

### What is GRACE?

Few concepts have been more misunderstood, corrupted and abused by modern Christianity than grace. No one really knows what it is exactly, but everyone knows you need it. Most think it does away with all need to obey the law, but after the last two lessons hopefully you're at least open to the idea that it does not.

On the other hand, I don't think there is a single concept that applies in more areas, to more separate concepts, and helps us to understand and explain more different things about God and the way He works with men than grace.

Grace is very easy to understand, like all truth. In fact, that's one of the tests of truth – if it doesn't make sense, it probably isn't true. There are large subjects which may be complicated, there are small details which may take time to understand or explain, but the fundamental concepts are ALWAYS simple.

**2 Corinthians 11:3** *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ.*

Almost all religions today teach that grace allows you to break the commandments freely. They say because we are “under grace” we can sin with impunity. As far back as the first century they were using the same arguments and used the writings of Paul as proof (**Romans 3:8, 2 Peter 3:16**). Because of this Jude felt it necessary to write to the true church instructing them to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (**Jude 1:3**).

Jude says the faith which had BEEN delivered is being lost, and they have to FIGHT for it! In **verse 4**, he explains that men had crept into the church to DECEIVE people, changing the meaning of GRACE! Changing it into, as Weymouth translates it “an excuse for immorality”.

These men were teaching that grace was an EXCUSE to be immoral! That grace somehow allowed us to sin! Saying that we should “sin the more, that grace may abound”, and that “grace does away with the law”! Sound familiar?

This is not a new teaching. It's been taught for a long time – even back in the time of ancient Israel. Read **Malachi 2:17**. Isn't saying “grace means God loves you, even when you sin” the same thing as saying “**EVERY one that doeth evil IS GOOD in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them**”? How is that statement, so thoroughly condemned by God, different from the modern teaching on grace?

There is an almost identical thought in **Jeremiah 7:8-10**. The priests were teaching that because God LOVED them so much they were DELIVERED from the law! They could now break commandments 8, 6, 7, 9, 1 and 2 and God would overlook their sins! How familiar is that! Look at how Calvin translated that last verse:

**Jeremiah 7:10 (Calvin Bible)** *And come and stand before me in this house, Which is called by my name, and say, "We have been MADE FREE to do all these abominations?"*

And your preacher tells you that you have been MADE FREE FROM THE LAW! While standing in a house CALLED BY GOD'S name! Even in the time of David, they were “making void the law”! (**Psalms 119:126**). And how did Paul answer that? **Romans 3:31**.

The irony of the situation is that everyone on earth understands grace today – EXCEPT where it applies to religion! They properly apply it to license plates and electric bills and overdue library books, but somehow fall short of applying the same simple logic to the workings of God.

## LESSON 5: WHAT IS GRACE?

There is no verse in the entire Bible that says “grace is....” So we are left with seeing what grace *does* to learn the answer. Read **Romans 3:22-25**. Having in the previous lessons thoroughly established the Bible definition of righteousness, and also making it clear that faith is KNOWING you are righteous, we can now understand this passage as it was meant.

Faith comes BY righteousness, it is certain. Yet here Paul speaks of a “righteousness” which comes BY FAITH. What can this be? Surely not a case of the chicken before the egg! We know that faith comes BY righteousness, and Paul – who helped us prove that in the last lesson – here tells us there is **also** a righteousness which comes BY FAITH!

He continues in **verse 23** saying ALL have sinned, but they are ALL “*justified freely BY HIS GRACE*”.

Now the wages of sin is death. The very first time you sinned, God SHOULD have killed you. That is what His law requires. Yet here you are! How is this possible? Paul answers that even though ALL have sinned, we were JUSTIFIED “BY HIS GRACE”.

So it is GRACE then, that allowed you to live from the moment of your first sin until now! But exactly how? He continues by saying that Christ came to remit (cancel) the sins that are PAST, “through the forbearance of God”.

Consider this now. How could you have lived in your sins all these years – long enough for Christ to come and cancel them? When the wages of that first sin was clearly death? Paul answers “through the FORBEARANCE of God”!

And just above, Paul had said that “all have sinned ... being JUSTIFIED FREELY BY GRACE!” So grace does the same thing as this “forbearance” or “tolerance” or “overlooking” of your sins! It temporarily postpones your judgment (and the death it would bring) *until a certain time*.

Read **Romans 4:3**. Notice that Abraham BELIEVED God, and God treated that belief as if it WERE righteousness. Not that it WAS righteousness, but AS IF it were righteousness! But was Abraham unrighteous?

Did Abraham obey God’s commandments? **Genesis 26:5**. Did Abraham BELIEVE God (have faith)? **Genesis 15:6**. But was Abraham COMPLETELY righteous? Did he have ANY sins at all? **1 John 1:8**. But could Abraham have had faith if he had ANY sins OF WHICH HE WAS AWARE? **1 John 3:21-22**.

So Abraham could NOT have had any sins of which he was aware, **or he could not have had faith!** Yet Abraham *must* have had sins, for all do! But they can only have been sins OF IGNORANCE! *And those don’t count against faith!*

...And yet those sins of ignorance were still sins. There is still a penalty for them. **Romans 5:14**. But are sins counted against you (imputed) when you don’t know about them (don’t have the law)? **Romans 5:13**.

Let’s say Abraham had a dozen sins of which he was unaware – sins of ignorance. Abraham was doing ALL HE KNEW, and what more can God ask than that? If you’re doing ALL you know, God can be confident that you will obey anything else He shows you, for you’re obeying all you know NOW! **Genesis 22:12**.

If Abraham had a dozen sins of ignorance, Abraham was not righteous. But Abraham didn’t know any better! And so God counted those dozen sins of ignorance AS IF they were righteousness! And God did that *because of Abraham’s faith – because he obeyed all that he knew!*

Since Abraham didn’t know about those sins, God “did not impute sin” to him! **Hence, he had righteousness without the law – and was justified without works!** So here is the simple definition of grace:

**Grace is God overlooking sins of ignorance.**

With that key all of Romans, arguably the most complex book in the Bible, now makes sense! Grace is not favor, it is not pardon, it does not forgive your sins! It merely OVERLOOKS them. And it overlooks them ONLY until you know about them!

Did Jesus' sacrifice buy us grace? **John 1:16-17, Romans 3:24**. Once you KNOW about a sin, and continue to commit it, can you receive a sacrifice – or the grace it bought? **Hebrews 10:26**. How did Paul receive forgiveness for his sins? **1 Timothy 1:13**. And UNTIL he received that mercy, did he have abundant grace? **Verse 14**. Why was there so much grace there? **Romans 5:20**.

Once you find out about a sin, can you continue in that sin and continue to receive grace? **Romans 6:1-2**. Does not being under the penalty of the law mean we can now sin freely, because of grace? **Romans 6:15-16**.

Can you know what sin is, without knowing the law? **Romans 7:7**. Without the law, does sin exist as far as you're concerned? **Verse 8**. When you don't have the law, does God blame your sins – even if there are TONS of them – on you? **Romans 5:13**. Why not? **Romans 4:15**.

But when the commandment comes to you, does sin “wake up” and suddenly God starts blaming you for it? **Romans 7:9**. And did this commandment symbolically kill Paul, when he learned that he was breaking it? **Verse 10**. Why did he find the commandment to be death? **Leviticus 18:5**. So because he broke the law, it was death to him! But was it the commandment, or the SIN, the BREAKING of that commandment, that slew him? **Romans 7:11**. So in reality, the commandment is a GREAT thing, but sin – the breaking of it – is the awful thing? **Verse 12**. Why then was the commandment used to kill Paul? **Verse 13**.

Sin killed Paul “by the commandment” so that PAUL could LEARN! As part of the second half of God's creation (Lesson 2), this all happened so that SIN might appear “exceedingly sinful” – in other words, so that Paul could learn HOW BAD SIN REALLY WAS! And learn that it was “exceedingly sinful”, something to be avoided at all costs! Something Adam and Eve did not, and COULD NOT, know!

Doesn't that make perfect sense of one of the most complex passages in the entire Bible – one that has confused theologians for centuries? And yet it fits perfectly with ALL other scriptures! That's when you know you've got the right answer!

Now turn back to **Romans 4:1-3**. Notice how much sense Abraham's “faith being counted for righteousness” makes now! And continue on in **verse 4** and you'll see that this “righteousness without works” is due to grace, setting the context as being about grace.

**Verse 5** explains that even if you DON'T do works (that is, if you break the law), if you believe (have faith) that faith will be counted to you AS IF IT WERE righteousness! **Verses 6-8** quote David saying “*blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*”. To “impute” means to charge someone, blame someone – to hold it against them, in other words.

And so because David, like Abraham, sought God “*with his whole heart*” (**Psalms 119:10**), and diligently obeyed everything he knew to obey, he built faith, which in turn gave him GRACE to overlook those sins of ignorance!

On the other hand **grace DOESN'T give you an excuse to sin. Ever**. If you know about a sin, it is *already* NOT COVERED BY GRACE! Sinning more on purpose doesn't bring more good things! Paul said this repeatedly (**Romans 6:11-16** for instance)!

## A BRIEF SUMMARY

We have literally hundreds of verses proving we MUST keep the law. Hundreds more prove that you CANNOT have faith without KNOWING you are keeping the law. And yet Paul says that you can have RIGHTEOUSNESS by having FAITH!

So here is the explanation: Even if you fully applied everything in the last lessons about the law and faith, you probably still have sins left. Things you're doing wrong, but things you don't know about! (**1 John 1:8**). So you

have righteousness (Lesson 3), and you have faith (Lesson 4), and yet you still have UNRIGHTEOUSNESS of which you are IGNORANT!

And grace is how God turns that UNRIGHTEOUSNESS into righteousness – for now! If you have faith, the ONLY WAY you can have faith is by obeying EVERYTHING YOU KNOW! If you have faith, then you are doing NOTHING that would displease God – that you know about! And so God is PLEASED to overlook those things of which you are ignorant, UNTIL you learn about them!

Now let's put this in modern terms, applying it to YOU, so you really get this idea down straight in your head! One day, you were walking along, ignorant of God's law. Breaking it right and left, but all without knowing it. God had you under grace, which paid for those sins of ignorance – and the more sins there are, the more grace abounds! To paraphrase Paul "*you were alive without the law once*".

But then someone like me comes along and tells you that it is wrong to steal. I just gave you the commandment! And now that you KNOW about it, it's no longer a sin of IGNORANCE, because it has come to your consciousness! And so grace CANNOT pay for it! So now you must die – or you must *kill that sin* and REPENT, to continue living! Because SIN has revived! And the wages of sin is death! **Romans 6:23**.

So then when you repent, Christ's blood forgives you, through MERCY (not grace!), and then you are once again full of faith doing everything you know! And now God does not impute sin to you once again. But then I tell you lying is wrong! And once again, God can no longer give you grace for that sin, so you must repent, be forgiven, and again be under grace. How simple is that!

And this happens for every sin you've ever committed, and ever will commit – until you know of it, you're not to blame for it! And the second you do, you're held accountable to repent and have Jesus pay the price for you... or else pay the price yourself!

## WHO GETS GRACE

Even though it is clear that sinners need grace far more than the righteous (**Romans 5:20**), and that you MUST have some temporary payment for your sins of ignorance, some suppose that only the righteous receive grace; only those in the church, those with whom God is pleased. Is that true?

Was Paul born, and called, by grace? **Galatians 1:15**. Before you are called, have you repented of your sins? **Romans 11:29**. Or are you by definition DISobedient? **Luke 5:32**. Did one man's sin bring death to ALL men (100% of mankind)? **Romans 5:12**. Then did Christ bring grace (which brings the free gift of righteousness) to those same men? **Verse 15**. So then as ALL (100%) received condemnation through Adam, HOW MANY receive grace (the free gift) through Christ? **Verse 18**. Finally, to WHOM has the grace of God appeared? **Titus 2:11**.

But the obvious question is, if all men receive grace, will all men be saved? Certainly not! The key here is that there are TWO USES FOR GRACE. Not two graces, but one grace with two PURPOSES!

**1 Peter 4:10** *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the MANIFOLD grace of God.*

"Manifold" literally means "many-sided" – the World English Bible translation renders it "*as good managers of the grace of God IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS.*" So the Bible specifically says there are MULTIPLE forms of grace – only one grace, but several USES, several FORMS in which it can appear!

Peter makes it clear that there is more than one grace when he says "*THIS is the TRUE grace of God wherein YE stand*" (**1 Peter 5:12**) – which means there must be another, lesser grace wherein OTHERS stand.

The difference is one has a PHYSICAL purpose, and the other has a SPIRITUAL purpose! One grace can pay only for physical sins – that is, sins against the letter of the law – and one can pay for SPIRITUAL sins – sins against the SPIRIT of the law!

## PHYSICAL GRACE

As has been said, the first sin you committed earned you the death penalty. But if God killed everyone who had a bad thought as a child, no one could learn to overcome sin. So God had to have a way to allow you to sin ignorantly, and not kill you on the spot. He does this by grace, which overlooks your sins of ignorance – from the day you are born.

How did Paul say he was separated from his mother's womb? **Galatians 1:15**. Does God overlook, or "wink at" sins of ignorance for EVERYONE? **Acts 17:30**. Do the good deserve rain? **Deuteronomy 28:12**. And the evil deserve drought? **Deuteronomy 28:24**. And yet do both the just and the unjust receive rain? **Matthew 5:45**. Then God is not giving the full, proper penalty of unrighteousness to the wicked – is that the definition of grace?

But does the world have faith? CAN they have faith, without righteousness? No. So then they have grace WITHOUT faith – which is best termed physical grace. This grace covers their physical sins against the letter of the law and allows them to have rain, 70 years or so of life, limited physical blessings and then die a physical death. A fine thing considering the alternative, but not the mark to shoot for!

## SPIRITUAL GRACE

The grace which Paul received as a child and before his conversion COULD NOT have come by faith, for Paul DID NOT have faith while he was uncalled and yet carnal! So clearly, physical grace comes without faith. And we have that same grace for our physical sins of ignorance too, just as the world does – but we have *in addition* a grace which can ONLY come by faith!

**Romans 5:2** *By whom also we have access by faith into THIS grace wherein WE stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

We have a BETTER grace. THIS grace, wherein WE stand, overlooks SPIRITUAL sins and grants us ETERNAL life! This grace is mixed with faith – something ancient Israel did not have, and so they COULD NOT inherit the spiritual promises!

**Hebrews 4:2** *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

But *this* grace we have, can ONLY come by faith – faith built out of obedience, and obedience built upon the law of God!

**Ephesians 2:8** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

In order to be saved, you must have grace WITH FAITH. The grace which has been covering your sins all your life must be used *together* with FAITH to be saved! It's a package! As you'll recall, faith is knowing God exists, knowing He is good, and knowing YOU ARE BEING OBEDIENT to Him!

When you add spiritual grace to OBEDIENCE, and you AGGRESSIVELY ROOT OUT and DISCOVER your sins, and STOP THEM, GOD WILL BE PLEASED! He'll be so pleased that He'll give you MORE grace! And cover your other sins of ignorance EVEN BETTER!

**2 Peter 3:18** *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

This extra grace He gave you came by faith! And it is for the overlooking of your sins of ignorance, just as the other – but because your heart does not condemn you, it can cover SPIRITUAL sins to bring you SPIRITUAL blessings!

## MORE CONTRASTS

In **Ephesians 2:8**, notice that it is BY GRACE you are saved, but ONLY through faith. Most assume from this verse that *faith* is the gift of God, but read it again, carefully; is grace the subject, or is it faith?



Remembering that punctuation in your Bible is *not* inspired, but added by men, would it make more sense to read this verse as “By grace are you saved (through faith), and that not of yourselves, for it [grace] is the gift of God?”

By reading this verse alone it is difficult to come to a solid conclusion either way – so what do we do? Do we guess? Do we choose whichever answer fits the preconceived ideas we have? No! We use ALL the scriptures together to make sense of the awkward ones!

Start where you must ALWAYS start, in an honest Bible study: GET THE CONTEXT! Read the verses nearby and see what Paul is talking about here! What does **verse 7** say? The exceeding riches of God’s... what? The riches of His faith?

Then skip ahead to **verse 9**, what is the context still? It is GRACE, not of works! Read **2 Timothy 1:9** and **Romans 11:6** to compare the thought and see that the context is certainly GRACE, and faith is mentioned only as an explanation of how you GET access to THIS free gift of grace! (**Romans 5:2**).

Then to be certain you are right, go and compare the place where Paul talks about this “gift of God” which brings salvation! Read **Romans 5**, and specifically **verse 15**. So grace is clearly the gift of God! We devoted an entire lesson to establishing that faith is certainly NOT the gift of God!

And here Paul, writing to the Ephesians the same basic message as was sent to the Romans, uses the words “grace” and “gift of God”, in the *same sentence* and yet everyone assumes that FAITH is the gift of God, when GRACE is clearly the subject of that statement!

The message of **Ephesians 2:8** is, it is by GRACE that you are saved – the grace that comes BY FAITH – and that grace doesn’t come from you, it is the GIFT of God!

So while the world has grace, they don’t have true faith based in the law of God. It requires BOTH to be saved! And so when God overlooks their sins through the physical grace He gives to all men, it is only enough to allow them to live a physical life.

On the other hand, when you have grace, and you add FAITH to that grace, you receive MORE grace, and since you are doing EVERYTHING GOD COULD POSSIBLY ASK OF YOU, God sees you as perfectly clean and spotless from sin!

You can be delivered from any sin of ignorance to avoid immediate physical death *without* faith. But in order to be delivered from your sins of ignorance and then **TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE**, you must have THAT SAME GRACE, AND FAITH! You must not only have your sins covered, but you must BELIEVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART THAT YOU ARE DILIGENTLY SERVING GOD!

**Romans 5:21** *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Grace without righteousness as its foundation can only bring temporary, PHYSICAL life. But when grace reigns THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS, it does so UNTO ETERNAL LIFE!

When you add righteousness – commandment keeping – to that initial grace that everyone has, it makes faith; that faith brings you more grace, a better grace, and this is how you GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE!

Read **James 4:4-8**, specifically **verses 5-7**. God resists the proud – He gives them very little grace. He gives grace to the humble. WHO are the humble? **2 Chronicles 7:14**. How do you be more humble? **Jeremiah 44:10**, **Micah 6:8**. Aren’t those the exact same things which bring faith – and therefore, grace? **Romans 1:17**.

The fact that the world receives grace does not mean God likes them! Because they are proud they cannot possibly receive “*this grace*”, spiritual grace, without REPENTING, and HUMBLING themselves before the will and commandments of God! Remember again Paul’s admonition NOT to think that you should sin more, that grace may abound! (**Romans 6:1-2**)

Those who are proud, and resist what knowledge of God they have, God resists! The more they know, and the stronger they resist, the harsher God's judgment is, and the LESS GRACE THEY GET! Because the more they understand... the more law they are under (**Romans 4:15, 5:13**).

**On the other hand, those who CLEAN their hands, PURIFY THEIR HEARTS, and have FAITH and OBEDIENCE to God, receive MORE grace, and will receive salvation!**

### SO THEN IGNORANCE IS GOOD?

A logical conclusion some might draw from what's been said, is that it's better to remain ignorant, and avoid condemnation. After all, if you do not KNOW your sins, then they are covered under grace. So does this mean you should stick your head in the sand, like the noble ostrich, and avoid learning where you might be sinning? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

Must you HUNGER and THIRST after righteousness? **Matthew 5:6**. If you sin through ignorance, is there STILL a price to pay? **Leviticus 4:27-28**. If you KNOW the Lord's will and do contrary to it, are you punished? **Luke 12:47**. But if you DON'T know it, are you still punished? **Verse 48**. What does the light do? **John 3:21**. Who avoids the light? **Verses 19-20**. How does God feel about people who avoid knowledge? **Proverbs 1:22-33**. And what will He do to those who reject knowledge? **Hosea 4:6**.

Do you get out of the Bible – and life in general – exactly what you put into it? **Galatians 6:7-8**. Doesn't seeking to avoid learning more so you can keep your sins under grace run contrary to the clear spirit of grace – that is, contrary to the *intent* of grace? And doesn't that make the sacrifice of Christ and the grace it bought an unholy thing? **Hebrews 10:29**.

### REMOVING GRACE

But if you follow the same logic, then it stands to reason that if you learn a new commandment, you lose grace for that sin. You may gain back better grace if you obey this new understanding, but the knowledge of sin destroys that first grace. It means that “the commandment has come” and “sin wakes up” and “you die” (**Romans 7:9**).

Grace only covers your sins of ignorance. Once you're no longer ignorant, you're no longer covered. Now see how Jesus applied that concept to the Pharisees, who didn't receive His teachings when He “gave them the commandments”:

Would the Pharisees have had sin, if Jesus hadn't come AND SPOKEN? **John 15:22**. Why not? **Romans 5:13**. Did Jesus say that spiritual blindness had a DIRECT bearing on whether your sin counted against you? **John 9:41**. What did Jesus say was the condemnation to the world? **John 3:19**. Did Noah also remove the world's grace, by giving them an example and being a “preacher of righteousness”? **Hebrews 11:7, 2 Peter 2:5**.

Until man has been forced to make an informed choice between good and evil, he doesn't receive judgment for his sin. Whether he is in the world, or the church, once he understands, and *to the extent* that he understands, his grace is removed and his judgment is more severe.

### GIVING GRACE

In most of the New Testament letters of Paul, he says “grace be unto you”. So it appears that Paul wanted to give grace to these people, not take it away. But only *God* can give grace, because God is the one who judges our sins. So Paul was only asking *GOD* to give grace – that is, asking God to overlook the sins of ignorance of these people. But it was FOR A PURPOSE!

Paul honestly thought it would help these people! Do you remember him asking for grace for Elymas the sorcerer in **Acts 13:10-11**? Or for the high priest in **Acts 23:3**? Or Hymenaeus and Alexander in **1 Timothy 1:20**? Of course not! Paul wanted the sincere people to have every chance to repent, but he NEVER asked for grace for their WILLFUL sins! Nor grace for the obstinate heretics among them! Because their deliberate, premeditated sins COULD NOT be covered by grace, and Paul of all people KNEW that!

We start out with a grace like that possessed by the entire world. The process of conversion is about LOSING that grace, one sin at a time, and building BETTER grace, based on OBEDIENCE, and FAITH! You don't WANT that old grace, because the longer you have it the longer you have your old sins of ignorance, and if you're truly following Christ you should WANT to have those old sins removed as quickly as possible!

Asking for grace for people is something that is very useful and should be done – when it's needed. It's a way of giving people you think are sincere a little push in the right direction. But it's not meant to replace real righteousness, or the grace that comes by KNOWING you're obeying God!

## THE ELECTION OF GRACE

Another use for grace is the call. As has already been quoted, the calling of God comes without repentance – hence without works, or obedience. We'll get into more details on what a call is after a few more lessons, but for now we'll just say it's when God begins teaching you things.

We are all called without works – without obedience. And in order for God to work with us we must have a “cloak” for our sins, and that cloak is grace. Now if we were called by works – that is, if God calls us based on how well we've obeyed Him – then we wouldn't be called by grace. On the other hand, if we're called by grace then it has nothing at all to do with our obedience. This is the simple explanation of this difficult scripture which confuses so many – **Romans 11:5-6**.

This “election” is the choice God made, whom He “elected” to be called. Paul is simply saying that we were not called by works, but by grace – (**1 Corinthians 1:27-29**) so that we can't say that God NEEDED us – the fact that God chose us is nothing for us to glory about over those whom God did not call.

## THE WHOLE LAW

As you'll recall from Lesson 3, whoever is circumcised is a debtor to do the WHOLE law (**Galatians 5:3**) – for grace has no part in the law of Moses. It requires COMPLETE obedience, with no tolerance for sins of ignorance. So if you seek to be justified by that law, as the Jews did...

**Galatians 5:4** *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

...Then you've fallen from grace. Grace is useless to you, because you're trying to be bound to obey the WHOLE law of Moses, a law which does not provide grace. And so Christ's death is useless to you and you “frustrate” the grace of God! (**Galatians 2:21**).

## THE KEY TO JUDE

Understanding these keys that you've learned in the last three lessons unlocks practically the entire book of Romans and makes it make SENSE – for the first time! But it also unlocks Jude, for Jude's entire topic was grace!

**Jude 1:3-4** showed his subject was grace, and the whole reason he wrote was to REMIND them that grace is NOT license to sin. He then shows examples of people being judged for sins; people who thought they could get away with sinning forever, because of grace, just as your preacher probably taught you. If you watch, you'll see a common thread running through each of Jude's examples.

In **verse 5** Jude says, “*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this*”. He says they once knew the true facts about grace, but that the meaning had been TWISTED by those certain men who “*crept in unawares*” and CHANGED it!

Then he gives the example of the stubborn Israelites – the ones who wouldn't trust God were allowed to tempt Him **only ten times** before He condemned them to death in the wilderness – so their grace ran out! God only “overlooked” their sins for so long!

And lest anyone think the angels that sinned have gotten away with anything, **verse 6** says that they still AWAIT their judgment – but they *will* be judged for their sins! Grace did not let them sin with impunity!



**Verse 7** shows that Sodom and Gomorrah likewise were judged by God. Remember, back in Genesis, God hadn't been judging them – merely overlooking their sins. But they became SO evil that God heard about them (**Genesis 18:21**) and went down personally to look at it and see if it were true; it was, and in that moment God stopped overlooking their sins of ignorance and destroyed them! Peter says this event was an EXAMPLE of how God will deal with the whole world (**2 Peter 2:6**).

Then in **verse 14** Jude shows a final example of judgment upon ALL, showing the entire world's grace is running out, and it's only a matter of time before God returns to RULE the nations with a rod of iron! (**Revelation 12:5**).

Even though there is rain on the just and the unjust today (**Matthew 5:45**), one day the wicked will be burnt to ashes under the feet of the righteous (**Malachi 4:3**). Even though they get grace today, it will only keep the wicked alive temporarily, and even that will only last until God gets really fed up, and when their sin ledger is so full (**Genesis 15:16**) that grace can no longer cover it... well, that's what the book of Revelation is mostly about. The point is, grace doesn't last forever.

The common thread of all of those examples follows the purpose Jude laid out in the beginning – to put you in remembrance that grace does NOT give you license to sin! That ALL sin, and all sinners, one day have their judgment before God, and ALL men will give account of their actions! (**Matthew 12:36**).

But for now God tolerates the sins of the world through grace; a grace period which God gives to ALL men, to allow them time to overcome their sins of ignorance, to avoid having to execute all mankind on the spot. Just as you have ten days to renew your license plates after they expire before you get a ticket – or an extra few days to return an overdue library book.

As I said up front, everyone already understands grace perfectly! It's just that they think when GOD uses grace it's somehow different, somehow incomprehensible, not *supposed* to make sense! And yet... it DOES make sense. And now hopefully, it makes sense to you.

There is much more to be said about grace, but this is enough for now. This makes it possible to mathematically chart why God blesses sinners and how much He can. Why the unbelieving can have answers to prayer and why those who are in the church of God often have problems – simply because we know more, therefore God expects more of us. Even though we are more righteous, overall, we may easily be less righteous, relative to what we know, than a complete heathen!

Bottom line, here is how grace is parceled out:

**James 4:17** *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, TO HIM IT IS SIN.*

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Because of the importance of the subject, and the fact that it runs contrary to what you've probably always heard, I want to give one more practical example to wrap this up.

Before you were called, God had given you no information about what He wanted from you. You didn't know it was wrong to frequent a brothel. Therefore, Christ paid for it so you wouldn't have to. You were ignorant, so He didn't impute, or charge, the sin to you.

In other words, you were under grace. While you were in this state, you were safe from the judgment of God. Then one day, you learned a new truth. And then grace disappeared and sin revived. (**Romans 7:9**).

Remember, you were alive without the law *ONCE through* the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is without works, **which is GRACE!**

But the instant you learned new truth – in this case, that you shouldn't hang out in strip joints – Christ stopped picking up the tab for that sin. It was no longer a sin of ignorance! Sin revived for you, and it became YOUR responsibility to do something.

You had two choices. God's books must balance – if a sin has been committed, someone, somewhere, must pay for it. Right now. Let's say you repent and Christ applies His sacrifice to your sin of ignorance. God's books balance, you are clean, all is paid for and well.

On the other hand, you might decide you like this sin, and God's commandment isn't really THAT important after all... now Christ's sacrifice cannot pay for this sin. (**Hebrews 10:26**).

Now, God must impute this sin to you, and you must pay for this sin with your own life. This means you must die for this sin. Literally. And your judgment will be commensurate with how much you understood – and therefore how much of God's knowledge you rejected, and how willfully you sinned against the truth He revealed to you.

But notice I only said THIS sin. It only takes one to earn the death penalty (**James 2:10**). To summarize the story thus far, you were under grace for your ignorance. Then the commandment came, and you rejected it, and you earned death. Now what does God do?

**2 Thessalonians 2:11-12** *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned (meaning "judged") who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Once you have rejected the truth He has shown you, and committed willful sin, He will send you a strong delusion – something you will believe in, and be **deceived** into false doctrine again so you can ONCE AGAIN BE IGNORANT! And these false doctrines will convince you that the law isn't binding, or doesn't apply to you, or in some way it will change your understanding of obedience to God! And this "strong delusion" will once again make you IGNORANT of the law of God!

**And when you are again ignorant, it means you will again be UNDER GRACE!** Like you were before He called you. Granted, now it will be worse for you because you've been exposed to truth and rejected it (**2 Peter 2:20**) – because now you are LESS ignorant than you were in the beginning, and therefore merit LESS grace!

The REASON God again seals you under grace is explained in **1 Corinthians 5:1, 5**. This was a church member, someone who had the spirit of God, was in the church of God, and KNEW BETTER. He committed a sin against what he certainly knew to be right – so Paul instructed the church to put him back in the world, where he would be deceived, and here we find WHY GOD DOES THAT... so THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED AT ANOTHER TIME!!

The spirit can be saved because this man will be deceived (**2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**), to go back to his previous condition of knowing no commandment – therefore receiving no further judgment from God for his sins in this life (**Romans 4:15**). In this way, Christ can give him grace for his future sins, allowing him to continue living and suffering the fruits of his sins without being immediately struck dead.

The man will die for his sin – unless he repents – and Christ can pay for his other, future sins through grace. So God's books balance. But the question remains, why did this man NEED to be deceived – HOW DOES THIS HELP SAVE HIS SPIRIT when he is resurrected?

In order for you to have no excuse before God, you must stand before God, understanding Him fully, with a clear mind and no deception, KNOWING that He is right... and then spit in His face, so to speak. But NO MAN HAS EVER DONE THIS!

The more you understand about God, the better you know His laws; the better you know His laws, the less ignorant you are of them; the less ignorant you are, the more serious your offense against them – and the more God holds you accountable!

So the better you understand the law when you break it, the less grace you have for that sin. That is WHY the latter end of a person who is in the church and turns away is worse than the first! (**2 Peter 2:20**). But since NO MAN understands God PERFECTLY, no one is completely without at least *some* excuse – and therefore, not completely without SOME grace!

But once a person has known God, and rejected Him, they cannot have as much grace because they have more understanding of the law! And where the law is, there is transgression! And the more law there is, the greater the transgression!

And yet despite this, they didn't understand God fully, because NO MAN EVER HAS! So they can't FULLY reject God, and require the immediate, eternal, unforgiveable death penalty in this life! Because EVEN AT THE MOMENT OF DEEPEST UNDERSTANDING, WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY!! (1 Corinthians 13:12).

**And because of this, BECAUSE THEY ARE STILL DECEIVED, they can still receive SOME grace! They can still receive ENOUGH GRACE to allow them to live out their lives and experience the suffering brought on by sin without dying instantly!**

God did not create man to destroy him, but to give him life; but that life is only available on God's terms, not ours (John 3:17). God doesn't want to destroy anyone, and won't, without them first having every opportunity to understand and repent (2 Peter 3:9). And grace is how God justifies giving them that opportunity.

God simply won't LET you truly and fully know Him, in order to PROTECT YOU! To remove any chance you might reject Him if you saw Him clearly! Thus PREVENTING you from willfully sinning and causing your eternal death on the spot!

If you TRULY knew God, without deception, without lies, without temptation, and THEN, of your own free will CHOSE to sin... you would have ZERO grace – because you would then have zero ignorance! You would receive the instant, immediate death penalty!

But as long as you, Eve, or the man in 1 Corinthians 5, can point to Satan, and say, "The serpent beguiled me, LORD", then God can make His books balance. And grace can postpone judgment for his sins.

But if God were to permit that man to continue understanding more and more, rebelling all the while, his spirit might not be salvageable in the future – and God has plans for him in the future, as you'll see after a few more lessons.

**Romans 11:32** *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

And so God locks this mind down, and allows it to be deceived. **Yes, God, Himself sends deception to people, for their own good. See 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 2 Chronicles 18:21, etc.** And after this mind is deceived again, it is under no law, for it is again ignorant – deceived! Therefore it can receive grace again, live out its life without fear of ETERNAL death.

This is one of the most beautiful purposes of grace – the protection of those who oppose themselves (2 Timothy 2:25), because God doesn't want to lose anyone unless He absolutely has to – unless they truly INSIST on wickedness after having known the glory of righteousness! (2 Peter 3:9).

So there you have it. That's what grace is, and several of the things it does. You need it, I need it – but at the same time, it's a constant reminder that we're still not good enough. That we still need a payment, perhaps a small one, but nonetheless we are still dependent on the constant payment of Jesus Christ for our continued existence.

So we look for the day when our carnal nature is finally conquered, and we are made a new creature, and His seed remains in us, and we cannot sin (1 John 3:9). Then we will no longer need grace to cover our sins... for we will be... the spirits of JUST men, made PERFECT (Hebrews 12:23).

**Revelation 22:21** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold;** "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

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Nathaniel Burson  
10758 Hwy 155 South  
Big Sandy, TX 75755

[Questions@TheSimpleAnswers.com](mailto:Questions@TheSimpleAnswers.com)

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