that it was written to believers about enjoying fellowship with God and the Apostles (see *GraceNotes* no. 37, "Interpreting 1 John"). Christians who sin, *do* sin against God (Ps. 51:4) and may lose joy, damage their testimony, and experience God's loving discipline (1 Cor. 11:27-32; Heb. 10: 26-31; 12:5-11; Rev. 3:19). Confession restores the fellowship with God lost because of sin (see *GraceNotes* no. 58, "Do Believers Need to Confess Their Sins for Forgiveness?").

Ignores the believer's struggle with the flesh. According to Hypergrace, efforts towards obedience or holiness is "striving in the flesh." They interpret Romans 7:14-25 as Paul's struggle with sin before salvation. This ignores the believer's struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:17; James 1:14-15; 4:1; 1 Peter 1:22).

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They believe the Holy Spirit is grieved not by a believer's sin, but by failure to fully identify with Christ. Hypergrace defines repentance as a *change of mind* that embraces the truth about God's grace; it is not about sin. But Scripture shows that believers can be carnal, (1 Cor. 3:1-5) and that repentance involves a change of mind that should lead to changed behavior (2 Tim. 2:24-25; Rev. 2-3).

Rejects moral exhortations in the New Testament. Hypergrace teaches that attempts to obey biblical commands is legalism. They encourage only resting in and looking to Jesus. But this ignores the connection of obedience and love for God (John 14:15, 21). Though believers today are not under the Mosaic law, Hypergrace too easily dismisses Old Testament morality and the Sermon on the Mount. They misunderstand legalism, which is not obedience but an attitude of following rules to appear spiritual, an attitude of pride. God's love and grace motivate and empower obedience; they do not eliminate it (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-12; 1 John 3:21-24; 5:2-3). *All* Scripture remains profitable for believers today (2 Tim. 3:16; see also Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6-12; Eph. 6:1-3).

Dismisses accountability at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Hypergrace asserts that God is never angry with believers and does not discipline them. Many dismiss the Judgment Seat of Christ entirely; others say it is a celebration of Christ's work, not an evaluation of believers. They reject any judgment or evaluation of Christians, arguing that believers are as righteous as Jesus, and teaching a future evaluation promotes fear-based religion. They claim such a motivation is legalistic since believers should be motivated only by God's love and their identity in Christ. However, Scripture indicates that believers will be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ for rewards or loss of rewards (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:9-11).

Disregards the relevance of the Mosaic Law. According to Hypergrace, the Old Covenant of Law continued until Christ's death, which inaugurated the New Covenant (Matt. 26:27-28; Heb. 9:16-17). While this is true, they believe the true gospel of grace does not appear until Paul's epistles, and that Jesus' teachings, being under the Law, have little or no relevance for Christians today. They fail to recognize that the Mosaic Law was a moral code that characterized God's righteousness, which can inform Christian morality. Though believers today experience some degree of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant, Scripture shows that ultimate fulfillment awaits Israel's future full restoration (Jer. 31:31-37; Eze. 36:16-38).

Conclusion

The Hypergrace view is appealing to some because it highlights God's grace and the believer's identity in Christ, and because of this, many have been helped by it. However, in its reaction against performance-based religion, Hypergrace often mishandles Scripture. It overemphasizes grace in ways that neglect valuable truths like walking in holiness, fellowship with God, and the accountability of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Any emphasis on God's grace must be tempered with God's truth. Believers are commanded to pursue godliness (Rom 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-14) and to walk by grace through faith, which produces the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). By removing God's expectations for holiness and discipleship, the Hypergrace view fosters a complacency that can be harmful to the believer. God's grace is truly amazing when balanced with proper interpretations of God's Word.

