**Do You Understand Grace?**

**Introduction:**

Grace might be the most misunderstood word in all of the Bible. Some believe grace means that it doesn’t matter what you believe – God will accept you. Others believe that grace excuses all sin. Still others say salvation is by grace alone; obedience is not necessary. But what does God’s Word really teach about this all important word?

**Body:**

1. **The Word “Grace”**

* The usual definition of grace is “unmerited favor.” That is probably too narrow a meaning of the word. Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines it as, “That which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard . . . on the part of the bestower, the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds; graciousness, loving kindness, good will.”
* In the time of Homer, it meant “sweetness” or “attractiveness.” It can also include the idea of “rejoicing.”
* In the New Testament, the Greek word is translated by words such as grace, thanks, favor, pleasure, benefit, and joy.
* As we’ve seen, the word has a broad meaning.

1. **What Grace Does/Has Done**

* Grace appeared to all people. (Titus 2:11) “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,” NKJV God’s grace is available to all who are willing to access it through Jesus Christ.
* It instructs. (Titus 2:12) “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” NKJV Grace is connected with knowledge. Teaching is involved. (John 6:45) “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” NKJV Grace only comes about through instruction.
* Grace justifies. (Romans 3:23-25) “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,” NKJV It is a gift from God.
* By grace God revealed His plan for man’s salvation. (Ephesians 3:1-5) “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles – if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:” NKJV
* Grace raises believers to a new life. (Ephesians 2:4-6) “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” NKJV

1. **Grace Includes Obedience**

* Grace does not exclude law. Everyone is subject to the law of Christ. (I Corinthians 9:20-21) “and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;” NKJV This is also called the “Law of faith.”
* Salvation, though, is not by law-keeping. This salvation by works of merit would require perfect obedience to God’s law. If that were possible, there would be no need for the blood of Christ. Therefore, grace must be conditional. Read Romans 6:14-18. “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” NKJV They were servants of sin before they obeyed and became servants of righteousness after they obeyed. Note also that they were freed from sin when they obeyed. God’s grace is only accessible when one obeys the gospel and is raised to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:1-4) “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.” NKJV Recall that it is by God’s grace that we are raised to walk in a new life. [We are made alive.] (Ephesians 2:4-6) “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

This lesson has shown us that God saves man by grace when man obeys by faith.

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