

Pastor Rick Countryman has made this statement on the subject of God's grace: *"Perhaps there is no word in the Bible more precious than grace."*

The Bible teaches we are not only saved by grace, but we also live by grace every day of our lives. However, most of us tend to base our personal relationship with God on our performance instead of on His grace. In this sense, we live by works rather than by grace.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

WHAT IS GOD'S GRACE?

I'm sure many of you have heard the acronyms: **"God's Riches At Christ's Expense"** or **"Gifts Received At Christ's Expense."** While both of these are true, neither really adequately describes the full scope of what "God's grace" means from a biblical viewpoint. **Grace** is God's free and unmerited favor shown to guilty sinners who deserve only judgment. It is God holding out His hand of fellowship to people who are in rebellion against Him.

Grace stands in direct opposition to any supposed worthiness or performance on our part. There is never a "works + grace" relationship with Him.

Let's look at a couple of Scriptures to get a handle on this concept:

Romans 11:6 / Philippians 1:6

God's grace in the Old Testament:

Genesis 6:8 / Esther 7:3

God's grace in the New Testament:

Romans 3:23-31 / 1 Corinthians 1:4 / 2 Corinthians 8:9

Additional verses to look up on your own:

Romans 4:4; 5:15, 17, 20-21 / Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:5, 8

Colossians 1:6 / 2 Timothy 2:1 / Titus 3:7

MERCY

God's mercy restrains Him from giving us what our sins deserve.

God expects us to show others the same mercy we have experienced from Him.

How do the following verses help us understand mercy so that we can exercise it in our lives?

Psalms 86 / 1 John 4:7-11 / Romans 3:23 / John 3:16-17

DISCUSSION

Can you think of a good reason why understanding the concept of God's Grace is important to how you live your life?

Is there a difference between God's grace as expressed in the Old Testament as opposed to the New Testament?

DIGGING DEEPER

This next week, review the verses we discussed in this session on mercy and the grace of God and complete the following:

In your own words, how would you explain the concept of God's grace to a new believer?

Think about your current practices when it comes to showing mercy. List 2 to 3 things you can do to make showing mercy a priority in your walk as a disciple of Christ.

Ask God to develop an attitude of mercy in you.

DAILY LIFE

Memorize this week:

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Titus 3:5

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy"