

# Grace

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*  
*Ephesians 2:8-10*

What do you believe God’s greatest gift to you is?

The Bible tells us that God is love (I John 4:7-20). God loves us (John 3:16). **And His greatest gift to us is salvation (I Peter 1:3-9)** According to Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10, salvation is by grace. Through grace, because of His great love for us, God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to be sacrificed for our sins.

Salvation is God’s GRACIOUS and GREATEST GIFT to us.

We are saved from sin and receive the free gift of eternal life (Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8) because of our faith in the goodness and grace of God that leads us to repent, resulting in restoration of our relationship with God (Romans 2:4, II Corinthians 5:17-21).

**You and I are saved by grace through faith. GRACE IS THE UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD. Grace cannot be earned. It is a gift, an undeserved gift from a loving, gracious God to sinful people like you and me.**

The Law of God declares we are guilty. The grace of God declares we are innocent. Law makes life hard. Grace makes life easier. Grace takes the hard edge off of living. Grace is the oil that reduces the friction of relationships between God and people, making them smoother and more mutually-satisfying.

Where would we be without God’s grace? We would be lost eternally and miserable living on this fallen earth. Grace is God’s gift that gives us abundant and eternal life in Christ Jesus. (John 10:10).

Do you understand grace? Have you received God’s grace? Do you walk in grace? Do you extend grace to others?

## Graceless Or Gracious?

- Do you beat up on yourself, or do you give yourself the benefit of the doubt?

- Are you always hard on yourself, or do you cut yourself some slack?
- Do you find your condemning yourself, or forgiving yourself when you make mistakes?
- Do you always expect to be punished by God, or do you rejoice that Jesus Christ took your punishment upon Himself?
- Do you view sin and mistakes are terminal, or do you believe in giving yourself another chance to do better?
- Do you treat people with a hard edge, or do you reach out to people with a soft, gracious touch?
- Do you write people off when they fail, or do you encourage them to start over again and succeed the next time?
- Is failure final to you, or do you believe that God's grace can take failure and turn it into success?
- Do you regularly believe the worst or the best of people? Do believe people, though undeserving, should get another chance
- Would the people who know you best describe you as a gracious person?
- Does God see His grace at work in you life? How about your Pastor?

Paul is the apostle of grace. In I Corinthians 15:10 he declares with appropriate pride and joy *“By the grace of God, I am what I am; and His grace did not prove vain toward me.”* **Paul is saying, What you see is what I be by the grace of God—and God didn't waste His time on me.**

During a very tough and turbulent time in his life, Paul learned that God's grace is sufficient. Paul writes in II Corinthians 12:9 *“And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”*

**Paul was strong when he was weak because of God's grace.** Grace is the difference between life and death, success or failure, winning or losing, health or unhealthiness, strength or weakness, joy or sorrow, fulfillment or disappointment.

## **GRACE: Rubber Meets The Road**

It took me many years as a Christian and Pastor to understand grace. Growing up in a graceless environment, where religion was legalistic, I never understand God's unmerited favor. For me, favor had to be earned. Even as a Christian and minister of His Word, I labored to be pleasing to Him and hopefully earn/deserve His favor. I lived by the falsehood that I could please God by doing all the do's perfectly and not doing the don'ts I found in the Word. How futile and fruitless this proved to be.

I turned into a ritualistic human performer motivated by law and rules rather than a redeemed human being who lived freely and joyfully by God's grace. I was always hard on myself, beating myself up for the slightest poor performance. It never felt right giving myself the benefit of the doubt or cutting myself some slack. I was wrong, dead wrong. No wonder life and ministry always seemed so hard and disappointing. I was living a graceless life.

And the pain of a conflicted heart is overwhelming at times. How can we, who call ourselves Christians, who are saved by grace, be healthy, whole and fruitful for Christ when we don't walk in grace? And what about the people we love and serve who are the innocent victims of our graceless lifestyle? Too often I was hard on people when all they needed was grace. The soft touch of grace was foreign to my heart that didn't understand that God's grace is for Steve Roll.

I have counseled with countless people who do not understand grace. They are miserable people who make life miserable for themselves and everybody else in their circle of relationships. Graceless people hurt themselves and hurt others.

**I believe with all my heart that grace helps heal hurting hearts. Grace paves the way for God's love to heal, restore and renew. Grace makes it possible for us to forgive and reconcile and go forward in a new, healthier relationship with God or the people we love. Grace sets people free from the harshness of legalistic living.**

**Grace is a spiritual, emotional, and relational breath of fresh air.**

How about you today? Do you walk according to God's grace? I encourage you to read and study the following scripture references regarding grace---and apply them to your personal life.

LIVE YOUR LIFE BY GRACE: you and those you love will be glad you do!!!!

## **GRACE SCRIPTURES**

Acts 15:11	Romans 3:24	Romans 5:15
Romans 11:6	Titus 2:11	Titus 3:7
Ephesians 2:5	Romans 2:4	Ephesians 1:7
Ephesians 2:7-10	Philippians 4:19	I Timothy 1:14
Titus 3:6	Deuteronomy 9:5	Daniel 9:18
Romans 4:16	Romans 9:16	Titus 3:5
Luke 2:40	II Corinthians 8:9	I Timothy 1:12
II Corinthians 12:9-10	II Timothy 2:1	Revelation 22:21

❖ God is gracious to you, so please be gracious to yourself and to everyone you meet!

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