

# Grace

With many church groups there is an emphasis on GRACE. This was obviously passed on to their children, because various ones at the Christian school I taught at, would say, “What about grace”, when they are being disciplined for their bad behaviour. This appeal to grace to get out of punishment was wrong.

The following is my study on the topic as part of my spiritual growth.

1. The typical definition of grace that most Christians use is – **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**.
2. It is demonstrated by Father's mercy towards us as sinners by sending his Son as a sacrifice for us, even though we didn't deserve it.
3. Ephesians 2:18 – “By grace we have been saved...” This is the usual reference that we quote to exemplify grace.
4. If you bring into the grace equation: (i) Father's love for us as sons; and (ii) Jesus' love for us as his beloved; and if you also bring in (iii) the Kingdom community; and if you bring in (iv) the original purposes of Father to provide a bride for his son; & (v) the Son's desire to provide many sons for Father, the Grace picture starts to expand and take on a fuller meaning.
5. John 1:14 – Says that Jesus came “full of grace and truth”. So grace is a characteristic – a characteristic exhibited by Jesus as a man here on Earth, not as Jesus the member of the Trinity. Grace is therefore more than just the fact that we are saved from God's wrath by Jesus' sacrifice.
6. John 1:17 – Says, “Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”.
7. Notice the order of these 2 words – Grace 1<sup>st</sup> and then truth. Holy Spirit was always specific in his inspiration when scripture was being penned.
8. The order of words in scripture needs to be noted and heeded.
9. Eg – When Jesus spoke to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was in petition with Father said, “Watch and pray; lest you fall into temptation”. The primary directive there was to watch, not to pray.
10. The spiritual law therefore is that praying should accompany watching – not the reverse.
11. Grace and truth came through Jesus. The emphasis by Holy Spirit is on grace first, and truth second.
12. The experience of Christendom shows that when these 2 are put in the reverse order, people become unbalanced.
13. 2 Peter 3:18 – Admonishes us to “grow in the grace of our Lord”. This is about our growth, not God's actions.
14. Hebrews 12:28, 29 – Says “Let us have grace to serve God”. Again it's about us not God.
15. Grace originates from Godly love, otherwise it's just benevolence.
16. Grace's companions are humility, a soft heart, and forgiveness.
17. Godly humility, is not weakness that masquerades as humility. It is something tangible – something you can actually feel.
18. You know when you're in the presence of someone full of grace – it's something of the character of God that flows out of them.
19. Jesus the man had this. John chapter one says so. People could detect it in him.

So I asked Father to show me what I needed to know about grace. I wanted his knowledge of grace because grace originates with him. Here's what he showed me:

1. So...if we are to grow in grace, what are the character traits that should develop in us. If we allow Father to build grace in us, these are his characteristics which should flow out from us:
  - Grace wants to.....forgive, because we are forgiven.
  - Grace wants to.....nurture and support, rather than judge or condemn.
  - Grace wants to.....uphold the right and it loves righteousness.
  - Grace wants to.....esteem and honour others.
  - Grace wants to.....defend others.
  - Grace wants to.....pay back evil with good.
  - Grace wants to.....overpay an account or debt.
  - Grace wants to.....forgive all and release others from reparation.
  - Grace wants to.....freely walk the 'extra mile'.
  - Grace wants to.....freely turn the 'other cheek' (allow for one to be insulted).
  - Grace wants to.....bring out the best in others.
  - Grace looks for.....the good in all people.
  - Grace desires to.....edify and lift others up.
  - Grace doesn't.....demand retribution.
  - Grace leaves.....justice to Jesus.
  - Grace sees.....hope for others.
  - Grace is.....self-sacrificing.
  - Grace is.....restorative.
  - Grace.....releases others.
  - Grace.....responds, rather than reacts.
2. Operating in grace is not just being merciful. It's about having the nature of the triune God flowing through us to others.
3. This grace comes from being molded and shaped by the hand of the Lord – it can't be faked. Everyone can see when it is fake.
4. For Christian homes to be places full of grace, each parent needs to submit to the hand of the Lord, desiring him to change them, and allowing him to make changes in them – from the inside-out.
5. The results will be overwhelming for the Kingdom and *ekklesia*.

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