

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 14

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: Grace, Holiness & God As Coach

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Grace is given to make us holy. Grace is not a license to sin any time we like. Grace is God's kindness to us so that we can keep on learning to follow Him. Grace (among many other things) involves God empowering us and teaching us inwardly as disciples, as learners from God, in the art of being a Christian.

When I was young we lived on a small steep hill which descended to a busy main road. One Christmas I received a bicycle and with a bit of pushing I rode it safely around the house. I then (mistakenly) decided to ride down the hill. But no one had told me how to put on the old-fashioned back-pedal brakes! The bicycle went quickly downhill until I was faced with the choice of the busy main road or a muddy ditch. I chose the ditch. Grace is your Heavenly Father pulling you out of the muddy ditch you have ended up in and teaching you how to ride your bicycle properly so you do not end up back in the ditch again!

There are many aspects to grace (and they often overlap in meaning)– for instance:

- a) The gracious removal of a legal fine or penalty. Forgiveness, wiping the slate clean.
- b) Grace as the practical working power of sanctification, cleansing and renewal
- c) Grace as a gift of ability strength, power or endurance.
- d) Grace as imparting spiritual gifts and miracles - 'charismata' (literally grace gifts)
- e) Grace as an attribute of God, His kindness to us, God's Riches At Christ's Expense
- f) The throne of grace – the experience of God's prayer answering power in time of need
- g) The special favor and blessing of God upon an individual life
- h) The grace that operates in us prior to salvation and leads us to be saved
- i) The grace of God's choosing us in Him before the foundation of the world

All these aspects of grace are centered in the love of God, in the character of God Himself and in His faithfulness to His covenant promises that are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Grace is not an impersonal spiritual force that is imparted by ritual or by association with holy artifacts. Grace is God Himself at work in our lives.

The first impression I got of grace (as a young Christian) was that it was just God wiping the slate clean after I had sinned. I would make a mistake, God would forgive, and then it was up to me to figure out how to do better next time and to get it right from that point on. God was the Heavenly Scorekeeper, and Christ made sure I never went negative, but I had to make all the plays, get all the runs and figure out how to play the game!

This was a very stressful view of God and of grace that eventually led to me being spiritually burned out. But what is the correct view of grace?

Romans 8:31-39 MKJV *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he condemning? It is Christ who has died, but rather also who is raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, "For Your sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep of slaughter." (37) But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Along with Jesus God freely gives us 'all things' - that is God gives us everything we require to become sons and daughters of the living God. That includes His comfort, His coaching and inner tuition, His power and might, His insight and understanding, and many other things. We do not have to struggle on our own. God is not just the Divine Scorekeeper - He is right there with us, on the field, helping us with every play.

So what happens if you sin? As you repent, God forgives, as you ask for cleansing He cleanses (1 John 1:9) and as you ask for power to be holy and to resist future temptation Christ intercedes in the heavenlies (Romans 8:34) asking that you be strengthened with might in the inner man (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Grace involves the actual experience of God's unconditional love for you. God does not want you to go around feeling guilty all day (that is the Law). Instead God wants you to go around feeling loved by God every minute of the day. The above verses in Romans 8 plainly state that 'nothing can separate us from the love of Christ'. Sin was dealt with at the cross, and since then no power, principality or life circumstance can stop the flow of God's love towards you!

Indeed a good family that produces godly balanced successful children is always a family in which unconditional love abounds. It is a family where people are simply loved for who they are, no strings attached. On the other hand dysfunctional families are often graceless, condemning, and harsh. In a similar vein God's love, which is God's grace, matures us into His image.

Romans 5:5 MKJV *And hope does not make us ashamed, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.*

Ephesians 3:16-19 MKJV *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; (17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, (19) and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Blessings,

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