

## **Some Insights on the Practical Implications of Teaching Teenagers from a Free Grace Perspective**

**by Robby Lashua**

I am a youth pastor serving in a Church in Buckeye, Arizona. I am a firm believer in Free Grace Theology and I continue to be convinced of it the more and more I study it. I haven't seen much written on Free Grace Theology in youth ministry, so I hope this will give you some insights on the practical implications of teaching teenagers from a Free Grace perspective.

As I prepare for our Sunday morning Youth Service, I study the biblical passages, use commentaries, do word studies when needed and ultimately try to prepare a sermon based on Biblical truths that will impact the teenager's lives. My approach on theology is to teach truth through my sermons so that the youth will be able to tell when someone tries to teach something contrary to Scripture. I approach Free Grace in the same way. The youth have no idea of the debates and the books that draw a line between Free Grace Theology and Lordship Theology. They simply know what I teach. My hope is that through the teaching of what is Biblical, in my opinion Free Grace Theology, the youth will be able to sense something wrong when they come upon the Lordship Theology.

This actually happened to me unexpectedly one day. One of my students came into my office for our weekly meeting. I was reading through some Lordship material and he asked what I was reading. I told him and then asked him what he thought of a view that states someone must show fruit in their lives as evidence that they are truly saved. I tried my best not to influence his response, and as he answered I was extremely delighted. He asked me, "Well, if you have to prove you are truly saved through doing good works, how is that different than working for your salvation? The Bible tells us that we can't work our way to heaven." At this statement I was excited and I told him that I whole heartedly agreed with him. This conversation gave me encouragement that the teenagers in our youth group understand the Gospel and can sniff out false doctrine. This was a great realization for me, because this has been my goal.

The truth is, Free Grace Theology has been well received by many teenagers in our group, but I must warn you that there is a danger in teaching Free Grace.

I have one teenager in our group that has walked away from God over the past two years.. He is the typical troubled teenager who has a horrible home life and is rebelling against everyone and everything. I called him into my office after I heard rumors of him having inappropriate relationships with some of the girls in the youth group. As I confronted him on these issues, he admitted to them and didn't really seem to care. I asked him what he thought God would think of his behavior. He went on to explain to me how he never really understood why the Bible says that you can't have sex before marriage. I knew this to be a lie, because we had talked about this issue many times over the three years he had been in our youth group. I explained that God did not want him to live this way, to which he replied, "It's not like I can lose going to Heaven! I am going to go with the flow and do what I want and maybe someday I will start living for God again." My Free Grace Theology had just been used against me. Everything inside of me wanted to tell this guy that since he was living in such rebellion to God, he might not have been truly saved in the first place. I wanted to scare him into obedience to God. And yet, I couldn't. He was right, he can't lose going to heaven. I ended up reassuring him that if he had trusted in Jesus for his eternal life that he was eternally secure. I also told him that he was risking punishment from God, loss of eternal rewards, and that his sin would be hurting his girlfriend, the youth group, the church at large, his family and countless others around him. He didn't care. He reinforced the fact that he was going to do what he wanted to do with his life. I told him I completely disagreed with his decision and that I couldn't allow him to participate in the youth group anymore with this attitude toward God. I told him that I would meet with him outside of youth group activities, but that I could not have his rebellious attitude influencing the other teenagers in our group. Through this conversation with I was reminded of what Paul said in Romans. "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8:6-8. I was dealing with the carnal Christian. This teenager was taken the Grace of God and knowingly walking all over it. It is at these times that I wish Lordship Salvation was true. Motivating this teenager through the fear that he might go to Hell might have scared him enough to change his ways, but I cannot teach what is not biblical. Free Grace Theology is true, and although teaching it to teenagers can have results for good and for bad, I will continue to teach the Truth of what the Bible says.