



Grace and Graciousness

God's undeserved blessings upon our lives

A) Distortions of Grace

- Satan does his best disguising grace so that people, unbeliever and believer, will not respond to God's goodness.

(1) Works rather than grace:

- Falsely believe one can and must work to gain approval. Once gained, then prideful.
- Historically this presents itself as a huge crisis.
- Instead we are saved by grace resulting in a thankful and gracious spirit.

"8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

(2) Abuse grace with lust:

- Falsely believe one deserves God's favor and idolize this pleasure by taking His gifts and rejecting the Giver. Desires rule.
- When pleasure becomes the motivation of a person's life, people are willing to break marriages, neglect studies, take risks, etc. in order to secure their pleasures.

Purpose of studying grace

- To bring the greatest amount of glory to God as possible.
- To joyfully serve our fellow man with all diligence.
- To keep from stumbling because of arrogance.
- To have the greatest joy in serving God.



B) A Biblical Study of Grace

"Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?" And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Mat 18:31-35).

- Why did Jesus call him a 'wicked' slave? Why is the penalty so harsh?

Word study

- NT usage of 'grace': 122 times (Greek word *charis*), close to *chara* meaning joy.
- OT forms 76 times (grace, gracious, graciously, etc.)
- Mercy is not receiving the judgment one deserves.
- Grace receives kindness one does not deserve.
- Septuagint, a pre-Christ translation of Hebrew scriptures into Greek, used the word mercy (*eleos*) to 'wrongly' translate hesed (lovingkindness 175x).

"But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Ps 86:15).

The Source of Grace

“And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Pe 5:10).

- God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the source ‘of all grace’.
- “grace of (our) God”
- “grace of (our/the) Lord (Jesus)” - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (Ph 4:23).
- “Spirit of grace” (Heb 10:29)
- Ex 33:12-17. “And the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I have known you by name.” (17)

The Meaning of Grace

18 Then Moses said, “I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!” 19 And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” (Ex 33:18-19)

- Choice bypasses our pretense of goodness (Rom 9:15)
- We all have a broken, past (Rom 3:23)
- But when do we seek and find God’s grace, we gain more.
- Our prayer for failures: “Lord, I was not saved because I was good, but because of the mercy and grace found in Jesus. Forgive me and strengthen me...”
- Start: spiritual death (Eph 2:1-3)
- End: abounding blessings (Eph 2:5-7)

C) Enjoying God’s Grace

- All grace stems from God’s goodness.
- Pleasure is part of that God’s grace.
- God put pleasure into the world so that we could share His joy in our relationships.
- Far from condemning pleasure, God designed it to enrich our lives and increase our sense of celebration.
- Fear of pleasure comes with association to temptation and guilt.
- Move on to God’s greater purposes: “acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1-2).

Design of Pleasure (Ps 16:11)

“Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever” (Ps 16:11).

- God formed sensory parts capable of receiving pleasure. “It was very good” (Ge1:31)
- God made the things that satiate those senses. He gave us an appetite but also the food to happily fill that appetite.
- God gave us the desires for those appetites to be satiated.
- God gave us the memory to remember with some delight past pleasures.
- Through God’s Word He told us how to protect and preserve (e.g. sexual desires for marriage)



Fear of Pleasure (1 Tim 4:1-6)

“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared

in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods” (1 Timothy 4:1-3a).

- Observations (Gnosticism cult, religions, etc.)

“Foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

- Solutions

Self-examination

- Are you forgiving?
- Are you patient and understanding or angry?
- Are you gracious, considering the needs of others above yourself?

It is not only what God has done but how He does it! He wraps our heart around Him so that we will delight in Him and praise Him.

Study questions

- Why does God ‘test’ His people such as Joseph (cf. Psalm 105:17,19)?
- What are two of the three steps towards properly forgiving?
- Describe at least two signs of forgetting God’s grace which lead God’s people from revival to despair (Psalm 106:10-15)?
- How should animals and people differ on the way they eat?