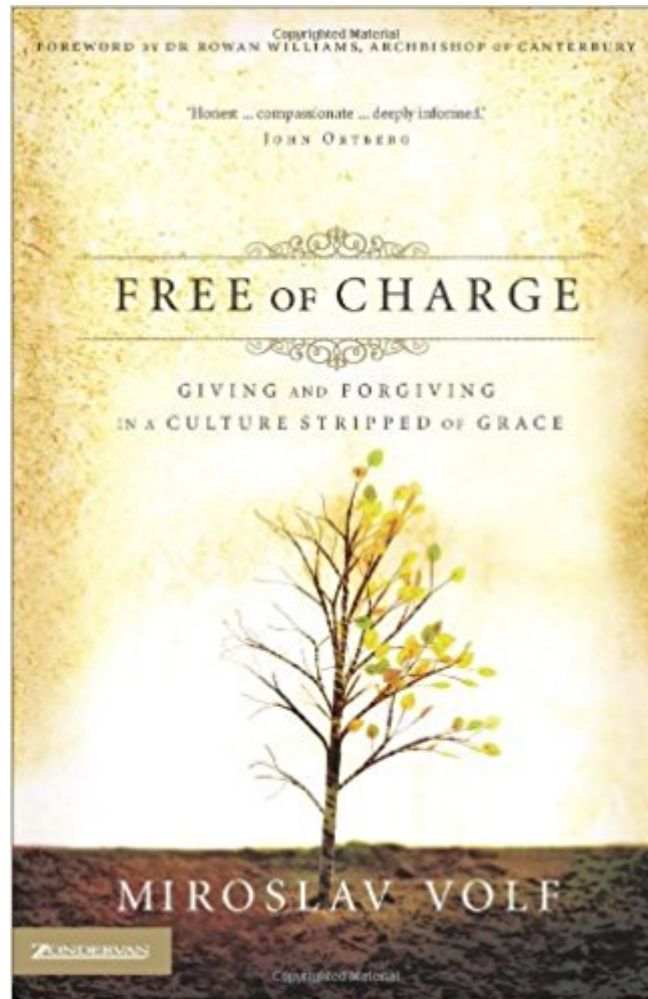


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Free Of Charge: Giving And Forgiving In A Culture Stripped Of Grace



Synopsis

We are at our human best when we give and forgive. But we live in a world in which it makes little sense to do either one. In our increasingly graceless culture, where can we find the motivation to give? And how do we learn to forgive when forgiving seems counterintuitive or even futile? A deeply personal yet profoundly thoughtful book, *Free of Charge* explores these questions—and the further questions to which they give rise—in light of God's generosity and Christ's sacrifice for us. Miroslav Volf draws from popular culture as well as from a wealth of literary and theological sources, weaving his rich reflections around the sturdy frame of Paul's vision of God's grace and Martin Luther's interpretation of that vision. Blending the best of theology and spirituality, he encourages us to echo in our own lives God's generous giving and forgiving. A fresh examination of two practices at the heart of the Christian faith—giving and forgiving—the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lenten study book for 2006 is at the same time an introduction to Christianity. Even more, it is a compelling invitation to Christian faith as a way of life. "Miroslav Volf, one of the most celebrated theologians of our day, offers us a unique interweaving of intense reflection, vivid and painfully personal stories and sheer celebration of the giving God ... I cannot remember having read a better account of what it means to say that Jesus suffered for us in our place." — Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

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Customer Reviews

In Short This is a book that many readers will enjoy "living with." Volf's stated purpose for the book is

to encapsulate the whole of Christian living within two axiomatic concepts. In other words, what does Christianity really look like when it is lived in a contemporary life? In *Free of Charge*, Volf's answer follows two principles - one that flows from the nature of who God is and, by way of extension, another that reveals the heart of the Gospel. According to Volf, the Christian life can be summarized by participating with God in giving and forgiving. Because God's nature is so bound up in his ability to give purely, forgiveness becomes the backdrop of all of his interactions with a creation marred by sin. If we truly follow, then our lives must mirror such giving and forgiving. As such, the book serves as a wonderful devotional tool. While it is deeply theological, it is admirably accessible. He does not drown the text in technical writing or lofty language. I have many friends that started reading this book a long time ago. Often, in eager anticipation of their thoughts on the book, I'll ask how it is going. They always reply, "It is so good, but I can only get so far before I have to put it down and reflect on it." In this sense, this book is not only a wonderful resource for those that want to practice generosity or forgiveness, but it might just be the kind of reading experience that drives self-reflection in order to help those who struggle with selfish ambition or unforgiving hearts break those chains of bondage. At Length In Volf's own words, the book does four things. First, it is an examination of whether the landscape of Christian perspective can appropriately be viewed through the lens of giving and forgiving.

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