

## The Grace of God

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The grace of God is an inexhaustible subject. We experience God's grace every moment of our existence. Due to the overwhelming nature of this topic, however, we may struggle to properly define grace. God's grace being ever-present can even cause us to take grace for granted.

The Greek term for grace is "*charis*." This term is translated into a variety of meanings. Each rendering of this word gives different details to this complex subject. Briefly note the different usages of the term "grace".

### Grace Is...

**1. A gift of God's love.** God has given us gifts. Of course, a gift is not given because it is owed. A gift is given as a result of the love of the giver. James wrote, "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change*" (Jas. 1:17).

The natural world is a gift of God's love to sustain us. The creation is given to provide for us without respect to our attitude toward God. As Jesus said, God causes the sun to rise on the good and evil and causes the rain to fall on the just and unjust (Matt. 5:45).

Of course, more than sunshine and rain, God has given us the gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus. Regarding the gift of God's love, Jesus said, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him*" (Joh 3:16-17).

Recognizing such a loving gift being offered to such undeserving people as we is intended to humble us. This humility will compel us to receive the grace of God through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

**2. The pleasantness of appearance.** Have you ever seen a horse in motion? Have you ever seen a basketball player running full-speed and gently roll the ball off his fingers into the basket? Have you ever heard someone say a few words and bring calm to a heated argument? Have you ever witnessed someone die with hope? These are actions that are graceful and elegant.

Grace has a transforming effect. Grace enables us to conduct our emotions, words, and actions with dignity. Paul used this aspect of grace when he wrote, "*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person*" (Col. 4:6). Graceful words come from a graceful heart.

**3. Favor or approval.** Through dignified living, we can gain the favor or approval of others. This aspect of grace relates to our reputation. As Jesus grew and matured from a boy to a man,

Luke wrote that Jesus, “*increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*” (Luke 2:52). We are to seek the favor of others in the hopes of them becoming recipients of God’s grace.

**4. Act of kindness.** Just as God has kindly given us gifts, we can extend kindness to others. There are many ways we might show kindness to others. Our kindness is to be offered liberally.

For example, Paul wanted the saints at Corinth to give relief money to the needy saints in Jerusalem. Their “liberality” was a demonstration of kindness or grace: “*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem*” (1 Cor. 16:2-3). The term “liberality” is a translation of the Greek “*charis*.”

### **God’s Grace Teaches Us**

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works* (Titus 2:11-14).

Understanding the meaning of grace is important. Once we learn what God’s grace is, we can then begin to relate to grace. Paul wrote to Titus about God’s grace from a personal perspective. God’s grace is not just a concept to convey the nature of God but is a blessing which is intended to transform us.

God’s grace brings salvation to everyone. God’s grace has come in the form of Jesus. Jesus came for the salvation of the human family. While this is overwhelmingly positive, God’s grace will not save us unless we receive it by faith. But what does this involve?

**1. Renouncing ungodliness and worldly passions.** Transformation is a total change. Our attitudes and behaviors as ungodly, sinners have to change. Sadly, many people think grace means they do not have to change. They can live without rules. They can live without any moral restraint. In another passage, Paul wrote, “*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*” (Rom 6:1-2). Grace demands we redirect our abilities from sin and towards righteousness.

**2. Living self-controlled, upright, and godly in the present age.** To some, renouncing ungodliness and worldly passions sounds confining. Some live according to their passions as a means to be their “*true selves*.” Such thinking is only the result of deception. Our true selves are only realized when God’s grace changes our thinking.

God's grace intends to transform us. God's grace restores God's image in us. God's grace is designed to empower us to reflect God's glory. Self-control and uprightness are characteristics of God. As His children, we must bear His traits today.

**3. Living with hope.** Not only did God send us the gift of His love in the form of Jesus, but He also raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus proved God's power over death. Therefore, anticipating eternal life is not wishful thinking: it is hope. Our hope in this life is based on that which is real.

The hope of eternal life given at the return of our Savior gives us motivation to lead a godly life. This hope strengthens our resolve to renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts. Ultimately, God's grace is our hope.

### **Conclusion**

As John Newton wrote, God's grace is amazing. Our hearts should be humbled to contrition by God's amazing grace. Without God's grace, life would be meaningless. Worse yet, life would be hopeless.

Let us resolve to pursue God's grace by faith. May we have faith to receive our salvation through Jesus. May we humbly submit to His rule and purpose to be like Him. In so doing, we can live and die in the hope of eternal life.