

## What razor do you use?

It's finally warm where I live! But, as joyful as the warm weather is, it exposes what I've been hiding all winter: hairy legs. Getting these legs smooth is going to be a task. If I don't do it right I'll either still have spots of hair or be covered in nicks, cuts and rashes

If you have been serious about being different this year and seeking the Lord with all your heart then you might feel like you've exposed some hairy legs of your own, spiritually speaking. Depending on your approach, you may feel like nothing has changed, or feel battered and bruised by the process.

Walk with me today through a tale of razors and then see the beauty of who you are in God's eyes.

Praying for you to fully receive His grace,  
Jennifer

## A Tale of Three Razors

My celebration of the first gloriously warm spring day faded as I donned a pair of shorts and realized that my legs were in dire need of a good shave.

I had a daunting job ahead of me. I needed something powerful enough to do the job, but soothing enough to not give me painful nicks, cuts and razor burn. I started digging through my choices. . .

### Razor #1 (no pain, no gain)

Last summer I found this razor that promised no nicks or cuts, even around knees and ankles. The fine wires that keep the razor from nicking your skin also keep it from giving you a close shave. It didn't cause any pain, but it didn't get the job done either. As soon as I stepped out of the shower I had stubble!

### Razor #2 (all pain, no gain)

Next I tried a sample razor my brother's wife gave me. It is serious hair control with four ultra-sharp blades. It got rid of the hair, but took part of my skin too! My legs burned and bled. The hair was gone, but my legs didn't look any better.

### Razor #3 (ahhh, grace)

Finally I tried this crazy looking razor my Dad's wife gave me. (Apparently my family would like me to shave more?) This razor had three blades surrounded by a big chunk of moisturizing soap. The three blades removed the hair completely and the moisturizer provided a barrier to prevent nicks and cuts. I loved it!

Since I do most of my thinking in the shower, I had plenty of time to think about these razors. It struck me how similar they are to the common approaches to being a Christian.

### Approach #1 (no pain, no gain)

This approach makes you feel good, but doesn't get the job done. It's saying you believe in Christ, but not doing anything about it. It puts God into a one-hour Sunday morning time slot and forgets about Him the rest of the week. It leaves the Bible on the shelf. It makes prayer nothing more than something you tell others you'll do for them.

It doesn't change you in the depths of your heart. It may initially feel good, but it leaves you empty and unchanged in the long run.

This approach is dangerously close to the politically correct lies of 1) being a good person will get you to heaven and 2) Jesus is not the only way to eternal life.

**Approach #2 (all pain, no gain)**

This approach doesn't make anyone feel good. It's judgmental, saying anyone who doesn't do everything exactly a certain way is cursed and damned to eternal hell. It leads you to believe that you pave your own way to heaven by being good enough and right enough.

It doesn't acknowledge the mercy and forgiveness of God. It may initially feel good as you get it 'right' but it leaves you empty because you either become your own savior or give up because you can't get it right. The harsh judgment and inability to forgive that it breeds also leaves you with few friends and not much ability to win others to Christ.

**Approach #3 (ahhh, grace)**

This is the approach of truth. It says that Jesus is the only way, but that He provides the way. It exposes our sinful nature, but provides the comfort and mercy of Christ's death as payment for our sins. It tells us we have to change and be made new, but gives us the Holy Spirit to counsel us through the process. It asks for obedience, but provides forgiveness when we fall short.

It acknowledges that we all sin and fall short before our Creator, but have been offered mercy and forgiveness through Christ's death for our sins.

It is the way of grace.

Grace is God's unmerited favor – a gift freely given to us. We can't earn it and don't deserve it. We can't repay God for it.

The amazing thing about grace is that it is what gives us the faith to believe in Christ as our Savior. It is G.R.A.C.E. - God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

And it's available to everyone. We just have to choose to accept it.

This grace is what gives us the strength to not skim over our sin with a no-nick razor, but instead dig deep to root it out and change. Grace is what saves us from the need to live a perfect life and demand that of others. God's grace catches us when we fall and, when we are truly repentant for our sin, is as ready to forgive us the 99th time we ask as it was the first time.

We can't save ourselves. Only by the grace of God are we saved. When we accept this grace it changes us. It causes us to seek out the Lord; to open our Bibles and to pray. And, because this grace is unearned and undeserved, though we are changed and live by the Spirit when we are saved, we are still not able to save ourselves. No matter how we might try, we will never be perfect this side of heaven. We should be gentle and forgiving and avoid tearing down ourselves and others in harsh judgment.

Which razor are you using?

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**Meditate and Study**

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore!

**Lesson 9-1**

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.

2. What did you apply from the last lesson?

If you didn't do the lesson, you can print it at

<http://www.hopeinthelord.org/DownloadBibleStudy.html>

3. How do you relate to each of the three approaches to Christianity?

4. To understand what God has done for us and desires from us, we have to search His Word. 2 Peter 3:16-17 tells us, "All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Each day for the next 12 days, read one of the following scriptures and list what you learn about being a Christian. Note how God's truth disagrees or agrees with the approaches above. Take time to read each passage through several times and meditate on it. Talk to God about what you're reading. Ask Him to help you understand His message to you and make notes on additional thoughts you receive from each passage.

- a. John 3:1-21.
- b. John 8:31.
- c. John 10:1-5.
- d. John 13:44-50.
- e. John 14:6, 12-27.
- f. John 16:5-16.
- g. Romans 3:21-26.
- h. Romans 4:1-8
- i. Romans 5:1-11.
- j. Romans 6:1-14, 23.
- k. Romans 12:1-21.
- l. Romans 13:8-14.

5. How has God spoken to you during this 12-day journey?

6. What will you do as a result?

7. End with a prayer that shares your heart with God.

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God is good. He is true. He will always be there for us.

A product of grace,  
Jennifer