

GRACE AND CUTTING PEOPLE SLACK

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We all need grace don't we? Life is a journey, and sometimes we need people to laugh, shrug stuff off, and cut us some slack — because truthfully speaking rarely are any two people at the exact same point in their journey and nobody has access to the depths of our hearts on a moment by moment basis besides like God does. Plus, we still live in a broken world full of pain and drama and *moods* (let's be honest, sometimes we're just grumpy). **One of the greatest gifts you can give a person is refraining from extending your judgment when you have a limited pool of facts.** Doesn't this sound like a relief?

When I became a mom, and started making decisions about the little life that was thrust into my arms without a lick of experience, I began to realize the tremendous *gift* that grace was. Some of the most loving people in my life allowed me to make the call for my child without raising eyebrows, quietly snickering or correcting me every half second. Because seriously, there are a thousand passionate opinions out there when it comes to parenting... sheesh. So guess what? Now, I don't care if you co-sleep or require the crib, if you used Babywise or demand-fed, if you used baby monitors or choose to space out your shots. Seriously, people, *is this what we are*

going to get all up in arms about?! And when you, sweet mom living in those first 12 weeks I like to call "survival mode," show up somewhere and you can't remember your phone number, welcome to the club. **Grace is a gift.**

It's fun to chuckle about the need for grace in the glorious demand of parenting our little loves, but then there's the tough stuff that really drives it home for me.

I have a twin brother, Heath, who just this summer seriously and profoundly loved on a sweet family. His friend of 10+ years had been battling brain cancer and saw a dramatic spiral where he was given 8 weeks to live. Heath made a decision to visit him every Tuesday just to be with him – not out of duty or it was the "right thing to do," or because he was obligated or guilted into in – but because he loved him and his family (yes – family). He sat by his bed and read, or talked, or joked, or whatever. And every Tuesday he left saying "see ya in a week!" Then he was this friend's pallbearer. This man's wife, now widow, is an understandable wreck. After getting the play by play from Heath these past few weeks my hope is that people will cut this sweet grieving woman some slack when she has moments where she's less than her best. I'm hoping for grace as she goes about her days just trying to figure out how to parent alone, do life without her partner, figure out how to develop new habits, and develop new stories as she lives in her new normal. I'm hoping that she she envelops herself into the company of real Christians who know God and who represent his rich and gracious love well.

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." — John 13:35

Here's the truth – we live in a broken world, with broken people, and broken methods of coping. And since we don't have all the information, I think it's wise not to respond too quickly when we feel wronged in some way. Well, except for those crazies who are still turning left when my light is clearly green... seriously people.

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." —James 1:19

Just to clarify, I don't think it's life-giving or gracious to ignore harmful conditions. When we love people, we graciously pull one another out of harm's way. That can be difficult and misunderstood — many even believe it to be judgmental or intolerant; **but offering grace is breathing life. We offer grace and love, because grace was**

offered to us. Then petty stuff just becomes, well, petty. We love better and shrug off the stuff that doesn't matter when we love deeply and invite people into life that is lasting. Grace is part of loving well, and loving well requires that we consider one another above ourselves. **I think it's tough to offer grace to another when we either take ourselves too seriously or we consider ourselves more important.**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves..." — Philippians 2:3

This is a crazy little life isn't it?! And becoming mature and complete is a process isn't it? Let's agree to graciously let journey's happen without judgment and with love.