

GRACE & FAITH

I have been asked this question lately.

“What do I need to do to receive the blessings of God?”

It is usually followed by this explanation:

“I have been praying, reading my Bible, going to church, and paying my tithes, yet I don’t seem to be able to get my prayers answered.”

The question reveals the root of the problem:

They have fallen into the trap of linking God’s response to their performance.

They have not properly understood the balance of grace and faith and their relationship to each other.

They still believe the lie that performance demands a relationship.

By definition, the word **grace** means unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor.

So grace has nothing to do with you.

Another way of saying it is, **grace is God’s part.**

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Faith is defined as being a positive response to what God has already provided by grace.

In other words, **faith is your positive response to God's grace,**

Faith only comes from what God has already provided for you.

Therefore, **faith is your part.**

Grace and faith work together, and they must be in balance.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

8 For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God;

9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].

You know, sometimes we read a passage from Scripture that is so familiar, we don't stop to think about what it is really saying.

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In this verse, a profound truth is being declared.

It says we are saved by grace through faith, not one or the other.

Think of it this way—**grace is what God does; faith is what we do.**

It takes both working together to receive salvation.

Salvation is not dependent on grace alone.

Titus 2:11

11 For the [remarkable, undeserved] grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

He has already given the gift of salvation to everyone through Jesus.

It is by faith that a person receives what was done over 2,000 years ago.

Most of us believe that in order to be saved, we need to ask God to forgive us of our sins, but that isn't what the Bible teaches.

In 1 John 2:2, it states that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.

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Jesus didn't just die for those He knew would accept Him; He died for every sinner who has ever lived on this earth.

And He died before you or I ever committed a single sin.

Here is the radical truth **Sin is not an issue with God!**

The Lord isn't waiting for us to ask Him to forgive us of our sins.

The sins of the entire world—past, present, and future—have already been forgiven.

Even a man like Adolf Hitler had grace extended to him!

Jesus loved Hitler and paid for his sins just as He did for yours and mine.

Rom. 2:11 For God shows no partiality [no arbitrary favoritism; with Him one person is not more important than another].

God is no respecter of persons!

God has already done His part; it is now up to you to receive the truth by faith and make it a reality in your life. Amen!

John the Baptist said in John 1:29,

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“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

In John 16:8-9, Jesus said,

8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world about [the guilt of] sin [and the need for a Savior], and about righteousness, and about judgment:

9 about sin [and the true nature of it], because they do not believe in Me [and My message];

We hear a lot of teaching that often misinterprets this scripture and preaches that the Holy Spirit is here to convict you of all your sins.

That is not what the Holy Spirit is here to do.

He is here to convict you of the single sin of not receiving Jesus as your Savior.

The only conviction is that of believing in Jesus Christ.

People do not go to hell for committing adultery, stealing, or even murder.

Those, like all sins, have already been paid for.

This is what the Bible is saying in John 16:8-9—

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the only sin that is going to send people to hell is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

So, stop magnifying sin in your life!

One of the biggest reasons we don't step into grace and we lack faith is because we stay conscious of sin instead of conscious of righteousness.

Rom. 3:19-22

19 Now we know that whatever the Law [of Moses] says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that [the excuses of] every mouth may be silenced [from protesting] and that all the world may be held accountable to God [and subject to His judgment].

20 For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law. For through the Law we become conscious of sin [and the recognition of sin directs us toward repentance, but provides no remedy for sin].

Justification by Faith

21 But now the righteousness of God has been clearly revealed [independently and completely] apart from the Law, though it is

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[actually] confirmed by the Law and the [words and writings of the] Prophets.

22 This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God's Son]. There is no distinction,

It also causes us to link our performance to all the other blessings of God.

God's grace has provided not only for salvation but also for every need of your life.

That provision is not based on whether you are reading the Bible enough, praying enough, going to church, or even paying your tithes.

Before you ever had a financial need, God created the provision. **That's the truth!**

Before you were sick, God, through grace, provided your healing according to (1 Pet. 2:24).

Before you ever became discouraged, God blessed you with all spiritual blessings according to (Eph. 1:3).

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God anticipated every need you could ever have and has met those needs through Jesus before you existed.

THAT'S GRACE!

Jesus hasn't saved, healed, delivered, or prospered a single person in the last 2,000 years.

What God provided by grace 2,000 years ago now becomes a reality when mixed with faith.

Faith takes what God has already provided.

Faith doesn't move God; He isn't the one who is stuck.

Faith doesn't make God do anything.

Grace and faith work together, and **our part is to accept what God has already done.**

Grace must be balanced with faith.

Many people still believe that God moves sovereignly as He wills, when He wills.

That is because religion teaches that God controls everything and that nothing can happen without His permission.

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However, it's not true—everything isn't up to God.

For instance, when my good friend died, I went to his funeral and I was told God needed him in heaven more than I needed him here.

I knew better than that.

Why would God need my friend in heaven? God didn't kill my friend.

That is not what the Word of God teaches.

The Scripture makes it very clear that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil

1 Pet. 5:8 says Be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour.

Satan is the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy according to (John 10:10).

God is being misrepresented.

If He was guilty of all the things we blame Him for, there isn't a civilized nation on the face of this earth that wouldn't convict Him of crimes against humanity.

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I think the idea that God either causes or allows evil so that we will somehow grow spiritually is the worst heresy in the body of Christ.

It renders people passive and takes away their hope.

Worship Team

If you really believe that God controls everything, what's the use of doing anything?

After all, it's all up to God, right? If you believe that God is trying to teach you something through sickness or poverty, why see a doctor or look for a good job?

Why not suffer as much as you can and really learn the lesson? I mean, how dumb can you be and still breathe?

Brothers and sisters, that is terrible doctrine.

In Isaiah it says that in the last days, people will call evil good and good evil.

Is. 5:20 Woe (judgment is coming) to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for

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darkness;

Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Denominations today are teaching that when you get sick or experience financial problems, God is causing it so He can teach you something or humble you.

I have heard it this way, what is God trying to show me?

That is an example of calling evil good.

God is not responsible for killing babies, for rape, violence, poverty, or sickness.

Satan is the author of evil, and the Bible clearly states that we are to resist the Enemy (James 4:7).

Resist means to actively fight against something.

If we aren't fighting against sickness, for example, then we are submitting to it.

To casually say to Satan "Please leave us alone" is not resisting the devil.

We need to get angry at the devil, and we won't get angry if we believe that God is the one causing or allowing the problem.

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God's will is for everyone to be healed.

Acts 10:38 says that Jesus went about doing good and healing *all* that were oppressed by the devil, and it calls what He did "good."

And 1 Peter 2:24 tells us that we *were* healed by His stripes.

It is not the truth that sets you free; it's the truth you *know* that will set you free

And the truth is that you need to put your faith in what God has already done, not in what you do.

God, by His grace, has already provided healing, prosperity, forgiveness for sin, and much more.

Your FAITH is the only activating ingredient!

God has done His part by giving His Son, Jesus.

His grace has provided everything through the sacrifice of Jesus.

There is absolutely nothing you can do to earn it and nothing you can do to lose it.

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Our part is simple: We respond to His grace by faith and take what has already been accomplished.

Many emphasize grace and others emphasize faith. But too few emphasize balancing grace and faith. It's like sodium and chloride: Taken individually, both are poisons and can kill you. When mixed together, they become salt, which you must have to live.

Grace without your positive response of faith won't save you, and faith that isn't a response to God's grace will bring you into condemnation.

1 John 5:4

4 For everyone born of God is victorious and overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has conquered and overcome the world—our [continuing, persistent] faith [in Jesus the Son of God].

Put your faith in what God has already done for you, and you have the victory that overcomes the world!