

# ABUNDANCE OF GRACE

How to progress in Christ



**grace:**  
Always more.

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# WEEK 1

## Frustrating the Grace of God (Gal 2:21)

### Galatians 2:21 (KJV)

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

Grace has been defined as “*God’s unmerited favour*”. Another definition which is really identical is “*the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life*”.

In other words, *grace is God’s work to change us and bless us*. Its a gift, its not something we can earn. This is Paul’s message here in this verse. God’s work of changing us and transforming us is also his work to make us true men and women as he is true (justification). Yet we can find ourselves trying to be right in our own effort *according to the law and perceived standards*, but Paul argues here that if that were possible then *Christ died for no reason!* Because the law came first then Christ came and died after, it clearly shows that *the law failed to make men and women right*. So if the law failed, and Christ succeeded, then how are we to progress as believers? This is what we hope to dig further into through this study.

What are some things that frustrate you?

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What are some ways that we might frustrate God’s grace?

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Do you think that the transformation by grace alone gives us a license to just live how we want? Any verses to support your thoughts?

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## Reigning in Life (Rom 5:17)

### Romans 5:17 (KJV)

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

“Reigning in life” would be one way to describe someone progressing in their relationship with God. Jesus said he has come that we might have life and “*that we might have it more abundantly*” (Jn 10:10).

Q) What do you think are the things we should be reigning over as believers? Consider 1 Cor 15:56-57.

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Here in this passage Paul gives us the secret to reigning in life... “*abundance of grace*”.

Q) Isn't grace enough? Why does Paul talk here about those who receive "abundance of grace"?

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**Who** is the "one" that abundant grace comes from? .....

Peter says in his letter (1 Pet 2:4-5) that we should be continuously coming to Jesus to touch him who is a "living stone" and as we touch him we become "lively stones" that he can build with. The tense of his statement is present continuous tense. In other words we need to be continuously coming to Jesus to draw upon his virtue and be quickened again and again!

Can you think of an example where someone touched Jesus and was quickened?

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Can we still 'touch' Jesus today?

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# WEEK 2

## Ye Are Spies (Gen 42:9)

Genesis 42:11 (KJV)

“We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies.”

What does it mean to be **righteous**? Surely it simply means to be ‘**made right**’. There is both the positional and experiential aspects to consider; both our standing and state. When we are baptized into Christ we are cleansed from all sin and declared righteous in God’s sight, this is **positional justification**. But Christ being formed in us and us being transformed by a renewed mind will depend on the measure in which we have responded to the grace of God in our lives; **this is our state**, and this is where the Lord is working to ‘make us right’.

Q) Read Romans 8:29. What is God’s whole work with us while we are here on earth?  
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We have a wonderful picture of this in the story of Joseph’s life and that of his brothers. In this picture Joseph represents C \_ \_ \_ \_ . and his brothers represent the C \_ \_ \_ \_ (see John 20:17 for a clue if you’re not sure).

It would be useful to review the story of Joseph’s life from Genesis chapters 37, and chapters 39 to 45.

When Joseph’s brothers come down to Egypt to buy corn because of the famine in their homeland, Joseph who is now ruler of Egypt accuses them of being **spies**. Their defence is that they are not a gang of spies but the sons of one man and that they are ‘**true**’ men.

This is the BIG issue the Lord has with every single one of us: **ARE WE TRUE?** And to that end the Lord is working, to make us true men and women.

Q) What do you think it means to be a **TRUE MAN** or a **TRUE WOMAN**?  
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Q) What are some verses that have come to you as you think about what it is to be a true person?  
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Q) What was going on in Joseph’s brother’s **hearts** while they stood there saying they were true men? See Gen 42:21-22  
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Q) What was going on in [Joseph's heart](#) as he led them through this distressing time? See Gen 42:23-25

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Q) What has the Lord dealt with in your life so far that has [not been consistent](#) with a 'true man' or 'true woman'?

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Q) Read Roman's 5:17 again. It refers to two things which precursor 'reigning in life by Jesus Christ'. They are 1) A \_\_\_\_\_ OF G \_\_\_\_\_ and 2) T \_ \_ G \_ \_ \_ O \_ R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

Could we say that this work of the Lord to make us true men and women is '[the gift of righteousness](#)'?

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## **WEEK 3**

### **God can only work with the good news (Galatians ch 1)**

In verse 4 Paul's focus is on Christ (no doubt) who first gave himself for us that he (not we) might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God the Father (not us).

In verse 6 he marvels they are so soon removed from him (God) who called them into the GRACE of Christ. Important here to stress they are being removed from relationship "him who called" (not just removed from correct doctrine or something intellectual).

He then reviews his personal encounter with Christ and how he received the gospel he preached to them that it was not taught him by men but by revelation of the Lord himself.

Verse 15-16 important the gospel is God "calling us by his grace" to 'reveal his Son in us'...good to consider these thoughts in light of what it means then to "progress/mature in Christ".

I think in this lesson we need to focus as Paul did firstly with the Galatians to confirm exactly what the gospel is because the Lord will not give grace by any other channel than the true gospel. Paul was so concerned about this he wished even that those who troubled the believers with a "perverted gospel" would even be physically cut off from them. Because without the true gospel of grace we cannot make any headway as believers with Christ.

We could look carefully here at the matter of legalism and mixing the law with grace and the incredible danger that is to believers to derail them from "being found in Christ not having their own righteousness, which is of the law" (Ph'p 3:9).

## **WEEK 4**

### **Yet Not I, But Christ Liveth In Me! (Galatians Ch 2)**

Could it really be that simple? Christ lives in me now and I live by him? I mean he walked by faith in his Father (who is in him) when he was here on earth, could he teach you and me how to do the same now he's living in us?

In this chapter Paul uses an example of a difficult situation he had with Peter (who is also an apostle) but who was not "walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel". Christ was living in Peter why wasn't Peter acting like Christ would have in this situation? Why can there be a divide between Christ who is in us and our actions?

I think in this study we could explore what that famous verse in Gal 2:20 means in its depth and how we can come into the victory of a life lived "by the faith of the Son of God" and not after the flesh. Paul spoke of Christ being formed in the believer (Gal 4:19); is there an aspect of growth here necessary for this progress to be made? Is it related to this fact that the "I" in you and me is still there though crucified.



## **WEEK 5**

### **Grace to fill every valley, bring low every mountain and hill, make the crooked straight, and make the rough ways smooth (Luke 3:5)**

The Lord will deal with the flesh in each of us till we go to glory. Valley's speak of self-pity and inferiority complexes that lead to unbelief; mountains and hills speak of pride and self-confidence, and self-righteousness which are the opposite; crookedness speaks of sin in all its forms, uncleanness, deceit, selfishness, foolishness, covetousness; rough ways speaks of lack of love, lack of care, thoughtlessness, carelessness. All these are aspects of the flesh that we need to be delivered from the power of, so that we can walk in the Spirit.

The good news is that there is "abundant grace" available to bring us into the victory over all these things, by one (Jesus Christ), and we should be encouraged to actively seek that grace from the Lord. As we enter into the victory, the Lord is able to bring us into life abundant, and bless us and use us, which has eternal rewards.

We could discuss here that fact that legalism will hinder these real changes in the believers life because legalism is the flesh trying to change to please God, whereas a believer living in the grace of God seeks his grace to change and the transformation is deep and real and is the work of God himself.

## **WEEK 6**

### **Grace for the humble (James 4:6)**

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Pride is one thing that will stop the flow of grace in our lives. Also Paul lists other things that will stop the flow of grace in a number of places for example Eph 5:5.

Would be valuable to look here at this study at all the word says about various forms of sin and issues that will hinder the flow of grace. There is so much said in the word about this and so many examples of kings and others that have suffered loss and been brought low by sin and all its various forms.

We could also look at such things as Sampson's life in Judges 13:25 – Judges 16:31. He is a picture of a believer who was greatly used of the Lord (chosen to judge Israel for 20 years) but had a massive battle with the flesh in relation to women. We see there is great grace available to us to overcome whatever sin we struggle with and we all have a "besetting" sin to which we are easily disposed (Heb 12:1-2).

## **WEEK 7**

### **Praying for the exceeding grace of God in you (2 Cor 9:14)**

Prayer for grace is so vital. Not just praying for grace personally but also praying for grace for one another. Here Paul testifies to the love of the poor saints at Jerusalem how they pray for their Gentile brethren for “exceeding grace” to be given! How beautiful. The saints knew that without the grace of God, we get no where.

Paul says that the prayers of the saints for him were vital to his salvation (Ph’p 1:19)

In this study we could look at prayer for grace and perhaps breakdown some of Paul’s prayers for the believers in his different letters and see how in very real terms he is praying for grace to be given to the saints in all these cases and look at the different aspects of grace (divine help) in these prayers.

## WEEK 8

### Receive not the grace of God in vain (2 Cor 6:1)

It is possible to have grace but not let it change your life. This is Paul's appeal here to the church at Corinth, Don't receive the grace of God in vain, take it with both hands and seek God to change and transform you. In the Proverbs (Pr 30:28) it says that the spider is very wise because she takes hold with her hands and ends up living in a king's palace. 'Ballooning' is the process by which spiderlings (baby spiders) disperse from their nest. They fly at the mercy of air currents but if they pass through the palace window and lay hold upon a beam, they may just have front row in the king's throne room! She takes hold with her hands! How much more should we take hold of every little bit of grace that comes our way, whether through personal time with the Lord, or through a book we read, or through someone else's testimony or ministry of the word! And let it transform our hearts and minds and not let go until it has thoroughly changed us.

### Thou are neither cold nor hot...thou art lukewarm (Rev 3:15-16)

We could look here at the Laodicean church (Rev 3) and consider how they were not responding to the grace of God but by virtue of their heart condition had pushed the Lord out, being satisfied with the things of the world and the flesh, and felt they had need of nothing. Christ is on the outside knocking. The Lord warned that one day he would spue them out of his mouth and they would suffer great loss in terms of heavenly riches though rich here on earth. The Laodicean church are the exact opposite of how we should be! We should be desperate for Christ and a real intimate relationship with him; spending time with him, supping with him and being transformed by what he has to share with us.

### Forsaking all for the excellency of his knowledge (Ph'p 3:7-11)

#### Luke 14:33 (KJV)

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

In the parable of Luke 14:25-33 Jesus explains why we cannot go further (be a disciple) with him unless we forsake all that we have. It's an important consideration because it can explain why sometimes we are not growing spiritually. Also we should look at how we can prepare our hearts to forsake all and follow Christ. Paul explains this in Phillipians ch 3, that is was on account of the wonder (excellency) of knowing Christ that made everything else in his life pale into insignificance and the same will be true for you and me of course. We need to know Christ more and more, and as we do, we will want to forsake all to know him more! Its not something we can do begrudgingly, we get no where with the Lord without the thrill of knowing who he is. **No self denial and hard work** can **earn** headway with the Lord who alone paid the high price for our redemption.

This aspect of so prizing Christ in our heart that we forsake all else to know him more is vital in receiving more and new grace to take us on further. And prizing Christ will come as we have revelation of the wonders of who he is! It's simply thrilling!