



PART 3 - A
UNDERSTANDING GOD'S
GRACE AND LOVE

“God’s love is perfect and unconditional, based totally upon the character of the Giver rather than you the receiver. Your performance does nothing to influence God’s love for you.”

God's Call to Obedience

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GRACE AND LOVE

A

“ AMAZING GRACE! HOW SWEET THE SOUND
THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME!
I ONCE WAS LOST, BUT NOW AM FOUND,
WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE. **”**¹
JOHN NEWTON

Paul David Tripp's words from his book, *Broken-Down House*, define some of the many aspects of grace and will be used throughout this study.

“ SO GRACE IS A STORY AND GRACE IS A GIFT. IT IS GOD'S CHARACTER AND IT IS YOUR HOPE. GRACE IS A TRANSFORMING TOOL AND A STATE OF RELATIONSHIP... GRACE IS AN EXPERIENCE AND A CALLING. GRACE WILL MAKE YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU CANNOT EARN GOD'S FAVOR, AND IT WILL REMOVE YOUR FEAR OF NOT MEASURING UP TO HIS STANDARDS. **”**²

- I. God's grace is expressed in a multitude of ways.
 - A. By His grace, which is *unearned* favor and merit, God chose to place His love and affection upon you *before* the foundation of the world.

“ ...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,
that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through
Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
to the praise of the glory of His grace,
which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **”**
EPH. 1:4-6 NASB

- B. By His grace, He drew you into a love-relationship that would last for eternity.
(John 6:44; 10:28)

“ ...I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with loving-kindness. **”**
JER. 31:3B

- C. By His grace, God chose to reveal the person of Christ and His truth.

1. He opens your blind eyes and unstops your deaf ears. (Luke 4:22)
 2. He opens your heart and mind to an understanding of Christ and His truth. (1 John 5:20; Luke 24:45; Matt. 16:15-17; Acts 16:14)
- D. By His grace, He revealed an understanding of who you were as a natural man and by His grace, revealed your need for a Savior. God describes your totally depraved condition in the following statements:
1. A rebel from birth (Is. 48:8d)
 2. An enemy of God (Rom. 5:10)
 3. Spiritually dead in your sins and trespasses (Eph. 2:1)
 4. Incapable of spiritual understanding (1 Cor. 2:14)
 5. Unrighteous; worthless (Rom. 3:10-12)
 6. Self-centered; self-seeking (2 Cor. 5:15)
 7. Deserving of death and hell; eternal separation from God (Rom. 6:23a)
 8. Believing you were something when you were nothing (Gal. 6:3)
 9. Having an imagined righteousness (Is. 64:6; Rom. 3:10,12)

**“ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way.”**
Is. 53:6A

The Prophet Isaiah when confronted with the holiness of God and his depravity responded in utter humility and submission. And once cleansed by the power of the King, he offered himself in sacrificial service. In his own words, he describes his encounter with the Living God:

**“ ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.’
Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand,
which he had taken with tongs from the altar.
With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips;
your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’**

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I.
 Send me!' ”
 Is. 6:5-8

“ GRACE WILL CONVINCe YOU OF YOUR UNWORTHINESS
 WITHOUT EVER MAKING YOU FEEL UNLOVED.”³

E. By His grace, He chose to love you and to die for you in your helpless, hopeless, ungodly state. (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:6-10)

1. You were powerless and helpless to save yourself. (Rom. 5:6)
2. You could not do enough “good works” to compensate for your daily violations of God’s law in thought, word and deed; by sins of omission and commission. (Eph. 2:9)

“ For while we were still helpless...Christ died for the ungodly.
 ...But God demonstrates His own love toward us,
 in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
 Rom. 5:6,8 NASB

F. By His grace, He chose to

1. bring you to an understanding of your sin and convict you of it. (John 16:8; 1 Thess. 5:5)
2. grant you repentance. (2 Tim. 2:25b; Acts 11:18)
3. place *your* sin on His perfect Son and proclaim Him “guilty.” (1 Pet. 2:24)
4. pour out the wrath you deserved on Christ, the Sacrificial Lamb. (Is. 53:5-10)
5. cover you with Christ’s righteousness so you would be judged “innocent.”

“ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,
 so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
 2 CoR. 5:21

6. present you holy and blameless, clothed in Christ’s purity and perfection to Himself.

“ But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation...”

CoL. 1:22

“ GRACE WILL CONFRONT YOU WITH THE FACT THAT YOU ARE MUCH LESS THAN YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE, EVEN AS IT ASSURES YOU THAT YOU CAN BE FAR MORE THAN YOU HAD EVER IMAGINED. GRACE WILL PUT YOU IN YOUR PLACE WITHOUT EVER PUTTING YOU DOWN. GRACE WILL ENABLE YOU TO FACE TRUTHS ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE HESITATED TO CONSIDER, WHILE FREEING YOU FROM BEING SELF-CONSCIOUSLY INTROSPECTIVE. GRACE WILL CONFRONT YOU WITH PROFOUND WEAKNESS, AND AT THE SAME TIME INTRODUCE YOU TO NEW-FOUND STRENGTH. GRACE WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU AREN’T, WHILE INTRODUCING YOU TO WHAT YOU CAN NOW BE. GRACE WILL MAKE YOU AS UNCOMFORTABLE AS YOU HAVE EVER BEEN, WHILE OFFERING YOU MORE COMFORT THAN YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN.” ⁴

G. By His grace, He continues

1. to convict you of sin and bring you to repentance. (Ps. 32:1-5)
2. to forgive and cleanse you. (1 John 1:9; Is. 1:18)
3. to grow you in godliness. (Phil 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:3)
4. to provide His Word as a resource to be treasured:
 - a. to turn you from temptation. (Ps. 119:11,57-61)
 - b. to guide, comfort, strengthen, revive and sustain you. (Ps. 119:28,50,92,116)
 - c. to teach you discernment between good and evil and discernment about your own heart. (Prov. 2:9-12; Heb. 4:12)
 - d. to be your delight and to bring you joy! (Ps. 119:105,111)

H. By His grace, He continues to reveal Himself through communion with you and to teach His truths through His Spirit and His word. (John 16:13-15; John 17:17)

I. By His grace, you are sustained in this life and in the far better one to come. (Jude 24)

“ GRACE WILL TURN YOUR LIFE UPSIDE DOWN WHILE GIVING YOU A REST YOU HAVE NEVER KNOWN. GRACE WILL DRIVE YOU TO THE END OF YOURSELF, WHILE IT INVITES YOU TO FRESH STARTS AND NEW BEGINNINGS. GRACE WILL DASH YOUR HOPES, BUT NEVER LEAVE YOU HOPELESS. GRACE WILL DECIMATE YOUR KINGDOM

AS IT INTRODUCES YOU TO A BETTER KING. GRACE WILL EXPOSE YOUR BLINDNESS AS IT GIVES YOU EYES TO SEE. GRACE WILL MAKE YOU SADDER THAN YOU HAVE EVER BEEN, WHILE IT GIVES YOU GREATER CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION THAN YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN. GRACE ENTERS YOUR LIFE IN A MOMENT AND WILL OCCUPY YOU FOR ETERNITY. YOU SIMPLY CANNOT LIVE A PRODUCTIVE LIFE IN THIS BROKEN-DOWN WORLD UNLESS YOU HAVE A PRACTICAL GRASP OF THE GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN. 5

II. God's unearned love and grace are *freely* given because of His character as the Giver, **not** because of your character. (Eph. 3:17-19)

A. God is perfect; therefore, His love toward you remains perfect. (Matt. 5:48; 1 John 4:16)

1. You can add nothing to it, as a child of His, by your performance and obedience.
2. You can subtract nothing from it when you sin.
3. You can do nothing to separate yourself from God's love. (Rom. 8:35,37-39)
4. You do not have to perform to impress Him or to keep Him from rejecting you.
5. You cannot lose your salvation by sinning. (Ps. 119:41)

**“ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;
no one can snatch them out of my hand.
My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all;
no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.”**
JOHN 10:28,29

B. God's love has freed you from His judgment and condemnation for *all time*.

1. By His grace, Christ received the complete condemnation you deserved as the wages for your sins. The Author of Life died in your place.
2. By His grace, the Lord will dispense loving discipline, but He will never condemn you to hell. (Heb. 12:5-11; Ps. 119:75)
 - a. The Apostle Paul acknowledged, as a mature believer, that he struggled with sin. (Rom. 7)
 - b. Paul, nonetheless, completely understood how Christ had freed him from all condemnation.

3. By His grace, God proclaims to every believer in Romans 8:1:

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...”

III. You may have the wrong view of God, the Father. (Ps. 18:30-32; Is. 6:3)

A. Your wrong view usually stems from an earthly father who was a poor role model of godliness. Your earthly father may have

1. demanded perfection and performance.
2. been domineering, controlling.
3. rejected, punished harshly, condemned.
4. lacked involvement; been detached.
5. lacked trustworthiness; been undependable.
6. been morally flawed and/or a hypocrite to his own teachings.
7. lacked a meaningful relationship with you.
8. spoiled and indulged you; given you whatever you wanted.
9. intervened to protect you from the consequences of your sin.
10. not taught you respect for and submission to his, others' or God's authority.
11. not taught you to be responsible.
12. not disciplined you or disciplined you in an ungodly way.

B. Your wrong view of God may have been developed by unconsciously transferring the sinful characteristics of your earthly father to your heavenly Father.

1. You may see God, the Father as
 - a. not accepting you as you are.
 - b. requiring your performance to receive His love.

- c. rejecting you because you are not meeting His expectations.
- d. deserting you in difficult circumstances.
- e. being uninvolved in the details of your personal life.
- f. not desiring an intimate relationship with you.
- g. not being worthy of your trust.
- h. existing to give you what you want; indulging your desires.
- i. not expecting you to submit to His authority; having no right to discipline you.
- j. requiring little or nothing of you.
- k. existing to eliminate the consequences of your sin.

2. You may believe God is “out to get you” because you view the biblical principle of “reaping what you sow” as punishment from a wrathful God, rather than the tender discipline of a loving Father. (Heb. 12:5-11)

C. Your erroneous beliefs must be corrected by renewing your mind with the truth of Scripture about God’s character, His eternal commitments to you and what He commands of you.

IV. God’s love, mercy and acceptance give you a **new identity** in Christ.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

GAL. 2:20

- A. By His grace, you are an entirely “new creation;” your old nature has passed away. You have been given a new nature, which is the nature of Christ Himself. (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:6-8)
- B. By His grace, you are freed from sin and have become slaves of God. (Rom. 6:22)
- C. By His grace, you are given the *ability* to live out your new identity. (Rom. 6:1-14)

“ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”
1 PET. 2:9,10

- V. God's love and grace also equips you to live in harmony with Him and to handle **any** situation, no matter how difficult.
- A. **God issues this proclamation to all believers:** "...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9a)

You do not have to hope for or pray for sufficient grace to handle your trials and temptations. Sufficient grace is already given to you!

1. You must accept the reality that God's grace **is** sufficient for you!
 2. The recognition of your own helplessness and neediness is your avenue to experiencing the *sufficiency* of God's grace.
- B. Christ empowers you, through His grace, to handle every crisis, temptation, adversity, blessing and eventuality. (Phil. 4:13)

**“ HIS GRACE IS GREAT ENOUGH TO MEET THE GREAT THINGS-
THE CRASHING WAVES THAT OVERWHELM THE SOUL,
THE ROARING WINDS THAT LEAVE US STUNNED AND BREATHLESS,
THE SUDDEN STORMS BEYOND OUR LIFE'S CONTROL.**

HIS GRACE IS GREAT ENOUGH TO MEET THE SMALL THINGS-
THE LITTLE PIN-PRICK TROUBLES THAT ANNOY,
THE INSECT WORRIES, BUZZING AND PERSISTENT,
THE SQUEAKING WHEELS THAT GRATE UPON OUR JOY.”⁶
ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

- VI. Christ's love makes every provision for your earthly existence.
- A. By His grace, He promises to *never* leave nor forsake you. (Heb. 13:5b)

- B. By His grace, He will not reject you when you fail Him. Read John 21:15-17, which is the account of Christ's gracious encounter with Peter after he had denied Him... **no condemnation!** (Rom. 8:1)
- C. By His grace, He provides all you need for godliness.

“ His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”
2 PET. 1:3

- D. By His grace, He is always loving, compassionate and faithful, even when you are not. (Lam. 3:22,23)
- E. By His grace, He has given you spiritual gifts to give you eternal purpose and meets your need for every good work. (Rom. 12:6; 2 Cor. 9:8)
- F. By His grace, He makes you adequate or competent to fulfill His mission because you are not. (2 Cor. 3:5,6; Eph. 2:10)
- G. By His grace, God will continue the work He has begun in you. His love will pursue you when you try to run from Him.

“ Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”
PHIL. 1:6

- H. By His grace, He has placed you in a realm where you can receive *every* spiritual blessing in Christ.
1. Draw upon His *endless* resources. (1 Pet. 1:2b)
 2. Draw upon His grace and peace. (John 14:27)
 3. Do not limit His abilities. (Eph. 3:20,21)

“ Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”
EPH. 1:3

“ HE GIVETH MORE GRACE WHEN THE BURDENS GROW GREATER,
 HE SENDETH MORE STRENGTH WHEN THE LABORS INCREASE;
 TO ADDED AFFLICTION HE ADDETH HIS MERCIES,
 TO MULTIPLIED TRIALS HIS MULTIPLIED PEACE.

WHEN WE HAVE EXHAUSTED OUR STORE OF ENDURANCE,
 WHEN OUR STRENGTH HAS FAILED ERE THE DAY IS HALF DONE,
 WHEN WE REACH THE END OF OUR HOARDED RESOURCES
 OUR FATHER'S FULL GIVING IS ONLY BEGUN.

HIS LOVE HAS NO LIMIT HIS GRACE HAS NO MEASURE,
 HIS POWER NO BOUNDARY KNOWN UNTO MEN;
 FOR OUT OF HIS INFINITE RICHES IN JESUS
 HE GIVETH AND GIVETH AND GIVETH AGAIN.”⁷
 ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

“ Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

1 PET. 1:2B

“ THROUGH MANY DANGERS, TOILS AND SNARES
 I HAVE ALREADY COME;
 'TIS GRACE HATH BROUGHT ME SAFE THUS FAR,
 AND GRACE WILL LED ME HOME.”⁸
 JOHN NEWTON