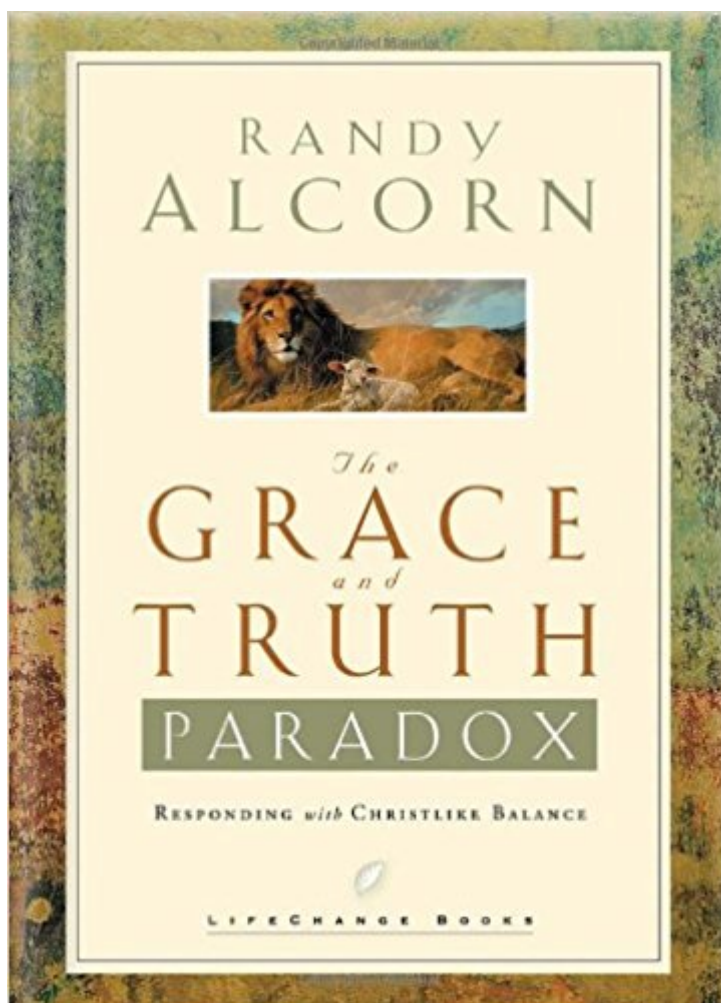


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# The Grace And Truth Paradox: Responding With Christlike Balance



## Synopsis

Christians trying to model their lives after Jesus may find that He gets buried under lists, rules, and formulas. Now bestselling author Randy Alcorn offers a simple two-point checklist for Christlikeness based on John 1:14. The test consists of balancing grace and truth, equally and unapologetically. Grace without truth deceives people, and ceases to be grace. Truth without grace crushes people, and ceases to be truth. Alcorn shows the reader how to show the world Jesus -- offering grace instead of the world's apathy and tolerance, offering truth instead of the world's relativism and deception. Grace or Truth -- or Both? Truth without grace breeds self-righteousness and crushing legalism. Grace without truth breeds deception and moral compromise. Is it possible to embrace both in balance? Jesus did. Randy Alcorn offers a simple yet profound two-point checklist of Christlikeness. "In the end," says Alcorn, "we don't need grace or truth. We need grace and truth. And for people to see Jesus in us, they must see both."

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## Customer Reviews

Hate the sin but love the sinner is the gist of the paradox explored in this slender point-of-purchase book by minister Alcorn. The author of *Deadline* draws on his experiences of getting "proabortion" activists, unbelieving academics and his "resistant" father to see the light to argue that Christians must display grace-a spirit of humility, love and inclusion-while also insisting on the truth of Christian doctrine. Truth without grace, he asserts, yields a self-righteous Pharisaism, while grace without

truth leads to "moral indifference" and a dilution of Christ's message. Alcorn writes in a contemporary idiom, likening grace and truth to a binary star system or the twin strands of the DNA double helix. But his is a traditional evangelical outlook that combines Biblical literalism, hell-fire and a deep acknowledgment of personal sin. Alcorn registers his fundamentalist views on such topics as relativism on campus, the fallacy of Darwinism and Oprah Winfrey's "have-it-your-way designer religion." But he also chides Christians for their holier-than-thou attitudes ("Jesus," he warrants, "would preach five sermons against self-righteous churches for every one against taverns") and compares himself with evil-doers ("I am Dahmer. I am Mao") in attesting to the fallen state of all humanity and their dependence on God's unmerited grace for salvation. Firm but forbearing, Alcorn's tract is a dose of old-time religion in a smooth modern formulation. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Randy Alcorn delivers his own work with a skill that sounds effortless. He discusses the differences between grace and truth, and why each is necessary to the other. Using modern stories to illustrate his points, he says that if Christians model Christlike behavior, their lives will reflect both truth and grace. Narrating with careful pacing and judicious timing, Alcorn states that grace is the cornerstone of salvation. The truth delivered without grace, he believes, leads to self-righteousness, and grace without truth breeds deception and moral compromise. A balance is needed. This is an audiobook to savor and to listen to time and time again." — G.D.W. — © AudioFile Portland, Maine  
--This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

This book didn't cover much but it conveyed its points clearly. It's an hour read for someone who likes to read. I love to read and give books to others to read, but I often find they don't get past the first chapter. I think more Christian books should be short and easy to digest precisely for this purpose. Otherwise, many people won't read at all. I am getting more copies of this book to give to people because I know it's short enough for them to read the whole thing. I like books with more depth but for the purpose of educating people who need more surface level material, this is a good one.

This is the second book I've read from Mr. Alcorn, the first being *The Treasure Principle*, and he has quickly become one of my favorite authors. His writing is very concise and piercing. The compactness of his writing fits perfectly to the LifeChange Books produced by the Multnomah publishing house, spanning less than 100 pages. That amount also happens to be the average

mental capacity of my brain. As the title suggests, Mr. Alcorn explains the tension and apparent contradiction between Grace and Truth. More importantly, he suggests that many Christians live their lives marked either by Truth-only (grace-less, legalistic) or by Grace-only (lack of essential truth, fearful of truth) qualities. Instead the Christian life is marked by both Grace and Truth, not one or the other. He explains how Christ in His incarnation was revealed to be the One who was full of Grace and Truth. He illustrates this using John 2 with the first miracle of Jesus when He turns water into wine. Alcorn asks why was Christ's first miracle turning water into wine? He claims that it was simply to show grace by preventing the host of the wedding from being embarrassed for running out of wine - allowing the people to enjoy themselves at the party. But immediately following, Jesus offers truth when he whips those who have turned His Father's house into a house of merchandise. This illustration displays the balance that Jesus had when he walked this earth. He epitomized Grace and Truth in all that He did. I appreciate his pithy introductions especially when defining What is Truth in chapter 4. He explains that Truth is like the guardrails in life that protect us and that it hedges us in for our own good. However in order for Truth to be able to protect us, it must produce moral decisions. Truth provides moral bearings and expects moral decisions. Truth, therefore, is not simply a set of neutral facts, but facts that demand change. Alcorn says, "Truth is more than mere facts. It's not just something we act upon. It acts upon us. It sanctifies (sets us apart) from the falsehoods woven into our sin nature and championed by the world." This is exactly what Jesus defined the power of truth to be that which sanctifies or purifies His followers. Sanctify them by Thy truth, Thy Word is truth (John 17:17) Jesus describes Truth as that which changes us but also exists outside of us. If we were to find truth, we would not start with ourselves, but must go outside of ourselves. According to Jesus that place to begin is God's Word. God's Word is truth - not the ideas, the culture, or the philosophy of man. If truth was found within ourselves, then a Savior would not be required. If truth will set us free, than we can look to ourselves to set ourselves free. One does not have to look very far to see how man is so incapable of freeing himself from sin. Another point he makes about Truth is not only is it outside of us, but truth is confused with what we want it to mean versus what it actually means. So not only is truth outside of us, it is objective and cannot be held under our subjection, rather we are held in subjection to it. What about Grace? Alcorn emphasizes what many people miss about Grace. He shares his experience with far too many people saying how they've, "failed God so many times that [they] no longer felt worthy of God's grace." If one was worthy to receive grace, it would not have been grace! It would have been a payment. I appreciate his explanations on Grace because Grace can only be understood in the context of the Law or of Truth. If we are to talk about Grace we cannot begin with Grace, but must begin with God's Law or

Truth. The truth of God's holiness and His righteousness must be explained before we can understand the value and shock-factor of Grace. Alcorn illustrates this perfectly by using John Newton's testimony of how the once slave-trading ship captain experiences the saving grace of God and pens the most beloved hymn, "Amazing Grace." Newton is quoted to have said on his death bed, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." Amen and Amen. The picture of how Newton understood the truth of his sin and the grace of Christ the Savior. This book is one that I'm sure I will read again and again to be reminded of how to balance my life with Grace and Truth.

I love Randy Alcorn and this book did not disappoint. It is a very fast read. It is a small book, but has enough material to make it worth buying.

I have become a student of Grace due to some challenges that have confronted me in the last year. Randy Alcorn's book is a gem. Randy, as usual, hits all the hard topics head on. I loved his segment on - "We've redefined Christlike" to be "nice." He writes - "By that definition, Christ wasn't always Christlike. He confronted people with sin, raised His voice, threw tables and called people snakes, blind hypocrites, and white washed tombs." Randy, as usual makes me laugh. "In the 1930s, German church leaders defended Adolph Hitler as a leader who didn't smoke or drink, encouraged women to dress modestly, and opposed pornography. If that's your checklist, Hitler was a swell guy." BTW I bought the book for one cent on (second hand.) Good on the Alcorn ministry group. Check it out....there are still some available. "The Grace and Truth Paradox" is a tiny book that can be read in an hour. It is worth its weight in gold.

This book explains beautifully how to answer in TRUTH and LOVE, when people say: "I do not believe a loving God would send anyone to hell." It is so easy for churches &/or believers to get stuck on the side of grace & discard the side of judgement. It is equally easy to get stuck on the side of judgement and ignore grace. This book uses scripture to put the two together seamlessly and simply. I now use material from this book when I need to give an answer to someone who does not believe in hell "because God is so loving". If you want to be ready to give a beautiful, caring & truthful answer to that statement, THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU! I thought I already had a good answer. This one is even better! That is only one (1) thing I found useful in this little book that is a quick but powerful read.

Awesome book! Can't have truth without grace!

Randy Alcorn is one of my favorite authors. He writes fiction and non-fiction! This is my favorite book he has written in the non-fiction category. I have read it many times and have just purchased three copies as gifts! The Bible says, "Jesus was full of grace and truth." This book takes a look and shows what that looks like in our world. Outstanding!

Powerful reaching, and this book is a must in truly understanding how both are a must in our journey walking with Jesus.

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