

# Biblical Perspectives From God's Word

## The Revelation of God's Grace

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### I. Introductory Remarks.

In this lesson we are going to begin talking about what it really means to be in the grace of God.

**Ephesians 2:6-8** *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, {7}that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. {8}**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,***

### Q. What does it mean to be saved by Grace?

In this lesson we will be looking at more specifically how God's grace is carried out in our lives. What does it really mean to live by grace?

The grace of God involves more than the dimension of it simply being God's unmerited favor towards us. It is also God's **divine enabling** through His Spirit. Through God's grace we are enabled to cope with whatever adversity, trial, or dilemma we face in a godly manner. We are also equipped by His grace to perform the spiritual tasks He gives us to do.

**1 Peter 4:10** *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the **manifold** grace of God.*

**2 Corinthians 9:8** *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work.*

■ This is a powerful **promise** to us concerning His grace towards us.

This means no matter what the situation we are going through, no matter what the problem we are dealing with and no matter what the task we are involved in, God's grace and sufficiency will be there to sustain us and help us in all that we put our hand to do.

**2 Corinthians 2:14** *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.*

**Philippians 2:12-13** *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

- **The Problem:** Many Christians fail to walk in the fullness of God's grace and often revert back to walking in a spirit of condemnation and guilt, which leads to a performance based walk because of a failure to fully understand the reality of a continuous walk in God's grace.

**Q. Do you consider yourself a performance based Christian or a Grace based Christian?**

- **Performance Vs. Grace Test.**

If you knew you only had one month to live, how would you prepare yourself to meet the Lord during that month? Check any boxes below that you would do.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray harder             | <input type="checkbox"/> Give more money                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorize more scripture | <input type="checkbox"/> Pay your tithes                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read Bible more         | <input type="checkbox"/> Witness more                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More spiritual works    | <input type="checkbox"/> Repent of every bad habit and sin |

If your answer was yes to any of these questions, you are probably a performance based Christian who is trying to work to earn God's favor. These are all good things to do, but this isn't what God expects from us to gain His favor. We are already as perfect as we will ever be in God's eyes.

**Hebrews 10:14** *For by one offering He has **perfected forever** those who are being sanctified.*

- **The apostle Paul addressed this issue to the Galatians.**

**Galatians 3:3** *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*

**Galatians 3:3 (NIV)** *Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

There is no amount of work you can do to earn any more of God's favor. His favor has already been granted to you through His grace which is a free gift. To live as a performance based Christian is to become estranged from Christ and

nullify the work of His grace in your life.

**Galatians 5:4** *You have become **estranged** from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Strongs: 2673. katargeo, kat-arg-eh'-o; from G2596 and G691; to be (render) entirely idle (useless), lit. or fig.:--abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void.

### ■ What does the term “fallen from grace mean?”

When it says you have fallen from grace, I do not believe it's referring to your salvation experience, but rather the appropriating of God's divine ability in your life. You are simply walking in your own sufficiency rather than Christ's and thus you become estranged from Him.

## II. Our **Need** For God's Grace.

### 1. Our **Condition** Prior To Our Salvation Experience.

As we have seen from previous lessons, we are born into sin and unclean in God's eyes. Because God is a perfect and righteous God and we are imperfect and unrighteous in His eyes, we are without hope without His grace and forgiveness. It is only as we apply the Blood of Christ to our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord that we are able to come to Him.

**Romans 3:10-12** *As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; {11}There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. {12}They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."*

**Isaiah 64:6** *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousness are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

**Romans 3:23** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

### 2. God's **Answer** To Our Need.

**Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we*

*were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Ephesians 2:8-10** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9}not of works, lest anyone should boast. {10}For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

■ **Definition of Grace:** Grace is God's free and unmerited favor shown to guilty sinners who deserve only judgment. It is the love of God shown to the unlovely. It is God reaching downward to people who are in rebellion against Him.<sup>1</sup>

### III. We Live And **Reign** In God's Kingdom By Grace.

When we came to Christ, we recognized our need for His grace and love and had no problem accepting what He had to offer because of our helpless condition. But how many of us continue to live in this helpless condition, being totally dependent upon His grace and sufficiency to cover over lives?

**Galatians 3:3** *(NIV) Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

If we come to God's kingdom by Grace, we must also live in it by grace. If we couldn't get into God's kingdom by good works, good works will not sustain us either.

#### 1. We Must Be Continually **Motivated** By Grace.

**Philippians 1:6** *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you [by His grace] will [will also by His grace] complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

We are brought into God's kingdom by grace; we are sanctified by grace; we are motivated by grace; we are called to serve by grace; we receive strength to endure trials by grace; and we are glorified by grace. The entire Christian life is

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from Jerry Bridges - Author of "Transforming Grace"

lived under the reign of God's grace.

### ■ A Definition of Grace:

Being motivated by grace means that we realize that it isn't our spiritual disciplines and works that earns us God's favor and blessings in our lives. This all continues to flow from His riches in grace. whether we deserve it or not.

Obviously, if we continue in a pattern of slothfulness and sin, we will begin to reap what we sow.

### ■ Spiritual Disciplines vs. Grace.

There are many godly spiritual disciplines that we all need to be involved in of which are often constituted as our spiritual works. Things such as regular church attendance, daily devotions, Bible study, prayer, fasting, scripture memorization, witnessing, and giving of tithes and offerings are all good and important Christian activities. The question is, do you do these things to earn God's favor or do you do them in response to His love and grace?

### ■ What happens if I **forget** to pray or I fail God?

Does that mean I go through the whole day with God ignoring me and not desiring to use me? A person who is secure in God's love and grace doesn't get blown away when something goes wrong. They confess and forsake their sin and go on, secure in God's love and grace.

***Proverbs 24:16*** *For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.*

***Hebrews 4:14-16*** *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. {15}For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. {16}Let us therefore come boldly to the **throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

## 2. Our **Works** Are A Result of Walking In God's Grace.

***Ephesians 2:9-10*** *...not of works, lest anyone should boast. {10}For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared*

*beforehand that we should walk in them.*

- **Spiritual works are an indicator as to how we are responding to God's love and grace.**

If we are doing things out of guilt to please and appease others, we are performance oriented. If we are doing things out of a godly response to God's love and grace, we are operating under His grace.

**James 1:25** *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

- **The true work of God is released through Grace.**

When we are looking into the perfect law of liberty we find the spiritual work that God gives us to do is somehow a part of our overall calling and gifting in Him.

### **3. God's blessings Flow Through His Grace, Not Our Performance.**

All of God's blessings and riches flow through His grace and if we are walking as a performance based Christian we have actually fallen from grace and are losing our inheritance in Him as well. That's why so many Christians live unproductive lives.

**Ephesians 2:7** *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

When Jesus paid it all, he not only purchased your forgiveness of sins and your ticket to heaven, He purchased every blessing and every answer to prayer you will ever receive.

- **The most important commandment that God has given to us, is to love Him with all our heart, mind and soul.**

**1 John 3:22** *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

- **Performance will not bring forth God's blessing.**

Most of us are legalistic by nature. We innately think so much performance by us

earns much favor and blessing from God.

Peter had this same attitude when he said to Jesus in *Matthew 19:27*, "*We have left everything to follow you. Therefore what shall we have?*" Peter had already added up his merit points, and he wanted to know how much reward they would buy.

There are rewards that we will receive for our labors, but if our motivation is self-serving and not provoked by a response to God's love and grace, we will probably lose our rewards.

***1 Corinthians 3:13-15*** *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. {14}If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. {15}If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

If we are doing things out of guilt, shame, eyeservice, as men-pleasers or some other self-serving motive we are performance based people who have fallen from the workings of God's grace and as a result we do not inherit the blessings that are entitled to us as New Testament Christians. When we fail we are guilt ridden and full of condemnation, thinking God hates us and is mad at us, instead of receiving the forgiveness and security that comes from abiding under His grace.

#### **IV. Concluding Remarks.**

Let us all determine to be motivated by God's grace and love, which will produce in us the godly character and good works that He is desiring in our lives.