

How to Grow in the Grace of God

2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- *The Bible instructs us to grow in the grace of God, which means we can grow in grace and that we should grow in grace.*
- *Before we can study how to grow in the grace of God we need to ask, “What is the grace of God?”*
- *One definition of grace is God’s unmerited favour.*
- *Using the definition of grace as unmerited favour we can see the difference between mercy and grace.*
- *Mercy is “not receiving what we do deserve” and grace is “receiving what we do not deserve.”*
- *When we say that grace is God’s unmerited favour we then need to ask, “What does unmerited favour actually mean?”*
- *Sometimes when we run out of patience with someone we may say, “I don’t have any more grace for that person.”*
- *Therefore grace enables us to do things we aren’t able to do on our own.*
- *Another definition of grace is, “God working in us and through us to accomplish His purposes.” - Robert Ewing*
- *Grace releases the power of God in our lives not only to see signs, wonders, and miracles take place, but it is the divine power to take us through the process so our souls are conformed into the image of Christ*
- *Therefore, when we say that we don’t have grace for a certain person or situation, what we really mean is that we are lacking the power of God to act, speak, and even think in a Christ-like way.*

John 1:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- *The Law of Moses did not bring about salvation, but it pointed to Jesus Christ who gives both grace and truth so that we can receive salvation and redemption.*
- *Truth is like a compass that points us in the right direction.*
- *Grace is the power to get us to the destination.*
- *Without grace we will not have the strength to fulfill God's will for our lives and we will grow frustrated and hopeless.*
- *Without truth we will not know God's will and we will end up in error and suffer great loss.*

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

- *“the manifold grace of God” – the Greek word for “manifold” is ποικίλος poikilos and it means “of various kinds; multi-coloured”*
- *God's truth is black and white so we clearly know right from wrong. But God's grace is multi-coloured or multi-faceted, so that no matter what we encounter there is an aspect of God's grace to meet us at our point of need and to empower us to be victorious.*
- *The Greek word for grace is χάρις charis and it can mean “to show kindness to someone, favour, goodwill, loving-kindness” and it can indicate an activity in which an individual is kind to someone.*
- *χάρις charis meaning includes the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life including gratitude. Grace produces gratitude and thanksgiving within the heart of the recipient.*
- *χάρις charis comes from the Greek word χαίρω chairō which means “cheerful, calmly happy, joyful” and is used as a salutation meaning, “rejoice, be joyful, God speed.”*
- *Among other benefits, grace produces and releases joy in our lives.*
- *χάρις charis is found 155 times in the New Testament and in the New King James it is translated 128 times as “grace” but is also translated 9 times as “thanks,” 8 times as*

“favour,” 3 times as “credit, 3 times as “gift,” as well as “commendable,” and “benefit.”

Luke 6:32 (NKJV)

³²“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

Luke 6:32 (YLT)

³²and—if ye love those loving you, what grace have ye? for also the sinful love those loving them;

- *It doesn't take God's grace to love those who love us, but it does require the grace of God to love our enemies.*

1 Corinthians 16:3 (NKJV)

³And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

- *Grace is translated three times as “gift.” The gift that the believers were giving to those in need was a manifestation of the grace of God working in the hearts of the givers.*
- *The gift is a picture of grace, because those in need were given something that enabled them to go through whatever situation they faced.*

Luke 2:40 (NKJV)

⁴⁰And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- *Christ did everything by the grace of God.*
- *We will either live by the grace of God or by self-effort.*
- *If we live by the grace of God it will produce the fruit of the Spirit.*
- *If we live by self-effort it will produce the works of the flesh.*
- *Understanding what grace is not.*

Romans 6:1–2 (NKJV)

¹What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

²Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

- *Grace is not license to sin, but is actually the reason why we can resist sin and live holy lives.*
- *If a person trying to excuse his or her sinful choices says, “I am under grace,” then you can respond, “Then good, by God’s grace you can live a holy, pure, and victorious life before God.”*

Luke 4:22 (NKJV)

²²So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

- *Jesus’ words were gracious.*
- *So what does it mean that Jesus words were gracious?*
- *What were Jesus’ gracious words like? His gracious words were not, “Please pass the peanut butter; that robe looks so good on you; my, what a nice haircut you have.”*
- *For us to understand what gracious words are we must remember that grace is the power of God to accomplish His will in and through us.*

Luke 24:32 (NKJV)

³²And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

- *Two very discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus encountered Jesus and Luke records the effect Jesus’ gracious words had on them – “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road ...”*
- *What were those gracious words Jesus spoke to them?*

Luke 24:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

²⁶Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

- *“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” – Jesus’ gracious words were filled with love, but also a rebuke that awakened them out of their unbelief and pointed them to Scripture, so their faith was revived and joy and hope filled their hearts.*
- *Gracious words are words that sometimes may appear harsh, but being motivated by God’s love and wisdom bring life.*

- *The difference between what we are able to do and what we should be able to do is how much grace we need to grow into.*
- *We need to learn how to grow in the grace of God and then walk in that grace.*
- *Some Ways to Release the Grace of God in our Lives.*
- *1. Grace is released by faith.*

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

**⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

- *When we first put our faith in Christ the grace of God was released into our spirits and the most amazing thing happened! We were born again and translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and became children of God!*
- *Every time we exercise our faith and put our trust in Christ it releases the grace of God in our lives and in the circumstances we face.*
- *2. Grace is released by boldly coming before God.*

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- *When we are confident in God's character then neither shame nor discouragement can stop us from calling out to God.*
- *3. Grace is released through expectation and hope.*

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

⁶But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- *When we believe that God will reward us for our diligence to seek Him then grace is released in our lives to pursue Him consistently and wholeheartedly.*
- *4. Grace is released through humility.*

James 4:6 (NKJV)

⁶But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

- *Humility is acknowledging our needs and failures to God, which causes us to be totally dependent upon His grace for our lives.*

James 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- *Humbly confessing our sins, failures, and struggles to a faithful brother or sister in Christ releases the grace of God in our lives so we can overcome temptation.*
- *Sins are like mushrooms – they both grow in the dark.*
- *5. Grace is released through generosity.*

2 Corinthians 9:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

- *Generosity is not defined solely by finances but also by giving our time, energy, forgiveness, and our hearts.*
- *6. Grace is released and perfected through weakness.*

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- *Paul learned to rejoice in his weaknesses, because he realized his weaknesses made him totally dependent upon God. This fully released God’s grace in his life.*

Romans 5:20 (NKJV)

²⁰Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

- *When we feel overcome by temptation God’s grace is extended to us in even greater measure.*
- *7. Grace is released through a greater revelation of Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

- *As we spend time just thinking about Jesus and all He has done for us it will result in God's grace actually being brought to us!*
- *8. Grace is released through edifying words.*

Ephesians 4:29 (NKJV)

²⁹Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

- *The result of our words and conversation should be an impartation of faith, wisdom, encouragement, and hope to ourselves and all who hear us.*
- *9. Grace is released through correct and precise knowledge.*

2 Peter 1:2 (NKJV)

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

- *If we do not understand the Bible correctly then our image of God will be distorted and how we relate to Him will be wrong.*
- *As we study God's Word correctly it will release a greater joy, wonder, and appreciation for God and the salvation we have received through Jesus Christ's sacrifice.*
- *10. Grace is released through fellowshiping and Body ministry.*

2 Corinthians 1:15 (ESV)

¹⁵Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace.

- *As we experience the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit operating through one another; the seven motivational gifts of Romans 12; the five gifts of Christ of Ephesians 4; and the nine fruit of the Spirit, a double portion of God grace is experience in our lives and in His Church.*
- *11. Grace is released through prayer.*

2 Corinthians 1:11 (NKJV)

¹¹you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

- *The Greek word for gift here is χάρισμα charisma and it can mean, "a gift of divine grace."*

- *As we spend time in prayer corporately and individually we release grace in our lives and those for whom we are praying.*
- *You can tell when someone spends time in prayer daily, because grace is released into his or her life and it is evident in all they do.*
- *12. Grace is released by choosing to stir up the grace we have already received.*

2 Timothy 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift (χάρισμα) of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- *The way we stir up or rekindle the grace of God is by using it!*
- *Many people fail to see the gifts and grace God has given them as pertinent to their daily lives, because they do not use them daily.*
- *You only begin to appreciate something when you can see how helpful and useful it is.*
- *Many Christians fail to stir up the grace of God they have already received, and therefore they do not see its true value.*

1 Corinthians 12:31 (NKJV)

³¹But earnestly desire the best gifts (χάρισμα). And yet I show you a more excellent way.

- *“And yet I show you a more excellent way” – Many times Christians don’t seek a greater impartation of the grace of God and live mediocre lives.*
- *13. Grace is released through obedience to God’s Word.*

Isaiah 66:1–2 (NKJV)

¹Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?

²For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the Lord. “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

- *“But on this one will I look” – How tender a thought, that our great God is stirred and mindful of us, when in our contrition and poverty we call out to Him.*
- *“And who trembles at My word” – What a wonderful description of true obedience to God.*

- *When we treat God's Word and the leading of His Spirit with such value and honour that we tremble at His word, it stirs the heart of God toward us and releases His grace in our lives.*
- *So many Christians live powerless and defeated lives, because they fail to fully obey God and their lives are devoid of His grace.*

Points of prayer:

- *If there are people here who have never experienced the grace of God and been born again, today you can come and receive Christ as your personal Saviour.*
- *If there are Christians here who are struggling to have joyful lives, today we can come before His throne of grace with boldness to receive mercy and grace in our time of need.*
- *If there are Christians here who have begun to enjoy God's over abundant grace, we can give thanks and ask Him to help us to enter into a great measure of His grace.*