

## Welcome to *Grace4Life*...

### *"the discipleship course that doesn't work!"*

**W**hen we say it doesn't work, we are quite serious. Discipleship courses can't make us grow, only a simple, childlike faith in Jesus can. And that's the purpose of this course. It leads us to centre our hearts and minds on God's love for us in the Gospel. *Grace4Life* unsheathes the Gospel's two-edged sword—"Rejoice, you are worse than you think!" but, "Rejoice, you are more loved than you ever dreamt possible!"

**You and I had not been Christians for very long** before we discovered the law of spiritual gravity—our tendency to fall out of love with God and in love with ourselves. When this began to happen (and we all struggle with self-centredness), two rather shocking fruits began to appear: a lack of integrity and intimacy in our relationship with God, and, strained relationships with people. Interesting, isn't it, that these are the exact opposite of what Jesus identified as the pure essence of the Law: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matt. 22:37-40) We Christians can be quite keen on pointing out the quality of our rule-keeping, but Jesus' goal is to make us like him—great lovers of God and others.

**That's where *Grace4Life* comes in.** It takes us back to Gospel basics because, strange as it sounds, the same Gospel that saved us, transforms us. That's why it's so unrelentingly Gospel-centred. Indeed, it's "Christianity Rediscovered." If you feel like your Christian life has hit a wall, dive into this course and let your heart be ravished by God's love for you in the Gospel. That's when the promised "rivers of living water" will begin flowing in your life again. (Jn.7:37-39)

**What does this course cover?** A glance at the Table of Contents on pages iii, iv shows that we use a topical format to focus on a number of essential truths every growing Christian needs to get hold of. Such as? What is sin, why is it sinful, and how does it operate in our lives? Why are the doctrines of justification by faith, adoption, sanctification (growth) so vitally important? What is the difference between living under law and living by grace, and how does each impact our relationship with God and others? How can we become self-feeding Christians? How do we battle our sinful impulses? What does true love look like? Where do we get the power to love other sinners? How do we weave repentance, forgiveness and constructive conflict into the fabric of our daily lives? How does the Holy Spirit fit in with all of this? And finally, where do we fit into God's great enterprise of reaching our lost world with the Gospel of the Kingdom?

***Grace4Life*** gathers up and integrates these core elements of faith and life, and aims them squarely at the heart to move us to deep repentance and fresh faith. Because the dynamic of this course is Gospel faith (rather than human effort), it can both promote your spiritual growth and serve as a useful part of your kit in discipling others.

**But... as the old adage says,** "*The proof of the pudding is in the eating.*"

**So join in and let's plumb the depths of the Gospel together.** We predict that as we do, the Holy Spirit will begin to transform our lives from the inside-out. And wonderfully, as that happens, not only will the angels in heaven rejoice, but our family and friends will be drawn to Jesus as they see us becoming more like him.

***Are you ready? Are you sure? Good. Let's tuck in!***

— JW —