

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text.

A Study on Grace

T.O.D. Johnston

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A Study on Grace

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Contact the publisher:

Owen Johnston

E-Mail – email@biblestudylessonspdf.info

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A concise study on the subject of Grace, based on the book "Grace" by Lewis Sperry Chafer in 1922. The book is totally based on Scripture. My purpose was to digest and concisely cover the most important points of this lengthy study of the subject of Grace. All the appropriate Scripture is included.

Read the book "Grace" by Lewis Sperry Chafer here -
<https://archive.org/details/gracechaferoochafiala>

Lesson I

The grace of God provides salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, freely, by faith. God has given instruction to these believers as to how to live in response to their new standing and heavenly calling in Christ. They are to be obedient children to the Heavenly Father, to be guided by His Spirit.

To the world (and all other religions), Christians are observed and judged according to outward works. They see just another system of works to earn salvation and a ticket to heaven. This is spiritual blindness. It cannot be healed by observation or knowledge. All other religions have lists or rules, also.

Spiritual sight and understanding comes only through the ministry of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The believer receives the Spirit that they will know the things of God, given us freely in Christ:

I Corinthians 2:9,10,14 -

9 But as it is written,
Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man,
the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things,
yea, the deep things of God.

14 ¶ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 3:3 -

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

It is only the Holy Spirit that is promised to us into all truth. He is called the Spirit of Truth. He will speak of the glories of God and the blessings of His salvation in Christ Jesus, and will show us things to come (see John 16:13-15).

So be it, Amen.

The Word is the seed that is spread by hearing or reading to the human mind (as different as each person, as described by the different soils in the parable of the Sower). The Spirit waters and empowers the seed to sprout. In fertile soil, it grows into the heart and becomes a living, maturing plant to produce fruit. Various other conditions and distractions are described as preventing the sprout and a new life. The Holy Spirit continues to guide and empower the new life, and God grants the increase.

I John 2:27 -

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Salvation is not the result of the work of man for God. It is the gift of God: by grace, through faith.

Modernism declares that anyone that has pursued the proper education are then qualified to be an authority in that subject. This has led many intelligent and educated men (mostly) to teach and write about Christianity and the Bible without knowing, understanding, or even recognizing things of a spiritual, miraculous, or divine nature. They can be called unregenerate and spiritually blind. They are left with a system of ethics as the greatest benefit of Christianity to modern society. This is the limit of their writing, teaching, and preaching. Their Churches become a self-improvement society. The goal is to grow and make the whole culture and behavior better and better – a paradise on earth. The Human Improvement Society. They also recognize the good advise and rules of other religions, as different (but not bad or false) ways to God.

Lesson II

Grace - Chapter 1.

Grace: the supreme motive of God in the creation, preservation, and consummation of the universe. It is the love of God showing itself without limit or measure. It is infinite and eternal.

In the New Testament, the thought of grace is almost exclusively expressed by the word 'grace'. In the Old Testament, the thought is almost exclusively expressed by the word 'favor'. The often given definition of grace is unmerited favor.

7 Fundamental Facts about Grace.

1. Grace is not withheld because of sin. God's grace provided the way of salvation through Christ's sacrifice, to pay for man's sin. God is righteous, and free to bestow grace in every case. Salvation is by grace also. Every human being has the choice to accept or reject this.

2. Grace cannot be lessened by sin. It never falls short, being without measure, the expression of God's infinite love, His tenderhearted loving-kindness.

3. Grace cannot incur a debt. It is given freely and therefore cannot be paid for before, at the time, or after. Nothing can be added or taken away.

The living service of man is the faithful expression of love and gratitude to God, for His glory. Good works cannot be defined as a job, earning pay, or any other recompense. Good works are done without thought of compensation.

4. Grace is equally given to all. This is because all people (starting with Adam and Eve) have sinned, and are under condemnation. The sentence is death. All fall short. Thus, any claim that human merit has value is irrelevant. On the other hand, rewards are always and only that which is merited by faithful service, based on works.

5. Grace cannot be connected with barter or trade. Grace treats a person according to neither what they deserve, or better than they deserve. Grace saves in every and any case. The blessings are included equally to every individual without measure all that God can do in His expressing His infinite love.

6. Grace is not connected with God directly forgiving sins of the unsaved. His grace is always and only through the cross of Christ. He took upon Himself (Christ) the undiminished righteous judgments of God against sin. The debt of sin was paid by Christ.

This judicial forgiveness is final. The individual has unchangeable standing and position in God's family as His child. Forgiveness toward His sinning child is and remains within the family relationship, when the child confesses to Him, fellowship and joy is restored to His child. The child will never be condemned. All sins, past, present, and future, are pardoned forever in Christ. God's imparting and bestowing His blessings are immediate acts

of grace.

7. Grace is not part of God's dealing with the sins of the saved. Grace was bestowed by God upon the single condition of faith in Christ. The saved child of God will be forgiven and cleansed on the sole condition of confession. Grace and salvation bring the individual into union with God through reconciliation with Christ. The restoration of the saved is unto communion with God.

I John 1:1 – 2:2. Read the verses online - www.bartleby.com/108/62/1.html

The central verse - I John 1:9.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The relationship between Father and child will never be set aside. The Father may correct and chasten His erring child. This was also made possible through the shedding of blood of God's own Son.

The Divine ministry in three parts:

1. God saves sinners by grace.
2. God keeps those who are saved by grace.
3. God teaches the saved and the kept how they are to live unto good works to His eternal glory by grace.

Grace – Chapter 2. Salvation by Grace.

God was taxed less in the power and resources of the creation of the material universe, than in the provision of salvation of human beings. In salvation, He spared not His own Son.

Four aspects of His saving grace:

1. Three Divine motives from least to greatest.

First. We are saved unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). Our salvation begins through the 'new birth', by the Spirit of God. This new creation is organically and spiritually connected to Christ as a branch in the vine, a member of the human body is 'in' the body, as a believer is in Christ, joined together, now and forever. Being joined to Him has redeemed and freed us from the bondage of sin to be zealous of good works. This is not to earn anything, but in recognition, gratitude and love for what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, through His grace, forever. This is an obligation, to walk worthily.

True salvation should be shown by a change in the behavior and conversation of that person. These are rooted in the conscience as a reconciled relationship with God through His grace. This can be defined as the obedience of faith. To live otherwise is the opposite: the disobedience of unbelief. Obedience must never be considered first or alone as God's motive to save men.

Second. John 3:16 - "16 ¶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This motive should never be taken alone or first. This motive centers on only the aspect of the human advantage and benefit in salvation.

Third. The final, supreme motive of God in the salvation of men is for the showing forth of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (see Ephesians 2:7). This salvation is described as those dead in trespasses and sins are raised, made alive, to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The unsaved have no hope and are without God in the world.

All other beings of intelligence will know the depth of sin and hopeless situation of the lost. The saved will be observed as now appearing in the highest glory – like Christ. This transformation demonstrates "the exceeding riches of His grace."

From the death of Christ to His return, there have been centuries of human struggle. Nothing that people have come up with can, have, or will solve the problems of human nature and the resulting sins. Only God's provision in Christ is sufficient. But the worldly are blind, and in darkness, believing that the intelligence and power of people can somehow improve and provide a better society. This history that man keeps recording includes the multitudes of people that had the answer and tried to put it into practice. The struggle continues. The human nature of man continues to rule.

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God's purpose is to gather all the redeemed of this age. The Church being the manifold wisdom of God, the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord (see Ephesians 3:9-11). The purpose of every individual part of Christ's body (the Church) is to make increase of the body (see Ephesians 4:16). Until the times of the Gentiles is complete.

Lesson III

Grace chapter 2, continued.

The purpose of God shows forth the exceeding riches of His grace. It goes far beyond the boundaries of this age and includes the whole of creation, the preservation, and consummation of the universe. Christ is the center, cause, purpose and benefactor of all creation.

Colossians 1:16,17.

16 for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 and he is before all things, and by him all things consist:

Through the blood of His cross, He is to reconcile all things unto Himself. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The good works of the redeemed proclaim the Gospel of God's saving grace. Glory will be given to the Lord for His all-surpassing love. This from His incarnation as a human, a servant, humble, obedient unto even death on the cross. God then highly exalted Him, His Name above every name in all of creation.

Philippians 2:6-11.

6 who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 1:2,3.

2 hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The complete showing forth (manifestation) of divine grace will be revealed when Christ is together with His transformed body (the Church) in Heaven. The response: His exceeding joy (see Jude 1:24).

All in the present age are under sin and unbelief, equally disobedient and guilty before God. All are therefore under divine condemnation. But since Christ paid the price by His substitutionary death for all men's sins, condemnation remains only for those that reject the Savior. John 3:18 -

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Only when any and all human merit is removed from consideration, does divine grace operate unto salvation. It includes all that God can do for a human being in time, into eternity.

Jesus prayed (John 17:24): "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

The extreme opposite of the saved are the lost: condemned, doomed to death, and hell, guilty sinners, rejectors of Christ and His Gospel.

God's grace cannot be added to any human effort or work. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9.) Human language is too limited to describe or picture the limitless measure of this grace.

Examples:

John 1:16 – grace added to or heaped upon grace.

Romans 5:17 – grace did 'much more abound' (super-abound).

II Corinthians 9:14 – the exceeding (unable to measure) grace of God in you.

II Corinthians 4:15 – the abundant (overflowing) grace.

The source is God's love as expressed is unlimited flowing forth infinite and eternal in His grace.

7 Major Aspects of God's Provision for Man.

1.) The finished work of Christ, the Gospel of saving grace offered to the whole world lost in sin. (See I Timothy 2:6; II Corinthians 5:19,20; I John 2:1,2.)

2.) The convicting work of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is illuminated in the mind and heart of the unsaved. He convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:7-11.) Only in this manner can the blind and dark soul be led into the glorious light of Christ (II Corinthians 4:3,4).

3.) The moment of belief is the point of the Saving Work of God being accomplished in that instant. Being born again, the Spirit indwelling full of love and light, peace and joy without measure.

4.) The Keeping Work of God. Endurance and perseverance are provided by God's presence, guidance, and power. (Matthew 24:13; John 10:28.)

5.) Deliverance from the power of sin is God's provision for the saved by the indwelling Holy Spirit. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16.)

6.) Christian Growth: the work of God. Only spiritual Christians grow. To remain carnal is to cling to 'babyhood' in spirituality. How to grow: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (II Peter 3:18.) This is a path and process of reading and study of the Word of God, prayer and communion with God and Jesus, assembling with other believers for growth, and praise, reaching out to others with faith, love, and so forth.

7.) The work of God in the final presentation. The believers will be conformed to the image of the Son of God before the presence of His glory to His exceeding joy.

The sovereignty of God in Salvation. God enables the human heart to be drawn to the Gospel. John 6:44 - "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Also God moves the heart of the saved. Philemon 2:13 - "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

God cannot be surprised, disappointed, or in any detail be defeated because of an unanticipated action of human "free will". The offer of salvation is to all people as a gift of love. At the same time, God has permitted human life that He knows will reject His provisions of grace. God's love is boundless, but Whose righteousness demands justice, and it can never be diminished.

The Gospel of grace must be preached purely. There must be no limitations because of anything a person can do to diminish it, nor conditions of a human obligation or earned merit. To pervert the Gospel in any way, unrevokable anathema is pronounced upon that person (see Galatians 1:8,9).

The Word of God is the bread of life to those who believe: it is the Truth. It shows the True Way. It imparts the True Way of Life in Christ Jesus our Lord, both now and forevermore.

Thus the love of God shown forth by His grace in providing forgiveness and eternal life with Him in the Gospel of His Son.

Lesson IV

Grace, chapter 3. Safekeeping in Grace.

Romans 5:2 - "by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (See also I Peter 5:12.) This word also expresses the condition of continuing and enduring. To stay, without changing, as standing. This is the work of God, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Human effort or ability has no power to attain the standing of salvation than it has the ability to maintain it (a right standing) before God. God's saving ministry of grace includes and guarantees His keeping ministry of grace.

Some theological systems. They describe the keeping of salvation as being conditioned on human effort or works. Only while and if you are 'good' enough do you stay saved. This belief makes it impossible to grow in understanding and maturity concerning the certainty of God's keeping power from the moment of salvation into the eternal state. To utterly refute the wrong system, more detail will show clearly the keeping power of God. All principles of grace include God's keeping power, and that continues into the time of its consummation, yet to come. God has provided many safeguards to that end.

Nowhere in Scripture is there a separation of God's keeping power from grace, nor a lack of its inclusion in all considerations of God's grace. There is no sin of a Christian that is not covered by Christ's death on the cross. God does safeguard Christians from practicing sin. He chastens when needed as a righteous Father does. Does sin 'unsave' the believer? Scripture (especially the Epistles) deal with Christians, all of whom do sin. Christians are not condemned for these sins.

Human experience testifies that Christians do remain saved in spite of imperfections and sin. The fact is that Christians are not lost when they sin, nor sinless when they remain saved. They are kept by the power of God. No Christian remains standing based upon their good works outweighing their weaknesses or sins. God is pleased to keep His child through His continual love and grace. It is God's supreme purpose to preserve His children forever. This will not be realized unto the saved sinner is transformed into the image of Christ and uplifted. Salvation through Christ includes every moment from the first of faith, every step of the way to the moment of consummation.

Philemon 1:6: "being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:". The believer shall "have everlasting life" (John 3:16 end). There is only one condition: belief. No condition related to time or merit to receive what is given which also does not include any limit of time or because of merit or lack of it.

God's provisions: His supreme power keeps His own unto His eternal purposes. In Romans 8:38,39 Paul expresses the observation that nothing in the natural world, spiritual world, neither death nor life, or any other creature can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This obviously includes all past sins, present sins, or future sins as not even considered. God is able (has the power) to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). We cannot even imagine the extent or dimension of what is possible to God. Hebrews 7:25 - "He is able to save them to the uttermost." Paul wrote

in Romans 4:21 - "and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

God's eternal purpose, His love as the supreme motive, is also eternal. God showed His love for us, that while we were yet sinners, He sent His Son to die for us. Through the Living Christ we are saved for eternity. This is an unchangeable position and relationship, therefore eternal.

Jesus spoke of those God has given Him, none of them was lost. He prays for them to remain united with Him and the father, to keep them from the evil. He also prays for those that shall believe on Him through their witness, preaching, teaching, bearing witness, by their lives and writings: they shall believe on me through their word.

Let us read some related verses from the Gospel according to John, chapter 17.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

20 ¶ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

None of those ever saved will be lost for so has Christ continued to pray for us in heaven. Hebrews 7:25 - "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Christ's prayer is effectual, always, and continual, always, This fact contains our eternal security as children of God in Christ.

The Substitutionary Death of Christ. Romans 8:1 - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The Resurrection of the Son of God. Every believer partakes of the resurrection life of the Son of God. It is the gift of God, the hope of the glory. John 10:28 records Jesus as saying, "and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This is absolute security.

The Present Advocacy of Christ. This is for all those saved by grace. Hebrews 9:24 - "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us..."

Christ intercedes for us as the Great Shepherd of His flock. He guards their path against the snares of the evil one, in the pleasant ways of His grace and blessing and peace.

Christ as High Priest continues forever. Hebrews 7:23-25 -

- 23 ¶ And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:
24 but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.
25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

From the 23rd Psalm: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

The Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Born of God, now a child of God, joint-heir with Christ.

Let us read related verses -

John 1:13

- 13 which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:3-6

- 33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.
34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.
35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.
36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Titus 3:4-6

- 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
6 which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

The Indwelling Spirit – see John 7:37-39; Romans 5:5, 8:9; I Corinthians 2:12, 6:19; I John 3:24. The staying (abiding) is eternal. (John 14:16.) The believer may grieve and resist (quench) the Spirit but no Scripture says it is even possible for the Spirit to be pushed out or away.

The baptism with the Spirit – see I Corinthians 12:13. This may be understood as organic union with Christ as a branch, grafted into the life union with the vine. In Christ, the believer shares in the imputed righteousness before the Father. This has been described as the white robe representing faith in Christ which makes us righteous before God (Romans 3:22). Thus the baptism with the Spirit is once and for all a union with Christ.

The Sealing with the Spirit. Mentioned only 3 times in the New Testament (II Corinthians 1:22) with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30) unto the day of redemption. This ends the possibility of any change.

The New Covenant in Christ's Blood. There are two types of Covenants. One is conditional, of which any point will depend on the faithfulness of man. The other is unconditional, which consists entirely of God's declaration of what He purposes to do.

The Law of Moses was a conditional covenant. If the people followed the Law, God would bless them. The Covenant with Abraham is an unconditional one. God declared to Abraham what He purposed to do.

The New Covenant is God's declaration of what He purposed to do for everyone that places their faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. So also the great promises of the keeping of God through grace are unconditional. They are in no wise dependent on any point upon the goodness or faithfulness of the believer. The life of the believer is to be unto good works to the glory of God. This is described as bearing good fruit. These works go under judgment only for rewards.

God saves perfectly, for all time and eternity. As God has spoken, so shall He bring it to pass.

Amen.

Lesson V

Grace, chapter 4. Life Under Grace and Law.

God's salvation in grace places the believer as a son of God, a member of the family and household of God, a citizen of heaven. A new manner of life, rules of conduct, must correspond to this new standing. This rule of life for the believer is complete in itself and has no relation to any other past covenants and conditions of conduct. To attempt to please God without knowledge of the revealed will of God concerning daily life would be pointless.

Ignorance has shown itself in the role of legalizers and their teachings. They in effect are discrediting God's grace. Whether zealous or sincere, their efforts are wrong, misguided and misleading.

Section I. Rule of Life under Grace.

Titus 2:11-14.

11 ¶ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,
righteously, and godly, in this present world;
13 looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our
Saviour Jesus Christ;
14 who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto
himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

See also Psalms 130:8; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 4:20, 7:6, 14:2, 26:18; I Peter 2:9.

God's grace has been shown unto all men in the Gospel. It is to be continually proclaimed to all. The invitation is "whosoever will". The teachings about conduct only apply to believers. God in no wise seeks to 'reform' or call them to be moral that are not saved.

Two extremes are to be avoided.

- 1.) To be irresponsible and careless, which is sin.
- 2.) To address the burden of law, earning piety and self-righteousness.

The life and ministry of Paul illustrates a life lived under grace.

Daily life is to be directed by the teachings of grace. They call for honesty, fairness, purity, beauty, positivity, and upbuilding. Think on these things and then act accordingly. This is what Paul calls upon believers to do, keeping his teachings and his life as an example, with the promise - "and the God of peace shall be with you." (See Philippians 4:8,9.)

The guide: "faith which worketh by love." (See Galatians 5:6.) Christ's life and teaching had two major aspects, as a Jew, the Hope of Israel. He kept, taught, enforced, and fulfilled the law. As savior of the world, He established the new manner of relationship and daily living for the believer under grace.

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