

GROW

AN SMBS SERIES

Lesson 8 – The Right Strength



Few concepts today are as misunderstood as grace. Ironically, grace often becomes an excuse for a lack of spiritual growth, with grace even becoming a way for people to hide and excuse their sin. Rather than being grieved by their sin, people simply shrug their shoulders and praise God that it's all covered by his grace, only to go and sin again. Abusing grace is nothing new; however, it's as old as the gospel itself. Paul confronts the readers of the epistle of Romans with this kind of thinking, and then denies it in the strongest terms possible (Romans 6:1-2). Both in Paul's times and in ours, people tend to misunderstand **what grace is, what it does, how to get it, and what it requires**. Today we will seek to answer those four questions as we take a look at this critically important part of the renewal and growth process.

THE _____ OF GRACE – WHAT GRACE _____

1. **A _____ of favor** – Grace means that God treats us kindly when he should treat us harshly. The Greek word for grace is sometimes used of people showing favor to other people, such as in Acts 2:47 or Luke 2:52. Because of our sins, we stand before God deserving condemnation and rejection, yet God looks at us and favors us when by all accounts he shouldn't.
2. **Divine _____ (i.e. God's help)** – God's kind regard for us results in his giving us help or strength when we need it. The classic example of this comes when Paul faced a trial so hard he didn't think he could make it and asked God three times to remove it. God's response was "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace here is clearly synonymous with power or ability to live life the way we need to.

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THE _____ OF GRACE – WHAT GRACE _____

1. **Grace _____ us (2 Thessalonians 2:16).**
God's favorable position towards us when he should wipe us off the face of the earth ought to be a source of great encouragement, motivating and inspiring us in our battle against sin.
2. **Grace inspires _____ (Ephesians 1:6-7).**
Ephesians 1 is a glorious poem about all that God has done for us in Christ, yet this was done "for the praise of his glorious grace." Meditating on God's disposition of favor richly blessing us ought to create within us a desire to love and worship him in response.
3. **Grace motivates _____ (1 Peter 1:13).**
In 1 Peter 1:13 the author tells us to "set [our] hope fully on the grace that will be brought" to us at Christ's second coming. This is done while "preparing [our] minds for action and leads in verses 14 and 15 to holy living.
4. **Grace _____ us (Titus 2:11-14).**
God's grace trains us to renounce a sinful lifestyle and to live "self-controlled, upright, and godly lives." The word for "training" means essentially "child-rearing." Grace wants to make us is into fully functioning, Christ reflecting spiritual adults.

THE _____ OF GRACE – _____ TO GET IT

1. _____ gives us grace (Acts 20:32).
2. _____ gives us grace (Hebrews 4:16).
3. _____ gives us grace (Ephesians 4:29).

Future lessons will examine these three means in greater depth.

THE _____ FOR GRACE – WHAT IT _____

God's grace, in the sense of his favor, is free and unmerited or it wouldn't be grace (Romans 11:6). But, the New Testament is clear that if we want God's grace, as in his enabling power to live rightly, there is a prerequisite. We must be _____. Both James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 tell us that "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

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