

UNDERSTANDING GRACE

The word *GRACE* is used to refer to God's giving to us, out of His love for us – a giving that is unrestricted because our former condemnation has been removed, our penalty has been paid, God's righteousness and justice have been satisfied, and we are "*in Christ*" and share the love that the Father has for His own Son.

Mastery of the Bible's teaching about Grace is the most important goal of the Christian Way of Life. Your productivity as a believer, your ability to function effectively as member of your local church, your effectiveness in the use of your spiritual gifts in reaching out to others - all are absolutely dependent on how well you understand and use Grace principles.

The following are some of the reasons why the subject of *Grace* is so important to every Christian:

1. Grace is the most important single concept in the Word of God. Salvation is "*by Grace through faith*", and the Christian way of life functions entirely on Grace principles.
2. Grace provides the foundational structure for all Bible study ([Eph. 2](#)). Knowledge of Grace principles gives believers great knowledge and confidence in God's Plan, His provisions, His blessings.
3. The doctrine of Grace gives believers confidence in witnessing and teaching, both for evangelism and the Christian way of life.
4. Grace gives Christians insight into the workings of society and God's actual intentions regarding the future.
5. Grace convinces believers that human righteousness is completely out of the picture.
6. Through Grace, believers become "conduits of Grace" to society. Families become Grace families; churches become Grace churches, centers of Grace influence.

Categories of Grace (Page 2 of 6)

We now discuss the subject of Grace under four headings:

- COMMON GRACE, or Grace which is common to all mankind, saved or unsaved, such as the rain which falls on the just and unjust.
- SAVING GRACE, the *"gift of God, lest any man should boast"*, namely, Grace applied to the lost sinner.
- LIVING GRACE, the provision of God the Father for the needs of the believer for the rest of his lifetime. God provides everything that is needed for a prosperous, happy life for any believer who has *"tasted grace"* and avails himself of *"more grace"*.
- SURPASSING GRACE, the Grace of God in eternity; what we will receive from God because of Salvation; what we will receive from God as crowns or rewards to be laid at the feet of Christ.

COMMON GRACE

Every human being is born under the complete watchfulness of God. God provides each person with an awareness of the existence of God and with a bona fide opportunity to exercise a choice with respect to God.

[Romans 1:18-22](#); [Acts 17:22-30](#); [Psalm 19:14](#)

In Grace, God has provided many blessings common to all people, whether they are Christians or not. It rains on the just and unjust alike; and Bible history shows us that material prosperity is often given to unbelievers as a demonstration of God's Grace to all people ([Matt. 5:43-48](#)).

God has provided Divine Institutions for the protection and preservation of the human race, and everyone profits from this. The Lord intends that people live under conditions of freedom and morality.

The institution of Volition makes it possible, among other things, for everyone to have a free will choice in all spiritual matters. The institutions of Marriage and Family provide for the orderly preservation of the human race and the growth of families in a protected, nurturing environment. The institution of Nations gives a simple structure to society so that personal freedom and individual morality are preserved. An in-depth study on Divine Institutions will provide a greater insight on this subject.

Categories of Grace (Page 3 of 6)

God the Father provides gospel information to any person who shows any positive inclination toward Him when the individual become conscious of God. And God the Holy Spirit makes the gospel clear to the unbeliever so that he can accept Christ if he wants to.

[Acts 17:26, 27; John 7:16, 17](#)

Meanwhile, by Grace, God withholds His judgment and wrath from mankind. He is longsuffering, giving everyone ample opportunity to repent or change his mental attitude toward Christ ([II Peter 3:9](#)).

SAVING GRACE

The term "Saving Grace" covers the categories of doctrines which deal with all that Christ did for us on the Cross. The general topic of Saving Grace includes salvation and all of the teaching regarding Positional Truth, the dozens of things God does for believers at the moment of salvation.

You can get an appreciation for the extent of what the believer receives at salvation, by reading [Ephesians 1](#). In just the first few verses you have the following blessings:

[1:2](#) – "Grace to you and peace..."

[1:6](#) – We are accepted in the Beloved

[1:3](#) – "all spiritual blessings in Christ"

[1:7](#) – We are redeemed, forgiven

[1:4](#) – "chosen in Him"

[1:8](#) – God's wisdom and prudence are available.

[1:4](#) – "without blame before Him"

[1:9](#) – God's will is made known

[1:5](#) – We are adopted by Christ

[Romans 3:24](#) says that justification offered on the Grace principle is *"through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* Grace can be extended freely to us, because of the price paid by Jesus Christ. The cost of salvation was the *death of Christ on the Cross*.

Grace is the only way that God could save man, and still be consistent with His perfect character ([Acts 4:12](#)). The Grace basis for salvation is seen in the following verses: [Eph. 2:8, 9](#); [Psa. 103:8-12](#); [Rom. 3:23, 24](#); [4:4](#); [5:20](#); [II Cor. 8:9](#); [Heb. 2:9](#); [Titus 2:11](#); [3:7](#).

Categories of Grace (Page 4 of 6)

LIVING GRACE

Every Christian has experienced Grace at least once in his lifetime. He has "*tasted Grace*" ([I Pet.2:2, 3](#)). The believer is said to be a child of God, no longer an enemy. Christ did the most for His enemies by bearing our sins when He died on the Cross. Since he did the most for us when we were His enemies, *how much will He do for us now that we are His own children?* The answer: "*much more than the most*". Grace is the concept of a life in which God gives us the most, then gives us *much more than the most*.

[Rom. 5:9-17](#); [8:32](#); [11:12](#); [Heb. 9:14](#)

Once having tasted Grace, the believer can go on to have all of the Grace he wants. To obtain all the blessings that God provides, a Christian must exercise his free will by choosing the things of God. The most important thing is the believer's attitude toward the Word of God. The Lord provides believers with the capacity to grow and be effective so that they can glorify God in this lifetime. In fact, the Christian is *commanded* to grow in Grace – [II Pet. 3:18](#).

Very little knowledge is required to accept Christ as Savior. But *extensive knowledge* is required during the believer's remaining lifetime, in order to profit from Grace. Every facet of a Christian's life requires an applied understanding of the Word, and orientation to the Grace of God.

God's Grace is always available for the believer. In fact, the Lord waits to pour out His Grace to us – [Isa. 30:18-19](#).

Grace is sufficient for every problem.

Grace is greater than sin, [Rom. 5:20](#).

Grace is greater than suffering, [II Cor. 12:9, 10](#).

Grace is greater than Satan, [James 4:6, 7](#).

A special provision of Grace is *Dying Grace*, for the Christian who is in the dying stage of life, whether that stage lasts two hours or two years ([PS. 23:4](#)). Dying Grace enables the believer to enjoy dying, even though he might be having great physical pain.

Categories of Grace (Page 5 of 6)

A Christian who neglects God's Word creates a vacuum in his own spirit, that part of him which can understand and assimilate Biblical Truth. Into this vacuum will come false teaching, religion, legalism, and satanic concepts, which further distort his orientation to the Plan of God ([Eph. 4:17 and following](#)). Therefore, failure to participate in the Plan of God is the believer's greatest occupational hazard ([Heb. 12:15; Gal. 5:4](#)).

The following are some examples of God's Grace provision for the Christian life:

- Grace in God's acceptance: [Eph. 1:6](#)
- Grace in confidence in God's plan: [II Thess. 2:16](#)
- Grace in prayer: [Heb. 4:16](#)
- Grace in daily provision: [Psa. 84:11; Acts 4:33, 34; Rom. 8:32](#)
- Grace in suffering: [II Cor. 12:9, 10](#)
- Grace in God's patience with us: [Psa. 103:8-12](#)
- Grace in releasing the power of God: [II Tim. 2:1](#)
- Grace in victory over sin: [Rom. 6:14](#)
- Grace in spiritual growth: [II Pet. 3:18; Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 15:10](#)
- Grace in spiritual gifts: [Rom. 12:6; Eph. 3:7, 8; 4:7](#)
- Grace in stability: [I Pet. 5:12](#)
- Grace in becoming gracious: [II Cor. 8:19; Col. 4:6; I Pet. 4:1](#)
- Grace in method of living: [Heb. 12:28; II Cor. 1:12; Rom. 11:6](#)
- Grace in worship of God: [Col. 3:16](#)
- Grace in the production of divine good: [I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 6:1; 9:8-11; Eph. 4:29](#)

Categories of Grace (Page 6 of 6)

SURPASSING GRACE

Surpassing Grace includes all that God is free to do for the believer in eternity. This Grace is based primarily on the Christian's relationship to Jesus Christ. In addition, the believer receives rewards and crowns in heaven, which are a part of Grace provision.

Study the following Bible passages: [Eph. 2:7; John 14:13; I Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19; 4:13-17; II Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; I Pet. 1:3, 4; 5:12; II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:4](#)

DISTORTIONS OF GRACE

As you can well imagine, Satan's main personal task on this earth is to distort what the Bible teaches about Grace. There are two basic ways to distort or pervert the idea of Grace (taking it to mean or imply something that it does not).

First, Grace is sometimes taken to mean that it is permissible to sin. Thus, Grace is used as an excuse for licentiousness, emphasizing overt sins. This is always condemned by the Word of God. Rom. 6:1, 2; 1 John 1:9 to 2:1; Jude 4.

Secondly, Grace is sometimes taken as permission to be lazy (especially to skip the study of God's Word). This emphasizes *sins of omission*. But this idea violates all of the Bible's commands to study, to be diligent, and to be oriented to Grace ([Heb. 6:11, 12; II Pet. 1:5, 10; I Cor. 15:10](#)).