

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Careful to Be Faithful

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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Some commenters lately seem to have typecast Grace to You as a bunch of cranky old men, fearful of a changing world that threatens their long-held positions of power. If that's what you or someone you know believes about John MacArthur and Grace to You, allow me to make a couple of clarifications. First, a word about the nature of this ministry...

One person asked if Grace to You was the proverbial pot calling the kettle black for criticizing multisite churches that broadcast their preacher to other congregations. A valid question. It's important to say up front, Grace to You is not to be the model for the local church.

Grace to You is a *para*-church ministry, not a local church. According to our **Purpose Statement**, we exist "to teach biblical truth with clarity, taking advantage of various means of mass communications to expand the sphere of John MacArthur's teaching ministry." Further,

Our role is not to supplant the local church's ministry, but to support it by providing additional resources for those hungering for the truth of God's Word. Media ministries can never substitute for involvement in a biblical church, group Bible study, or interaction with a teacher. Yet we sense the need for more in-depth resources, evidenced by the many Christians and Christian leaders worldwide who depend on our ministry to supplement their own study.

As a *para*-church ministry, there's no biblical mandate for our organization. We have freedom to pursue it (biblically, culturally, politically), but if political or economic winds blow a different direction, well, the Lord gives no guarantees that Grace to You will continue to exist. We exist at the mercy of God's good providence.

By contrast, the local church *is* a mandated organization. The Lord Jesus Christ created it (Matt. 16:18), commissioned it (Matt. 28:18-20), equipped it (Eph. 4:7, 11-12), and governs it (Matt. 18:15-20). Nothing—not political, economic, cultural influences, not even the gates of hell itself—can prevail against the Lord and His church.

Another interesting set of criticisms (and snipes) in the comment thread seem to indicate a misunderstanding about our view of technology. Some seem to think we are hypocritical to caution against technological innovation in the local church (i.e., multisite churches). The idea seems to be, if you use technology, you can't criticize when others use it. One commenter asked,

All technology was given by God to reach the lost. We should be using every piece of it for the harvest before Satan uses it for his purpose. Your own ministry uses social media. Why wouldn't you want to use it in the church?

To answer that question straight up, we've never said churches should not use technology. That's not the point, and it never was the point. We are cautious about using technology and think others, especially churches, should be too.

Marshall McLuhan, Neil Postman, Nicholas Carr, and other "prophets" of the technology age have raised legitimate concerns about the effects of technology. We're not alarmists, and we're obviously not Luddites, but we think it's wise to think about using technology before diving into it. That's especially true for Christians who are commanded to test everything—ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5), words (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21), the spirits (1 John 4:1), and especially "gifts" from the culture (1 John 2:15-17)—to determine if it is or isn't according to the will of God (Rom. 12:2). So, we don't hate technology, or ideas, or innovation; but we are cautious because we fear the Lord and want to do what pleases Him.

One last word...being careful doesn't mean we're advocates for the moth-ball smelling churches today's innovators are reacting against. We deplore dead orthodoxy and cold tradition more than anyone. We want churches to submit every decision, every pattern, every model, every initiative, every tradition, and every idea to the authority of God's Word. Why? Because doing God's work in God's way glorifies Christ, puts His great gospel on display, and saves and sanctifies God's elect.

Being careful is not the quick path to immediate gratification and big numbers—all the fleshly marks of success. It's the slower, more methodical, deliberate, and (often) mundane walk of Christian faithfulness and church growth described by the Scripture. We want you to be careful to be faithful. That's the true path to enduring joy and blessing.

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