

## God's Grace: More Than Forgiveness

Have you ever taken the time to think deeply about grace?  
Have you ever taken the time to study God's Word about grace?

*Today, we will discover that God's grace is more than forgiveness; he sends his grace to teach us a new way to live.*

Story of the angry husband.

The only thing she knew of God's grace was forgiveness.

She had been told all her life that she was powerless over sin and that God's grace came to forgive and restore her relationship with God. She was enough of a Christian to understand that, if God had forgiven her, she should extend the same grace to others, especially her husband.

Forgiveness is sweet, but forgiveness alone can be filled with torment, unless there was something more.

-If we look at the wife in this story, we want to scream, "Get out! It's not safe!"

-If we look at the husband in this story, we see a man trapped in thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that will harm everyone he loves and ruin his own life, as well.

-And what of Jesus, the third member of the marriage? We could no more imagine Jesus leaving this husband alone in his condition (a captive to anger and fits of rage) than we could imagine Jesus telling a homeless man, "Go your way, be warm and filled," without giving him food and clothing.

### The Larger Question

Beyond the characters in this simple story lies a larger question: What about us?

Would a grace-filled God leave us in the condition he finds us? Would he spend his days reminding us of our shortcomings, demanding, again and again, prayers of repentance and sorrow? Would the loving Creator wave his hand and say, "You are forgiven, now—go and sin no more," without lifting even one finger to empower us over our sin?

Would God leave us alone in our rage, our addictions, or our isolation?

A cold and comfortless God he would be, if that were so.

*Grace forgives, but it also guides.*

His grace is available to lead and guide us right now! The fabric of everyday life is alive with the grace of God.

*Grace restores, but it also guards.* It also instructs us to deny ungodly ways and teaches us the how-to of life: how to live sensible, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

The kingdom brings righteousness, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17), and best of all, the gracious Holy Spirit wants to lead us into righteousness, peace, and joy in everyday life. *The kingdom is never attained; it is received.*

How will we receive the grace of the kingdom today?

Titus 2:11-14

In this passage, the word "grace" appears right next to phrases like "self-controlled" and "upright and godly lives."

What kind of grace is this?

**1). Grace brings salvation.** This is the part of God's grace most Christians know. And it's wonderful. It's foundational to our faith; "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not

from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). This is the starting point of our life in Christ, but it’s just the start. The good news gets even better!

**2). Grace teaches us to say no.** God doesn’t want us forever trapped in a cycle of sin and forgiveness. So, grace keeps on working for us, teaching us how to resist temptation and ungodliness. That’s right, we can call on the grace of God before we fall into sin!

**3). Grace teaches us how to live.** There’s more to the Christian life than saying no to sin. God’s grace is available to replace our sinful habit patterns with self-control, so we can live upright and godly lives. This is not the result of trusting in our works, but rather allowing grace to teach us.

**4). Grace fills us with hope.** Do you see the connection in these verses? Life in Christ is not meant to be a desperate fight against sin, nor even a narrow focus on godly living. In verse 13 we see that it is God’s grace that fills us with hope—hope for this life, and the next.

*The grace of God wants to teach us a new way to live. This is part of the good news; grace not only forgives our sin, but grace also teaches us how to live a life that is no longer captive to sin!*

*If we are open to God’s voice, even our sin become grace in his hands.*

What he asks, he empowers. Jesus says, “Go, and sin no more.” He also makes this command possible. He takes us to the source and gives us hope. This is a kind of resurrection, a resurrection from a life of sin. Resurrection isn’t just for Jesus; it’s for us. It’s not just for the end of days; it’s so we can walk in newness of life. Sin puts us in the tomb; Jesus rolls away the stone, as often as we need.

### **Application**

In your daily prayers, include prayers like this: “Spirit of God, please open my eyes and heart to recognize your grace-works in my life.”

After our time of prayer, it is our opportunity to learn. Make a few notes of what came to your mind. What did you discover about God as you prayed and listened? What did you discover about yourself? You can be sure that God will lead you toward a larger understanding of grace.

Try this every day this week. God wants to teach you a new way to live.