

November 7

## Is God's Love Conditional?

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*[God] gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:6-8)*

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James teaches us that there is a precious experience of "more grace" and God "drawing near" to us. Surely this is a wonderful experience — more grace and a special nearness of God. But I ask: is this experience of the love of God unconditional? No. It is not. It is conditional on our humbling ourselves and our drawing near to God. God "gives [more] grace to the humble. . . . Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

There are precious experiences of the love of God that require that we fight pride, seek humility, and cherish the nearness of God. Those are the conditions. Of course, the conditions themselves are the work of God in us. But they are no less conditions we fulfill.

If this is true, I fear that the unqualified, biblically careless reassurances today that God's love is all unconditional may stop people from doing the very things the Bible says they need to do in order to enjoy all the peace that they so desperately crave. In trying to give peace through "unconditionality" we may be cutting people off from the very remedy the Bible prescribes.

To be sure, let us proclaim, loud and clear, that the divine love of election, and the divine love of Christ's death, and the divine love of our regeneration — our new birth — are all absolutely unconditional.

And let us declare untiringly the good news that our justification is based on the worth of Christ's obedience and sacrifice, not ours (Romans 5:19, "as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous").

But let us also declare the biblical truth that the fullest and sweetest experiences of the grace of God and the nearness of God will be enjoyed by those who daily humble themselves and draw near to God.

*Solid Joys Devotionals are the works of John Piper and can be found at:  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/>*