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5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Understanding Grace

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
(John 1:17)

It was expected of God’s anointed King (the Messiah) that He would deliver His people from their enemies and give knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins (Luke 1:71-77). The means of accomplishing this task, in the scriptures, is called “grace.”

“Grace,” is the free, unmerited, undeserved favor of God toward the undeserving and the ill-deserving. It is not merely that we didn’t deserve good, we actually deserved evil, and in the place of evil God offers us good. The only explanation for this is grace. There is nothing in ourselves for which we can find any reasons for God’s offer of love, mercy and favor, it is God’s own grace that causes Him to do it.

There are several great facts about the grace of God. First of all, it’s free. It can never be earned. No one ever earns the grace of God (Romans 11:6). Secondly, it is sovereign or independent. God is entitled to do whatever He wills with His grace. He owes no one any account or explanation of His grace. The gospel really is a manifestation of His grace (Acts 20:24), the free unmerited favor toward those who didn’t deserve favor, but did deserve judgment and condemnation. Most religious people think they must do something to earn God’s grace and even worse, they think they have done something that has earned them God’s grace. They are totally wrong in both respects. Most religious church goers think because they’ve sat so long in church or Sunday school that God owes them some grace, He doesn’t. God will faithfully reward good, but that’s not grace. Grace is on a whole different plane, we must be willing to humble ourselves and accept it without trying to be good enough to receive it.

There are certain facts about grace that are clearly revealed in the New Testament. First of all, grace has only one channel, it is Jesus Christ. God offers grace to no one in any situation apart from Jesus Christ (John 1:17; 14:6). Secondly, grace is offered to only one kind of person, that is the humble (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Luke 18:13-14). Thirdly, there is only one means by which grace is appropriated and that is faith. Ephesians 2:8 states,

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8)

Even the faith is given you by God, so you can’t even boast of that. So God offers you grace, only through Jesus Christ. It is offered to the humble and it is appropriated only

by faith. Having made a little study of the word “grace” [charis], we are now in a position to understand the word “charisma”, which is simply the word for “grace” [charis] with the two letters “ma” added on. The effect of adding on these two letters is to make a definite specific noun out of a general abstract noun. “Grace” is essentially what we call an abstract noun, but “charisma” is grace made definite, specific, and effective. It is some particular form, operation or manifestation of the grace of God. “Charis” is grace, but “charisma” is grace made specific, made available in a certain way, in a certain form, in a certain operation. Normally “charisma” is translated “gift”, but in two instances, it’s translated “free gift” (Romans 5:15-17). There are seventeen instances where the word “charisma” is used in the New Testament.

One of the first places that “charisma” is used in the New Testament is in Romans 5:17.

“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17)

I want to point out to you that the free gift that Paul speaks about here is “righteousness.” It is tremendously significant that the first actual specific form of grace mentioned in the New Testament is “righteousness.” Again, I find that the majority of professing Christians fail to realize that we are offered righteousness as a gift. We cannot earn it or work for it (Romans 11:6). It is offered freely as a gift through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24). Any other righteousness, other than Jesus Christ’s, is too low of a level. The only righteousness that will admit us into the kingdom of heaven is the righteousness of God, offered to us as a gift through Jesus Christ.

The first thing that God does when we humble ourselves to approach Him for mercy, is to make us righteous (John 14:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21). The tax-collector in Luke 18:13, *“would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”* The scripture goes on to tell us that this man went to his home justified, righteous, forgiven, just as if he had never sinned (Luke 18:14). I think the majority of Christians have never grasped this fact. One thing the devil fights against as powerfully as anything else, is the person that realizes that he has been made righteous as a gift. The devil will keep you by any measure he can, in some measure under guilt and condemnation and keep you feeling very religious about it at the same time. The majority of people would feel almost embarrassed or presumptuous to call themselves righteous, because they think they have to earn it. The scripture emphasizes that it is a grace gift. You either receive it as a gift or you just don’t have it (Romans 5:17; Galatians 2:21).

(Adapted from Derick Prince - Gifts of the Holy Spirit)

Questions

1 “Grace,” is the free, unmerited, undeserved favor of God toward the:

- A. good and faithful
- B. undeserving and the ill-deserving
- C. blameless and mature

2 Read Romans 11:6.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” - Romans 11:6

Grace can:

- A. be earned
- B. never be earned
- C. be worked for

3 Read Romans 9:15.

“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” - Romans 9:15

God owes no one any account or explanation of His grace.

True or False

4 Read Acts 20:24.

*“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”
- Acts 20:24*

The gospel really is a manifestation of God’s grace.

True or False

5 Read Romans 3:24.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” - Romans 3:24

We are justified [made righteous] freely as an act of God's:

- A. holiness
- B. justice
- C. power
- D. grace

6 Read Romans 9:14.

*“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”
- Romans 9:14*

When God gives man what he deserves, that is an act of:

- A. justice
- B. compassion
- C. grace
- D. mercy

7 Read Romans 4:4 (NIV).

“Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation” - Romans 4:4 (NIV)

Read Romans 9:15.

“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” - Romans 9:15

When God gives man what he does not deserve, that is an act of:

- A. justice
- B. his power
- C. grace

8 Read Romans 3:22.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:” - Romans 3:22

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” - 2 Corinthians 5:21

What kind of righteousness does God offer to those who believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

- A. the righteousness of man
- B. the righteousness of God
- C. the righteousness of the Pharisee's

9 Read Romans 5:17.

“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” - Romans 5:17

Those that receive abundance of grace, also receive righteousness as a:

- A. gift
- B. debt to be paid
- C. hope for the future

10 Read Ephesians 2:5, 8-9.

“⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.” - Ephesians 2:5, 8-9

No one will ever be saved except by the grace of God.

True or False

Answer Key

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True

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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