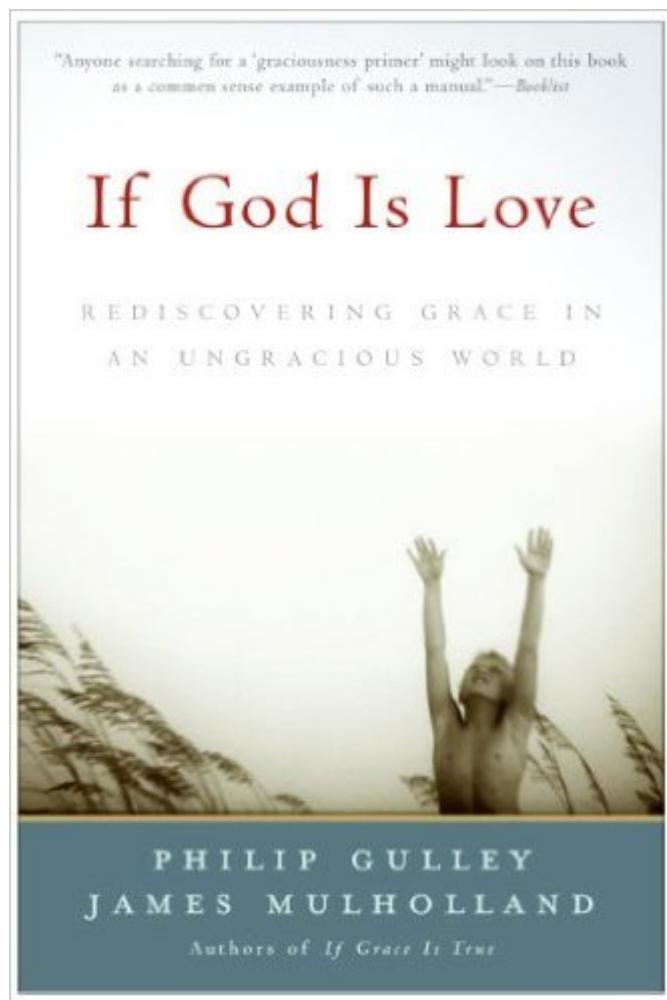


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If God Is Love: Rediscovering Grace In An Ungracious World



Synopsis

If God is love, why are so many Christians fearful, and why do so many church leaders sound hateful? Two controversial pastors address issues the church won't face, calling us to restore grace as the center of the Christian life. In *If Grace Is True*, Pastors Philip Gulley and James Mulholland revealed their belief that God will save every person. They now explore the implications of this belief, and its power to change every area of our lives. They attempt to answer one question: If we took God's love seriously, what would our world look like? Gulley and Mulholland argue that what we believe is crucial and dramatically affects the way we live and interact in the world. Beliefs have power. The belief in a literal hell where people suffer eternally has often been used by the Church to justify hate and violence, which contradicts what Jesus taught about love and grace. The authors present a new vision for our personal, religious, and corporate lives, exploring what our world would be like if we based our existence on the foundational truth that God loves every person. Gulley and Mulholland boldly address many controversial issues people in the pews have wondered about but churches have been unwilling to tackle. For too long, the Christian tradition has been steeped in negativity, exclusion, and judgment. Gulley and Mulholland usher us into a new age--an age where grace and love are allowed to reign.

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Customer Reviews

I am not a convinced universalist. Yet. Both times I have read the books of Gulley and Mulholland I have been brought a step closer, though. Let me also say, though, that I do not believe in hell in the traditional sense at all. I understand the uses of the term in the biblical narrative (Gehenna, etc.),

and I reject the idea of an ever-burning place of torment as uncharacteristic of the Jesus I know and the God I serve. Having adopted this position, the question for me becomes, annihilation or restoration? Gulley and Mulholland have chosen restoration as their answer. If God is Love is the sequel to If Grace is True, in which the authors first posited their ideas on universalism. In If God is Love, they look at the practical implications of this view in the lives of its adherents. To me, the Christian Universalist has two attributes: 1) She is a heretic, and 2) She is an outstandingly good person who reflects the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. This book is about the lifestyle of grace which believing in God's effectual love for all people brings into the life of the universalist. It's not about being wishy-washy and just buying everything that comes down the highway. It is about having convictions and opinions, but still holding forth the love and compassion of Christ to those of differing ideologies. The two chapters on "Gracious Christianity" and "Gracious Politics" were worth the whole price of the book all by themselves. The description of the gracious Church harmonizes wonderfully with the inner symphony playing in my heart. "No one will arrive in heaven perfected - we will all need transformation. The Church, offering a foretaste of heaven, should be a place where people come to be accepted, loved, healed, and restored.

I have just finished reading this book and I must say it is one of the best books I've ever read. These authors capture the essence of the gospel and of God. What a marvelous thing it is to simply give in to the idea that God really is love. Those who feel the Bible is inerrant and infallible will have trouble with this because it is counter to their belief system. However, those who struggle with that in the Bible and about Jesus which point to the idea that God is love, both on this side and the other side of the grave, will find welcome relief here. I feel closer to God after reading this book than I have felt in a long time. How I will finally come down on some things discussed here, I don't know, but I have been given ample food upon which to reflect. I love the flavor of this book, because it matches the flavor I feel when I pray, and even read the Bible itself. Some of the reviews suggest the thesis of this book is not amply logical and thought out. I disagree. I think this is a thoughtful presentation of ideas which is extremely compelling. I may or may not come to complete agreement with the authors on everything, but the direction and flavor of this book is right on. God is indeed love. This is stated in the Bible. We have to choose that God of the Bible or the images of another kind of God, also in the Bible. The authors choose the former, as do I, because it most parallels the life, teaching, and ministry of Jesus. His message must be the interpretative principle of God and scripture. The Christianity presented here, that of inclusive love, is the kind that can could really reach people presently turned off, and it could affect the whole world as well.

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