

The Grace of God

13 Lessons

**Prepared by:
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*A Study
on the*

Grace of God

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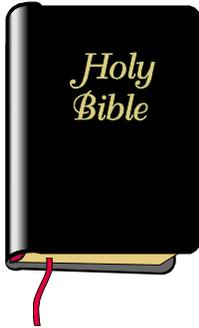
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Lesson One

“The Law of God”

“Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way.” (Psalm 119:127-128)



For a logical and scriptural approach to the study of Grace, it is first necessary to look at the concept of law. Without a concept of law, there is no point of a study on Grace. They are inseparably tied together in thought and scripture. In Romans 4:15, the inspired apostle Paul makes this clear by saying: ***“...for where there is no law there is no transgression (sin).”*** Transgression or sin is the breaking of the law of God—which shows a lack of respect for the will of God in our lives (1 John 3:4). And if there is no law, there can be no sin. And if there is no sin, there is no need for forgiveness or grace from God. Thus, a discussion of grace would be unnecessary!

Since there is a God and we are His creatures, it is understood that we have an obligation to do what is right in His sight. But one of the most apparent things of life is the fact that man does not live up to his own expectations, much less God’s expectations. Because of such, we are all identified as sinners (law-breakers, lawless, “outlaws”). ***“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** (Romans 3:23) All men break, go against, the law of God—which brings a penalty. ***“For the wages of sin is death....”*** (Romans 6:23; 1:18) And, if we do not want to suffer the just penalty for our sinfulness, we need the mercy, forgiveness, or the grace of God to deliver us (Ephesians 2:1, 5). Thus, it is important that we look closer at the concept of law before our study of grace.

A DEFINITION OF LAW

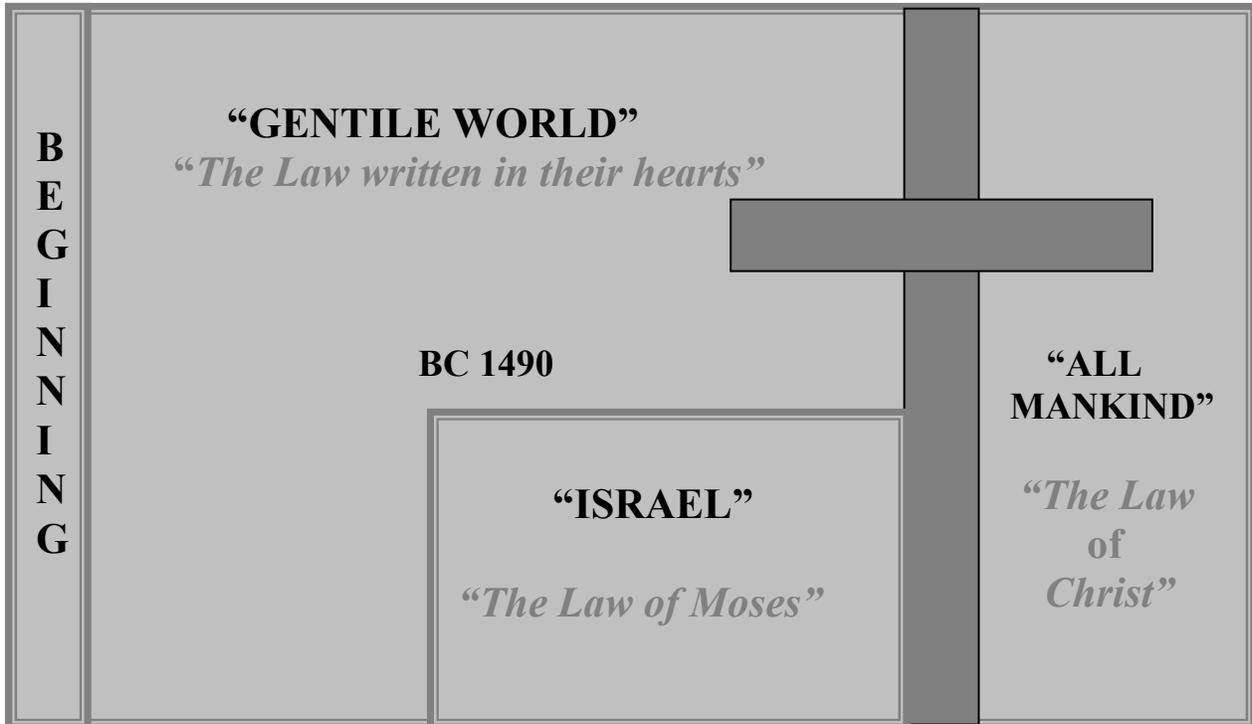
“Law” carries with it the concept of “authoritative instruction.” It is generally looked upon as a rule of action given by or established by some recognized authority. These laws or rules are generally to govern the affairs of man within a community, state, or social order. Law is generally expressed by commands, ordinances, statutes, judgments, exhortations, admonitions, and persuasion in order to determine man’s social and spiritual conduct (Deut. 4:1-2), but also to regulate relationships between God and men, and men with other men.

It is important that we see the distinction between “natural law” and “spiritual law.” These are accommodative terms to help see the difference between the “laws of nature” and the revealed “laws of God.” Scientists have long understood the uniformity of the natural laws of the universe. With this understanding, man has discovered many things for his benefit. When men go against these laws, he is destined to be hurt. For example, jump off of a high building and one will quickly learn the grave dangers of going contrary to the laws of nature. All must live in submission to these laws or suffer the consequences!

But God is not only the author of “natural laws of the universe,” but of “spiritual laws” as well. It would seem to logically follow that one should not go contrary to these spiritual laws either, or else suffer the grave consequences of such (Revelations 21:8; Romans 1:18). Men should consider themselves subject to both the natural and spiritual laws of God. Whether we like it or not, we are under law!

But another fact about law as revealed in the Word of God is that man has always been under law to God! Romans 5:12 tells us that sin entered the world when Adam disobeyed God, which indicates that Adam was subject to the law of God and broke it or transgressed it (1 John 3:4). Romans 3:23 unequivocally states **“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”** If all have sinned, then all have been under law to God.

In the days of Noah, mankind became so sinful that God destroyed all but eight souls (2 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 3:20). If they were without law, then God would have had no basis or justification for punishing them. But they were under law! The gentile world, from the beginning, was under law to God according to Paul in Romans 1:18-32 and 2:14-15). There is no evidence that they had a written law as God later gave to the Israelite nation, but they were responsible for the law of God, broke it, and paid the penalty! Ancient writings, dating about BC 2000 (Code of Hammurubi), certainly indicate that men were able to come up with laws that help to regulate their relationships to one another. Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:19-21 certainly indicate that man was capable of knowing about God and his responsibility to worship Him. The chart below will help to illustrate these ideas.



In about the year of 1490 BC, God made a special covenant with the selected descendants of Abraham. Included in this covenant were laws by which they were to be judged as individuals and as a nation. The gentiles were not obligated to come under this covenant, but they could if they desired to become an Israelite (a proselyte to the Jewish nation and its religious practices) (Romans 3:2; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalm 147:19-20). This covenant contained moral laws that the gentile world would be able to ascertain from their own understanding (Romans 2:14-15; 1:32). But this covenant also contained special laws that had to be revealed by God—such as rules, regulations, ordinances connected with their priestly and sacrificial system, etc. Some writers refer to these as “positive Divine commands,” in order to distinguish them from the general moral laws of God.

Since the death of Christ, all men are under obligation to submit to the “law of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:21; Matthew 28:18-20). In this covenant is contained the same basic moral laws that have been in force since the beginning (with possible minor changes), as well as “positive Divine commands” such as the necessity to believe and obey the gospel, the special kind of worship, leadership in the church, etc. All such had to be revealed for us to know what God expects of us. He has a right to expect us to follow these laws given by His Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:25).

In relationship to the above, the word “law” is used in various ways that relate somewhat to what has been expressed above. The word is used in the following 5 ways at least:

- 1) **Natural Law or General Law** (1 Corinthians 11:13-14; 2:14-15; Romans 2:14-15; 5:13-14)
(Sometimes referred to as the Patriarchal Laws or the General Laws of God)
- 2) **The Law of Moses** (John 7:19) (Sometimes referred to as The Torah)
- 3) **The Law of Christ** (1 Corinthians 9:21)
- 4) **Civil Law** (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 19:38)
- 5) **As a Principle that is stated or shown** (Romans 7:21,23, 8:2; 3:27; 9:31; James 1:27; 2:8; Hebrews 7:16)

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE LAW OF GOD

There are several factors that help to illustrate the unusual nature of the Law of God as revealed in the Bible.

1) It is an expression of God’s Will to man. Not only has man been created by God so that he can come to an understanding of the “general” law of God (Romans 2:14-15), but He has also revealed His Will to the Israelite nation and now to all mankind (Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14). God is the Law-Giver, it is His Will being expressed to man (James 4:12).

2) God’s Law is a reflection of His Nature also. God’s Law is Truth, Righteousness, the right way to live. God is perfect and His Law is designed to lead man to that perfection (Matthew 5:48; 2:Timothy 3:16-17). By his Laws we can know His Justice, Goodness, Righteousness, Holiness, etc. The command in 1 Peter 1:16 illustrates this clearly, **“Be holy, for I am holy.”**

3) God's Law is Perfect. *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..."* (Psalm 19:7). God's Law forbids all sin and requires all virtue. It demands right words and acts, but right thoughts as well. His Law is perfect and holy and good (Romans 7:12) and cannot be improved upon by men. Thus, God's Law is not under judgment, but sinful man is.

4) God's Law can be expressed in summary statements. Examples of such: Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:14; 6:2. Love does not replace law, but it causes the person to do what the law teaches for man to do.

5) God's Law can be expressed in general principles that apply to all situations. Example of such: 1 Corinthians 8:9-13. The principle is clearly seen that we must not do anything that would undermine the spiritual welfare of our brother. Additional examples: 1 Corinthians 9:14; 10:31.

6) God's Law has special provisions that are temporary. General or universal laws are not temporary. They are basic and remain the same throughout time. But temporary laws are only for a special period of time. These laws can be replaced by other special laws. Example of special laws for the Israelite nation: Sabbath, Feast Days, Special Observances, etc. (Colossians 2:14-17). As long as these laws are in force, they must be kept or a person is in rebellion to God. Once they have been removed or replaced, they no longer are required by God.

THE PURPOSE OF LAW

It should be quite obvious that man is under law to God, and that his conduct and deeds are measured by the law of God. If he keeps God's law, he is referred to as a righteous person. If he transgresses God's law, he is referred to as a transgressor or a sinner. But what is the point of all of this—what is the purpose of God giving laws to mankind?

1) God is revealing His nature through His law. It is a revelation from God (2 Corinthians 2:11-14), but as well, it is a revelation of God. *"I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight."* (Psalm 119:75-77) See also verses 86, 88, 90-91.

2) God is showing mankind what is Right. His word serves as a guide to right living and conduct that brings happiness to me and glory to God (1 John 2:29; Ezekiel 33:13-16; Deuteronomy 12:25) It is to do that which is lawful and right. It is righteousness as opposed to iniquity or wickedness or unrighteousness. It is not only right because God said so, but it is right because of the outcome. It is for the good of all concerned.

Why does man need to be told what is right by God? Can't he figure it out for himself? Doesn't he have sufficient understanding and intelligence to know what is right? And the answer is YES, generally (Romans 1:18-32; 2:14-15). But man has a problem. He becomes so perverted in his thinking, he can't think straight. He winds up perverting that which is right. He changes the truth into a lie. He worships perversions of the true and living God. He needs help! (1 Corinthians 1:20-21). The Word of God is a perfect guide for man (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

3. The Law of God shows man's imperfections. It shows us how far short we fall of being like God or what God intended for us to be. God's word serves as a mirror for us to see ourselves as we really are—sinners in need of the grace and mercy of God. ***“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*** (Romans 3:20). ***“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.”*** (Romans 5:20).

4. The Law of God lets us know the outcome of keeping or breaking God's Law. If there were no consequence or blessing tie in with breaking or keeping God's law, what would be the point of being obedient to it? Law, without punishment or reward, is no law! It is invalidated! God let's mankind know clearly of the reward or punishment connected with submission or rebellion to His law. ***“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*** (Matthew 25:46)

5. The Law of God is a tutor to point us to Christ and our need of Him. ***“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”***(Galatians 3:24). It makes crystal clear man's need of mercy, reconciliation, redemption, forgiveness, and salvation from the penalty of our sins.

CONCLUSION

What should be one's attitude towards the Law of God? Do you consider it a blessing or a curse to your life? The psalmists highly elevated the Law of God in the 119th Psalm—all the way through. But several passages are of significance. ***“The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.”*** (verse 72) ***“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”*** (verse 97) ***“How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”*** (verse 103) ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*** (verse 105) ***“I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.”*** (verse 162) What a blessing God's Law can be to humanity if we will just strive to observe it with the respect and reverence it deserves.

Homework

1. Define the word “Law.”

2. How is the word “Law” used in Scripture?
 - a) Acts 19:38—
 - b) Rom. 2:12—
 - c) John 1:17—
 - d) Gal. 6:2—
 - e) Rom. 2:14-15—
 - f) Rom. 3:27—

3. Has mankind always been under some kind of Law to God?
 - a) Gen. 2:17—
 - b) Rom. 5:13—
 - c) Rom. 1:18-32

4. How was the Law given through Moses to the Jewish people characterized?
 - a) Ps. 19:7—
 - b) Rom. 7:12—
 - c) Rom. 7:14—

5. What is the purpose of Law?
 - a) Ps. 19:7—
 - b) Ps. 19:8—
 - c) Ps. 19:9—
 - d) Ps. 19:11—
 - e) Rom. 3:20—
 - f) Jer. 10:23—
 - g) Gal. 3:24—

6. What is the outcome of one who keeps the Law of God?
 - a) 1 John 3:24—
 - b) 1 John 2:29—
 - c) James 1:25--

Lesson Two

“The Grace of God”

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age...” (Titus 2:11-12)

Since God has created man with the capability of knowing what is right and wrong; and, has also given a revelation of His Law to mankind—man is without excuse in his disobedience to the Law of God (Romans 1:18-32). And since mankind has continually disobeyed God’s Law, he finds himself in need of mercy and forgiveness from God or else suffer the just penalty of his sins. “Grace” is that term that helps us to know about God’s willingness and desire to save man from such a penalty. Without this understanding of Law and Law-breaking (sin), there would be no need of “Grace” from God! Paul’s inspired statement says that the Grace of God ***“has appeared to all men”***—because all men need God’s grace!

GRACE DEFINED

The concept of “Grace” is found in both the Old Testament Scriptures as well as the New. The first use of the concept is found in Genesis 6:8 where ***“Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord”*** while the rest of the world was under God’s condemnation of destruction (Genesis 6:5-7). The inspired apostle Peter speaks about eight souls that were saved in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20), while the rest of the world perished in the flood (2 Peter 3:6). God’s favor was not alone extended to Noah, but to the rest of mankind through the preaching of Noah (1 Peter 3:20; Genesis 6:3). Yet, they rejected God’s offer of escape, while Noah gladly accepted God’s offer (Hebrews 11:6-7). While it is obvious that Noah was not a perfect law-keeper, yet, he was a righteous man and one who walked with God (Genesis 6:9). Thus, God’s favor was offered to him so that he would not perish with the rest of the world that was wicked.

The primary Hebrew word in the Old Testament is **“CHEN.”** In the KJV it is translated **“favor”** about 26 times, and **“grace”** about 38 times. It includes the idea of recognition by another, but also to be recognized in a favorable way. This favor is expressed on God’s part by showing **“mercy”** toward the penitent sinner (Exodus 20:6); or **“forgiveness”** to those who did not really deserve it (Numbers 14:19-20; 2 Samuel 12:7-14; Psalm 32:1-2, 5). In general, it is to show a kindness or mercy to others who do not really deserve it, but especially to the humble (Proverbs 3:34). There is an erroneous idea that has been taught—that people under the Old Covenant were not forgiven, but the sins were “rolled forward.” To my knowledge, this is nowhere taught. God actually states that He forgave the people (Numbers 14:19-20), but it was done on the basis of the coming sacrifice of Christ. This is shown in two Scriptures in particular: Romans 3:25-26; Revelation 13:8.

The New Testament Scriptures uses primarily the Greek word **“CHARIS”** to express the attitude of God towards sinful man. The word is found some 155 times in the Greek text. In the

KJV it is translated: **Benefit (1); Favor (6); Grace (129); Thanksgiving (1); Liberality or gift (1); Pleasure (2); and Thank or Thanks (7); Acceptable (1); Gracious (1); Thankworthy (1); God be thanked (1), etc.** It may be significant that the apostle Paul used the word some 101 times in his letters, but that Jesus never used the word—as recording in our Gospels. If expressed in word, it is a form of greeting that wishes the other person well: *“Grace be unto you.”* (Romans 1:7) To be a gracious person is to treat others with kindness and respect. We can find ourselves in a favorable view of another (Romans 5:2). It also carries with it the idea of being thankful for the kindness of another (Colossians 3:16). But the overwhelming use of the word is to express: (1) the attitude of God towards sinful man (Titus 2:11-12); (2) the state of justification because of God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8-9); (3) or to show a system or principle under which one lives (Romans 6:14).

A simple definition of “Grace” is: *“The unmerited favor of God toward sinful man!”* It is for man to get what he needs (forgiveness), but not what he deserves (everlasting condemnation). “Grace” is set in contrast to: “Debt” (Romans 4:4, 16); “Works” (Romans 11:6); and “Law” (John 1:17; Romans 6:14-15; Galatians 5:4). But all three must be properly understood in their relationship to “Grace” in order to fully appreciate “Grace.” God gives many gifts to mankind, whether just or not (James 1:17; Matthew 5:45), but the greatest gift that God’s “Grace” bestows upon mankind is the salvation of his soul.

WHO CAN RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD?

In relationship to salvation, God is the only One who can extend grace unto sinful man (Romans 15:15; John 1:17). However, men can extend or receive favor to or from other men—which is also commendable (Acts 2:47). Mankind is the one who needs grace, God does not need such. Thus, there is a one-sided view of grace—God toward man, not man toward God.

The question of who can receive the grace of God has been expressed wrongly in two extreme positions.

1. “Limited Atonement.” This idea is advocating that only the “elect” can or will receive the grace of God. It teaches that God has pre-determined certain people to receive His grace even before they were born. Neither their attitudes nor actions can have any thing to do with receiving it. Thus, grace is LIMITED to only the “chosen few.” This teaching was a part of the erroneous doctrines taught by Augustine and later by John Calvin during the Reformation Movement.

2. “Universal Atonement.” Universalism or universal salvation is the other extreme that must be avoided. This doctrine advocates that God’s grace will be given to all men regardless of their moral or religious beliefs or actions. God’s love has delivered all men from everlasting punishment. Therefore, the only task left for man is to so inform all men of such promises from God.

We believe that the correct (Bible) position is to be found between these two extremes. It is to advocate that God’s grace is to be **“offered”** to all men (Titus 2:11), but that His grace will be **“given”** only to those who accept it on God’s terms (Ephesians 2:8-9).

WHAT DOES GRACE DO FOR MAN?

Since man is a law-breaker and under the curse of such (death—Galatians 3:10), his only hope for mercy and deliverance comes from God. That which he needs, God can offer!

- 1) Man is guilty before God, and needs to be pronounced as “Just!” The grace of God can make such possible (Romans 3:24).
- 2) Man is “lost”—without God and without hope in the world (Ephesians 2:12)! But through the grace of God, he can be saved from the wrath to come (Ephesians 2:5, 8), and have a hope of heaven someday.
- 3) Man is “dead” in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5), but by the grace of God, we can be made alive again.
- 4) Because of man’s sinfulness, he is unable to save himself by “works of law,” but because of God’s grace he can still be saved, justified, reconciled, redeemed, and be given life and hope (Romans 3:20).
- 5) If man is to be in heaven with God some day, he must be among the “elect” or “chosen” of God. By the grace of God, we can be among that elect! (Romans 11:5)

CONCLUSION

What man is unable to do for himself, God has made possible through His grace! What a great blessing the grace of God brings to us. What a great God who loved us enough to make provisions for His grace and mercy to be extended to sinners. May we never lose sight of the great debt that we owe to God, and may his grace be a great motivation for us to live according to His law.

Lesson Three

“Jesus, the Means of Grace”

“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Living good moral lives is not only important for the Christian, but also for the well-being of society. We should be appreciative of our neighbors and friends who try to live up to a decent standard of morality because we are benefited by such. These actions of moral living are promoted and encouraged, not only from religious influences, but also from social pressures, governmental laws and regulations, and personal commitment of their each person. Without this, our society would not be a very pleasant place in which to live.

But, even at the best that mankind can do, we are far from perfect. And if we are not able to keep man’s laws perfectly, it is certain that we cannot keep God’s perfectly either. The scriptures are very explicit concerning this fact: ***“There is none righteous, no, not one....”*** (Romans 3:10). And, while the law is necessary to give guidance for mankind, it has no means of making a person right with God. In fact, it does the very opposite—it pronounces that man is under the curse of law—**DEATH!** (Galatians 3:10-11; Romans 6:23).

WHY DID MAN NEED THE GRACE OF GOD?

Our study thus far has tried to show that not only are all men sinners before God (because they have broken His law), but that he is also “LOST,” “WITHOUT GOD,” and having “NO HOPE OF LIFE WITH GOD. He is under the sentence of death (both physically and spiritually). The following passages help to make this concept clear:

- 1. Romans 5:12-14**—When Adam sinned in the garden, it brought sin into man’s world. And all men have sinned ever since. Thus, sin has reigned over man from Adam—and the consequence of sin has passed unto all men, as well. But sin is a breaking of the Law of God! Thus, all men are under obligation to keep God’s Law! But all men break the Law of God, rather than keep it, and are under its curse—Death!
- 2. Romans 3:19-20**—The Law of God helps man to see how imperfect he is and that he has broken it. Instead of being law-keepers, man became law-breakers, and is under condemnation from God. The reason why man cannot be justified by the law is because he breaks it—he does not keep it perfectly. The law can only pronounce a man just who keeps it, not those who break it.
- 3. Isaiah 59:1-2**—What makes sin so terrible is the consequences it brings. The sentence is death. But what is this death? Isaiah describes it as being separated from God. It shuts off our access to God and all that His fellowship makes possible for us. It is a spiritual death (separation) from God (Ephesians 2:1, 5).
- 4. Romans 5:10**—Our disobedience to the Law of God causes us to become “enemies” of God who are in need of being reconciled to God.

5. **Romans 5:9**—Man evidently comes under the wrath of God when he sins also according to Paul’s statement here. Since the Holiness of God can not condone sin and uphold His Law at the same time, it was necessary for man to suffer the penalty of his sin.
6. **Romans 7:24-25**—Paul’s statement here should be the cry of all... *“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”* But Paul did not stop with the question, but gave a joyful answer... *“I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* Only God can deliver man from this penalty of sin.

DID GOD INDICATE FROM THE BEGINNING THAT GRACE WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR MAN?

The apostle Paul states that God determined before He laid the foundation of the world that He planned to redeem fallen man from the penalty of sin (Ephesians 1:4-8). This redemption would be accomplished through Christ (the anointed One of God) by the grace of God. The apostle Peter stated that God was revealing this fact through the Old Testament prophets of old (1 Peter 1:10). It is possible that the first indication of this redemption was given to Adam and Eve just after their disobedience (Genesis 3:14-15). And later, it was more fully stated to Abraham and his descendants that one would come through his lineage that would *“blessed all nations.”* (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). The prophet Isaiah states clearly that this one would be *“made an offering for sin.”* (Isaiah 53:10). But the full revelation of this great mystery of God was not made until Jesus came and gave Himself as an offering for our sins. The Gospel message reveals this concept clearly both in the Old Testament and in the New (Romans 1:16-17).



EXTENDS

1. Mercy (Titus 3:5)
2. Forgiveness (Romans 4:6; Ephesians 4:32)
3. Remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22)
4. Covering of sins (Romans 4:6)

OFFERS

1. Salvation (Titus 2:11)
2. Justification (Romans 3:24)
3. Redemption (Revelation 5:9)
4. Righteousness (Romans 4:6)
5. Reconciliation (2 Cor. 2:18)
6. Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30)
7. Life (Hebrews 9:12)

**MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST
TO
SINFUL MAN**

HOW DID JESUS PROVIDE THIS GRACE TO MAN?

The Gospel message not only tells us that this grace of God offered to man came through Jesus (Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:24), but gives insights as to just exactly how this was done.

1. **Jesus became poor, so we could be made rich.** (2 Corinthians 8:9). It was necessary that Jesus give up his place in heaven for a while in order to become flesh—emptied Himself! (Philippians 2:5-8). As the apostle John stated, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*”(John 1:14).The Son of God evidently laid aside the glory that he had with the Father from eternity in order to take on human flesh (John 17:5).
2. **Jesus lived a perfect life.** (Hebrew 5:8-9). He had to be perfect in order to be a sin substitute for mankind. Peter said that He did no sin (1 Peter 2:21-25). Jesus said that He came in order to fulfill the law, possibly in the sense of keeping it perfectly (Matthew 5:17).
3. **Jesus was then slain for our justification.** He became sin, who knew no sin, for us. (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus is said to have been slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Not in actuality, but in the mind of God a completed action. The shedding of blood is connected with forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22) a great deal in the Old Testament—evidently leading up to the one true sacrifice for sin, the shedding of the blood of Jesus (Revelation 5:9; 1 Peter 1:18; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). John the Baptist pictures Jesus as “*the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Thus, the redemption of mankind has been made possible by God through the means of Jesus’ death on the cross, so that we can escape the just penalty of our sins.

WHY IS GRACE LOOKED UPON AS A GIFT?

Paul refers to our salvation or redemption as a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23). He expresses it as being thankful for God’s indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15). What is offered to man is a gift, because it is never something he could earn or merit. If man could work and earn salvation, it would then be a debt God owed to man and not a gift. But it is obvious that it is truly an indescribable gift to us (Romans 4:4). The Gospel is the good news that God is willing to give man salvation from the penalty of his sins upon the merit of the blood (death) of Jesus on the cross (Acts 20:24). John 3:16 expresses the message of grace clearly, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.....*”

If man is ever to be right with God, it will have to be something outside of Law to be able to accomplish such. The apostle Paul states in Romans 3:20-21 that God has revealed that **WAY** through the sacrifice of Christ for sin. Jesus then is not only man’s hope of deliverance, but man’s **ONLY** way to the Father (John 14:6).

Homework

1. Why did man need the Grace of God?

- a) Rom. 5:12-14 _____
- b) Rom. 3:19-23 _____
- c) Isa. 59:1-2 _____
- d) Rom. 5:10 _____
- e) Rom. 5:9 _____
- f) Rom. 7:24 _____

2. Did God indicate from the beginning that Grace would be provided?

- a) Eph. 1:4-8 _____
- b) Gen. 22:18 _____
- c) Isa. 53:10 _____
- d) Rom. 1:16-17 _____

3. How did Jesus provide this grace to man?

- a) 2 Cor. 8:9 _____
 - 1) Phil. 2:6-8 _____
 - 2) John 1:1, 14 _____
 - 3) John 17:5 _____
- b) Heb. 5:8-9 _____
 - 1) 1 Pet. 2:21-25 _____
 - 2) Matt. 5:17 _____
- c) 1 Pet. 2:24 _____
 - 1) Rev. 13:8 _____
 - 2) Rev. 5:9 _____
 - 3) John 1:29 _____

4. Why is Grace called a gift?

- a) Eph. 2:8-9 _____
- b) Rom. 6:23 _____
- c) 2 Cor. 9:15 _____
- d) Rom. 4:4 _____

Lesson Four

“A Law-System versus A Grace-System of Justification”

“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” (Romans 6:14-15)

It has already been suggested in previous lessons that Law and Grace are inseparable. The reason is obvious: (1) Where there is no law, there is no sin; (2) Where there is no sin, there is no need of Grace. The two are logically tied together. But there is a sense in which Law and Grace must be kept separate and apart. They are opposites like Oil and Water. Law and Grace are to be seen as two separate and distinct systems of justification before God (Romans 11:6). In this lesson we will be using the terms “Law-System” and “Grace-System” to represent two distinct approaches to God. The Bible only knows of two ways a man can approach unto God. He can approach God on the basis of his own merits, or he can approach God on the merits of another. The first way is referred to as the “Way of Law and Works,” and the second way is referred to as the “Way of Grace and Faith.”

Man is faced with a choice of which of these two ways he will choose. He cannot afford to pass the question off lightly—for his eternal destiny is at stake! Man needs to face up to his responsibility and see the need to seek after God (Matthew 7:7), so that he may know how he can find Him. Man needs to clearly see these two systems and what they represent.

WHAT ARE THE STATED PURPOSES OF LAW?

The concept of Law is all-inclusive. It is referring to mankind under the Patriarchal System, the Mosaic System, or the Christian System—the concept is there under each. Man has always been under Law to God—even in the Garden of Eden. The purposes of law are stated as follows:

- 1. Deuteronomy 4:2**—To show man how he ought to live in strict adherence or conformity to the laws of God.
- 2. Galatians 3:21**—To pronounce righteous or just those who keep it (Romans 3:19).
- 3. Romans 7:7**—But in reality, its primary role is to show man what is right and at the same time to show him that he has grievously broken God’s Law and is a “sinner”—one who transgresses God’s Law (1 John 3:4).
- 4. Romans 3:20**—The best way to know my condition before God is to be knowledgeable of what is right and wrong. The Law shows us clearly what is wrong or sinful (Galatians 2:21).

The Law does its job well! It makes it quite clear that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and that there is none righteous (just) before God—no, not even one (Romans 3:10). This is easily illustrated by a person who is trying to keep the laws of the land and finds himself continually breaking these laws—even at the best he can do. If he is caught and brought before a judge, he will suffer the consequence of breaking the law.

WHAT IF MAN COULD KEEP GOD'S LAW?

If man is to be justified by “Law keeping” or by his own “Works of merit,” it is imperative that he keeps God’s law perfectly! If we break it in one place, we become a “Law breaker,” a sinner (James 2:10). In order to fully understand what is involved in this approach to justification, it would be good to look at it from the standpoint of what this would indicate about man and God.

1. **To be justified by Law, a man must be a doer of the Law.** (Romans 2:13). He is one who not only hears God’s Law, but he does it! The Law is the delight of his heart.
2. **This person would be sinless, like Jesus!** (1 Peter 2:21-14). Since he is a doer of the Law, he is not a Law breaker, a sinner—thus, he is sinless.
3. **He will have worked his way to heaven.** (Titus 3:5). He has earned or merited that heavenly home with God (Romans 11:6).
4. **Eternal Life is owed to him as a debt to be paid by God.** (Romans 4:4). It is not a gift, but a debt that God owes to such a man.
5. **He can boast (glory) in his accomplishment!** (Ephesians 2:8-9). He didn’t need God’s help in order to make it to heaven—he did it all by himself.
6. **The necessity of faith is made void.** (Romans 4:14). Faith, for him, is not a need in order to be right with God.
7. **He shows that Jesus’ death on the cross was in vain for him.** (Galatians 2:21). He did not need the blood of Christ for cleansing—he had no sins to be cleansed of. He needed no atonement.

It should be obvious that the perfect man has no need of God’s mercy. He is pronounced as just, righteous, without fault. He is not lost, nor does he need salvation. Salvation and forgiveness is for sinners, not perfect people.

WHAT IS THE INHERIT WEAKNESS OF LAW?

A person makes an observation, *“I am good enough, God ought to save me!”* The very terminology is contradictory. If man is “good enough,” he doesn’t need saving! The very idea that a man feels he needs God to save him shows his recognition of his imperfections, his sinfulness, his law-breaking actions. It indicates clearly that he recognizes his need of the grace of God on one hand, but that he is so good that he deserves heaven—CONTRADICTION!

The writer(s) of both the Roman letter and the Hebrew letter mention the *“weakness”* or the *“fault”* of the Law (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 8:7-8). In both cases, it is not saying that the Law of God was not perfect (Romans 7:12), but that the Law has no provisions for man’s weakness or sinfulness. The Law has no provisions for forgiving the Law breaker, only a pronouncement of death to the Law breaker (Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:10). The contrast is obvious: *“The Law of the Lord is perfect....”* (Psalm 19:7), but man is sinful (Romans 3:23). Isaiah describes mankind as: *“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* (Isaiah 64:6)

Man is either a PERFECT LAW KEEPER, or he is a SINNER in need of God’s Grace. Our goodness is worthless, unless it is perfect goodness. A man might appear good in

comparison to other sinful men, but when compared to the Law of God, he is a sinner—his so-called righteousness is as filthy rags, and he is not good enough to save himself by his own works of merit. Thus, under a Law-System, man finds himself in a very precarious situation. He does not need justice, but mercy, or else he will pay the supreme price of his sin—everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). *“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 7:24-25).

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF BEING UNDER A LAW-SYSTEM?

If a person would stop and think for a moment, it should be obvious that he/she could not want to be under such a system. The following things should be obvious at this point in our study:

1. **We realize what great sinners we are.** (Romans 3:19) The Law helps us to see that we are guilty before God—we become knowledgeable of our sinfulness.
2. **We realize that we are unable to be just under a Law-System.** (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; 3:11). Paul says that it is evident that no one can be justified by Law keeping.
3. **We realize that we are under condemnation by the law.** (Romans 7:10; 6:23). The death penalty has been pronounced upon all who break the Law. This should bring a sense of hopelessness into the hearts of all who honestly see their true condition before God.
4. **It forces me to recognize my need of God’s help.** (Romans 11:6) I cannot do it all by myself, I need help. I need God’s forgiveness, cleansing, and his means of justification.

If Law keeping is the basis of man’s justification before God, then no one can be right with God. And if man cannot approach God on the basis of his Law keeping, then he must find another way or else be lost forever.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF GRACE?

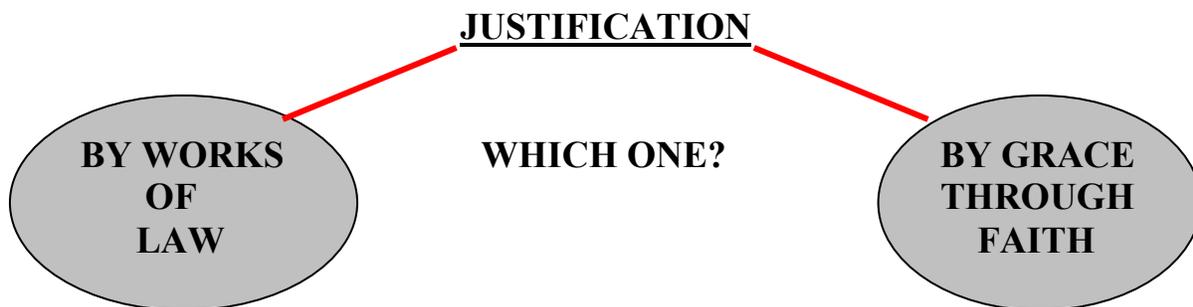
In the outset of this lesson, we tried to point out that man has only two choices in which to approach God. The first choice is obviously out of the question (Galatians 3:11), for we are all under sin as Law breakers (Romans 3:9, 12, 23; Galatians 3:22). The Law not only helps us to see that we are sinners, but that we need to turn to the other approach to God—a **Grace-System** that offers mercy and forgiveness (Titus 3:5; Romans 11:32). The following thoughts need to be understood in order to appreciate the magnitude of the grace offered to mankind.

1. **To show the great love and mercy of God to His creatures.** (John 3:16) God did not create and place us here on earth and forget about us. He is concerned! He wants all men to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).
2. **To imput righteousness to a sinful person.** (Romans 4:11) Man, in his sinful state, is not right before God. He is made righteous in the blood of Christ (Romans 5:21).
3. **To make me dead to a Law-System of justification.** (Galatians 2:19; 5:19; Romans 6:14-15) The apostle Paul gives an illustration of this point in Romans 7:1-4, comparing our relationship to that of a marriage that ends through death, so the person can be married to another.

4. **To deliver me from the curse of Law breaking.** (Galatians 3:13). If we get what we deserve, we will suffer death. If we want to escape such a fate, we must turn to the Grace of God for our deliverance.
5. **To recognize that my justification is God produced, not merited on my part.** (Titus 3:5; Romans 3:24-25). It is a recognition that my works (no matter how good they are) are insufficient to merit eternal life.
6. **To realize that any boasting (glorying) that is done is done in the Lord.** (1 Corinthians 1:31). There is to be no boasting in myself, my good works, or how much I have done. My glorying is in Christ Jesus who made it possible for me to have life!
7. **To make clear that I am under a different system of justification before God.** A Law keeping system is OUT! We can easily see that we cannot keep the Law perfectly. Our only hope is to depend upon the grace and mercy of God extended to us through Christ.
8. **To provide forgiveness, peace, fellowship with God, and eternal life to mankind.** (Romans 6:17-18; 5:1, 10; 6:23).

The apostle Paul begins the Ephesian letter with an emphasis upon God's planning for man's redemption even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:1-7). In the midst of such, he sings the praises of the Grace of God towards man and even the *"riches of His grace."* And if we understand how dependent we are upon the Grace of God, we too will sing the praises of His Grace and glory in that Grace. But the apostle also adds another thought about God's Grace in the next chapter, *"that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."* (Ephesians 2:7).

Man has only two approaches to God—a Law-System or a Grace-System! Which approach are you seeking to follow?



Homework

1. What are the purposes of Law?

- a) Deut. 4:2 _____
- b) Gal. 3:21 _____
- c) Rom. 7:7 _____
- d) Rom. 3:20 _____

2. If man could keep God's Law, what would be understood?

- a) Rom. 2:13 _____
- b) 1 Peter 2:21-24 _____
- c) Tit. 3:5 _____
- d) Rom. 11:6 _____
- e) Rom. 4:4 _____
- f) Eph. 2:8-9 _____
- g) Rom. 4:14 _____
- h) Gal. 2:21 _____

3. What is the inherent weakness of law?

- a) Rom. 8:3 _____
- b) Heb. 8:7-8 _____
- c) Rom. 7:12 _____
- d) Isaiah 64:6 _____
- e) Rom. 7:24-25 _____

4. What is the outcome of being under a law-system?

- a) Rom. 3:19 _____
- b) Rom. 3:20 _____
- c) Rom. 7:10 _____
- d) Rom. 11:6 _____

5. What are the purposes of Grace?

- a) John 3:16 _____
 - b) Rom. 4:11 _____
 - c) Gal. 2:19 _____
 - d) Gal. 3:13 _____
 - e) Tit. 3:5 _____
 - f) 1 Cor. 1:31 _____
 - g) Rom. 6:17-18; 5:1, 10; 6:23 _____
- _____

Lesson Five

***“(Meritorious) Works of Law versus
(Unmeritorious) Works of Faith”***

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”
(Romans 3:27-28)

In most discussions involving a study on Grace, two expressions are used often: “Works of Law,” and “Works of Faith.” While both expressions are talking about “Works,” yet there is a world of difference in these two concepts. The difference is not necessarily in the actions involved, but in the outlook that is involved. The seeming conflict between the apostle Paul and James can illustrate this readily. Paul spoke of Abraham as not being justified by works (Romans 4:1-5), while James states that Abraham was justified by his works (James 2:21). While these two statements appear contradictory, they are in reality dealing with two different systems of justification. Paul is pointing out that Abraham’s justification could not be by a “Works” approach, while James is showing that man can be justified by God’s grace through a “Working Faith” approach. (James 2:22-24) One approach is on a meritorious basis, while the other is an unmeritorious approach. I believe that taking a closer look at these two expressions can be of great help in a proper understanding of the Grace of God.

(MERITORIOUS) WORKS OF LAW

Did you notice that the title of this lesson had two contrasting terms: Meritorious and unmeritorious! There is a good reason for using such because they reflect the truth about man’s being accepted before God. Man’s acceptance is either merited or unmerited. Justification is either something man earns and is owed or it is a gift that is received. The apostle plainly states that ***“by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight....”***(Romans 3:20) And the reason given for saying this is: ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** (Romans 3:23). Simply put—since man is a sinner, he has lost his chance of be just before God. The perfect man (one who keeps perfectly all the works of the law) does not need God’s mercy or forgiveness—for he has merited his justified position by his perfect law-keeping. His justification is man-produced and earned. Heaven is a debt owed to him, not a gift. Such a man does not need God’s help; he did it on his own. Such a person could then boast in his own attainment (Romans 4:2; Ephesians 2:8-9). There is a constant assertion on man’s part: ***“I am good enough—God owes Heaven to me”*** or ***“How could God send such a good person to Hell?”***

Have you noticed that man has a problem with admitting his mistakes? To do so, takes away from his perfection. My image of myself drops if I am wrong about something. Notice the example that Jesus gave to help us understand this problem. Jesus told about a Pharisee that went into the temple to pray. The temple was a place of holiness, perfection, God’s dwelling place among men. But there were sacrifices all around that showed the sinfulness of men. And this Pharisee had the audacity to say, ***“I thank God I am not like other men.”*** And he even began to

extol his works, showing he was so good. He even looked down his nose at sinners like the Publican that also went into the temple to pray. Which person went to his house justified—the Pharisee or the Publican who recognized his sinfulness and asked for mercy? The answer should be obvious—not the self-righteous, legalistic Pharisee, who thought he was so good that God owed him justification.

Man doesn't want to admit that he sins. He wants to think of himself as good. But our goodness is *worthless* unless it is perfect goodness! Jesus, in Matthew 7:21-23, indicated that “good, sincere, righteous people” are going to be lost! Why? Because they are depending upon their own goodness to get them to heaven, rather than the Grace of God. They had done so many great things, God owed it to them.

Cain and Abel also illustrate this problem as well. 1 John 3:12, ***“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”*** What made the difference—they both brought a sacrifice unto God! Abel brought the kind God commanded—a blood atonement! (Recognizing his need of forgiveness. The Hebrew writer states, ***“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”*** (Hebrews 11:4). Abel's works were “Works of Faith,” while Cain's were “Works of Law.” Cain felt that God should accept any kind of a sacrifice that he wanted to offer Him. Thus, showing his lack of faith, but as well his arrogance.

People have asked, *“Were the people under the first Covenant justified by works of law or works of faith?”* The answer is clearly given in Galatians 3:11, ***“But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’”*** The last phrase is a quote from the Old Testament indicating that man's rightness with God is not by law, but by faith. (Habakkuk 2:4) Paul in Romans 3:25 states that God was righteous in forgiving the sins of those under the first Covenant. So, God did forgive—extended grace to them, but not because they were perfect law-keepers, but because of their obedient faith.

The expression, “Works of Law,” and its equivalents, is used in the New Testament to indicate a system of justification by “perfect works.” (Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5; Romans 3:20; 4:2, 4; Ephesians 2:8-9). These are all describing man's attempt at his own justification without the Grace and mercy of God. His works make God obligated to accept him, and he is eager to boast at what he has accomplished on his own.

(UNMERITORIOUS) WORKS OF FAITH

Since man is incapable of being “good enough” to save himself, then the only other alternative to which man can turn is justification through “Works of Faith.” This concept is emphasized in different ways or expressions.

- a) **James 2:21-23**—Abraham was saved by his faith that was obedient to God. It was by his works that his faith was perfected or made acceptable to God. Faith only is worthless! Dead!

- b) **Hebrews 5:8-9**—Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for our sins through His perfect obedience. But man does not justify himself by perfect obedience. His justification depends upon an obedient faith in God. Eternal Salvation is offered to all who obey Him.
- c) **1 Peter 1:22**—It is this obedient faith that brings purification into our lives.
- d) **James 1:22**—It is not the one who hears only that is acceptable to God, but the one who has an obedient faith in God.

The acts may be the same, but the attitude towards them is different. Works or obedience of Faith are different from “Works of Merit.” (Romans 4:5) Works of Faith are not meritorious in nature (Ephesians 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12). There is nothing man can do to obligate God to accept him as a self-justified person (Romans 5:8). It is the merit of Christ’s sacrifice that eliminates boasting on man’s part (1 Corinthians 1:27-31).

Thus, those who are justified by “Works of Faith” give recognition to three basic things:

- 1) **A recognition to our sinfulness!** We are far from perfect because we are law-breakers. (Romans 3:23, 9; Galatians 3:22). It is to freely give recognition of our need of God’s mercy in our lives (Romans 11:32; Titus 3:5). That our only hope is not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus! (Romans 3:24).
- 2) **A recognition that our justification is God produced—unmerited on our part!** The only debt that we are owed is “Death!” (Romans 6:23) But God has chosen to offer us life, if we will accept it.
- 3) **A recognition that our boasting is in God, not ourselves!** The Scriptures indicate that we have no basis for boasting. (Romans 3:27; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:29, 31).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

There has been a tendency to go to extremes by religious people. Some stress grace and put obedience down. Others stress obedience and put grace down. One fact should be plainly clear—without the grace of God, all of our efforts would be in vain, useless! We cannot justify ourselves. Thus, whatever we do, all must be done in the context of grace. When we push grace into the background, we are then tempted to start thinking that our actions are gaining us merit. When grace is remote, legalism is at hand (we don’t need the grace of God!). When grace stands in the foreground, it keeps our good works in a proper perspective.

Our “Works of Faith” are the means by which we lay hold onto the free gift that we have accepted from God. Therefore, our works are not for merit; instead, they are for expressing our faith in the promises of God. In Galatians 5:4, the apostle speaks of those who have **“fallen from grace.”** He also gives the reasons—because they had turned from salvation by Grace through Faith to justification by their own law-keeping. When one thinks that he is meriting his right relationship with God, he has departed from grace as a means of approach to God. It is important that we clearly indicate that it is necessary to have “Works of Faith” in order to be saved, but that salvation is the results of the grace of God.

Homework

1. What two expressions are used in discussing the subject of Grace?
 - a) Romans 4:1-5—
 - b) James 2:21—

2. What two Bible examples illustrate this concept?
 - a) 1 John 3:12; Hebrews 11:4—

 - b) Luke 18:9-14—

3. Why were the people in Matthew 7:21-23 condemned?

4. Were the people under the first Covenant justified by works of law or works of faith?
 - a) Galatians 3:11 (Habakkuk 2:4)—

 - b) Romans 3:25—

5. How is the expression, “Works of Law,” and its equivalent used in the New Testament?
 - a) Galatians 2:16—
 - b) Titus 3:5—
 - c) Romans 3:20—
 - d) Romans 4:2, 4—
 - e) Ephesians 2:8-9—

6. How are “Works of Faith” described in the New Testament?
 - a) James 2:21-23—
 - b) Hebrew 5:8-9—
 - c) 1 Peter 1:22—
 - d) James 1:22—

7. What three things does “Works of Faith” give recognition to?
 - a) Romans 3:23—
 - b) Romans 6:23—
 - c) Ephesians 2:8-9—

8. Explain the expression, “Fallen from Grace,” in Galatians 5:4.

Lesson Six

“Does Grace Do Away With Law?”

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:13-14)

Grace is something very desirable and necessary for man’s relationship with God. To be right with God, man needs a cleansing from his sins. While man does not deserve that forgiveness, God freely offers it to all men upon the basis of faith. Therefore, if man is justified by God’s Grace through our faith and not by works of Law, then is man under Law any more? Some contend that Grace does away with Law altogether. A Greek term was used to identify this concept in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries: “Anti-Nominianism.” The idea is—No Law! It advocates that Christians are no longer obligated to keep the Law of God. Since we are no longer under a “Law-System” for justification, but a “Grace-System,” Law has no place in the Christian’s life.

SCRIPTURES USED TO UPHOLD THIS IDEA

Those who advocate this idea use the following Scriptures to indicate their authority for such teachings.

1. Galatians 4:5—***“To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”***
2. Galatians 3:10-11, 13—***“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’.....Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’)”***
3. Galatians 2:19, 21—***“For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.....I do not set aside the grace of God: for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”***
4. Galatians 5:18—***“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”***
5. Romans 6:14—***“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”***
6. Romans 10:4—***“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”***

It is suggested on the basis of the above Scriptures that the Christian is no longer bound by rules and regulations of Law. We are free from Law. Law, as far as the Christian is concerned has been discarded, done away with! The outcome of this concept has led to all kinds of religious errors. Some go so far as to advocate that once a person is saved, he can never be lost. It does not matter what he does or does not do—such has no bearing on his eternal security with God. This

may be a very desirable doctrine to believe, but it is the opposite of what the Scriptures actually teach. It does make a world of difference what the Christian does or does not do. We are called upon to turn from sin (breaking the law of God) in our lives. ***“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”*** (Romans 6:1-2) The apostle continues to encourage God’s people: ***“For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”*** (Romans 6:19). Just as we once had no desire to keep the Law of God in our lives and lived “Lawless Lives (unrighteousness),” we are now exhorted to strive to keep the Law of God as perfectly as we can (righteousness). We become willing slaves to keep God’s Law (God’s righteousness).

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE EXPRESSION—“NOT UNDER LAW?”

Passages that seem to be saying we are not under Law has to be understood in the context of a contrast between two systems of justification—a “Law-System” versus a “Grace-System.” All men are under one or the other. Romans 11:6 shows clearly this choice: ***“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.”*** The choice must be made by every person between these two systems. There is no other! If we choose a “Law-System,” then we are under obligation to keep the Law of God perfectly (James 2:10). If we break the Law in only one place, we are placed under its curse of death (Galatians 3:10). Without Grace, we are hopelessly lost!

The other choice that we have is to come under a “Grace-System” for justification before God. If we choose this system, then we are no longer under the other system—not under Law (system, understood). Under Grace, we no longer have to depend upon being right with God by perfect Law-keeping! But, that does not automatically say we are not under law in any sense of the word. For all men have been and will be under obligation to keep God’s Law. Not being able to keep the Law of God perfectly is what causes us to be sinners and in need of the Grace of God. This is the reason why Justification has to be a gift from God, because we cannot earn it by perfect Law-keeping. In becoming a Christian, we must make a decision to stop breaking God’s Law (die to sin) (Romans 6:1-2). In living the Christian life, we are encouraged to stop sinning (breaking God’s Law), but if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). Thus, all men (Christian and non-Christian) are under obligation to obey God’s Law—it is still just as valid as ever. But the Christian has made the choice to come under a “Grace-System” in order to be acceptable to God and no longer relies on “perfect Law-Keeping” for his means of justification. Paul says of the Christian: ***“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin (disobedience to God’s Law), you became slaves of righteousness (obedience to God’s Law).”*** (Romans 6:17-18).

THE WEAKNESS OF A LAW SYSTEM

Any “Law-System” cannot bring justification before God! Whether it is the “Law of God” that the Gentile world was under, or the “Mosaic Law” that the Jewish world was under, or even the “Law of Christ” that all men are under today—no Law system can save or justify. All

men who have been made right with God—from the beginning of time to the end of time—are made right by Grace through faith! There are no exceptions! All Law systems put us under a curse of death, for no one has ever kept Law perfectly—except for Christ (Heb. 5:8-9; 4:15). He had to in order for us to be able to receive forgiveness from God. Thus, the “weakness” of a “Law-System” is man’s inability to keep it perfectly—and is thus justly condemned.

When one is referring to a “Law-System,” he is talking about a “Merit-System,” an “Earning-System,” or an “Achievement-System.” From a common-sense or logical viewpoint, such is pure foolishness on man’s part to even seriously consider such an approach to God. The inspired apostle Peter said about the “Law of Moses,” which was a perfect Law (Ps. 19:7), that it was **“a yoke upon the neck....which neither our fathers or we have been able to bear”** (Acts 15:10). It was God’s Law, the BEST that He could give, and it proved to man that he could not save himself by a “righteousness” of his own, based on Law-keeping (Philippians 3:9), even if that Law was given by God.

IN WHAT SENSE IS THE CHRISTIAN UNDER LAW?

If we are not under Law in a “Legal Sense,” then, in what sense are we under Law at all? It is first of all important to understand that a “Grace-System” is not another “Law-System” by which to be justified! A “Grace-System” freely recognizes the fact that we have broken the Law of God and as a result are under condemnation because of our sins (Romans 6:23). It is to give recognition to the fact that our justification does not depend upon keeping the Law of God perfectly, but that it is through faith in a redeemer (Christ Jesus) who died in my place so that I could be set free from the “Law of Sin and Death!” (Romans 8:1-2) The “Law of Sin and Death” is simply stated—you break the Law(sin) and you die! We have been set free from this “Law” and been given “Life” by the “Law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus.” Thus, because we are walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, we will not experience death, but we will have life and peace. (Romans 8:5-6, 13-14).

But what does it mean to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh? Just as there are two ways to be just before God, there are also two ways to walk in this life. To walk after the flesh is to walk in disobedience to the Law of God (Galatians 5:19-21). To walk after the Spirit is to walk in obedience to the Law of God (Galatians 5:22-25). Jesus’ warning in Matthew 7:21 makes this very clear, **“No everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”** Doing the will of the Father is obviously keeping his Law. Again, Jesus challenges His followers with these words, **“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”** (Matthew 5:48) To be perfect is to keep God’s Law perfectly. But we are well aware of our inability to do this. But, as well, we understand that He wants us to keep His Law as best we can! The apostle John advocated the same thing in 1 John 2:1, **“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin (be disobedient to the Law of God).”** Striving to keep the Law of God perfectly is not an effort to earn or merit our salvation, but a way of expressing our faith in Jesus, as our redeemer. If our salvation depended upon keeping the Law of God perfectly, then, we are back under a “Law-System” for justification!

The Law of God is a perfect guide for our lives (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is not only the best way to live, but the only right way to live. God wants us to live by His Law for our own good. The person who strives to live by it will be blessed (James 1:25). But living by the Law of God without a Savior has no saving merit. But living by God's Law out of an obedient faith in Jesus' death brings the gift of forgiveness and right standing with God. Under a "Grace-System," mercy is extended to the obedient believer.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It should be quite obvious from our study that God's Grace does not relieve one of wanting to abide by the Law of God (doctrine of Christ, Jesus' words) (2 John 9). It is the Law that lets us know we need God's Grace. The "perfect law of liberty" sets us free from a "Law-System" of justification—not to live in disobedience, but to live in obedience unto God. Many passages emphasize this concept, as follows:

Homework

1. What is meant by the expression, "*The Christian is not under Law, but under Grace?*"
 - a) Rom. 6:14—
 - b) Gal. 5:18—
 - c) Rom. 10:4-5—
 - d) Gal. 4:5—
 - e) Gal. 3:10-11, 13—
 - f) Gal. 2:19, 21—
2. How do the following Scriptures harmonize with the above Scriptures in dealing with man's justification?
 - a) Rom. 6:1-2—
 - b) Rom. 6:19—
 - c) 1 John 2:1—
 - d) Rom. 6:17-18—
 - e) Rom. 11:6—
3. What is the weakness of a "Law-System" for justification?
 - a) James 2:10—
 - b) Heb. 4:15; 5:8-9—
 - c) Gal. 3:10-13—
4. What does Peter say about the Law in Acts 15:10?
5. In what sense is the Christian under Law?
 - a) Gal. 5:19-21—
 - b) Gal. 5:22-25—
 - c) Matt. 7:21—
 - d) Matt. 5:48—
 - e) 1 John 2:1—
 - f) 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 - g) James 1:25--

Lesson Seven

“Grace and Guilt”

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:19)

We have already seen that where there is no Law, there is no sin! (Romans 4:15) And if there is no sin, then there is no need for the Grace of God. But also, where there is sin, there is (or should be) guilt (Romans 3:19). And where there is guilt, there is the need for Grace. Grace and Guilt are inseparably tied together as well. Guilt, Conscience, Sin, Forgiveness are all tied in with the concept of Grace. The following terms are also tied to Guilt: **Good and Bad, Mature and Immature, Productive and Unproductive, Socially Adjusted and Maladjusted.** These terms are often used in connection with determining the guilt or innocence of a person. Real or normal guilt is identified as “Sin” in Scripture (James 2:10; Romans 3:19; 1 Corinthians 11:27). Guilt also infers human responsibility (Leviticus 5:3). True feelings of guilt are a sign that something is wrong and needs to be attended to. The conscience is the thought process that lets us know if we have done “good” or “bad.” If bad, we then should feel guilty, and if good, we should feel good about ourselves. Guilt originates out of one’s value system. In Scripture concept, Guilt should arise when we commit acts that we should not (1 John 3:4) or when we leave undone what we should have done (James 4:17). From a mental health standpoint, it is to fulfill all human needs so that there are no guilt feelings.

WHAT IS GUILT?

We talk about guilt, about feeling guilty, and how we and/or others should feel guilty about certain things. Guilt is a phenomenon that everyone experiences. Guilt is a human problem—it is that which is peculiar to mankind. It can be something very undesirable at times, but also a very hopeful fact for man. Guilt helps one to evaluate his relationship both to God and man. *“Guilt is the special form of anxiety experienced by humans-in-society. It serves as the warning tension of the violation of life principles that are held to. It lets us know that we have transgressed or ignored those principles or values of human behavior that causes alienation from God and/or man.”* A sense of guilt can affect man’s behavior for the better or worse—depending on how he deals with his guilt. Guilt causes us to experience anxiety, pain, displeasure, depression, or remorse—all serving as warning signals to bring about a positive action in dealing with Guilt.

Guilt is believed to have come from going against our values. But where do we attain these values? It is obvious that our parental upbringing will have a lot to do with such. This is the reason for the admonition to parents to, ***“bring them (children) up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*** (Ephesians 6:4). It would seem to be obvious that we can gain our values from the society in which we live and with which we associate. The warning in 1 Corinthians 15:33 would tend to show this: ***“Evil company corrupts good habits.”*** The laws of the land will play a part in helping to form our values (Romans 13:1-7). But it is quite possible as well that God has made us in such a way that within our own heart (consciousness) we can have

an idea of what is good and right (Romans 2:14). Obviously, the teachings of the Bible can help to form our values for our lives (or should). (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Guilt arises when we go against these values that we respect or hold to.

THE KINDS OF GUILT

Several terms are used by those who have made a study of Guilt to help identify the various aspects of Guilt, such as: Real Guilt, Imaginary Guilt, Healthy or Unhealthy Guilt, Neurotic Guilt, Psychopathic Guilt, etc. There are three concepts that helps to grasp some of the differences in Guilt within people. We want to look at each one briefly.

1. **Too little Guilt.** One who lacks appropriate or normal Guilt feelings over acts engaged in. This person will have very little evidence of anxiety or Guilt. This can lead to a Sociopathic personality that can be very destructive in society. They can literally leave a trail of misery behind them. His behavior is largely a-moral and anti-social, and is characterized by impulsive, irresponsible actions and unconcerned with consequences. Such people may wind up in some sexual deviation, alcohol and drug abuse. Such a person can be aggressive, irresponsible, shallow in affections, very impulsive, inability to accept blame, trouble distinguishing between truth and a lie, failure to learn by experience, and follows a pattern of self-defeat.
2. **Normal Guilt.** His guilt is real, not supposed. He is able to see it, experience it, and is willing to deal with it as he should. When dealt with correctly, he is considered a healthy mental person. His self-esteem is rebuilt.
3. **Too much Guilt.** Guilt feelings that are over-exaggerated will usually lead to unhealthy social living. His Guilt feelings are deeply rooted in his unconscious mind and struggles to rid himself of such great guilt by unusual means. Often, his atoning for his “wrong actions” tends to be endless—no relief! His feelings dominate his judgment. He struggles with pride, fear, defensiveness, and pre-occupation with moral superiority—but not self-respect. He has a constant struggle with temptation and pre-occupation with evil.

It is important to recognize that having guilt feelings is not only healthy, but a necessity. Without a sense of guilt, there would be no need for action on our part, nor the need to seek for forgiveness or healing. It is guilt feelings that cause us to act—to do something about our wrong actions. One of the prime purposes of preaching the Gospel is to first of all help people to see their sinfulness, recognize their guilt, and the need to act because God has provided a way for forgiveness for sinful man. In the first Gospel sermon on Pentecost, Peter help to show those people that they had sinned grievously before God and needed to do something about it. ***“You have taken (Jesus) by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death....”***(Acts 2:23) Such preaching was designed to cause them to be ***“Cut to the heart”*** and to cry out, ***“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*** (Acts 2:37). When men can feel no guilt for their wrong actions, the Scriptures say that their conscience has been seared (1 Timothy 4:2). A sense of guilt is one of the factors that makes man different from the lower animals. It would seem that God has designed man to have a conscience, to experience guilt when he goes against his conscience, and to have the kind of feelings from guilt that prompts him to do something about his wrong actions.

EFFECTIVE HEALING FROM GUILT

Men have tried various ways to rid their mind and heart of the sense or feeling of guilt over their past actions. Some of these ways are recognized by both people and the Scriptures as being the correct approach. While some do not honestly deal with the problem. What must be recognized is that there may be some difference in dealing with guilt before God and guilt before our fellow-man.

In dealing with our fellow-man, the following things seem to find acceptance widely: **Reparation** (to make amends), **Confession** (openly admit the wrong), and often some form of **Punishment** for the wrong actions. Generally speaking—self-humiliation, self-abasement, self-denial, renunciation, drastic self-sacrifice, and self-punishment are all methods of men trying to dissipate guilt from their lives. While others try to escape having to deal with their lives by two approaches that are not healthy: **Rationalization** (explain away failures or wrongs in one's life), **Projection** (blaming others, assigning motives to others).

The Bible plainly teaches the need of confessing our sins to one another and praying for one another so that we may be healed (James 5:16). The confessing of one's sin shows a recognition of guilt and an admission of guilt—and at the same time the need for forgiveness. An excellent example of this process is given in the two Corinthian letters. In 1 Corinthians 5, a Christian was guilty of a sexual sin. He was unrepentant at first. The church was told to withdraw their fellowship from him to help bring him to repentance. In Paul's 2nd Corinthian letter, this man had evidently repented and wanted to return to the fellowship of the church. The church is told to forgive him, comfort him, and reaffirm their love for him (2 Corinthians 2:5-10). In so doing, the terrible burden of guilt was lifted, and the man found peace in his soul. This is man expressing or showing grace or favor to the one who has done wrong. Even though he did not deserve such, it was extended anyway.

THE ROLE OF GRACE

When guilt is involved on man's part in his actions toward God, Grace takes on a very important aspect of healing the guilt. The role of God's Grace to man is two-fold.

1. **There needs to be the removal of the penalty of sin.** When man does wrong, feels guilty, he has sinned against God. God's Law demands the penalty of death. God's Grace, through Jesus' death on the cross, can remove that penalty and give us assurance of going to heaven, not hell. (Romans 5:8-9)
2. **There needs to be a restoration of the lost relationship.** Sin alienates man from God. God cannot fellowship with sinful, disobedient man. When God's Grace removes the penalty of sin, it also makes possible the restoration of the fellowship with God. It is to know that we are loved, wanted, and accepted by God—even though we sinned against him. We know we do not deserve what He has done, but we are eternally grateful for such. (1 John 3:1-3)

Involved in the feeling of Guilt is the sense of loss! Our actions have or may cause us to lose something that we don't want to lose. Forgiveness helps to restore that which was lost. This

may be illustrated by a husband that was unfaithful to his wife. He is deeply sorry for his sin, confesses and asks for forgiveness from his wife. She offers him forgiveness, but would not sleep with him for weeks. The peace was not there, even though she said she had forgiven him. In some instances, the healing takes time for some people. But God's unmerited favor (Grace) not only offers forgiveness, but restores the broken relationship.

It is important to point out here why FAITH is so important in this process. God does not speak to us directly, but has spoken through His Word! How do we know that God has forgiven us—BY FAITH! How do we know that our broken relationship with God has been restored—BY FAITH! When the prodigal son returned home, he openly admitted he did not deserve to be restored to the father's fellowship (as his son), but to be treated as a servant. The Father made it clear that forgiveness and the relationship was completely restored. This is what we must believe in our relationship with God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To be a human being means that we will have guilt in our lives. Guilt has its purpose for good in our lives and will bring about good if we will act upon it correctly. When guilt is properly dealt with, there should be healing—resulting in a healthy person and a healthy outlook. When guilt is unheeded and not dealt with correctly, all kinds of problems can be brought into one's life. So many of mankind's problems come out of not dealing properly with guilt. God has given us the proper solution to guilt in our lives—let's follow His directions!

Homework

1. Why is Guilt and Grace tied together?
 - a) Rom. 4:15—
 - b) Rom. 3:19—
 - c) Lev. 5:3—
2. What is Guilt?
 - a) 1 Jn. 3:4—
 - b) Eph. 6:4—
 - c) 1 Cor. 15:33—
 - d) Rom. 13:1-7—
 - e) Rom. 2:14—
 - f) 2 Tim. 3:16-17—
3. What are some levels or different kinds of Guilt?
 - a) 1 Tim. 4:2—
 - b) Acts 2:23,37—
 - c) Matt. 27:1-5—
4. What is God's way of dealing with Guilt?
 - a) James 5:16—
 - b) 1 Cor. 5:1-5—
 - c) 2 Cor. 2:5-10—
5. What is the two-fold role of Grace in regards to Guilt?
 - a) Rom. 5:8-9—
 - b) 1 John 3:1-3—

Lesson Eight

“How Does One Receive the Grace of God?”

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:21-23)

One of the major problems in the Religious World is a common problem with mankind through the ages—a one-side approach to Truth! The inspired James stated the problem very bluntly and plainly: ***“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.”*** (James 1:26) Jesus faced the religious leaders of his day with the same evaluation: ***“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”*** (Matthew 23:23) It is so easy to pick and choose what I want to accept and neglect or reject what I don’t want. With this approach, God’s Truth can be perverted to teach the very opposite of what was intended. Because this area of understanding is so critical to man’s eternal salvation, Satan has done his work well in turning men’s minds from all of what God says about justification and centering on a one-sided view that perverts God’s Truth! The purpose of this lesson is to look at both sides of this issue and draw a conclusion that harmonizes all the Scriptures.

GRACE: CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL

All people are under obligation to obey the Law of God! Laws are given to be followed, not ignored or rejected! What makes us sinners is our disobedience or rejection of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). And.....because we are sinners, we need the Grace of God to save us from the just penalty of our sins—since we cannot save ourselves! (Romans 3:19, 23) The giving of the great commission shows God’s concern for His creatures: ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*** (Mark 16:15) What is the gospel? It is the “good news” that salvation has been made possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Why preach this message into all the world? Because all the world (all people) need salvation that God offers. The apostle Paul wrote to Titus: ***“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”*** (2:11)

A key question needs to be dealt with here in our study. Is Grace conditional or unconditional? Is Justification all on God’s part, or does man play a role in his becoming just before God? Hopefully, we have clearly established the fact that man is unable to save himself. All that man can do is not enough to bring Justification. The reason is obvious—if he just sins one time, he is under the curse of the Law (death). All else is worthless as far as his justification. Without the Grace of God man would be eternally lost!

So, the real issue here is not whether a man can save himself by his own good works. That is out of the questions. Then, what is the real issue? It is—does God require anything on man’s part before His Grace will save him? One of two things would seem to be obvious:

1. **All mankind will be saved by God’s Grace. No human being that has ever lived will be lost regardless of what he does or how he lives. This is known as unconditional Justification.**
2. **Or, only certain people will be saved by God’s Grace because God has required certain things of man before His Grace will justify or save them. And whoever is willing to do those things will receive the Grace of God. Those who are unwilling to do those things will continue in their lost condition. This is known as conditional Justification.**

Is Justification a two-sided thing or just one-sided? Has God required anything at all of man before His Grace will bring him into a justified condition? Let’s turn to the Scriptures to see how clear the answer is to the above thoughts.

MAN’S JUSTIFICATION BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST

A Truth that must be obvious by now in our study is—**All men that ever have or ever will be saved (from Adam to the end of time), will be saved by the Grace of God!** Thus, even before Jesus came into the world to be God’s Sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world (John 1:29), God’s Grace was at work justifying men. It was done in view of the coming of Christ in TIME, but in the mind of God it was already an accomplished fact (Revelation 13:8). Thus, God’s justifying of men in His sight before Christ came was done on the same basis that God’s justifying of men is done after the coming of Christ in TIME.

Do the Scriptures indicate that God required anything of men (before the coming of Christ) before His Grace would save them? Or, upon what basis did God extend Grace (forgiveness) to men from the time of Adam to the time of the coming of Christ? The Scriptures clearly indicate that God’s Grace was given to those who **BELIEVED!**

1. **Hebrews 11:6—“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**
2. **Habakkuk 2:4—“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.”**
3. **Romans 4:3, 5—“For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.....But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.’”**
4. **Romans 4:6-8—“Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not imput sin.”**

If man wanted to be right with God and enjoy the blessings of His Grace, he had to be a believer in God. But it did not stop with just a mere mental assent to the existence of God. It went further and stated that God rewards the man whose faith is shown by diligently seeking after God. There is no question in the matter—that man’s part to be played in justification is on the basis of his

faith, not his works. If it were by his works, he would not need God's Grace! If his justification is on the basis of his faith, then it is a gift, not something he earns or merits!

It is important for us to now look at the "elements" of faith. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith involves a strong assurance of things desired or hoped for, even though they have not been seen. This causes a person to be motivated into action in order to receive that which has been promised. This is illustrated throughout the chapter! When man's faith was put into action, the promised blessings would come. By faith, Noah built an ark to the saving of his house! (11:7) By faith, Abraham obeyed God. (11:8) Abel, Enoch, Sarah,, Jacob, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, etc., all believed in God and showed it by their actions that caused God's blessings to come into their lives. Notice the emphasis that God placed on obedience.

1. **1 Samuel 15:22-23**—*"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."*
2. **Leviticus 4:20**—*"And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them."*
3. **Isaiah 1:16-20**—*"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

God expected that man's faith had to be expressed in **proper actions!** Living just any old way was not acceptable. If they expected their sacrifices and worship to be acceptable to God, they had to clean up their lives. James uses Isaiah's words to emphasize the same concept—if you want God to draw nigh to you, clean up your lives (James 4:6-10). God made it clear that men needed to bring a sacrifice for his sins if he wanted to be forgiven. But his life also had to conform to the Will of God as well! ***"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*** (2 Chronicles 7:14) If you want the Grace of God, humble yourself, pray, seek God's face, and turn from your wicked ways! Their forgiveness (Grace) was on the basis of their faith (put into action).

MAN'S JUSTIFICATION AFTER THE COMING OF CHRIST

Since Christ came and offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, the need for animal sacrifices on man's part have been done away with (Hebrews 10:4-10). The blood of animals was not able to take away sin, but God required such on man's part in order to receive the Grace of God. Our sin offering today has been offered once and for all! (Hebrews 10:10) Jesus, the Lamb of God, is our sin offering to which we look (John 1:29). With the coming of Christ and His death, there has been a change in the things that God requires of us in order to receive His Grace. He has given a new and better Covenant that all men are encouraged to come under and

abide by (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15-17). Thus, whatever this New Covenant requires of man in order to receive the Grace of God, we must do!

It should be no surprise that the means of God's Grace to mankind today is through Christ—that the basis upon which God gives Grace is through the avenue of faith. But this time, faith is extended, not only to faith in God, but to faith in Christ as well. Many passages illustrate this concept so clearly, such as: John 3:16; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; Romans 3:20-28; 5:1-2. A well-known and a greatly used passage is Ephesians 2:8-9 ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*** God's Grace can only come through faith to man, not by works. If man could work out his salvation, he would not need God's Grace, and could boast in himself—*“see what I have done!”* Faith makes boasting invalid—except for our boasting in what Christ Jesus has done for us! ***“He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”*** (1 Corinthians 1:31).

In the bestowing of a gift there is always at least two parties involved: the giver and the receiver(s). God is the gracious giver of salvation to man, and man is the happy recipient of God's Grace. Man must be willing and desirous of receiving the gift of life. It is never forced upon him. ***“He that will, let him take of the water of life freely.”*** (Revelations 22:17) Therefore, God lovingly provides; the sinner must willingly appropriate.

The question is often raised, *“Is Salvation free if man has to do something in order to obtain it?”* This would be like asking: *“Is Air free if man has to do something in order to obtain it?”* Yes, they are both free in the sense that they are a gift from God. Man has no ability to secure either one on his own. They are something God must provide, which He has so abundantly done. But, man still has the obligation of receiving or appropriating them on his part.

Since faith is the basis upon which man can receive the Grace of God, we need to ask another question—*“What kind of faith does man need to have to be justified before God?”* James discusses this question in chapter 2 verses 14-26. He compares two kinds of “faith.” There is a faith that is dead or worthless—***“faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*** (verse 17) The demons have this kind of faith and they tremble! (verse 19) He then turns to Abraham and shows that Abraham's faith brought justification before God because it was accompanied by his works (obedience). In fact his works perfected his faith in the sight of God. (verses 21-23) James then concludes that the kind of faith that justifies is the kind that is shown or perfected by our works (obedience) unto God. (verse 24) Faith needs to be expressed in actions just like love. (Romans 13:8, 10; Galatians 5:6-7) Jesus' strong statement in Matthew 7:21 shows clearly that faith in Him must be shown by obedience if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. In giving the great commission, Jesus ties the two together: ***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*** (Mark 16:16) Paul ties the two together in Galatians 3:26-27, showing that our justification is by faith, but a faith that is obedient in baptism. Example after example illustrate this in the book of Acts (Acts 2:36-41; 8:35-39; 22:6-16, etc.).

Another insight that needs to be brought out is that there are many Scriptures that emphasize the importance and necessity of obedience in order to be right with God. All of these are emphasizing man's part to be played in receiving the Grace of God. They should not be

understood in isolation from other Scriptures that deal with the subject of Salvation. They either state or assume in the passage or context or over-all context that man's salvation is by the Grace of God through faith, but that this faith must be expressed in obedient actions that God requires before He will extend His Grace to our lives. Following is a list of some of these Scriptures: 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 1:7-9; Romans 6:16-18; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:22-23, etc. When a person complies with these acts, he is not performing his own deeds of righteousness, but the works of God's righteousness. For a person to believe, repent, and upon a confession of His faith in Christ to be baptized—he is not trying to earn his salvation by his own works of merit, but merely submitting to God's Will so that he may receive the precious gift of justification with God. If a person thinks that he can be saved without doing what God requires, he is only deceiving himself!

WHO DOES NOT RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD?

The answer to this question should now be very easy—**those who do not believe!** (Mark 16:16) The reason is because faith is the basis upon which man can receive the Grace of God. If he is unwilling to believe, then there can be no Grace! Several passages can be given to illustrate the answer to this question:

1. **2 Thessalonians 1:8**—Those who know not God and obey not the gospel!
2. **1 John 1:5-6**—Those who walk in darkness, not in the light!
3. **John 12:48**—Those who reject Jesus and His words!
4. **Galatians 2:16; 3:11; 5:1-4**—Those who think they can be justified by Law-keeping or works of Law!

And then, all the passages that positively emphasize the necessity of doing something to be saved can be added to the above list. If a person does not do them, he cannot receive the Grace of God.

SOME THOUGHT PROVOKING OBSERVATIONS

1. **“A man cannot be justified by Law-Keeping and still need the Grace of God.”**
2. **“As well, a man cannot be justified by Grace and still need to keep the Law perfectly.”**
3. **“But an obedient faith is necessary in order to receive the Grace of God.”**
4. **“If Christ becomes Lord of our lives, then what is Lordship without Lord?”**
5. **“Judgment is to be on the basis of a man's deeds. If he turns from keeping the Law of God, then he is apostate. But, if he is not obligated to keep God's Law, then he cannot commit sin—for sin is the breaking of God's Law. If he has no sin, he has no need of Grace.”**
6. **“We are told that if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with God. But to have fellowship with God or Christ, we must abide in the teachings (Law) of Christ.” (1 John 1:7; 2 John 9)**
7. **“A person is to confess his sins to be forgiven (receive God's Grace). But you have to have Law in order to have sins that need to be confessed.” (1 John 1:9)**
8. **The expressions, “Law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21) and “The perfect law of Liberty” (James 1:25), need to be understood in the sense of being under a Grace System, not a Works or Law System of Justification.**
9. **“Rule keeping without a Savior has no saving merit.”**

10. “Obedience out of faith in Jesus’ death brings the gift of God’s Grace.”

11. “Under Grace, mercy is extended to the obedient believer. But under Justice, there is no forgiveness—only death!”

God’s plan for saving mankind has always been by His Grace and through man’s faith that is obedient. The Bible, from beginning to end, is full of examples and instructions that clearly show this. God has lovingly provided salvation by His Grace through His Son, Jesus. It is now up to mankind to willingly appropriate it in God’s appointed way.

HOMework

1. How do these Scriptures reflect a one-sided approach to Truth?
 - a) James 1:26—
 - b) Matt. 23:23—
2. Is Grace conditional or unconditional?
 - a) What is unconditional Grace—
 - b) What is conditional Grace—
3. Upon what basis was man justified before the coming of Christ?
 - a) Heb. 11:6—
 - b) Hab. 2:4—
 - c) Rom. 4:3, 5—
 - d) Rom. 4:6-8—
4. By what was Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, etc., justified before God? (Hebrews ch. 11)
5. What kind of faith were the people required to have?
 - a) 1 Samuel 15:22-23—
 - b) Leviticus 4:20—
 - c) Isa. 1:16-20—
 - d) James 4:6-10
 - e) 2 Chron. 7:14—
6. Upon what basis is man justified after the coming of Christ?
 - a) John 3:16—
 - b) Gal. 2:16; 3:11—
 - c) Rom. 3:20-28; 5:1-2—
 - d) Eph. 2:8-9—
 - e) Rev. 22:17—
7. How can Salvation be free if man has something to do to receive it?
8. What kind of faith does man need to have to be justified before God? (James 2:14-26)
9. What are some passes that illustrate this?
 - a) Gal. 5:6-7—
 - b) Gal. 3:26-27—
 - c) Matt. 7:21—
 - d) Mark 16:16—
 - e) Acts 2:36-41—
10. Who does not receive the Grace of God? (Mark 16:16)

Lesson Nine

“How Do God’s People Maintain Access to the Grace of God?”

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.” (Acts 11:22-23)

The Grace of God makes possible sinful man’s forgiveness, justification, and entrance into a loving relationship with the God of heaven. So much emphasis is placed upon the lost needing and receiving the Grace of God that people do not think beyond the original forgiveness. But Grace is not only for the sinner, but for the saint as well. It is what helps to sustain our relationship with God. It affects the whole of the Christian life, from beginning to the end. The exhortation by Barnabas to the saved people at Antioch shows the need to maintain or continue in this Grace they have received. Paul and Barnabas both exhorted those who believed the message of Grace through Jesus that they should ***“continue in the grace of God.”*** (Acts 13:43)

In this lesson, we want to look carefully at some important questions: ***“Just how secure is the Christian?—“Can a Christian be sure of God’s promises of eternal life?—“Can a saved person so sin that he can lose his access to the Grace of God?—“Can a sincere, dedicated, honest believer ever fall from the Grace of God?”***

HOW SECURE IS THE CHRISTIAN IN THE GRACE OF GOD?

Unless a person believes that a Christian never sins, it would seem very logical that he would continually need the Grace of God to maintain his relationship with God. The apostle John wrote: ***“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*** (1:10-2:1) Thus, if a Christian is capable of sinning, he needs the Grace of God. Is this the reason why Christians are admonished not to ***“turn the grace of God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ?”*** (Jude 4) Again, ***“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel...”*** (Galatians 1:6)

If it is important that Christians not turn from God’s Grace and that they need to continue in that Grace, then how secure is the Christian’s relationship with God? The apostle John quotes the words of Jesus indicating the great security that we have from God’s standpoint. ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”*** (10:27-29) Or the assurance that the apostle Paul gave to Christians in Romans 8:37-39: ***“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am***

persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Or again that which the apostle Peter writes about how secure the promises are to us: *“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* (1 Peter 1:4-5) These passages are stressing the faithfulness and dependability of God to save us eternally. If we can lose the Grace of God or turn from it, it won’t be because of God’s inability to save us. The question comes back to us—can we or do we have the power or right of choice, to turn from the Grace of God? In each of the above passages, the key is what we do. John 10:27: *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”* Romans 8:37: *“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”* 1 Peter 1:5: *“who are kept by the power of God through faith...”* In each case, man’s part is also vital to maintaining that relationship with God to enjoy His Grace.

KEEPING ACCESS TO THE GRACE OF GOD

It is important to recognize that man’s access to the Grace of God is through his faith in God (and in Jesus). (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2) A person is saved by God’s Grace when his faith leads him to be obedient to the gospel (Romans 6:1-4, 15-18). The Christian remains saved by Grace by his continued obedience to the Will of God. (Hebrews 5:8-9; 1 John 1:7) This obedience is not a “Legal (Law) System” but a “Grace through Faith System.” Grace, itself, teaches us to so live: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...”* (Titus 2:11-12).

If access to God’s Grace is through faith, then, it is critical that we maintain that faith! But it is also important to realize what kind of faith the Scriptures are speaking about. It is not a dead faith, but an obedient faith (James 2:17-26). The following passages indicate the kind of faith that keeps us in contact with the Grace of God:

1. **Philippians 2:12**—By working out our salvation with fear and trembling.
2. **Hebrews 5:8-9**—By obeying as Jesus obeyed.
3. **2 John 9**—By continuing in the doctrine of Christ.
4. **1 John 1:7**—By continually walking in the light.
5. **1 John 1:9**—By continually confessing our sins.
6. **Revelations 2:10**—By being faithful unto death.
7. **Revelations 22:14**—By keeping God’s commandments.
8. **Galatians 5:7**—By continuing in the Truth of God.
9. **1 Peter 5:12**—By continuing to stand in the true grace of God.

So the Christian has a choice—whether to have the kind of faith that will save him or have a dead faith or no faith!

CAN A CHRISTIAN LOSE ACCESS TO THE GRACE OF GOD?

By now in our study the answer to this question should be obvious! If a man has the choice of accepting the Grace of God by an obedient faith, does he lose this choice to believe after he becomes a Christian? If not, then, it is in the realm of possibility that a Christian can choose to disbelieve. Look at the passages below that indicate this possibility:

1. **Hebrews 3:12**—To come to have an evil heart of unbelief and depart from God.
2. **Hebrews 3:19**—Israel could not enter the promise land because of unbelief.
3. **Hebrews 6:4-6**—Warning against falling away.
4. **Hebrews 12:15**—Danger of falling short of the grace of God.
5. **Revelations 3:5; 20:15**—If not overcomers, names blotted out of the book of life.
6. **1 Corinthians 10:12**—If you think you stand, take heed lest you fall. (from what?)
7. **1 Timothy 4:1**—Some **Shall** depart from the **Faith!**
8. **2 Peter 2:20-22**—Again entangled in the world and overcame.
9. **2 Peter 1:10**—If do these things—won't stumble or fall.

The key to losing the Grace of God is unbelief, which is exemplified in disobedience to God. Man does not lose his choice to believe or disbelieve when he becomes a Christian. Paul illustrates this clearly when writing to the Galatian Christians. They had received the Grace of God and continued in it for a time, but had been turned aside from it by false teachers. Because of their believing these false teachings, Paul said: ***“you have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”*** (Galatians 5:1-4) The above passages make it very clear that a child of God can so conduct himself that he denies the faith and loses the Grace of God (Hebrews 6:4-6).

CAN A CHRISTIAN GO TO HEAVEN IF HE DIES WHILE COMMITTING SIN?

It should be an obvious fact that all of us sin, even after becoming Christians. To deny such shows that we haven't been reading and studying God's word (1 John 1:10). The very fact that Christians are promised fellowship with God and continual forgiveness if they will continue to walk in the light—shows clearly that we need God's Grace continually (1 John 1:7). Paul quotes David in Romans 4:6-8 when he indicates how blessed a man is to have his sins forgiven or covered and that they are no longer imputed to him. A true follower of Jesus wants to live right each day. Because of this desire, he very easily can recognize when he does wrong. Thus, there is a continual need for him to recognize and confess that sinfulness before God (1 John 1:9). While he has made the decision to die to the way of sin (Romans 6:1-2), he is not perfect, but finds himself sinning out of ignorance, or weakness, or discouragement, etc. God requires of His people faithful obedience, but not perfect obedience, to stay in His Grace. God promises daily cleansing by the blood of Jesus. Unbelief, continuing in the way of sin, a seared conscience, turning from God's truth, exalting self above Christ, allow ourselves to be deceived, ensnared and enslaved to sin or false teaching can all lead to the sin that is unto death (1 John 5:16-17; Hebrews 3:12-14). But as long as we walk in the light, our sins are forgiven! (1 John 1:7). It is critical that we maintain our faith in the Grace of God to save us.

**PROMISED BLESSINGS TO THOSE WHO MAINTAIN
THE GRACE OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES**

The Christian must understand that when he came under the Grace of God that no power on earth can take away the salvation that he enjoys in Christ—except himself! He chose to accept the Grace of God, and he can also choose to turn from it. As long as our life is a life of trust in Christ, we can be assured of some wonderful blessings from God:

1. **1 John 5:13**—We can know that we have eternal life in Him.
2. **1 John 4:17**—We can have boldness in the day of judgment.
3. **1 John 2:28**—We can have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
4. **2 Peter 3:12**—We can be looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God.
5. **2 Timothy 4:8**—We can say that we love His appearing.

We must not allow sin in our lives to rob us of this boldness, confidence, and assurance that we have in our relationship to God. Sin can crowd Jesus out of our lives. It can sear our conscience. It can quench the Holy Spirit. It can cause us to exalt self above Christ. We can become so ensnared and enslaved to sin that it becomes fatal to our soul.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A question that has bothered some in this area of study is—“*If eternal life can be terminated, then how is it eternal life?*” But on the other side of the picture, we could ask this question—“*If eternal life cannot be terminated, then why all the warnings against falling from the Grace of God?*” The answer should be obvious from our study. Eternal Life is found in Christ (1 John 5:11-12). But we must abide in the Son to have this life—outside of Christ, there is no life with God. We must, as well, abide in His word (believe His message). If we turn from His word in unbelief, we no longer are protected by the Grace of God (1 John 2:24). Faith is a lifetime outlook. To disbelieve is to lose the prize. “***This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.***” (1 John 5:4).

Homework

1. What are Christians exhorted to do in regards to the Grace of God?
 - a) Acts 13:43—
 - b) Acts 11:23—
 - c) Jude 4—
 - d) Gal. 1:6—

2. How secure is the Christian in the Grace of God?
 - a) John 10:27-29—
 - b) Rom. 8:37-39—
 - c) 1 Peter 1:4-5—

3. What part does the Christian play in keeping in the Grace of God in the above passages?
4. What is man's access to the Grace of God?
 - a) Eph. 2:8-9—
 - b) Rom. 5:1-2—
 - c) Rom. 6:1-4, 15-18—
 - d) Heb. 5:8-9—
 - e) 1 John 1:7—
 - f) Tit. 2:11-12—
5. What kind of faith do we have to have to secure and keep access to God's Grace?
 - a) Phil. 2:12—
 - b) Heb. 5:8-9—
 - c) 2 John 9—
 - d) 1 Jn. 1:7—
 - e) 1 Jn. 1:9—
 - f) Rev. 2:10—
 - g) Rev. 22:14—
 - h) Gal. 5:7—
 - i) 1 Pet. 5:12
6. What warnings are given to Christians about losing access to God's Grace?
 - a) Heb. 3:12—
 - b) Heb. 3:19—
 - c) Heb. 6:4-6—
 - d) Heb. 12:15—
 - e) Rev. 3:5; 20:15—
 - f) 1 Cor. 10:12—
 - g) 1 Tim. 4:1—
 - h) 2 Pet. 2:20-22—
 - i) 2 Pet. 1:10—
7. Do the Scriptures actually speak about falling from Grace? (Gal. 5:1-4)
8. Can a Christian go to heaven if he dies while committing sin?
 - a) 1 John 1:10—
 - b) 1 John 1:7--
 - c) Rom. 4:6-8—
 - d) 1 John 1:9—
 - e) Rom. 6:1-2—
 - f) 1 John 5:16-17—
 - g) Heb. 3:12-14—
 - h) 1 John 1:7—
9. What blessings are promised to those who maintain access to the Grace of God?
 - a) 1 John 5:13—
 - b) 1 John 4:17—
 - c) 1 John 2:28—
 - d) 2 Peter 3:12—
 - e) 2 Tim. 4:8—

Lesson Ten

“Growing in Grace”

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

We need to hear about the Grace of God, see our need of the Grace of God, receive the Grace of God in God’s appointed way, and then to grow in the Grace of God! Not only is it commanded, but it is an obvious need if we are to make it to heaven someday.

God’s people have the privilege to stand in the Grace of God (Romans 5:1-2) because of our obedient faith. But that same faith must keep us from falling or turning from the Grace of God (Galatians 5:4; 1:6). We are also encouraged to continue in the Lord (Grace of God) (Acts 11:23). But not only to stand, not turn, but continue, as well as grow in God’s Grace!

GROWING IN GRACE ILLUSTRATED

While the above concepts are all necessary in order to be in the Grace of God, there must be a reason why we need to grow in this Grace. The following Scriptures illustrate the idea of “growing in grace.”

1. **John 1:14**—Jesus was full of Grace and Truth.
2. **Acts 4:33**—Great Grace was upon them all (early Christians).
3. **Romans 5:20**—Where sin abounded, Grace abounded much more.
4. **Romans 5:17**—Those who receive abundance of Grace.
5. **2 Corinthians 8:7**—Abound in the Grace of giving.
6. **2 Corinthians 9:14**—The exceeding Grace in you.
7. **2 Timothy 2:1**—Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
8. **Hebrews 13:9**—It is good that the heart be established by grace.

The above expressions certainly indicate the possibility of growing in Grace.

HOW DO WE SHOW THIS GROWTH?

We are to grow spiritually in this state of Grace. 2 Peter 1:5-11 shows the things that we are to grow in: **faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness.** Growing in Grace seems to have reference to a maturing process as a Christian. The more mature, the more we have grown in the Grace of God. Other passages give some insight as well, such as:

1. **Colossians 3:16**—Sing with grace in our hearts.
2. **Colossians 4:6**—Let our speech be seasoned with grace.
3. **Romans 6:1-2**—Not to continue in the way of sin.
4. **Titus 2:11-12**—To deny ungodliness and worldly lust, live soberly, righteously, and godly.

As we grow in our ability to worship, and our lives are continuing to mature as Christians, we are certainly growing in God's Grace. If we grow, we become more like Him in our attitudes and actions (Matthew 5:48).

WHY THE ADMONITION TO GROW IN GRACE?

God never requires anything of His creatures without a good reason or purpose behind such. To grow in Grace should makes us stronger in faith, greater in love, more mature in our outlook, and more grateful to God for his exceeding and glorious grace bestowed upon us (Ephesians 1:7). The following passages from the second letter of Peter can give insight as to why the admonition:

1. **2 Peter 2:1**—To help guard against the dangers of false teachers.
2. **2 Peter 2:2-3**—Not get caught up in Heresies, and allow these teachers to make merchandise of us.
3. **2 Peter 3:11**—The world will be destroy—we want to be prepared for such.
4. **2 Peter 3:17**—So we won't fall from our steadfastness.

The greater our understanding and appreciation of God's Grace, the less danger that we will abuse or misuse His Grace. It helps to motivate us to faithfulness, as well as to fruitfulness.

HOW IS THIS GROWTH ACCOMPLISHED?

If we stay in the same second letter of Peter, we can get the insights that will give an answer to the above question.

1. **2 Peter 1:10**—Give diligence to make our calling and election sure.
2. **2 Peter 1:8**—By adding the "Christian Graces" to help us be fruitful.
3. **2 Peter 3:1**—By continual study of God's Word.
4. **2 Peter 3:14**—Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

The Word of God is our source of learning about the Grace of God (Acts 14:3). The admonitions from His Word help us to draw closer to God, become a better servant, and to serve out of a high sense of love.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We need to come to a mature understanding of the Grace of God in our lives. With understanding comes the wisdom to make correct use of Grace from God, rather than to despise or to insult His Grace (Hebrews 10:29). Through growth, we make sure our hope of being heirs of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). So, let's take our stand in the true Grace of God (1 Peter 5:12).

Homework

1. What things are necessary in order to be “in” the grace of God?
 - a) Romans 5:1-2—
 - b) Galatians 5:4—
 - c) Acts 11:23—

2. How is the concept of “growing in grace” illustrated?
 - a) John 1:14—
 - b) Acts 4:33—
 - c) Romans 5:20—
 - d) Romans 5:17—
 - e) 2 Corinthians 8:7—
 - f) 2 Corinthians 9:14—
 - g) 2 Timothy 2:1—
 - h) Hebrews 13:9—

3. How do we show or express this growth in grace?
 - a) 2 Peter 1:5-11—
 - b) Colossians 3:16—
 - c) Colossians 4:6—
 - d) Romans 6:1-2—
 - e) Titus 2:11-12—

4. Why the admonition to “grow in grace?”
 - a) Ephesians 1:7—
 - b) 2 Peter 2:1—
 - c) 2 Peter 2:2-3—
 - d) 2 Peter 2:11—
 - e) 2 Peter 3:17—

5. How is this growth accomplished?
 - a) 2 Peter 1:10—
 - b) 2 Peter 1:8—
 - c) 2 Peter 3:1—
 - d) 2 Peter 3:14—

6. What are three goals in regards to this grace?
 - a) Hebrews 10:29—
 - b) 1 Peter 3:7—
 - c) 1 Peter 5:12—

Lesson Eleven

“The Motivation of Grace”

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability; yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

An extreme position taken by some on Grace is to advocate that it doesn't matter what we do or how we live, we can't be lost because we are not under Law but Grace. A natural question to those who believe such would be, *“Then, what motivation does a person have to live right? If he can't be lost, and is not responsible for living right, then, why should he even try?”* The apostle's question in Romans 6:1-2 and his answer should show clearly that such a belief as the above is not what the Scriptures are teaching: ***“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”***

When a person becomes a Christian, he has to make a decision to die to sin. His faith in God and in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, causes him to meet whatever conditions God lays down before His Grace will save us. The following passages illustrate this:

1. **Romans 6:17-18**—Upon their obedience from the heart, they were set free from sin—and became servants of righteousness.
2. **Acts 2:38**—The crucifiers of Jesus were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins.
3. **Acts 22:16**—Saul, who had persecuted the Lord's people, but had come to believe that Jesus was truly the Son of God, was told to arise and be baptized so his sins could be washed away.

A system of Grace is not without conditions to be met on man's part. It is not a matter of earning or meriting (Law System) our justification, because we can't! God extends His Grace and man must reach out to accept it in God's appointed way. If justification is unconditional, all would be saved regardless of what they believe or do. There would be no motivation to live right, nor would there be a need or purpose to do so. God's Grace is conditional; and when properly understood, it can serve as a great motivator to righteous living.

REPENTANCE AND GRACE

God ***“commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”*** (Acts 17:30-31) Why must all men repent? If they desire the Grace of God, it is required. Why is repentance so important for

man? Because, it involves a decision to turn away from disobedience to obedience! To die to sin is to no longer desire to walk that way. The apostle John states, **“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.”** (1 John 2:1) He also adds, **“He who sins (continues in the way of sin) is of the devil.”** (1 John 3:8) Repentance is a matter of allegiance—which we will serve: God or the Devil; Righteousness or Unrighteousness. If we want the Grace of God, then we give our allegiance to Him—to serve Him, to do His bidding. To do so, we die to our former way of living in disobedience (sin) and turn to obedience (righteousness) (Romans 6:16-18). Thus, Jesus’ warning is straight to the point, **“unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”** (Luke 13:3)

True repentance is reflected in our outlook and actions. The following passages show this clearly:

1. **Romans 6:4**—We rise up from baptism to walk in **“Newness of life.”**
2. **Romans 6:6**—The old man is crucified—the body of sin is done away with—and we are no longer slaves of sin.
3. **Romans 6:14-16**—Sin no longer has dominion over us—we are the slave of the one we choose to serve or obey.
4. **Romans 6:17-18**—Upon obedience from the heart, we become slaves of righteousness.
5. **Ephesians 4:21-24**—We put off the former conduct of sin and put on the new conduct in righteousness and holiness.

It should be obvious that Christians are not saved to continue in disobedience, but to turn to obedience to God. We are not saved to live as we please, but to live as God pleases (Matthew 16:24).

HOW DOES GRACE MOTIVATE US TO LIVE RIGHT?

People do things because we are motivated to satisfy one or more needs in our lives. Some satisfy their needs in a selfish way, not concerned for others about them. While the more mature spiritually do so in consideration for others. We do things to evade pain, persecution, or punishment—or, to receive relief from such. We are also motivated by the desire to receive something desirable—like forgiveness or Heaven. It would seem obvious that two basic motivations for our actions would be either Heaven or Hell. Jesus personally used both of these motivations in His teachings, as well as the writers of the New Testament. We do right because our Salvation depends upon it (Acts 2:38; Revelations 2:10). **“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”** (Philippians 2:12). Why? Because we want to be saved eternally! (Hebrews 5:8-9).

But what part does Grace play in motivating us to live right? The following sequence of thoughts will hopefully give insight to this concept:

1. **Romans 3:23, 6:23**—A recognition that we all have sinned and are under condemnation of death.
2. **Ephesians 2:8-9**—But God’s Grace has provided a way of escape from death.

3. **Acts 2:38**—If I want to be saved, then my faith will lead me to repent and be baptized so that my sins can be remitted or forgiven. That’s motivation! God’s Grace provided the reason for my obedience to the Gospel.
4. **1 John 1:7**—As I attempt to live right (walk in the light), I find that the struggle within me between the flesh and the Spirit (Galatians 5:17) makes it hard for me to perfectly obey God. Instead of being discouraged and giving up, I keep on trying to live right. Why? Because God’s Grace continues to cleanse me of sin as I continue to strive to live right. Without this understanding, there would be no motivation to live right.

Forgiveness is a great motivator. Yes, people can try to take advantage of such, but to their own ruin. Without forgiveness, this world would be a “Hell on earth!”

EXAMPLES TO ILLUSTRATE

One of the beauties of the Word of God is the many examples recorded, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, that helps to illustrate God’s truth, as well as help to encourage us in our daily efforts to live right (Romans 15:4).

Saul of Tarsus (later the apostle Paul) persecuted the church without mercy. He tried to destroy it by putting people in prison or giving consent to their death (Acts 8:1-4). What a burden he must have carried upon realizing that Jesus really was the Son of God, man’s Savior. (1 Timothy 1:15). But Saul gladly received the Grace of God and that burden was taken away. He became a great servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? What motivated him? ***“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:9-10)

Jesus used an example to illustrate this concept in Luke 7:40-50. He told about two persons who were forgiven of debts they owed. One was forgiven of a large debt. The other was forgiven of a very small debt. He then asked the question, ***“...which of them will love him more?”*** (verse 42) And the answer was obvious—the one forgiven the greater debt. Then Jesus pointed to the woman that had been so attentive to Him and said, ***“Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”*** (verse 47) Forgiveness not only gives us hope, but a reason to keep on trying to live right.

King David’s actions in regards to Bathsheba and the killing of her husband are well-known in the Old Testament. When he was faced with what he had done by the prophet Nathan, it brought about an outward confession of the wrong in written form (Psalm 51). He desired the mercy and forgiveness that God could give (verses 1-2). He openly acknowledged that he had sinned, not only against those two people, but more importantly against God (verses 3-4). He wanted to be purged, washed, and cleansed of these terrible wrongs (verses 7-11). He wanted his fellowship to God to be restored (verse 12). With forgiveness, he is able to go on with his life—

but as well to tell sinners about a merciful, forgiving God (verses 13-14). This forgiveness came when David's heart was broken and contrite before God (verse 17).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The challenge of a Law System of Justification is to live the Law perfectly! With some, this challenge is met with great effort! But after a while, it becomes a terrible burden, discouraging, and defeating because it is not possible to live up to its perfection. The end result can be disastrous—the person may give up and quit trying.

This is the great value of Grace. It makes provisions for our weaknesses and forgives and motivates us to keep striving to live righteous lives. We are motivated to live right, not only because our eternal destiny is involved, but also because of God's love toward us. God's love motivates us to fulfill what the Law says is right and good (Romans 13:8-10). We keep striving to be keepers of God's Law because God's Grace gives us reason (motivation) to keep doing right. Our eternal destiny depends upon our maintaining the Grace of God in our lives by an obedient faith (James 2:24).

Homework

1. What is an extreme position that some take about Grace?
2. What conditions does God require of us in order to receive His Grace?
 - a) Romans 6:17-18—
 - b) Acts 2:38—
 - c) Acts 22:16—
3. Why is repentance so important to man?
 - a) Acts 17:30-31—
 - b) 1 John 2:1—
 - c) 1 John 3:8—
 - d) Luke 13:3—
4. How is true repentance reflected in our outlook and actions?
 - a) Romans 6:4—
 - b) Romans 6:6—
 - c) Romans 6:14-16—
 - d) Romans 6:17-18—
 - e) Ephesians 4:21-24—
 - f) Matthew 16:24—
5. What motivates people to do what they do?
6. What two basic motivations do we have to live right?
 - a) Matthew 25:46—
 - b) Acts 2:38—
 - c) Revelation 2:10—
 - d) Philippians 2:12—
 - e) Hebrews 5:8-9—

7. How are we motivated by Grace? (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7)

8. How do these examples illustrate this?
 - a) 1 Corinthians 15:9-10—
 - b) Luke 7:40-50—
 - c) Psalm 51—

9. What does God's Love (Grace) motivate us to do? (Romans 13:8-10)

Lesson Twelve

“Extending Grace to Others”

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, to Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Timothy 1:1-2)

God has extended His Grace (Titus 2:11), His Love (1 John 4:7-10), and His Forgiveness to mankind (Acts 2:38). He expects His children to do the same—to extend Grace, Love, and Forgiveness to others (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 John 4:11; Matthew 6:14-15). Even though we have sinned against God and do not deserve His Grace, Love, or Forgiveness—He is still willing to extend these to us. He even sends the rain and the sunshine on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45). But God’s Forgiving and Loving Grace is only **GIVEN** to those who will humble themselves (James 4:6) and through faith obey His Gospel (Acts 2:38). And it is our privilege to continue to receive His Grace throughout our lives—if we walk in the light (1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 9:14).

God does not intend for His Grace to stop with us. It is to work in us and through us to others. We, too, are to extend this Grace to those about us (Acts 20:24, 32). And like God, we are to have a gracious spirit toward those about us (Matthew 5:43-45). But in particular, God wants us to extend this Grace to saints of God (Eph. 6:24). We should wish God’s Grace, Mercy, and Peace to be upon all of God’s people (2 Timothy 1:2). We should not want any child of God to fail (fall short of) the Grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).

SHOWING GRACE BY OUR TONGUE

If our hearts have been affected by the Grace of God, then we will certainly want to show this same Grace to others by how we speak to them. A tongue that extends Grace comes from a righteous heart and life (Proverbs 10:11); a just heart (Proverbs 10:31-32), and the right kind of a heart (Matthew 12:34). The following passages emphasize this strongly:

1. **Colossians 4:6**—Our speech should always be with grace, seasoned with salt.
2. **Colossians 3:8**—Put away anger, wrath, malice blasphemy, and filthy language.
3. **Ephesians 4:31**—Put away bitter words, clamorous words, evil words.
4. **Ephesians 4:25**—Put away lying, and speak truth.
5. **Ephesians 4:15**—Speak truth in love.
6. **Ephesians 4:29**—Put away corrupt words, and speak words that edify—that impart Grace to the hearers.

The Christians tongue is to be graced by words that bestow delight and show kindness—words that show beauty and a kind spirit. These words are the opposites of abusive or vindictive speech. They are not words spoken in a cutting and ugly manner, nor vile or impure. A foul-mouth Christian can do more damage to reaching the lost than many devout speakers of truth can overcome. Our challenge then is to bridle our tongue (James 1:26) so that we will bless and not curse others, and not let our tongue run loose and cause all kinds of evil (James 3:6-10).

SHOWING GRACE BY OUR ACTIONS

Our actions can influence others favorably if they are guided by the Grace of God. The following passages emphasize what our actions should be:

1. **Colossians 4:5**—Walk in wisdom towards those without.
2. **1 Peter 2:12**—Walk in honesty and in good works.
3. **Philippians 2:14-16**—Not to be murmurers, disputers, but rather blameless and harmless, and without rebuke.
4. **Ephesians 4:32**—If we are kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving—it is because of our extending Grace to others.
5. **Colossians 3:12-13**—We are to be merciful, humble in mind, meek, longsuffering, and forbearing towards one another.

In order for God's people to know how to show this Grace by our actions, he has given us examples that help us to see the proper actions.

1. **1 Peter 2:18**—Servants being subject to even harsh masters.
2. **1 Peter 2:19**—To endure underserved grief.
3. **1 Peter 2:20**—Suffer patiently under injustice.
4. **Matthew 5:39**—To turn the other cheek.
5. **Matthew 5:41**—To go the extra mile.
6. **Matthew 5:44**—To love, bless, do good, and pray for even our enemies.

Gracious actions toward others go beyond what is deserved. When we only love those that love us, we have only done the normal (Matthew 5:46-47). When we go beyond, we have truly shown Grace to others.

WHY SHOW GRACE TO OTHERS?

Jesus ended the above passages with the challenge *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”* (Matthew 5:48) Being like God is to extend Grace to others about us. It shows that we are truly desirous of being the children of our Father (Matthew 5:45). It is our way of bringing glory to God (Matthew 5:14-16) by acting like Him. It is our effort to follow the example of Christ (1 Peter 2:21), so that we can be commended by God (1 Peter 2:19-20).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

By seeing God's Grace demonstrated toward us, we can better see how to show it to others. Showing Grace is our way of overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:20-21). Grace goes beyond justice to bless others. Two men were walking down a certain street one day and a woman came along. One man tipped his hat, but the other did not. He said: *“You should not have done that, she is not a lady.”* His reply was: *“I did not tip my hat to her because I thought she was a lady, but because I wanted to be a gentleman!”*

Homework

1. What three important things does God extend to mankind?
 - a) Titus 2:11—
 - b) 1 John 4:7-10—
 - c) Acts 2:38—

2. What does God expect of His children? (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 John 4:11; Matthew 6:14-15)

3. How do we show Grace with our tongue?
 - a) Colossians 4:6—
 - b) Colossians 3:8—
 - c) Ephesians 4:31—
 - d) Ephesians 4:25—
 - e) Ephesians 4:15—
 - f) Ephesians 4:29—
 - g) James 1:26—

4. How do we show Grace by our actions?
 - a) Colossians 4:5—
 - b) 1 Peter 2:12—
 - c) Philippians 2:14-16—
 - d) Ephesians 4:32—
 - e) Colossians 3:12-13—

5. How does God specify the way of showing Grace by our actions?
 - a) 1 Peter 2:18—
 - b) 1 Peter 2:19—
 - c) 1 Peter 2:20—
 - d) Matthew 5:39—
 - e) Matthew 5:41—
 - f) Matthew 5:44—

6. Why show Grace to others?
 - a) Matthew 5:48—
 - b) Matthew 5:45—
 - c) Matthew 5:14-16—
 - d) 1 Peter 2:21—
 - e) 1 Peter 2:19-20—

7. How do we overcome evil? (Romans 12:20-21)

Lesson Thirteen

“Review Questions

TRUE FALSE

- _____ 1. Law has been given to govern man’s actions.
- _____ 2. Mankind has always been under some kind of Law to God.
- _____ 3. The Law of God has both positive and negative purposes.
- _____ 4. Man cannot be justified by Law.
- _____ 5. Grace from God is freely given.
- _____ 6. Grace is only given to those who merit it.
- _____ 7. Grace comes only through Jesus Christ.
- _____ 8. Grace is needed by man because of sin.
- _____ 9. There was no need of Grace on man’s part until Jesus came.
- _____ 10. Grace is misnamed as a “gift from God.”
- _____ 11. One purpose of Law is to show man his sinfulness.
- _____ 12. The Law of God is perfect, but it has a weakness.
- _____ 13. Grace is a system of justification before God.
- _____ 14. People were justified by Grace before Jesus came into the world.
- _____ 15. Works of merit are something man can boast about.
- _____ 16. Works of faith are also something man can boast about.
- _____ 17. Works of faith are the process of man saving himself.
- _____ 18. “Anti-Nominianism” is the concept that man is no longer under Law to God.
- _____ 19. The New Testament states that we “are not under law, but under grace.”
- _____ 20. Grace does away with the need for Law.
- _____ 21. The New Testament states that man is justified by works.
- _____ 22. Only those with obedient faith can be saved by the Grace of God.
- _____ 23. The disobedient person is still saved by the Grace of God.
- _____ 24. A Christian cannot be pluck out of the hand of God.
- _____ 25. A Christian can lose his access to the Grace of God.
- _____ 26. Christians are exhorted to continue in the Grace of God.
- _____ 27. A Christian can be saved eternally even if he dies committing a sin.
- _____ 28. Man’s continued access to the Grace of God is through his faith.
- _____ 29. A Christian can and must grow in Grace.
- _____ 30. Repentance is a decision that man must make in order to obtain Grace.

