

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

LESSON 12: A GRACIOUS GOD

I. God is a God of **grace**

A. The Hebrew word for grace in the OT is *chanan* in the noun form and *channun* in the verb form; it means to be considerate, to show favor; in the Greek (NT), the word *charis* is used, meaning “the state of kindness and favor toward someone, often with a focus on a benefit given to the object.” (Strong’s Greek, 5485)

B. Graciousness is not something that God shows or dispenses, depending on the situation. He does not decide to show us grace when deemed appropriate, but is always gracious by nature. He demonstrates grace in everything he does. His creation, providence, conviction of the heart of the sinner, gift of salvation, equipping/ preparation of the saints, and the eternal future for His saints are all of due to God's grace. He is favorably inclined toward us in all situations and at all times, even in distress and trials and suffering. In love, He always wants to do what is best for us. *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:16)

C. As for the work of God’s grace *in our lives*, we must understand certain truths:

1. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It gives us what we don’t deserve and cannot earn. It is God’s power at work in our lives, empowering us to become who He has called us to be – joint heirs with Christ, new creations, righteous in His sight, and children of God. It is God’s grace that empowers us to fulfill our spiritual purpose and the good works that God has given us to do. Grace is not just a one-time gift; it is an ongoing process in our lives as we walk with God.

Everything we have, and everything we are, is a result

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

of God's grace working within us.

2. Romans 6:14 reminds us that sin no longer has dominion over us because we are under grace and not law. Falling from grace doesn't only happen if we renounce God, but also if we decide to combat sin by our own strength, relying on legalism and self-effort. We must understand that we are forgiven and accepted despite our shortcomings and failures. Grace frees us from the chains of sin and guilt, and also the temptation to forget our reliance on God

3. Jesus is the personification of grace. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15 that he became an apostle of grace after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. To understand grace, one needs more than just knowledge and doctrine – *one must meet Jesus and walk Him daily* (just like Paul). Jesus's life on Earth exemplified grace in action, showing compassion for sinners, outcasts, and the brokenhearted. The ultimate form of His grace was displayed on the cross, where He took upon Himself the punishment each of us deserved, providing forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father. Jesus' dramatic expression of grace is always **transformative**, if we will only pay attention.

4. God has a unique spiritual purpose for each of us. Accepting His grace and allowing it to work in our lives is necessary for us to use and control our own spiritual abilities. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:19, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." 2 Corinthians 9:8 states, "...And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (ESV).

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

II. Other useful scriptures about God's grace:

***James 4:6** - But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

***Exodus 34:6** - The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

***Luke 6:38** - Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.

***Philippians 4:19** - And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

***Hebrews 13:16** - Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

***John 3:16** - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

***2 Corinthians 9:6** - The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

***2 Corinthians 9:8** - And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

***2 Corinthians 8:7** - But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

***2 Corinthians 8:9** - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

***Matthew 6:19-21** - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

***James 1:17** - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

***Matthew 10:42** - And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

***Galatians 5:1-26** - For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ...

***John 3:16-17** - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

***Romans 12:6-8** - Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

***Matthew 25:34-40** - Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ...

***2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15** - We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ...

***John 1:16** - from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

III. A closer examination of grace

A. One way to understand God's grace in our lives is to see His control in the following spiritual categories:

- 1. Salvation** – removing our sins and redeeming us (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-14)
- 2. Sanctification** – the process of being cleansed and consecrated us for a special purpose – God transforms us to make us fit for His holy work (Phil. 2:12-13; John 15:1-5; Phil. 1:6; I Cor. 4:16 & 5:17; I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:14; John 17:17)
- 3. Strengthening** – giving us the strength, power and endurance to do the work set before (John 1:16; James 4:6; I Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9)
- 4. Sharing** – sharing God's grace through extending encouragement, forgiveness, the hope of the gospel, and helping others in need (I Cor. 10:33; Matt. 10:8)

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

5. Serving – God provides all the spiritual tools necessary to complete our service, regardless of the circumstances (1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:30)

B. Another way of considering God’s grace at work is to see how it powers every aspect of our spiritual lives:

1. Identity: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1Cor.15:10).

2. Standing before God: “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:2).

3. Behavior: “We behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God” (2 Cor. 1:12).

4. Living: Those who receive “the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ,” (Rom. 5:17) by the “grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7).

5. Holiness: For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 1:9).

6. Spiritual strength: “Be strengthened by the grace that is in Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:1) for “it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace” (Heb. 13:9)

7. Speech: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned as with salt...” (Col. 4:6).

8. Self-Sufficiency: “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor.12:9). “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work” (2 Cor.9:8).

9. Coping with difficulty and suffering: We have “grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16). When “you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace... will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Pet. 5:10).

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

10. Service/ participation in God's mission: "Serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pet. 4:10). As those who receive grace, we are privileged to serve as His agents of grace. Believers receive grace (Acts 11:23), are encouraged to continue in grace (Acts 13:43), and are called to testify to the grace of God (Acts 20:24). In John 20:21, Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

11. Eternal hope: "Grace [reigns] through righteousness, leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). "Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13).