

**Lessons
of
Grace**



By

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Chapters

Grace Living 3

Grace Doing 7

Grace Walking 10

Grace Loving 16

Grace Living

God has called Christians to a special way of living. It's different than anything else on earth. It's a way of thinking and acting and reacting that is truly one-of-a-kind in the world. It's not easy. In fact, it's not something human beings can even do without God. We need Him to teach us how to live this unusual life.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.” Titus 2:11-15

God's Grace is a Holy Teacher. God knows we have lessons to learn and His Wonderful and Precious Grace is our teacher. Paul explains the lessons clearly to Titus:

- to say “No” to ungodliness
- to say “No” to worldly lusts
- to live soberly, righteously and godly lives in the present age

The first thing to notice about the lessons of Grace is that they deal with real life. Paul is not presenting a theoretical theology here. He's not pontificating from an ivory tower as one untouched by reality. He's dealing with what every believer faces every day of their lives. We live in a world filled with ungodliness and sinful passions. Grace teaches us to say "no" to both.

"Ungodliness" is *asebeian*. It comes from the word *aseben*, which means "without worship." It meant to be "godless, without fear and reverence of God." A "godless" person is one who behaves in a way that is opposite of what the fear of God demands. The "ungodly" are wicked and immoral people. They reject God and His authority. They do as they please. The "ungodly" are concerned only with their will and not the Will of God. Paul tells Titus that Grace teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness.

Grace teaches us to say "Yes" to God's Will. It teaches us that what God wants is the best thing for us and that's what we should do. It means placing God first in our lives and saying "No" to thoughts that we know better than God. Grace teaches us to love and respect God for that is the beginning of Wisdom. Anything less takes us away from the full and beautiful relationship we can have with Him.

The more you understand and love a person and respect them for who and what they are brings you closer to them. The same is true with God. We are as close to God as we can be because Christ is "in" us and we are "in" Christ. God wants us to enjoy that intimacy in our relationship to Him. Grace teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness

because it comes between our growing in love and intimacy with the Great God of Eternity. Grace will always lead us toward a deeper love of and devotion to God. We cannot grow in the direction of God when we're growing in "ungodliness." The two oppose each other. God opposes "ungodliness." So must we.

"Worldly lusts" is *kosmikas epithumias*. "Worldly" is that which pertains to this world: the world you and I live in today. "Lusts" is a strong desire. It can be either good or bad. In this context, the passion is for that which pertains to **this** world, rather than **God's** world. Grace teaches us to be passionate about the things of God and say "No" to being passionate for the things of this world. Does that mean Christians shouldn't work or buy a home or invest in the stock market or get nice things for their children? No. Grace teaches us to put our passions in the proper order.

Our first passion should be for Christ. God tells us how to use our passions properly. He wants us to live for Him. He wants us to reach out to a world starving for His Grace and Love and tell them about Christ, the Lover of our Souls. God knows that our life is eternal and that giving ourselves to that which is eternal is the best way to live.

God does not live in a vacuum. He understands our life. He knows what we do. He knows our needs and desires. He knows our wants and dreams. He doesn't ask us to live in a vacuum either. He tells us to live a godly life before our families. He tells husbands to love their wives. He tells wives to love their husbands. He tells parents to love their children and children to love their parents. He tells employees to

work hard for their employers and be examples of God's Love and Grace in the workplace. He tells employers to treat their employees fairly and with kindness. He tells Christians to behave gently around non-believers and be light and salt in their neighborhoods and communities.

Grace teaches us how to use our passions in every area of our days and nights to influence others for God's purposes. God is the most balanced Being in the universe and His Grace teaches us how to be balanced as people who live on earth and are seated in the heavenlies.

Grace Doing

Paul tells Titus that Grace teaches us “to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” Grace begins by teaching us what “not” to do. Then it teaches what to do instead.

“Soberly” is *sophronos*. The word comes from *sophron*, which comes from *soos*, which means “sound,” and *phre*, which means “understanding.” It carries the idea of being of a sound mind. A sound understanding of what’s right and wrong, real and unreal, proper and improper leads to soberness and self-control. Dr. Vine wrote this about *sophronos*: “it suggests the exercise of that self-restraint that governs all passions and desires, enabling the believer to be conformed to the mind of Christ.” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

Self-control is one of the greatest lessons parents can teach their children. It is the great lesson God’s Grace will teach Christians. We must control ourselves. Lack of self-control has led to some of the darkest days in the lives of Christians, their families and churches. Most of us have witnessed the damage the lack of self-control has caused in the Christian community. How we need God’s Grace to teach us quickly before the Body of Christ loses its power to demonstrate God’s Love to the lost and dying around us. How we need to understand Christ “in” us, the hope of glory. We must pray every day that Grace will teach us “self-control.” We can use our passions fully for God when we learn to control the passions for self.

“Righteously” is *dikaios*. It comes from the word *dik*. Ancient Greeks understood the meaning to be expected behavior or conformity to the imposed standard of another with a prescribed punishment for nonconformity. A “righteous” person is one who conforms to what is right and just. Grace teaches us to conform to what God says is right and just. God is our Authority. He established the standards. He explained the standards. He governs those standards and stands as the only Judge of those standards. God determines what is right and wrong. No one else can do that. No one.

God uses human beings to explain God’s standards and even enforce them at times, but no one can stand as God in our lives. Good laws are those laws that are based on God’s standards and God’s judgment of what is right and what is wrong. Good leadership is leadership that is based on God’s standards for leadership and His judgment of what is right and wrong. Grace stands ready at every moment to teach us the lesson of being “upright.” Grace uses God’s Word to instruct us in His righteousness and justice. Christ “in” us uses His Grace to lead us where He wants us to be.

“Godly” is *eusebos*. It comes from *eu*, which means “well,” and *sebomai*, which means “to be devout.” We are “godly” because we are “in” Christ and He is “in” us. We are the “righteousness” of God in Christ. That is our position in Christ. Christ “in” us will show us how to live a “godly” life. Christ teaches us how to behave in accordance with who we are in Him. Christ shows us how to wake up in the morning thinking about how to please God that day. Christ shows us how to go through our day looking for each new opportunity

that arises to please God. Christ shows us how to go to bed at night reflecting on how we pleased God that day and how we might please Him tomorrow.

“Godliness” is **not** what we do when we enter the church building on Sunday. It’s what we do Friday and Saturday night when we’re out with friends. It’s what we do in the private moments when no one else sees us. It’s what we do at work and school and in our home. It’s the way we live every moment of our lives. “Godliness” is an attitude that reflects the Face of God in our thoughts and actions. “Godliness” is our way of life. It comes from our relationship with the God Who lives “in” us.

These are Lessons of Grace. This is what God would have us do while we’re on earth. He wants us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly lusts. He wants us to say “Yes” to living soberly, righteously and godly lives in this present age.

Grace Walking

It's important to remember that what we're doing today is in light of something far greater than what we see now. We're living our sober, righteous and godly lives while we **wait** for Christ in us to take us to Heaven. What do we do while we wait? Jesus gave Himself for us "to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Our time of waiting should be taken up with an eagerness to do what is good. That's where our passions should flow. That's what should drive us. "Doing good" is the result of the Lesson of Grace! Be eager to learn it.

1. Redeem the time!
2. Walk in love!
3. Love your wife!
4. Submit to your husband!
5. Be strong in the Lord!
6. Put on the whole armor of God!
7. Set your affection on things above!
8. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts!
9. Continue in prayer!
10. Let your speech be always with grace!
11. Do all things without murmurings and disputings!
12. Press toward the mark!
13. Be imitators of God!
14. Abstain from fornication!
15. Study to show yourself approved unto God!

16. Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace!
17. Preach the Word!
18. Reprove, rebuke, exhort!
19. Be alert and self-controlled!
20. Encourage one another and build each other up!
21. Be followers together of me!
22. Rejoice evermore!
23. Pray without ceasing!
24. Abstain from all appearance of evil!
25. Warn them that are unruly!
26. Comfort the faint-hearted!
27. Support the weak!
28. Be patient toward all men!
29. In everything give thanks!
30. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Obviously the Apostle Paul was a man of action! He used more present and future tense verbs in the active voice than any other writer in the New Testament. Look at these active verbs from the list above:

**Redeem! Walk! Love! Submit! Be! Put! Set! Let rule! Continue!
Do! Press! Abstain! Study! Follow! Preach! Reprove! Rebuke!
Exhort! Encourage! Build! Rejoice! Pray! Warn! Comfort!
Support! Give! Grow!**

The message of Paul's letters is clear: there is a big job to be done, so let's do it!

Christians should be busy people. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) **Good works** are why we're here. It's what God wants us to do with our time, talents, gifts, and personal resources. Imagine what would be accomplished if every Christian worked hard to serve God and others!

Let's be more specific. Imagine what would be accomplished if every Christian worked hard to serve God and the Gospel of God's Grace. The possibilities are wonderful! More people saved; more churches established; more souls encouraged; more homes united; more lives changed; more problems solved; more questions answered. Most importantly, Christ would be glorified!

Many believers want to serve God, but years of failure, hard knocks, and poor direction have just about wiped them out. Pastors spend a lot of their time helping Christians fallen by the wayside. That's part of a shepherd's ministry, but there's so much more to do. Plus, it would be great if most of the "wayside" Christians were strong and vital and involved in meeting the needs of others. Paul writes that pastor-teachers are given to the churches:

"...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the

faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” Eph. 4:12-13

There’s that word again. Works! God wants His people prepared for **work**. That’s a major reason why God created us.

I believe much of the sadness and impotency of Christianity comes from lack of involvement in “works of service.” The Bible appeals to church leaders to prepare or “equip” the people for fulfilling service. Notice the benefits:

“... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4:14-16

Listen to what the Apostle Paul is telling us. We want our families and churches built up. We want unity. We want Christians to know more. We want Christians to become mature. We want Christians to reach the full measure of perfection found in Christ. Paul tells us how to do it! Church leaders are to prepare, equip, and train Christians for their works of service. Sounds simple. So, why don’t we do it?

You say, “I want to work. I want to serve God. I want to do great things for God. But where do I start?”

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Tim. 2:15 (KJV)

Find out what God wants you to do, then do it! Too many of us are trying to make things happen before we even know what’s going on. Much of the “work” of Christians today isn’t what God has for us to do. We’re barking up the wrong trees. Time spent in careful study is time saved from the failure of spinning our wheels and knocking our heads against the wall.

Talk to others about God’s Love and Grace. Look around you. Count the number of people you know who are unsaved. Each of us must know at least five unsaved people. Some are in our own family. Others are neighbors, friends and fellow workers. Imagine the impact of every Christian in the world explaining the Grace of God to at least five people this month!

Walk in love toward fellow believers. Care for them. Pray for them. Support them. Encourage them. What a ministry awaits every believer who shows God’s love to a brother or sister! Each of us knows at least five Christians. Imagine the impact of every Christian in the world reaching out to care for at least five fellow-believers this year!

Good works are as close as a visit, the telephone, a letter, an email, a smile, a Bible study, or a prayer. Get involved. Use your talents and gifts wherever you live; whatever you do. Pray for Christian leaders. Jump into the middle of the battle and wage holy war side by side with other believers. Paul often describes Christians as “fellow workers” and “workers together.” We need God and we need each other.

I left the best for last! Get to know God better. Love Him. Praise Him. Serve Him. Obey Him. Enjoy Him. He saved us to have fellowship with Him. Make Him your number one priority.

Let’s go over our “Believer’s Action List” once more:

1. Study God’s word correctly (rightly divide).
2. Talk to others about God’s Love and Grace.
3. Walk in love toward fellow believers.
4. Help others grow.
5. Get to know God better.

Remember Paul’s own example. He was a man of action! Let’s be **people of action!**

Grace Loving

Jesus died for our sins because He **loves** us. That's what the "grace" of God led to for God the Son. Jesus died sacrificially, in our place, then was buried. What does His Burial mean to us? It means we are dead to sin and were buried with Him. When you think of Jesus hanging on the Cross, remember that our "old man" was crucified with Him. Why? That the body of sin might be done away with; that we should no longer be slaves to sin. Death to sin is our freedom. We are freed from sin because of our Lord's Death and Burial. We are no longer slaves of sin. We are alive to God through Christ!

Why are we alive to God? Because of His Love and Grace. But that doesn't mean we should continue in sin. On the contrary. We are called to a new life; a new way of living – newness of life. We can live that new life because death and sin no longer dominate your life as they did before you were saved from your sins. What does that mean from day to day? We are no longer under laws and rules and regulations. We are under the Grace of God. That impacts everything we think, feel, say, and do. We do not let sin reign in our bodies. We do not obey the lusts of the flesh. We do not use our body as an instrument of unrighteousness to sin. Instead, we present our body to God. Every part of our body should be an instrument of righteousness. Why? Because sin no longer dominates us. We are under the amazing and wonderful Grace of Almighty God.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Romans 6:1-14

“And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 1:14

“Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” 2 John 1:3

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