Dear Open Door Family,

Have you ever sat back in wonder at what God has created? I have a confession to make. I love watching humming birds. That may be why we have 3 humming bird feeders on our deck. As I watch them fly, hover, zip around like attack helicopters I think of the amazing God who gave them to us. They are colorful and delicate and can fly at speeds that take your breath away. Not only that, they can fly backwards or just hover in place. Their wings look like there is no way they can support their bodies and if they fly by you can hear the hum of the wings which flutter so fast they are a blur. I have spent lots of time enjoying them and being in awe that the Creator of the universe would care enough about humming birds to create them and give them to us to enjoy. But the thing that makes me praise God even more is His Grace. That He would love me, choose me, save me, and give me the privilege of worshipping and serving Him is beyond anything I could ever imagine. That He gives me the ability to come boldly into His presence is cause for songs of Praise. That He gives me the Grace and Power to Live in the way He asks makes me causes me to lift my heart in worship. What an amazing God we have. Let's look at these verses together.

Titus 2:11-14 *(ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

That is so clear in the Bible about certain things. Here in vs. 11 we are reminded that it is God's grace that saves us. We know we are saved by Grace through Faith in Jesus and that it is God's gift to us. Yet, there is another aspect of God's grace. It is the grace we need to continue growing and living and becoming more like Jesus. God's grace also TRAINS us so that we RENOUNCE ungodliness and worldly passions. JB Phillips puts it this way: grace "...teaches us to have no more to do with godlessness or the desires of this world..." The challenge is to trust God's Grace to say NO to those things which lead to ungodliness and YES to those things which lead to Spiritual Growth and Maturity. We are called to live responsible, self-controlled, God honoring and God fearing lives in the "present age" here and NOW. While we say NO to ungodliness and YES to honoring God, we are to live in eager expectation that our Lord Jesus is coming. As we wait for Him we are to be enthusiastically serving HIM. We cannot do any of those things - say NO to ungodliness or say YES to pursuing Spiritual Maturity, without God's Grace. May we seek to live in and through the Gift of God's enabling power everyday.

PRAYER: O Lord, help me to LIVE in the center of Your daily Grace. May I never think that I can live a godly life saying NO to the temptations and passions of this world without Your Power. Please give me Your Strength and Grace today to SAY YES to those things which honor You in my life. Again Lord, I cannot do it without Your Help... please... Help me.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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