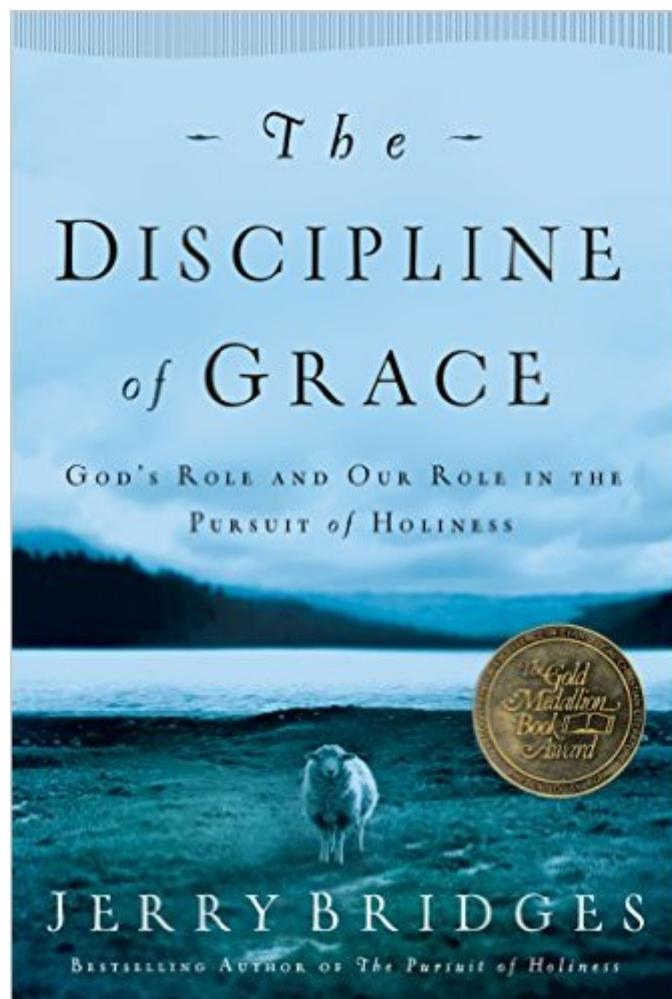


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The Discipline Of Grace



Synopsis

The Discipline of Grace offers a clear and thorough explanation of the gospel and what it means to be a believer. Written by Navigator author Jerry Bridges, this book explores how the same grace that brings us to faith in Christ also disciplines us in Christ. In learning more about grace, you also will learn about Godâ™s character, His forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When it comes to the area of books on Christian living, Jerry Bridges stands out among a very crowded field of authors. In the last 10 years, there has been an explosion of books on Christian living, with all kinds of authors trying to find a publishing niche - whether it's books that are geared specifically towards women, homeschoolers, men, parents, seniors, new Christians, seasoned Christians, etc. Thankfully, in the midst of all this we have an author like Bridges, whose 'niche' is writing thorough and challenging books that the entire body of Christ can profit from. This particular book certainly falls into that category. The purpose of the book is to attempt to find a Biblical basis for understanding our individual pursuit of holiness. In particular, the book tries to explore what our role is, versus what God's role is, and then expanding upon not only what we should be doing, but what our approach and attitude should be in order for our efforts to be effective. This is a difficult area. As Bridges properly points out, teachings on personal holiness range from a 'God is in control so don't worry about your own conduct' approach to a legalistic rules and regulations approach that on a practical level leaves holiness entirely up to the individual. Bridges spurns both approaches in favor of a balanced approach that struck me as being very biblically responsible. That approach

being that God is indeed in control and His grace is the ingredient that empowers our efforts to become more holy. The strength of the book is the last six or so chapters where Bridges puts practical legs upon many of the Biblical concepts discussed in the first half of the book and develops several Biblical disciplines that all Christians should heed in their lives.

The Lord says to Moses, "Speak to the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy'". The Master calls His followers, saying, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Yet we clearly are imperfect, and our response to this calling all too often smacks of striving, pride, and ultimately of hypocrisy. So what are we to do? And who's responsible for what? These questions are explored by Jerry Bridges in this excellent book. The title itself is a meditation on shared responsibility in the process of sanctification. On the surface it may seem that grace and the personal discipline to pursue holiness are opposed to one another, but Bridges argues that they are not. "In fact", he writes, "they go hand in hand. An understanding of how grace and personal, vigorous effort work together is essential for a life-long pursuit of holiness". A foundational point that the author makes is that Christians must constantly preach the Gospel to themselves. The conventional paradigm is that the Gospel is relevant to unbelievers, and that after they come to the Lord, the essential focus becomes one of discipleship. However, Bridges reminds us that daily recognition of the saving grace of the Gospel message is necessary if discipleship is not to become a matter of performance and of empty striving. He describes how the primary responsibility of the disciple is to behold the glory of the Lord as it is displayed in the Gospel; this opens us to the sanctification that is the work of the Holy Spirit. And as we receive this grace, the practice of the other spiritual disciplines that are discussed in the book becomes a natural outflowing of the love of God in the believer.

First of all, thanks go out to Stephanie Chalfant at NavPress for this review copy of *The Discipline of Grace* and *The Discipline of Grace Study Guide*. "So learn to 'preach the gospel to yourself' everyday, and in the joy and strength of knowing your sins are forgiven and sin's dominion is broken, press on to become holy as He is holy." This closing sentence succinctly lays out the major aims of *The Discipline of Grace*. Speaking with the heart of a pastor, Jerry Bridges encourages believers to take an active approach to discipleship, while keeping a proper grounding in the gospel as Christ-centered and Spirit-empowered. The message of the gospel as an essential element for both believer and unbeliever takes center stage. Bridges shows throughout the fallacy of thinking we can "earn" righteousness or holiness, while still lifting up a challenge to actively engage in the

process of spiritual growth. The heart of a pastor can be easily seen in the many stories and quotes offered, and a strong push towards action, towards application. The text strives to relate Biblical truth in an easily digestible form. Overall, Bridges is successful in demonstrating to the reader the need for personal and proactive action, and the need for dependence on God's gift of forgiveness and the empowering work of the Spirit as a foundation for discipleship. Bridges' success in accomplishing his objective got better as the book progressed, especially after chapter 6. It is clear that this is not just some academic subject to Bridges, but rather worthy of deep, personal involvement, and with weighty implications for the life and mission of Christ's body. Unfortunately, there is a certain lack of precision throughout.

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