

## The Grace of God

- *What is grace?*
- *The most common definition of grace is unmerited favour.*
- *The Greek word for grace is χάρις (charis) and it can mean “to show kindness to someone.” It is not merely a gracious disposition, but an expectation of the Lord showing kindness to the recipient of His grace.*
- *The word χάρις (charis) is not only translated as grace, but depending on the context, it is sometimes translated as “thanks; favour; benefit; credit; gift; commendable; gracious.” These translations all allude to the unmerited favour that one receives from God and our response to His grace.*
- *Romans 5:15 is an example of where grace is seen as God’s unmerited favour. Even though we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, through Jesus’ sacrificial death at Calvary we have received God’s grace and were saved. “But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.”*
- *If we define grace as God’s unmerited favour, we can contrast mercy and grace as follows: Mercy is not receiving what we deserve and grace is receiving what we don’t deserve.*
- *There are a number of Greek words that share the same root as χάρις (charis) which reflect and illuminate the meaning and the effects of grace:*
  - *χαίρω (chairō) means, “rejoice, be glad”*
  - *χαρά (chara) means, “joy”*
  - *εὐχαριστία (eucharistia) means “thanksgiving, thankfulness”*
  - *εὐχαριστέω (eucharisteo) means “give thanks”*
- *However, there is another definition for grace which is equally important and which the Bible clearly speaks about. The word grace in classical Greek applied to art, persons, speech, or athletics, as well as to the good fortune, kindness, and power bestowed by the gods upon divine men, moving them to miraculous deeds.*
- *So a second meaning of grace is “God working in and through us to accomplish His purposes.”*
- *Two other Greek words that share the same root as χάρις (charis) and illustrate grace as God’s power working in and through us, are:*

- *χάρισμα (charisma) means “gift.” This Greek word for gift is used in relationship to the gifts that God gives us so that we can serve Him, including the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.*
- *χαρίζομαι (charizomai) means “forgive; give freely.” This speaks about the grace and ability to freely and generously forgive those who have hurt and betrayed us.*
- *Another Greek word that provides insights into the Greek word for grace is ἀχάριστος (acharistos) meaning “ungrateful.” This word signifies a lack of grace - ἀχάριστος. When we lack grace we are ungrateful, unthankful, and discontent and are unable to enjoy anything that God gives us no matter how many blessings He pours out on us.*
- *Apostle Paul recognized that it was God’s grace that empowered him to fulfill the ministry that the Lord had given him. “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:9–10). Paul’s response to God’s grace brought more grace.*

**Luke 1:30–33 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup>Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

<sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

<sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

<sup>33</sup>And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

- *The first time the word “grace” χάρις (charis) is used in the New Testament is found in Luke 1:30 and it is translated as “favour,” but it really exemplifies grace as God’s power moving in and through us to bring forth His purposes.*
- *What could be more glorious or powerful or miraculous than for a virgin to conceive a child, and not just any child, but the Son of God, God incarnate?*
- *It is most fitting that God would introduce the word grace in the New Testament in the context of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being born into the world as a man so that through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection, He would be the redeemer of mankind and He would establish His eternal kingdom. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will*

reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

- *When Mary asked, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” the angel’s response described an aspect of the grace of God, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35).*
- *The grace of God is released in our lives by the Holy Spirit and that is why the Bible exhorts us, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18).*
- *The second time the word “grace” is used in the New Testament is in the context of how Jesus grew and matured. “And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” (Luke 2:40).*

#### John 1:14–17 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ”

<sup>16</sup>And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

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

- *Jesus is described as being “full of grace and truth.” This is a reflection of the time Jesus spent in communion with the Father. As a result, Jesus was filled with truth, knowing, and understanding God’s Word, and grace, the power to fulfill God’s Word.*
- *Jesus’ ministry to us is described as “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Jesus’ earthly ministry is described as being so filled with the grace of God that He could unendingly pour out that grace on all those who were willing to receive.*
- *John 1:17 contrasts Jesus’ ministry to that of Moses’ “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” The Law is holy and just but all it could do was point out our sins and the penalty we faced. The Law did not have the power to either save or change us for it lacked grace. However, through Jesus Christ we received both truth and grace so we can be both saved and changed.*
- *God’s grace is given to us so we can be free, but not free to serve the flesh, but free from the power of sin so we can serve God. “For you, brethren, have been*

called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (*Galatians 5:13*).

- *For us to fully appreciate what is meant by Jesus being filled with grace and that “we have all received, and grace for grace” we need to study His ministry.*
- *When Jesus ministered, His words are described as gracious and produced amazement in those who heard them. “So 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?” (*Luke 4:22*).*
- *What do gracious words sound like? Do they sound like, “What a nice dress you are wearing!” or “I beg your pardon, but could you pass the butter?” or “What a pleasant day it is today.” Those may be pleasant or polite words, but they are not gracious words.*
- *Gracious words are empowered by the Holy Spirit to change lives and bring about God’s purposes.*
- *To gain insights into God’s grace and what gracious words really sound like we need to study the words that Jesus spoke.*
- *After Jesus’ death on the cross His disciples were totally grief stricken and filled with despair and hopelessness. They had failed to understand all that He had taught them about His sacrificial death and His glorious resurrection that would follow.*
- *Luke 24:13-32 describes an event that occurred shortly after His resurrection but before His disciples understood that He was resurrected. Two heart broken and despairing disciples had left Jerusalem and were traveling to a town called Emmaus when along the way they had an encounter with Jesus.*
- *The disciples’ spiritual eyes were not yet opened and they failed to recognize that “this stranger” was actually Jesus. But as they came to Emmaus they earnestly asked Him to stay overnight with them.*
- *As they sat down to break bread the revelation of who this stranger was became apparent. “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” (*Luke 24:30–31*).*
- *The disciples described the effect that Jesus’ gracious words had on them as they journeyed with Him on the road to Emmaus. “And 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?” (*Luke 24:32*).*

- *What did these gracious words that Jesus spoke sound like? “Then He said to them, “**O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe** in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (Luke 24:25-27).*
- *Although Jesus’ words were very strong they were filled with grace and truth. His words were not spoken in anger or frustration but out of love and they brought hope and life.*
- *Gracious words are able to impact and change people’s lives.*
- *It is very clear from Scripture that not only are we able to grow in grace, but we are exhorted and instructed to grow in grace, “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18). Grace and our knowledge of Jesus are linked. As we know Jesus better, we will grow in grace.*
- *The difference between what we are able to do and what we should be able to do reflects how much grace we still lack.*

#### **1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)**

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

- *It is only by God’s grace that we are able to minister in the gifts that He has given us. “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” The gifts we receive from God by His grace can only operate as His grace flows through us.*
- *“as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” When the Bible says that we are to be good stewards of the grace of God it means that God gives us grace so He can use us to minister to others and accomplish His purposes in this world.*
- *“the **manifold** grace of God” The Greek word “manifold” means “various, something that can exist in various forms or varieties.” It also can mean “multicoloured.” Therefore, we can understand that grace comes in various forms to meet our very specific needs at a very specific moment whether it is needing wisdom or healing or any of a variety of different needs.*
- *While truth is black and white, because something is either true or is not true, grace on the other hand is multicoloured because God’s provision of grace is there to meet us wherever we are or whatever we face.*
- *Truth is a compass that points us in the right direction.*

- *Grace empowers us to get to that destination.*
- *Truth is black and white to keep us on course, while grace is multicoloured to meet each need so we can get to our final destination.*

**Luke 6:32–35 (NKJV)**

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

<sup>33</sup>And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

<sup>34</sup>And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.

<sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

- *The Greek word translated as “credit” in Luke 6:32-35 is actually the word “grace” χάρις (charis). If we translate the word χάρις (charis) as grace in Luke 6:32-35 we will see a clearer picture of grace.*

**Luke 6:32-35 (YLT)**

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

33 and if ye do good to those doing good to you, what grace have ye? for also the sinful do the same;

34 and if ye lend to those of whom ye hope to receive back, what grace have ye? for also the sinful lend to sinners—that they may receive again as much.

35 ‘But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward will be great, and ye shall be sons of the Highest, because He is kind unto the ungracious and evil;

- *If we love those who love us, or do good to those who treat us well, or lend knowing we will receive something back, then Jesus asks, “What grace is that?” In other words, we don’t need God’s grace to be nice to those who are nice to us. This is the type of love where there’s nothing to lose and no grace is required.*
- *Verse 35 describes the empowerment we can receive from grace. “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward will be great, and ye shall be sons of the Highest, because He is kind unto the ungracious and evil.” This is the type of love where there is something to lose and great grace is required.*
- *“because He is kind unto the ungracious and evil” God’s grace is able to empower us to respond in a godly manner no matter how dark the circumstances, even when no one else is operating in the grace of God!*

- *The Law of Moses and the Prophets could not give us the grace of God, but pointed to the One who would give us grace through His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” (1 Peter 1:10-11).*
- *Apostle Paul as Timothy’s spiritual father gave him the best advice possible. “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 2:1) We need to be strong and firmly established in the grace of God that is found in Jesus Christ.*
- *How can we grow and be established in the grace of God and see the grace of God released in our lives?*
- *1. Grace is released through faith.*

#### **Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

<sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith” Faith is the conduit through which grace flows.*
- *Fear and doubt block the conduit of faith and when we entertain thoughts of fear or doubt we feel powerless and devoid of God’s grace. However, when we choose to put our trust in God then His grace is released in our lives.*
- *2. Grace is released through boldness.*

#### **Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>Let 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 step forward in confidence and boldness before the throne of grace looking to God for help, His grace is released in our lives.*
- *At the throne of grace we receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- *In contrast to mercy, which we receive immediately, grace is something that we grow in. The more we boldly seek His grace, the more grace we find and the more power and victory we experience.*

**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.**

- *We need to have bold confidence that God is faithful and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. One of the things God will reward us with is more of His grace.*
- *We need to be boldly confident that “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.” (2 Corinthians 9:8).*
- **3. Grace is released through humility.**
- *Humility is an absolute necessity if we want to have the grace of God released in our lives. “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)*
- *The connection between humility and God’s grace is repeated numerous times throughout Scripture. “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” (1 Peter 5:5-6).*
- *The grace of God is released in our lives as we humble ourselves and reach out to others for forgiveness, help, support, and accountability. “Confess 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.” (James 5:16).*

*A heart of humility moves the heart of God more than if we accomplish great feats for Him. “Thus 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? For 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.”** (Isaiah 66:1-2).*

- **4. Grace is released and perfected in weakness.**
- *When Paul asked God three times to take away his “thorn in the flesh,” he received an answer that both delighted and encouraged him. “And 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. Therefore 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.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).*



- *When we turn to God in the midst of our failures, struggles and weaknesses, His grace is there to give us the strength to overcome and be victorious. “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” (Romans 5:20).*
- *However, the converse is also true. When we are feeling strong and self-confident, and stop relying on His grace to sustain us, then we are in danger of falling. “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12).*
- *5. A greater revelation of Christ releases a greater degree of grace.*
- *The clearer the revelation of Jesus Christ, Who He is and all that He has done for us, brings a greater measure of grace into our lives. “Therefore 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.” (1 Peter 1:13).*
- *Jesus asked Peter, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter boldly and confidently stated, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15–16).*
- *Jesus’ response to Peter’s answer showed both the source of the revelation that Peter had received and the grace that is released through this revelation. “Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:17–18).*
- *6. Grace is released as we speak words of life and truth.*
- *Apostle Paul encourages us to speak words that release grace into the lives of those who hear them and he also warns us not to speak words that will tear others down and rob them of grace. “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29).*
- *We need to be conscious of the words we speak and seek wisdom from God as to what to say that will release the grace of God and build others up. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6).*
- *Our heart and words should always resound with a melody of God’s grace. “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.” (Colossians 3:16).*

- *Gracious words impart grace to the hearers. When we speak gracious words not only do those words edify others but we ourselves are being built up and receive grace because we are hearing the very words we are speaking. “The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.” (Proverbs 11:25).*
- *7. Grace and peace are released as our knowledge of God and His Son Jesus increase.*
- *As we study and understand the Word of God more clearly and precisely it will produce a greater degree of confidence and peace in our hearts along with a greater revelation of His grace. “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” (2 Peter 1:2).*
- *Our understanding of the Bible is affected by our level of revelation. Unless we understand the grace of God, when we read the Bible we will hear condemnation and legalism. When we have a correct revelation of God’s love and grace, we will hear hope and encouragement.*
- *8. Grace is released through fellowshiping and through receiving the different ministries in the Body of Christ.*
- *It is through Body Ministry, as we minister to one another, that the grace of God is released in our lives. “Do not neglect the gift (charisma) that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” (1 Timothy 4:14).*
- *Apostle Paul’s desire to visit the different churches was so that the grace of God could be imparted to them in greater measure. “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift (charisma), so that you may be established.” (Romans 1:11).*
- *When we gather together, we are partakers of the grace of God in a special way, even as Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20). Apostle Paul reiterates the idea of collectively experiencing the grace of God, “you all are partakers with me of grace.” (Philippians 1:7).*
- *God gives us grace so we can minister to one another, but if we are isolated, neither grace nor the gifts can operate. “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” (Ephesians 4:7).*
- *9. Grace is released through prayer.*

- *As we make our needs known to God, His grace and peace is released into our lives. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7).*
- *10. Grace is released as we stir up our excitement and our first love for the Lord.*
- *We must stir up or rekindle a zeal for the things God has already imparted to us. “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift (charisma) of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6).*
- *11. Grace is released through thanksgiving and praise and worship.*
- *The word grace is sometimes translated as “thanks” because our response to God’s grace so overflows our hearts that we are not able to contain it. The joy of what His grace has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ can only be expressed with an outburst of thankfulness.*
- *By God’s grace He has rescued us from the fear of death and has given us a glorious victory through Jesus. “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:56-57).*

#### 2 Corinthians 2:14

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

#### 2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

- *12. Grace is released through obedience.*
- *Grace gives us the power to resist sin and to obey God, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:14). When we choose to obey God we will find God’s grace will be there to empower us to actually fulfill our act of obedience.*
- *Just as obedience releases grace in our lives, disobedience and willful sin robs us of God’s grace and weakens us.*
- *Every time someone sins it weakens their will and resolve to do the right thing and to serve God, “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?” (Romans 6:16).*

- *The wonderful news is that if we turn to God in repentance and choose to obey Him then His grace is released in our lives so that we can walk in freedom from sin, “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.” (Romans 6:17-18)*
- *13. Grace is released as we have an earnest desire for a greater release of His grace.*
- *God delights when we want more of Him and more of His grace. “But earnestly desire the best gifts (charisma). And yet I show you a more excellent way.” (I Corinthians 12:31). The Greek word translated as “earnestly desire” means a very strong zeal and deep desire.*
- *The more God’s grace is released in our lives, the more He will reveal to us “a more excellent way.”*
- *If we don’t see our failures and weaknesses, we will not understand nor appreciate our need for God’s grace.*
- *If we fail to grasp the indescribably glorious victory that Christ purchased for us through His sacrificial death at Calvary and resurrection we will fail to fully take hold of the power of God’s grace so we can live an abundant victorious life.*