

Special Section: From Guilt To Grace

Are You A Performer?



Illustration by Stefano Vitale

Without realizing it, many of us are living under tremendous pressure to perform . . . pressure that God never intended. Sometimes becoming a Christian can even “sanctify” this tendency rather than free us from it.

The first step to living under grace, not guilt, is realizing how performance-driven we really are. Read the statements below and honestly assess how much each one applies to you.

	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Tension builds within me when I think of all I have to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I find myself wanting to correct people on minor points, or actually correcting them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I would feel guilty if I stayed home from a meeting or activity just because I was tired.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I avoid doing things I'm not good at.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I get embarrassed when a family member makes a mistake in front of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. When my work is judged “average,” I feel like I've failed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. It upsets me when someone else wins an award or receives recognition that I feel I deserved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I tend to focus more on what I did wrong than on what I did right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I have difficulty saying no when someone asks me to do something for them, or feel guilty when I do say no.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I feel badly about myself when I meet someone who accomplishes more than I do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. If my child messes up, I tend to blame myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I feel guilty about things on my "to do" list that are left undone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. It is very important to me to have the right answer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. If some part of my life isn't going well, I try to figure out what I am doing wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. When I look at how consistent I am in the spiritual disciplines, I feel that God must be disappointed in me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All of the above can be symptoms that a person has not fully grabbed hold of the amazing grace God offers. If you found yourself checking "usually," or even "sometimes," more often than you'd like, this special section is for you! You've probably picked up the idea somewhere along the line that you have to do the right things to be valuable, accepted, and loved. And you may be exhausted from the effort.

There's very good news. You don't have to live this way! In God's eyes, you are already accepted, already loved. The special section that follows is designed to help you learn to relax in

God's grace. To quiet the voices within that tell you you're not doing enough. To free you from the heavy burden of trying to "measure up." Discover with us the liberating truth in Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28–30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

—*Susan Maycinik*