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Things Grace Does

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Many know that grace is connected with salvation. Even so, it seems that many today have a very narrow view of God's grace. People frequently think it is unconditional, think that once it is received it can never be forfeited, and think that grace has nothing to do with doctrine. But these common beliefs (and others) are wrong. Let us look at some things the Bible says that God's grace does or is connected with.

GRACE TEACHES. So says, Titus 2:11-12, "For the **grace** of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **instructing** us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts..." The word "instructing" is Strongs # 3811 and means to train, educate, discipline (including punishment), chastise, instruct, and learn. It is common for people to view grace as something far removed from doctrine, much less from "discipline", punishment or chastisement. It may, therefore, be very hard for some to understand how God's grace can possibly be connected to such "negative" things.

Consider this - God's grace instructs us to deny ungodliness & worldly lusts. God's grace also instructs concerning consequences for sin, including brotherly attempts to correct and bring repentance. This is how grace "disciplines" or "chastises" us. Read Hebrews 12 about the "chastening of the Lord". See that those that God loves He chastises, refines & corrects. He does this so that they will repent and be better, rather than persisting in sin and ending up in Hell. Now, isn't that gracious of God to deal so patiently with us? As it is written, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." (Ps. 103:10)

GRACE DIVIDES & OFFENDS. "Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto **the word of his grace**, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. **But** the multitude of **the city was divided**; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. **And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them**, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached **the gospel**." (Acts 14:1-7) Here

we read of the instructive grace of God, the word of His grace.

Since God's grace brings salvation, we would think that everyone would be willing to receive His instructions. Yet, as we see in Acts 14, some do not agree with what God's word says. In fact, sometimes people get so upset that they become divided and even try to harm those who speak "the word of His grace". Hard to imagine? Maybe, but it is true. In fact, this is seen time and again in the New Testament.

If we do not understand why grace offends some, then perhaps we do not yet have the correct understanding of what grace is according to the Bible...

GRACE PRODUCES FAITH. Acts 18:27 says that Apollos "helped them much which had **believed through grace**:" (Acts 18:27). Since grace is instructive, educational and is manifested as "the word of His grace", it will naturally lead to & produce faith. This is exactly what Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing" and "hearing by the word of God." God's gracious word is the source and ground of correct faith. We may "believe" many things, and believe them sincerely; **but** if it is not founded & grounded in God's word, then it is incorrect faith and contrary to God's grace.

GRACE DWELLS IN US. "Let **the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16) Since we have seen that God's grace teaches & instructs, notice where the Lord's word is to dwell & reside. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly". God's word is to fill our thoughts, guide our judgments, teach us the way, and to fill us so thoroughly that we overflow with songs and spiritual hymns and grace (gratitude). Does God's instructive grace fill your inner being?

GRACE RESISTS FALSE DOCTRINE. "Be **not** carried about **with divers and strange doctrines**. For it is a good thing that the heart be **established with grace**; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." (Heb. 13:9) Many today think that "doctrine" doesn't matter that much. Many think that we may hold different doctrinal beliefs, but that we should all get along anyway. Yet, this passages say that "different and foreign doctrines" are **not** what we are to be carried about by. Instead, God's instructive grace will **establish** us in the Truth and help us to resist being led astray by false doctrine. For example, God's gracious word instructs us about meats, saying that all meats are clean (Rom. 14:14). Thus, when someone says that certain meats are spiritually unclean we are able to resist that different and foreign doctrine **because we know the Truth**. Another example is when people "justify" various forms of adultery. Knowing the God's instructive grace equips us with Truth so that we may properly resist being led into sin & reject false doctrine.

GRACE HAS CONDITIONS. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to **grace**; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of **the faith of Abraham**, who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4:16). Salvation is by grace through faith. And the faith described here that saves is the kind that Abraham had. What kind of faith did Abraham have? One that had "steps" to it (Rom. 4:12).

Note another passage: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Eph 6:24) To whom is grace applied here? Yes, grace is available to all mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2); but who are those who actually become partakes of it and are benefited by it? Those who sincerely **love** the Lord. What did Jesus say shows true love for Him? "**If** ye love me, ye will **keep** my commandments." (John 14:15) and "**If** ye **keep** my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10). Clearly, these statements express conditions.

GRACE CAN BE ABUSED. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness**, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4) This one doesn't need much explanation. Some abuse God's grace by saying it allows them to commit sin and still be right with God. Such is **not** God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not stand in it or remain stedfast in it? What if, for example, we give in to a "strange doctrine", such as one that claims "by God's grace" to allow what is in reality a sexual sin? If we are not remaining in Grace, but rather living in sin - will we remain saved?

As Paul later writes, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Rom. 6:15). He then goes on to state that what we do is what we are. If we do sin, we are sinners. If we do righteousness, we then serve God. Paul warned the Corinthians of the same danger, saying, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. 6:1) God's grace can be received in vain. We can turn our back on it & depart from it. All its benefits and blessings can be lain aside.

Impossible you say? Then what of : "I marvel that ye are so soon **removed from him** that called you into the **grace** of Christ unto **another gospel**" (Gal. 1:6). If we are **removed** from God who called us by the gospel into the grace of Christ, are we still saved? Also "**Christ is become of no effect unto you**, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are **fallen from grace**." (Gal. 5:4) If Christ is "become" of no effect to us and we are "fallen" from grace, are we still saved? And, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted **the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified**, an unholy thing, **and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace**?" (Heb 10:29) Can a blood sanctified person turn their back on the

blood & disregard it? Can a blood sanctified person despise the Spirit of grace by returning to sin? So says the Bible. And if we do, will we still be saved?

There are many other things grace does, but space is running out. In summary, Grace involves warfare with Satan (Rom. 16:20), does not always remove physical troubles, but does help us glorify & serve God anyway (2 Cor 12:9). Grace should motivate us to labor more abundantly (1 Cor. 15:10). Grace comforts us & gives us good hope (2 Thess. 2:16). Grace is something we must choose to be strong in (2 Tim. 2:1). Truly, God's grace is "manifold" or diverse in character (1 Pet. 4:10). There are many qualities to God's grace, and all too frequently people have a narrow & mistaken view. May we all be diligent to better understand the word of His grace, the instructions which promote godliness and warns against error & disobedience. May we be strong in His grace, steadfast and growing. Indeed, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Rev. 22:21)

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Marilyn Poteet-Langford (Tests), **Johanna Fletcher**, **Othena Kinnard** (Staying with her son), **Jo Miller**, **Wesley Geer** (Life Care 316), **Mag Bumbalough**, **Thelma Cunningham**, **Mary Cox**, **Monie Petty** (Breathing difficulties), **Dave Poteet**, **Joshua & Misty Poteet**, **Dorris Williams**, **Robert & Betty England**, **Ed Williams** (Heart blockages), **Joe Smith**, **Lydia Poe**, **Mike Tenpenny**, **Thelma Klein**, **DeLeesa Price** (expecting) and **Alisa Fletcher** (expecting), **Kenley Streeval**. Also, **Reba Jones** (Dorris Williams' niece), **Jackie Tindle** (cancer, relative of the Sims), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey**, **Kitty Mahan** (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), **Dwayne Williams** (Dorris William's son), **Paul Grissom**, **Carl Williams** (Ed's brother), **Teddy Sims**.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. April 28 & May 12, 26
- **Door To Door** - Every Tuesday @ 6pm.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. April 29.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **GM** - Raymond Castillo, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday Bible Study	9 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6 pm
Wednesday Bible Study	7 pm

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