

# **Alienation**

## **What's the #1 problem that the world is facing today?**

My friend Doug Burleigh suggests that the biggest problem on planet Earth is alienation.

9-11, Al-Qaeda, Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, even our deteriorating relations with France, Germany and Russia are all evidence of the pervasive and growing climate of alienation.

We see nations, races and ethnic groups, philosophies, cultures and religions all pitted against each other. Even families have painful rifts. And, of course, mankind's estrangement from God.

- If it is, how is alienation playing a role in your life today, and what can you do about it?

What is God's solution to alienation? (Read Romans 6:22-23; Romans 5:1,2,6,8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

God's response to alienation is reconciliation (reestablishing friendship or harmony, rapprochement, peacemaking). He urges us to be active reconcilers in three areas of our life:

- (a) Be reconciled with God. God acted first (Romans 5:8).
- (b) Be reconciled with others. (Read Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-17).
- (c) Help the world become reconciled with God.

We can't accept/love ourselves unless we know we're accepted/loved by God.

My Dad and I were estranged for 14 years of silence. When I began to understand the grace of God, I knew that I must extend grace to him, even though he had not yet asked me for forgiveness, or apologized to me.

We are Christ's representatives. What does peacemaking look like in your life?

We don't like grace because: (inspired by Scott Dudley)

Grace makes us all equal, and we want to be better/different.

Grace is too radical because there's nothing we can do to make God love us more. Currying favor with God is not like earning trips with frequent flyer miles. (Of course, there's nothing we can do to make God love us less either.)

Grace is unfair. The "biggest" sinners get the same 100% forgiveness that the "least" sinners receive. Therefore, I can't feel superior to the worst offender. Nor can I be jealous of the good gifts that God gives to others. But "deserve" has nothing to do with it. Yes, we may be "good," but God demands "perfect!" And only God's grace can declare us perfect in His sight. Grace truly is unfair since Christ had to die so that people like us could be saved. He didn't deserve that. Who is beyond God's grace? No one!

His Deal

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