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## Theme

Before we can effectively heal the brokenness in the world, we must allow the Gospel to heal the brokenness in us. Before we can move into our future, we must make sense of our past and embrace how it has formed who we are. We'll discover what this formula is and how you can follow it.

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## Discussion

Grace is the first ingredient necessary for growing up in the image of God. Grace is unbroken, uninterrupted, unearned, accepting relationship. It is the kind of relationship humanity had with God in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were loved and provided for. They knew God's truth, and they had perfect freedom to do God's will. In short, they were secure; they had no shame and anxiety. They could be who they truly were.

Perhaps you have experienced this kind of love and grace with someone. You can be exactly who you are. You do not need to hide your thoughts or feelings; you do not need to perform; you do not need to do anything to be loved. Someone knows the real you, and loves you anyway.

1. Who is that person for you? How was that kind of relationship cultivated?

- a. Have you ever experienced being in relationship with a someone who only shows you grace? Someone who never tells you anything that you do wrong. How does that make you feel? Do you only want people around you that agree with you?

Truth is the second ingredient necessary for growing up in the image of God. Truth is what is real; it describes how things really are. Just as grace is the relational aspect of God's character, truth is the structural aspect of his character. Truth is the skeleton life hangs upon; it adds shape to everything in the universe. God's truth leads us to what is real, to what is accurate.

2. Who is that person for you? How was that kind of relationship cultivated?
  - a. Have you ever experienced being in relationship with a someone who only gives you truth? Someone who doesn't deliver the truth with any care. They tell you everything that you are doing wrong. How does that make you feel? Do you only want people around you that correct you?

### **Read Galatians 3:10,23 and Galatians 5:4**

When we look at what the Scripture says about the law, about truth without grace, we see that the law silences us, brings anger, increases sin, arouses sinful passions, brings death, puts us under a curse, holds us prisoner, alienates us from Christ, and judges us harshly. The law without grace destroys us. No one ever grows when they are under the law, for the law put us into a strictly legal relationship with God: "I'll love you only if you do what is true or right." Getting truth before grace, or truth before relationship, brings guilt, anxiety, anger, and a host of other painful emotions.

3. How have you been affected by people who put truth over grace? How have you affected others in the times where you put truth over grace?
  - a. How do things like guilt, shame and anger affect someone's relationship with God?

Truth without grace is deadly, but grace without truth leads to less than successful living as well. Grace alone is directionless. In actuality, the same way that Truth (without grace) can be called Judgment, Grace (without truth) can be named License.

### **Read Galatians 5 (Verses 13, 19-21)**

4. How have you been affected by people who put grace over truth? How have you affected others in the times where you put grace over truth?
  - a. How do things like a lack of constraint and a lack of boundaries affect someone's relationship with God?

5. Read John 1:14-17. Jesus is full of grace and truth. What does this mean for our relationship with Jesus? How comfortable should we feel going to Jesus with our issues?

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## Application

The Lord accepts us fully, knowing that we will need time and experience to work out our imperfections. Our failures do not surprise him. If they surprise us, it is only because we have too high an opinion of ourselves. We have a standing in grace that gives us freedom to achieve truth over time. The truth we need to achieve has many aspects. It includes the developmental needs of the real self, the grace of relationship, and the external truth of the precepts of God. And it takes time for all of these to work.

Take 5 minutes to pray in a small group. Pray for the times when you have been lacking in truth and/or grace. Pray that God would give you the patience to press through the time that it takes to see transformation in our lives and the lives of others.

## Additional Reading

Scriptures to read if you tend to be someone who speaks truth without grace:

### **Romans**

3:19-20

7:5-10

### **James**

2:10

Scriptures to read if you tend to be someone who speaks grace without truth:

### **Romans**

6:15-16

### **Colossians**

3:5

### **1 Peter**

4:3