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Part 1: What Is Grace?

INTRODUCTION

As my wife and I were driving in Louisiana in early 2017, we saw a church whose first name started with the word "Grace". It struck me that I know of very few churches in my denomination that have "Grace" in their name despite the absolute necessity of "Grace" in our salvation. (Actually, I can only think of one to this day.) On the other hand, many other denominations are replete with churches with "Grace" in their names as they celebrate what God has done. Perhaps the "Pentecostal Holiness" heritage of my denomination has made us forget the key elements of our salvation. I don't know. It was then that I felt that a study of this word was essential because it seemed that either we didn't get its importance or we felt that it was no longer relevant to us. Either reason is a horribly bad answer!

WHAT IS GRACE?

One of the key Scriptures on Grace is found in Ephesians 2:8-9 and this will serve as our theme Scripture through much of this study:

NKJV *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.*

Amplified Bible *For IT IS BY GRACE [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; 9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].*

The number one ingredient in our salvation is GRACE! This is often referred to as SAVING GRACE. Therefore, we MUST know what it is or our souls may be in jeopardy. Grace appears in many facets in the Scripture including saving grace, empowering grace, enabling grace, sanctifying grace, and developing grace. However, our focus will be SAVING GRACE because this is where it all starts.

So, what is Grace? The word "Grace" appears in 159 verses in the King James Version (and in similar numbers in other translations). It's not only a New Testament word but it also appears many times in the Old Testament. However, in the Old Testament it primarily refers to "favor, elegance, charm, and acceptance". "Acceptance" is close to the New Testament definition of Grace but not entirely. In the New Testament, Grace did not start to be defined until John 1:14-17. That's interesting because that means the New Testament Church understood Grace outside of the Gospels since the Gospel of John was written so late in the church age. However, Paul did a tremendous job in defining Grace to the early church.

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Let's first try to understand it theologically, with several definitions from those that are trained to know and then try to come up with our definition based on what they've said and what the Bible says. (I found that many make the concept of "Grace" too hard for the average Christian to understand.) Each of these definitions represent excerpts from much lengthier discussions and these are the ones that made the most sense.

- {Bridgeway Bible Dictionary} "**Grace is the undeserved favor of God.** People repeatedly sin and rebel against God, yet God in his grace is still ready to forgive them when they repent (Exodus 34:6; Romans 5:20). **The only way people have ever been forgiven their sin and saved from condemnation is by God's grace, and they receive this salvation through faith (Ephesians 2:8).** People have never been saved through obeying the law or offering sacrifices (Romans 3:24-26; Galatians 3:17-22)."
- {Holman Bible Dictionary} "Undeserved acceptance and love received from another, especially the characteristic attitude of God in providing salvation for sinners. For Christians, **the word 'grace' is virtually synonymous with the gospel of God's gift of unmerited salvation in Jesus Christ.**"
- {J. J. Packer, Knowing God} "In the New Testament grace means God's love in action towards men who merited the opposite of love. **Grace means God moving heaven and earth to save sinners who could not lift a finger to save themselves.** Grace means God sending His only Son to descend into hell on the cross so that we guilty ones might be reconciled to God and received into heaven."

There were some great points here, which I highlighted, but I still found most of these definitions very difficult, and these are the "easy" definitions. Let's look at the definition I received when I first came to Christ: "Grace is God's unmerited favor to us the totally undeserving". No, I couldn't figure that out either so we need a definition we can all stand on no matter where we are intellectually. Let's return to our key Scripture and examine it:

Amplified Bible For IT IS BY GRACE [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] THROUGH FAITH. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God.

IT IS BY GRACE (that mysterious "something" that we haven't yet defined) **THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED** (delivered, set free from the judgment of sin and granted access to eternal life) **THROUGH FAITH** (Grace only works when we believe it, so we have a part to play). So, if I can't understand Grace, how can I have faith in it? We do it all the time. I recently put twenty gallons of gasoline in my car. Per an internet source, one gallon of gasoline has the explosive power of 14 sticks of dynamite! I put the equivalent of 280 sticks of dynamite in my car,

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turned the key, and ignited it...comfortably. I had faith in the machine without knowing who built it, their ulterior motive, or how the igniting of that gasoline worked. However, I have enough knowledge about the car to know what cautions I should exercise, what benefits the gasoline has, and how the car and gasoline can work against me if used incorrectly. That's what we must get to regarding GRACE.

After study and meditation, study and meditation, and more study and meditation, I came to this conclusion on grace:

GRACE REPRESENTS THE VERY HEART OF GOD. IT IS THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOD.

Some do a great disservice to God when they paint Him as harsh, judgmental and cruel toward sinners. GOD LOVES SINNERS! Look at this:

- God's love is what motivated Grace: John 3:16-17; Romans 5:8.
- God's love created a remedy before there was a problem: Rev. 13:8.
- Grace does not exist without Jesus Christ: Galatians 2:21.
- God is not on a mission to punish sinners: 2 Peter 3:9.

GRACE IS GOD SAYING, "I'VE GOT THIS!" THERE IS ALWAYS A PRICE FOR SIN AND JESUS PAID IT. GRACE BELONGS TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST. GRACE IS GOD'S SOLUTION FOR OUR SIN.

While we're defining Grace, let's look at what Grace is not. Grace is not the same as mercy. They are similar but you'll find that, at their root, they are very different.

- **With MERCY, we are spared punishment that WE DESERVE.** Mercy gives deliverance without the ability to handle it. Mercy removes something that should have been there. After the punishment has been removed, you have nothing to sustain you because only that issue has been dealt with, not the source of that issue (the root of your sin).
- **With GRACE, we receive favor and acceptance that WE DON'T DESERVE.** Grace brings us into a relationship with God and right standing in the eyes of God. Grace empowers and enables us because we are no longer viewed as a sinner. Grace gives us the ability to live the life of Christ. Grace comes in measures so more Grace is available.

REVIEW

What is the number one ingredient in our salvation?

What is God's attitude toward sinners? Does that change after they are saved?

Give a definition for grace that helps and encourages you.

Are grace and mercy the same? Are grace and favor the same?

Grace is God saying, "I've got this!" It represents the heart and very nature of God.

Part 2: What Is Grace? Let's Go Deeper!

Let's return to our key verses on Grace found in Ephesians 2:8-9:

Amplified Bible *For IT IS BY GRACE [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; 9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].*

Before we go deeper into verse 8, let's look at a few more points on Grace to make sure we fully understand:

- Grace is not just a remedy for sin but it is also a means to a continued relationship with God. Grace empowers us to live a life free from sin but if we fail, Grace offers us continual forgiveness, as we ask for it (1 John 1:9). **Question:** In this verse, why is it important to know that God will be "faithful and just"?
- What must not be forgotten in any study of Grace is the absolute necessity of the death of Jesus Christ. Without His death, Grace does not exist and we are still in our sins. He worked so we don't have to work because our work is useless before God anyway.

Romans 3:23-25a NLT *For EVERYONE has sinned; we ALL fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in his GRACE, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.*

Did you see it? **EVERYONE HAS SINNED! WE ALL FALL SHORT!** But God, through Grace, made us right in His sight. Many have a tough time with this because it seems like a handout; like charity. IT IS! **We could do NOTHING so EVERYTHING about the salvation of our souls is in the hand of God.** And the means for Him to do this was through Jesus Christ, presented bodily as a sacrifice for sin. The wonderful thing about Grace is that God WANTED to do what was necessary for our sake! (Look at Isaiah 53:10 to see the eagerness and love of God to provide a way for us! It helps John 3:16 to make more sense.) Finis Dake, in his reference Bible of the same name, said, "*Such a sacrifice on the part of God showed His divine perfection, justice, mercy and boundless benevolence. The law was upheld, sin was judged, and a basis of pardon and reconciliation was made possible.*" It was all done because of God's Grace.

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OUR RESPONSE TO GRACE

The availability of Grace is to all people of all backgrounds since Christ. So why then are some saved and some are not? Just like any benefit, there is a response required from us. Our theme Scripture gives the answer in the middle of verse 8 – “**THROUGH FAITH**”:

Ephesians 2:8-9 Amplified Bible *For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] **THROUGH FAITH**. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God;*

The means to access God’s Grace is **THROUGH FAITH**. Faith is not just in our words but in our actions. Where did we get the idea of “*accepting Christ as our personal Savior*”? It’s not in the Scriptures but it’s the best way to portray the fact that this is how we accept (have faith for) God’s grace that saves us. How do I accept Him? I believe Him to save me and to do this NOT based on ANYTHING I have done. Salvation is the undeserved gift of God.

Romans 5:1-2 NKJV *Therefore, having been justified **BY FAITH**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access **BY FAITH** into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

So, our response to Grace is FAITH for God to justify us (make us right in His sight) and FAITH to access His Grace to keep (preserve) us or keep us right before God. In other words, when we come to Christ for salvation, the only thing He wants from us is our belief (trust) in Him to save us. Anything else we try to give is ineffective in doing anything for our souls.

Our best example in Scripture of Grace justifying a person was Abraham and the Scripture shows us this again and again.

Genesis 15:6 NLT *And Abram **believed** the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.* Before there was New Testament Grace, it was evident in the life of Abraham.

Romans 4:22 NLT *And because of Abraham’s **faith**, God counted him as righteous.*

Galatians 3:6 NLT *In the same way, “Abraham **believed** God, and God counted him as righteous because of his **faith**.”*

I know from personal experience that this bothers us. Abraham, the scoundrel, was declared righteous by God, not by his actions, but because of his faith. Did the actions later follow? Yes, but **ACTIONS DON’T SAVE US!** **Question:** **Is there a time when we stop walking by or relying on our faith in God and focus on our holy life?** The answer is coming.

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Here are more points on grace from a study conducted by Robert L. Deffinbaugh on Bible.org because we must get this! Our souls depend on it!

- *Christianity cannot be understood apart from an adequate grasp of grace.*
- *Our efforts to contribute to God's saving grace are an affront (insult, outrage) to Him.*
- *No matter how pious legalism appears on the outside, it dishonors God by revealing a deep-seated distrust of God. Legalism is best described as the things WE DO thinking to satisfy the requirements of our holy God – actions that are NEVER adequate.*
- *Grace meets the demands of justice and holiness rather than to set them aside.*
- *While sin is an occasion for grace, grace is never to be an occasion for sin. Don't you dare tell me that emphasizing Grace gives people the freedom to sin! (Can you believe that I've heard this from preachers MANY times?) We'll discuss this in coming parts because too many are using Grace as an opportunity for sin. Even with Grace, sin is still clearly defined and there is a requirement for seeking forgiveness AFTER salvation.*

We ask, Grace saves us and we believe it. That's the simplicity of salvation. When we add more to it, **we insult the integrity of God by saying that we don't really believe His simple solution.** Isn't there more for me? Yes, but we'll reserve that for future parts.

REVIEW

Grace is God saying, "I've got this!" It represents the heart and very nature of God. Too often we misrepresent God as harsh and judgmental keeping people from His great salvation.

God's Grace doesn't need our help for us to be saved.

Legalism says that we don't trust God's remedy for sin. It's not a "help"; it's an insult!

We respond to grace in one manner only – FAITH. But Grace is NEVER to be an excuse for continuing in sin since Grace resolves that also.

Grace empowers us to live a life free from sin but if we fail, Grace offers us continual forgiveness, as we ask for it.

Part 3: Now That I Know, What Do I Do?

Let's return to our key verses on Grace found in Ephesians 2:8-9 and focus on the latter part of verse 8 and all of verse 9 (shaded text below):

Amplified Bible For *IT IS BY GRACE [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; 9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].*

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

Let's answer the question, "What's our response to God's Saving Grace?" "There must be something for us to do." "It can't be as simple as that!" But it is! And our key verses give us the answer:

1. **...this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort]** – The Amplified Bible makes it clear – our salvation is not based on our own effort. Period! End of story! This is hard for people to grasp and especially hard for those "working out" their salvation in "works oriented" Christian denominations. The fact that we are saved has nothing to do with what we have done but it is a result of God's wonderful gift to us (Grace through Jesus Christ) and any gift you must pay for, is not a gift.
2. **...not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law]** – It's not based on our works! This is a repeat of the last phrase. Here the apostle is repeating the same thing for emphasis. What's our response? We should repeat these phrases, which are paraphrasing the end of verse 8 and the start of verse 9:
 - a. My salvation is not my doing.
 - b. My salvation is not based on my effort.
 - c. My salvation is not based on my works.
 - d. My salvation is not based on anything I may do to keep the Law of Moses.
3. **...so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].** Why is all this emphasis and re-emphasis necessary? The answer is in this final phrase of verse 9. Without this emphasis, someone *will* boast or take credit for what *they* have done stealing the glory from God. In fact, Christians are doing it all the time! Well meaning, but wrong, preachers are telling people that they are not saved until they have "shown" them something. Friend, who made you the Judge?

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Before leaving this section, I'm going to add a few more Scriptures to think about because we cannot go on until we understand that there is NOTHING we have done to secure our salvation.

- **Romans 11:6 NKJV** *And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.* You cannot mix Grace and works. They stand alone.
- **Galatians 2:21 NKJV** *I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.* If I can be righteous and acceptable to our holy God through my personal works for Him, then Christ suffered needlessly!
- **Galatians 5:4 NKJV** *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.* Contrary to what has been taught, we fall from Grace when we attempt to satisfy our holy God through our own works; especially works tied to the Old Testament Law of Moses.
- **2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV** *Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus BEFORE TIME BEGAN.* God saved us and called us BUT NOT BASED ON OUR WORKS! This verse supports what was said early in this study – God created a remedy before the problem appeared.

I'VE GOT IT, SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that Grace has transformed us (2 Corinthians 5:17), God expects us to live the life He wanted from Adam and Eve except we do this of our own will. But don't forget that it is the power of Grace that has transformed us! After Grace, we are not the same! Because of that, God has new expectations for us. Let's go to the next verse after our theme Scripture:

Ephesians 2:10 Amplified Bible *For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for GOOD WORKS, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].*

God wants to showcase the Church to the world, to angels, and to demons that the Grace of God is greater than any bondage or any sin. The Church is His workmanship, masterpiece, or handiwork just as Adam, formed by the hand of God, was intended to be. Instead, we were formed by the Grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must not allow the devil to deceive us and we end up frustrating the work of Grace. I have said this many times in my attempt to capsule the Christian life: **WE DON'T LIVE A GODLY LIFE TO BE SAVED. WE LIVE A**

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GODLY LIFE BECAUSE WE ARE SAVED. Early in this study I told you, “Grace brings relationship with God and right standing in the eyes of God. Grace empowers and enables because you no longer are viewed as a sinner. Grace gives you the ability to live the life of Christ.” There is a responsibility after Grace has done its part and this will take some careful balancing so that we don’t fall back into thinking that our life style is what has saved us.

Let’s end this part with a few points to make sure we understand our role:

1. Grace has saved you but it brings with it a RESPONSIBILITY on your part to live right before God. **1 Peter 1:13-16 Amplified Bible** *So prepare your minds for action, be completely sober [in spirit—steadfast, self-disciplined, spiritually and morally alert], fix your hope completely on the grace [of God] that is coming to you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 [Live] as obedient children [of God]; do not be conformed to the evil desires which governed you in your ignorance [before you knew the requirements and transforming power of the good news regarding salvation]. 15 But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage]; 16 because it is written, “You shall be holy (set apart), for I am holy.”*
2. There is a command from the Scripture that we deal with sin in our lives after salvation. Why else would God have the Apostle John write 1 John 1:9? If forgiveness was unnecessary, why do it and why encourage the Church to receive it?
3. Paul is forceful in bringing out the requirement for Christians to overcome sin in their lives after salvation. **Romans 6:1-2 Amplified Bible** *What shall we say [to all this]? Should we continue in sin and practice sin as a habit so that [God’s gift of] grace may increase and overflow? 2 CERTAINLY NOT! How can we, the very ones who died to sin, continue to live in it any longer?* Let me know if you can answer that second verse.

REVIEW

The fact that we are saved has nothing to do with what we have done but it is a result of God’s wonderful gift to us (Grace through Jesus Christ) and any gift you must pay for is not a gift.

Without emphasizing that Grace saves us and not works, someone will take credit for what they have done stealing the glory from God. Christians are doing it all the time!

Contrary to what has been taught, we fall from Grace when we attempt to satisfy our holy God through our own works; especially works tied to the Old Testament Law of Moses.

Now that Grace has transformed us (2 Corinthians 5:17), God expects us to live the life He wanted from Adam and Eve except we do this of our own will.

God wants to showcase the Church to the world, to angels, and to demons that the Grace of God is greater than any bondage or any sin.

We don’t live a godly life to be saved. We live a godly life because we ARE saved.

Part 4: The Balanced Christian Life

UNDERSTANDING OUR LIFE BECAUSE OF GRACE

The fear, after focusing on the power of Grace, is that some will stop with that step and not go further. After Grace, we need to know what God accepts and expects. We must begin working on our lives so that we can be His “workmanship”. Grace will empower us to do this. We need to see the depth of this, so we turn to James for one of the most controversial doctrines in the New Testament: James’ discussion of faith versus works. Some feel that James is in direct contradiction with Paul who, they say, supported faith without works. This is not true. To understand it, we need to look at the steps of the Christian’s conversion:

1. **SINNER LOOKING FOR GOD** – (Works without faith). This is where we all start. As sinners, we try to satisfy our holy God by good works without accepting the salvation of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul taught against in Romans when he said that all our actions to satisfy God fall short of God’s expectations (Romans 3:23). **THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO OUTSIDE OF CHRIST TO SECURE OUR SALVATION** (Acts 4:12)!
2. **INITIAL SALVATION (I’M SAVED!)** – (Faith without legal works). At the point of salvation, your justification is dependent upon your faith in operation with the Grace of God. (We’ve spent a lot of time on this.) There are absolutely no moral deeds attached to it (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:4-5; Galatians 2:16). Our salvation is not based on anything we’ve done but is based on our faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice at the cross.
3. **CONTINUED SALVATION (LIVING FOR CHRIST)** – (Faith with works). After our initial salvation, the Christian has the responsibility to develop a consistent, holy life before God and others. Grace has freed you from the bondage of sin so you have the power to do this. Sin must be confessed (there are many “lists” in the New Testament to help us with this) and laid aside; weights (hindering forces that could lead to sin) must be recognized and laid aside (Hebrews 12:1). The Christian’s walk has nothing to do with continued sinful inconsistencies (Galatians 2:17-18). Our goal is to be like Jesus Christ (I John 2:6; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:24-25).

James’ text gives balance to our Christian life. Without this balance, i.e., if we only had grace without a corresponding life, would we fully sell out to Christ? Would we have a zeal for Him and no other or would we allow other things to enter in knowing that we’re saved (going to heaven) *anyway*?

James 2:18 Amplified Bible *But someone may say, “You [claim to] have faith and I have [good] works; show me your [alleged] faith without the works [if you can], and I will show you my faith by my works [that is, by what I do].”*

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If it is possible, show me your faith that exists without works. Even the people in the world will let you know that as Christians we should demonstrate this by good works -- we must "live something." How is that we are so deceived? James lets the hearer know that he can demonstrate his faith by his works. TALK IS CHEAP; DO SOMETHING! Faith must have some demonstration to prove that it is faith.

James 2:26 Amplified Bible *For just as the [human] body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works [of obedience] is also dead.*

The works that we do supporting the life that grace has implanted in us demonstrate to everyone that a change has taken place in our lives.

This is where the question is asked that demonstrates where a person's life is in Christ: "*Is it a sin if I do _____?*" Get your list ready of all the possible scenarios but the point is that this is a person who is *not* looking to do all they can to please the Father. That was the Lord's testimony in John 8:29. If our goal is to live like Christ, we must embrace that same life.

Finally, let's ask the question that may be troubling many: "*What is the sin that will cause me to lose out on heaven?*" That's like the previous question. What you're asking is, "When do I cross the line?" That's a foolish question. It's like a husband or wife trying to determine the action that will lead their marriage to divorce. You shouldn't want it. There are many Scriptures in the Bible that point to the real possibility of losing what we started with. Likewise, there are many Scriptures in the Bible that testify of our security in Christ. How do we merge these two and obtain balance? Here's one way: I choose to put my faith in our security in Christ while working out my "*own salvation with fear and trembling* (Philippians 2:12)". My goal is to please Him, and I'll allow His Grace to take care of the rest.

WHAT IS SIN?

The key to a balanced life in Christ is a proper understanding of sin. When we don't understand it, we tend to excuse it under Grace. Unfortunately, too many are dismissive of the impact of sin after Grace. Sin doesn't change because of Grace (read Romans). Sin is still sin. In the New Testament, the word "sin" comes from a Greek word, and its variants, that means "*to be without a share in; to miss the mark; to wander off the path of righteousness; to err; to do or go wrong; a violation of the divine law in thought or in act*". There are powerful words in these definitions that point to the awfulness of sin in our relationship with God. For that reason, the issue of sin AFTER GRACE is repeatedly emphasized throughout the New Testament and especially in the epistles. We must deal with it and overcome it!

Romans 6:12 Amplified Bible *Therefore DO NOT let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts and passions.*

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Hebrews 12:1 Amplified Bible *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who by faith have testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness], stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us, let us run with endurance and active persistence the race that is set before us.*

CONFLICTING DOCTRINES

We can't end this discussion of what is next without talking about teaching that may divert us from where we should be in Christ. We'll look at a quick overview of the "eternal security" doctrine and the concept of "cheap grace". In the details of both, which we will not dig into, there are points that we must embrace, however, there are also subtle additions that may lead us in the wrong direction. The power of Grace is phenomenal! Grace transforms us and Grace keeps us. But we must want to please God now that we're free from bondage. We must not look for an easy way out because we've been given the power not to!

ETERNAL SECURITY DOCTRINE

The Eternal Security Doctrine says that once I am saved, this salvation is so great and powerful that no action on my part can nullify it. Its nickname is "*Once Saved; Always Saved*". Be careful! This doctrine is based on Scripture, as are all doctrines, true or false. To support the doctrine, advocates use Romans 8:39; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 Corinthians 3:15; and John 10:28 among others to prove their point. (It's interesting that these same books also have verses disproving this doctrine.) Let's make it simple – **would God allow anyone who tramples on the Blood of Jesus Christ with a life of rebellious disobedience have eternal life?** Those that believe this would say, "Yes" without hesitation. However, they are forgetting how God so highly reveres the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:29).

CHEAP GRACE CONCEPT

The term "cheap grace" refers to an excerpt from a book written by the late German pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, called [The Cost of Discipleship](#). In that book, Bonhoeffer defined "cheap grace" as "*the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession.*" It is a Christianity with all the benefits and none of the life. Since it costs the recipient nothing, it's called "cheap grace". But there is nothing cheap about Grace. It was purchased for us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The difference in the "Cheap Grace Concept" and the "Eternal Security Doctrine" is subtle. Cheap Grace takes Eternal Security to another level and proposes that you can have salvation without a link to sanctification (a holy life). Based on when this concept became popular, it appears to have been driven by a lust for numbers in the Church. Revivals were conducted and success was measured by the number of commitments made by those in attendance. In the 1800's, Charles Finney would run revivals and the saloons would go out of business. But when you fast-forward 150+ years, you have phenomenal numbers of

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people saved but no relative change in the city where the revival was conducted. We can't be as those that "turned the world upside down" living a life based on the Cheap Grace Concept.

REVIEW

After Grace, we need to know what God accepts and expects. We must begin working on our lives so that we can be His "workmanship". Grace will empower us to do this.

The key to a successful life in Christ is a proper understanding of sin. When we don't understand it, we may tend to excuse it under Grace.

The power of Grace is phenomenal! Grace transforms us and Grace keeps us. But we must want to please God now that we're free from bondage. We must not look for an easy way out.

Remember, now that Grace has transformed us (2 Corinthians 5:17), God expects us to live the life He wanted from Adam and Eve except we now do this of our own will.

Regarding the false doctrines of Grace, let's make it simple – would God allow anyone who tramples on the Blood of Jesus Christ with a life of rebellious disobedience have eternal life?

Part 5: The Power of Grace

INTRODUCTION

At the end of one of the classes conducted in this study (all of this material was presented in a class setting), one of the students asked, “*Would you say then, in order for us to stay saved, we must have the (Baptism of) the Holy Ghost?*” Now if you are unfamiliar with or opposed to the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (or the Baptism of the Holy Spirit), this question may seem confusing or akin to witchcraft. The works of the Holy Spirit are varied and still in action. I’m not going to argue with those that believe the Holy Spirit’s works ceased after 100 A.D. My problem with a thought like that has always been God’s consistency. If the Holy Spirit stopped, did Grace also? The Lord Jesus promised the Church in the Gospel of John that He would send a Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit’s work as the Comforter the same work that He does in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? From my studies, it certainly appears to be so but I don’t want to lose focus on the purpose of this study, which is Grace. Now let’s return to the question asked that night and paraphrase it so everyone understands – “*Do I need something ‘extra’ to maintain my salvation after I come to Christ?*” That will be the focus of this part.

CAN GRACE KEEP ME?

Within Pentecostal Holiness churches (many, if not most, of them), and perhaps in other churches, there is a saying that says, “*The Holy Ghost is a keeper.*” There are other variations of this expression that say that without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, one will not and cannot continue with the Lord. I have a problem with that and I’ll start with this Scripture to emphasize where I think our focus should be:

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 NKJV *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, “MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

I’ve rarely heard anyone preach or teach on this passage without getting into their personal theological “bent”. They focus on the “thorn in the flesh”. The healing preacher will tell you that “the thorn” has NOTHING to do with Paul have any kind of physical ailment. The holiness preacher will tell you that “the thorn” has NOTHING to do with any problem (weight or sin – see Hebrews 12:1) that Paul may have had. In the process, they miss the revelation of verse 8, which speaks to the power of Grace. **Whatever Paul’s issue was, God’s answer was found in Grace.** He said, “*My grace is sufficient for you*” or it is all he needed. The Message Bible says of that same excerpt, “**MY GRACE IS ENOUGH; IT’S ALL YOU NEED.**” Then the

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Lord explained why. **When we are at our weakest point (relying 100% on the Grace of God or just God Himself), that is when God's strength is perfected in our lives. Grace stands up to help us when we have hit that point where we can do no more.** Paul took this a step further in the verse that followed and allowed this revelation to revolutionize his spiritual life to handle the immense suffering he endured: **2 Corinthians 12:10 NKJV** *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG. NLT* *That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

When I read this great revelation by Paul, I come to the realization that the issues I have cause Grace to stand up stronger in me to empower me and to keep me. (And, no, this is not sin but Grace can overcome that also.) There are things that we all wish we could do better and these are things that highlight our insecurities. But when we are at our weakest point relying 100% on the Grace of God, then God stands up for us because WE are out of the picture. Every time we allow these insecurities to overcome us and we "beat" on ourselves because of them, we penalize ourselves from the power of Grace. This is not a crutch for lack of preparation. No, we have done all we can do and Grace comes to fill up the rest. As we go deeper in this, we must realize that there is a micro-second gap between boasting in our infirmities (like Paul) and beating ourselves up for our personal shortcomings like so many do. That micro-second gap is the point for the devil (and us!) to direct us to the poor choice of focusing on our weaknesses and allowing them to overcome us. We are always at this point of decision where we must choose to listen to the enemy (and the "inner me") or embrace what God has promised us. It's automatic. But because it's automatic, the inner me (the flesh) almost always chooses to beat itself. We must allow Grace to overcome that and condition us to embrace our weaknesses so that God can stand up in us. Grace fills that gap.

Therefore, can Grace keep me? Absolutely, yes, IF I want to stay with God. But Grace will not keep me against my will! It's all that I need and I'm counting on it. In the previous lesson, I stated: ***"After our initial salvation, the Christian has the responsibility to develop a consistent, holy life before God and others. Grace has freed you from the bondage of sin so you have the power to do this."*** If this is NOT you, you have no desire to stay with God and Grace is frustrated in your life.

HOW DO I HOLD ON TO GOD?

We're in a generation that is ignorant (through distraction) to the power of God inherent within His Grace and the saving Blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we need to use this section to educate God's people about our Christian benefit plan. I'm taking the time to go through this because so much error has come into the Church that has grieved young Christians to

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the point where they are confused about their salvation and some have given up. But let's clarify one thing: GOD IS HOLDING ON TO YOU. As long as you desire Him, He desires you.

Psalms 121:5 NKJV *The LORD is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand.* God has demonstrated throughout time that He is willing and able to keep us. But for those who worry about Who is doing it, you're overly concerned. Just let God work.

1 Peter 1:5 NKJV *Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* When Peter opened his general epistle, he explained where we are as the Church. We are kept (sustained, preserved, saved) by the power of God. How does that power operate? It operates like Grace in that it is THROUGH FAITH. The power of God does not operate against our will. We are kept by this power because of our willingness to please God with our lives. (I am repeatedly touching on this point because it is so important!)

2 Timothy 1:12 NKJV *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.* Again, this verse begins in the middle of a thought and, for context, please look at the whole passage. But Paul told Timothy some key things that will help us in understanding the power of the Grace that we have embraced.

1. ***"I am not ashamed."*** He was not ashamed of the things that he was going through. Christians are bombarded with false and misleading teaching through so many sources today. This teaching sometimes makes us believe that we're not where we should be as evidenced by the things we're going through. The devil used this ploy on Job and it's still being used. If you're concerned about the genuineness of your Christian walk, ask God to forgive you of what you *feel* is sinful or holding you back and move on to the next part of this verse. DON'T LET THE DEVIL FOOL YOU!
2. ***"I know whom I have believed."*** Do you know the One Whom you have believed in? Do you trust, appreciate, and believe in the absolute faithfulness of God? If not, then you don't KNOW Him. FIX THAT because until you do, moving on is impossible. Make your "home" in the Scriptures until you're totally convinced of the integrity of God. He's not playing with you! He loves you! Because of that, we can trust Him.
3. ***"[I] am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."*** What did I commit to Him? I committed my soul to Him, of course! Paul was absolutely persuaded (convinced!) that God could keep his soul which he had given to Him. God's part was to keep him, and Paul's part was to commit to Him. When we follow the same steps, God will keep us and at this point we are eternally secure. It's not hard and it's available to all.

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CAN I CONTINUE TO SAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A KEEPER?

As we close this lesson, I've put out a question that I expect. The answer is still, "Yes". My concern throughout this lesson was that we don't teach the erroneous doctrine that those that don't have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (a specific work of the Holy Spirit) are on shaky ground and on the verge of one day leaving God. We penalize hundreds of years of Christianity by doing so (modern day Pentecostalism is not that old in Church history) and we make the work of the Cross of Christ and, hence, His Grace, incomplete and powerless.

In some of the Lord's final private conversations with His disciples in the Gospel of John, He spoke of the coming "Comforter" (John 14:16, 26; John 15:26; John 16:7). John 14:26 specifically defines the "Comforter" as the Holy Spirit. John 16:7 states that the Comforter would not come UNTIL Christ left and then He would send Him. The work of the Comforter (Holy Spirit) as defined by the original Greek word is {Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words} "[One] 'called to one's side,' i.e., to one's aid. In the widest sense, it signifies a 'succorer, comforter.'" This is definitely the work of One sent to keep us.

The intent of this study is not to promulgate a particular doctrine or to argue. Don't we already do too much of that in the Church while the world looks on and enjoys the show? Of course, they don't believe what we say after that because we don't even believe ourselves. No, I want you to see that our God has given us so much for us to BE saved and STAY saved. There is no excuse for going back. YOU CAN MAKE IT!

REVIEW

When we are at our weakest point (relying 100% on the Grace of God or just God Himself), that is when God's strength is perfected in our lives. Grace stands up to help us when we have hit that point where we can do no more.

Can Grace keep me? Absolutely, yes, IF I want to stay with God. Grace will not keep me against my will!

GOD IS HOLDING ON TO YOU. As long as you desire Him, He desires you.

There are things that are God's responsibility (keep us) and our responsibility (commit to Him). When we follow the same steps, God will keep us and at this point we are eternally secure. It's not hard and it's available to all.

Whatever our issue is, God's answer is found in Grace.

Part 6: What Grace Is NOT!

INTRODUCTION

This part is important because so many Christians have used Grace as an excuse to do whatever they felt was good at the time. Generally, Christians are viewed by other religions as living lives that are inconsistent with the teachings of Christ (hypocrites), divided, and generally hateful in our attitudes. Yes, this is a gross generalization (or maybe not) but it's also an excuse for many who refuse to come into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those that need Christ don't see their own sins because they're busy pointing out the sins of the Church. I believe we have come to this point because of a misunderstanding and misuse of Grace. As we go into this part, it will only be effective if we agree that the Bible has our instructions for a life pleasing to God from Genesis to Revelation. These Books are there so that Grace can empower us to do what God desires and so that we will know to reject what He hates.

WHAT GRACE IS NOT...

- **GRACE IS NOT A FREE TICKET TO SIN OR DO AS YOU WISH.** Remember from Part 1 that Grace represents the very heart of God. An extension of that heart is the character of God, which is holy. But many today seem to have lost sight of that. This is not a ceremonial holiness, as some teach, or an imputed holiness, which we receive through Grace, but it is a holiness that says that our God is pure in all that He does. Because of that, He calls to His Church to take on His nature after Salvation, through Grace, which has changed us:

1 Peter 1:15-16 Amplified Bible *15 But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage]; 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy (set apart), for I am holy."*

This call for a holy conduct comes from the one Apostle who, when Christ was on earth, often conducted himself in a most unholy fashion. But he calls the Church to embrace what he now understands – since God is holy; we must be holy.

But in taking this deeper, we find many, many Scriptures that call for the Church to model the life of Christ. **WE CANNOT USE GRACE AS AN EXCUSE TO CONTINUE TO SIN!** As stated earlier, Paul, who spoke more on Grace than anyone else in the New Testament, gave a strong warning about this:

Romans 6:1-2 Amplified Bible *1 What shall we say [to all this]? Should we continue in sin and practice sin as a habit so that [God's gift of] grace may increase and overflow? 2 Certainly not! How can we, the very ones who died to sin, continue to live in it any longer?*

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The King James Version translation of the beginning of verse 2 is even stronger when it says, "God forbid!" How can we keep on sinning? How do we do this if we're dead to sin? Grace has empowered us to overcome sin!

Before leaving this, there will be some that will still want sin to be defined. This is a question from someone who is either very new to the things of God, someone who has not taken the opportunity to be instructed, or someone who wants to do what they want to do. Sin was defined to us as children when we first learned the word, "NO!" from our parents. Even as a child, you knew there would be consequences for trespassing against that "NO!" That's what sin is – it is a trespass or transgression (crime, disobedience, or wrongdoing) against what you know that God expects (we discussed this in detail in the previous part). That's the beauty of Grace. While I learn the heart of God through His Word, Grace covers me and shows me what to do when I realize that I've been wrong.

1 John 1:9 NKJV *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Let's be honest, we're not going to understand everything about God immediately or even after many years. There are some things that are clear in the Scripture but we haven't found them yet and that's the beauty of this verse. When we find them, we apply this verse confessing our sins with the intent to not go in that direction again.

Why do we need to confess and look for forgiveness if sin is no longer an issue? No, sin will always be an issue as long as there is a tempter to draw us away (James 1:14-15).

John, in his epistle, goes further in admonishing the Church to deal with the reality of sin. Some, in their arrogance, view all their actions as acceptable. But John said:

1 John 1:10 Amplified Bible *If we say that we have not sinned [refusing to admit acts of sin], we make Him [out to be] a liar [by contradicting Him] and His word is not in us.*

But Grace empowers us to find out what God requires and then to do what God enjoys. If we live a life that says, "Is it a sin if I do...?" then we are cheapening our relationship with God. There are things in life that we should not do that are not specifically called out in Scripture. But they fall under the "umbrella" of sins like "uncleanness", "lasciviousness", "the lusts of the flesh", and other such things. Then there are things that we should do for the sake of our love for God. The Lord Jesus made this clear to us:

Luke 17:7-10 Amplified Bible *7 "Which of you who has a servant plowing or tending sheep will say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat?' 8 Will he not instead say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and appropriately clothe yourself [for*

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service] and serve me while I eat and drink; then afterward you may eat and drink?’ 9 He does not thank the servant just because he did what he was ordered to do, does he? 10 So you too, when you have done everything that was assigned and commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants [undeserving of praise or a reward, FOR WE HAVE NOT GONE BEYOND OUR OBLIGATION]; we have merely done what we ought to do.’”

Let’s conclude this with a final Scripture to emphasize the importance of our conduct before God:

1 Thessalonians 4:7 Amplified Bible *For God has not called us to impurity, but to holiness [to be dedicated, and set apart BY BEHAVIOR THAT PLEASES HIM, whether in public or in private].*

- **GRACE IS NOT A ONE-SIDED RELATIONSHIP.** This is an extension of the former topic. Grace is God’s love toward us. It begins a relationship and no successful relationship is one-sided. In any relationship, there must be moves and sacrifices made on both sides. God has done His part through the life of Christ, the suffering and death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ. This provided us with the opportunity for justification by faith in Christ. Now what do we do? We find out those things that are pleasing to God after we have dealt with the issue of sin. That was the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

John 8:29 Amplified Bible *And He who sent Me is [always] with Me; He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him.*

When we condition ourselves to please the Lord, our life for Christ becomes easier. We’re no longer struggling with things that WE want to do because our approach is only to please Him (Galatians 1:10). (This is also the solution to many relationship issues among us – we need to stop wanting things OUR way and focus on what the other person wants.)

- **GRACE IS NOT HARD.** We’ve talked about this before. The Lord Jesus did all the “heavy lifting” because we could not. I salute those that have written volumes on Grace. Grace is fascinating and deserving of such intense study. However, don’t be deceived. The magnitude of the books written about it are not intended to convey the fact that satisfying the requirements of God are hard. What’s hard is when you’re a transgressor (Proverbs 13:15). What’s hard is when you, like Saul of Tarsus, read the Scripture and kick against it (Acts 9:5). No, the Lord Jesus said that His yoke was easy and His burden was light (Matthew 11:30). What messes people up is not realizing that the Lord still said that there would be a yoke and a burden. Grace is not hard but there is a part that we must play after Grace has saved us.

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Finally, do not allow denominational differences within the Church (and there are many) water down the truth of the Gospel and the power of Grace. Many have strict allegiances to their organizations and whatever their organization says is right, is right to them. Some refuse to fellowship across denominational lines. Is this what Christ intended in His prayer in John 17 when He called for His Church to be one? Paul addressed doctrinal differences in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8. In these verses, they don't sound as pervasive as denominations but they are the first steps in dividing the Church. But in both cases, Paul told us to focus on making sure that the one "for whom Christ died" does not perish with our difference.

REVIEW

This Part will only be effective if we agree that the Bible has instructions for a life pleasing to God from Genesis to Revelation.

Grace is not a free ticket to sin or do as you wish. Grace empowers us to find out what God requires and then to do what God enjoys.

Grace is not a one-sided relationship. When we condition ourselves to please the Lord, our life for Christ becomes easier.

Grace is not hard. The Lord Jesus did all the "heavy lifting" because we could not.

Part 7: Final Words on Grace

INTRODUCTION

There are still some things to share about Grace but, after coming to this point in our study, I now fully understand why scholars have written long essays, documents, and whole books on this subject and felt that they were yet incomplete. Because Grace is the essential nature of God and God is so far beyond finding out, how can we contain or digest Grace in only these few pages? However, I believe the main objectives have been met and we'll conclude with a few more aspects of Grace.

FINAL WORDS ON GRACE

- **GRACE IS NOT ONLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.** Remember that Grace represents the essential nature of God. Though the Scripture clearly says that Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17), we see Grace in operation in the pre-historic past in the period known as the Antediluvian Period (the period before the Great Flood) among Bible scholars:

Genesis 6:8 KJV *But Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the LORD.*

This is the first of 38 times that the word “Grace” is used in the Old Testament and it means the same thing as our New Testament version – *being made acceptable*. But for clarity in understanding John 1:17, Dake says that the fullness of Grace came through Jesus Christ. Grace was also in operation in the life of Abraham for Paul recounts that Abraham believed God (faith in operation) and it was counted to him for righteousness (an act of Grace) (Romans 4:3). It's important to see God's Grace in operation throughout history so that we don't present an Old Testament version of God that differs from a New Testament version of God. No, He is the same throughout ages. The idea of two different personalities of God confuses people especially new converts.

- **GRACE EMPOWERS US, STRENGTHENS US AND HELPS US.** I have repeated this throughout this study but here I want to present those Scriptures that tell us the power of God's Grace. Grace has the power to crush sin in our lives because Grace is against sin. (**Grace is not an excuse for sin, but it is the remedy for sin.**) We also know that God is against sin, anxiety, negative speaking, etc. Grace is the remedy for that AFTER we've come to Christ.

2 Timothy 2:1 Amplified Bible *So you, my son, BE STRONG [constantly strengthened] AND EMPOWERED IN THE GRACE that is [to be found only] in Christ Jesus.*

Why did Timothy need this strengthening and empowering? We see in the context of Paul's two letters that Timothy was dealing with some issues internally (health – 1

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Timothy 5:23; insecurity – 2 Timothy 1:7) and externally (1 Timothy 4:12). However, Paul, as a seasoned veteran of ministry, understood that the answer would be found in God's empowering Grace. That's what Timothy would need to defeat these foes.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find GRACE TO HELP in time of need.*

In the context of this verse, we have a Great High Priest in the Lord Jesus Christ who has successfully defeated every temptation without sin. He understands what we're going through and the writer encourages US to boldly request help through Grace when we need it so we can follow Christ's same footsteps. Once again the Scripture does not allow us to hide behind our failures and present Grace as the answer. No, Grace is the answer to our successes!

Acts 20:32 NKJV *So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

The "Word of His Grace" is "able" to build us up. Before we came to Christ, our souls were in ruins. Sin had truly messed us up. However, the Master Builder, using His Grace, has repaired us and is continually building on us to move us to that point where He wants us to be. The beauty of Grace, however, is that it's like insurance. If you purchase a policy for your car today and have an accident next week, you're covered. They don't wait until you pay in enough to cover the accident. Grace is working on us but if we leave here before we're complete, we are "covered" for that inheritance that God has reserved for His sanctified (set apart) people.

- **GRACE IS A GIFT TO THE CHURCH.** The deception of the enemy comes to tell some that they don't have this level of Grace or that their Grace is not enough to empower or strengthen them against sin. Not only does Grace empower and strengthen but it prepares us for the call of God.

Ephesians 4:7 NKJV *But to EACH ONE OF US GRACE WAS GIVEN according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

Ephesians 3:7 Amplified Bible *Of this [gospel] I was made a minister BY THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE given me through the working of His power.*

- **GRACE COMES IN MEASURES.** The beauty of Grace is that it's available to all but, once received, you will need more for what you're dealing with in life and more is available.

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James 4:6 Amplified Bible *But He gives us MORE AND MORE GRACE [through the power of the Holy Spirit to defy sin and live an obedient life that reflects both our faith and our gratitude for our salvation]. Therefore, it says, "God is opposed to the proud and haughty, but [continually] gives [the gift of] grace to the humble [who turn away from self-righteousness]."*

Why would more Grace be necessary? As this verse says, it's necessary to overcome sin and to live an obedient life. (Once again we see where the Scripture does not allow Grace to be an excuse for sin.) The process to access more Grace is based on our individual humility. Is it any wonder then that a haughty or arrogant spirit goes before a fall? **The fall occurred because one has forfeited additional Grace through arrogance!** This directive is repeated in 1 Peter 5:5.

Finally, the Christian is also commanded to grow in Grace.

2 Peter 3:18 KJV *But GROW IN GRACE, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

When you put this command with James 4:6 you find that growing in Grace gives us the power we need to get to that point in our Christian conduct where God is pleased. That should be our primary goal as a Christian.

Conclusion

Over this brief study, we have looked at Grace from various angles. We've examined this subject several ways and tried to expose myths existing within the Church regarding Grace. We have come to some key conclusions through all of this:

- Grace represents the essential nature of God.
- Grace is the number one ingredient in our salvation.
- Grace took Christ to the cross and brought Him out of the tomb.
- Without this awesome attribute of God, working with His great love, humanity is completely and utterly lost.

But this seems to raise Grace to a level where we may be uncomfortable so I offer this passage:

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 Amplified Bible *16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting comfort and encouragement and the good [well-founded] hope [of salvation] BY HIS GRACE, 17 comfort and encourage and strengthen your hearts [keeping them steadfast and on course] in every good work and word.*

Yes, God has loved us and given us everlasting comfort, encouragement and the good hope of salvation BY HIS GRACE.

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
T'was blind but now I see

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far
And Grace will lead us home

I hope by now this hymn now really makes sense. Thank you, Lord, for Your Amazing Grace!