

Transformative Grace
Lesson #14
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A photograph of a person's hands holding a small, dark-colored Bible. The person is wearing blue jeans. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building. The text "Transformed by Grace" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Transformed by
Grace

Word of His Grace
Christian Ministry

Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ through the exposition of God's Holy Word, the Bible.

Compiled by Pastor Angel.
Please submit any friendly questions to:

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The
Good News
of Christ

In the Greek, the word for grace is *charis*, which has the idea of ‘*blessings, favor, kindness, mercy.*’ What is the power of grace? What does it mean to be under grace? In short, it is God’s love, His grace extended to sinners that transforms hearts. It is receiving God’s favor when it is not deserved or earned. Those who understand and receive God’s favor exclaim, O what amazing grace!

How does Scripture explain God’s grace?

“For the *grace of God* that bringeth *salvation* hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who *gave himself for us*, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:11-15).

NOTE: This is the gospel or the good news! God took the initiative and took our punishment unto himself that we might have eternal life!

So God extends grace through Jesus Christ?

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace* reign through righteousness unto eternal life *by Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Romans 5:21).

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NOTE: Once one comes to understand the infinite goodness and love of God, coupled with His overflowing mercy and grace towards them, then the heart begins to soften and respond to God. Receiving the goodness and grace of God begins the transformative process, which continues onward to sustain and cause the believer to love God.

What else does the bible say about grace?

“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).

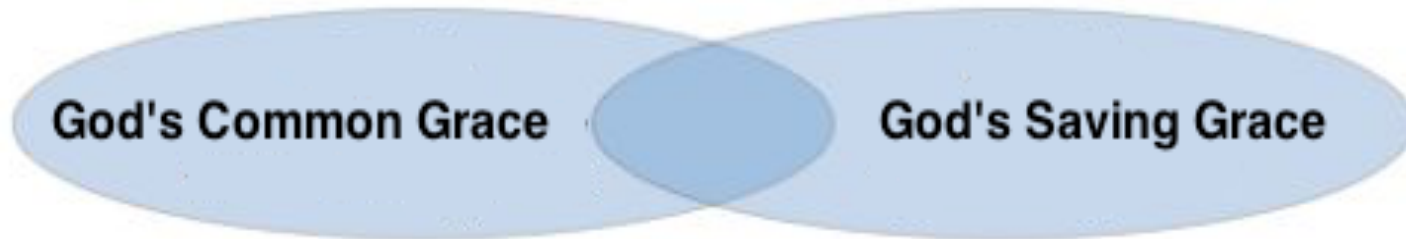
“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his *mercy* he saved *us*, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

Why is grace so important?

““Because the carnal mind is *enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God” (Romans 8:7-8).

“The *heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately *wicked*: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

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A L W A Y S
U N D E S E R V I N G

NOTE: Since man's fall from grace, man's nature became sinful. Meaning, we all enter the world with a nature that gravitates toward selfishness, wrong, sin, and evil. Only the grace and power of God can change the human heart.

Does this mean that people in general cannot do any good?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give *good* gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that *ask* him?”
(*Matthew 7:11*).

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the *things* contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (*Romans 2:14-15*).

NOTE: Paul does not say that the Gentiles (*non-Jews*) could fulfill the righteous requirements of the law by nature, but instead they understood in a general sense, the difference between right and wrong. See *Romans 1:20-21*; *Galatians 3:22*.

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The heart or conscience of man is said to be “*seared*” or burned by sin (1 Timothy 4:2). Yet it can also be influenced by the grace of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 15:7; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 17:30). Though man bears the image of God, sin has marred this image, and only the grace of God can renew the heart. At the same time, man has free will, who bears the responsibility for believing or not believing the gospel.


What change has taken place in the hearts of those that believe in Jesus Christ?

“Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is *born* of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 John 5:1).

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is *born* of the *Spirit*” (John 3:8).


“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit* of his Son into your *hearts*, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

NOTE: It is only by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit that hearts are transformed. Believers are encouraged to daily ask God for grace, power to surrender, and the courage to follow Him.



And because you are sons, God has sent
the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,
crying, "Abba! Father!"
Galatians 4:6

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BORN
of
GOD
1 JOHN 5:1-5

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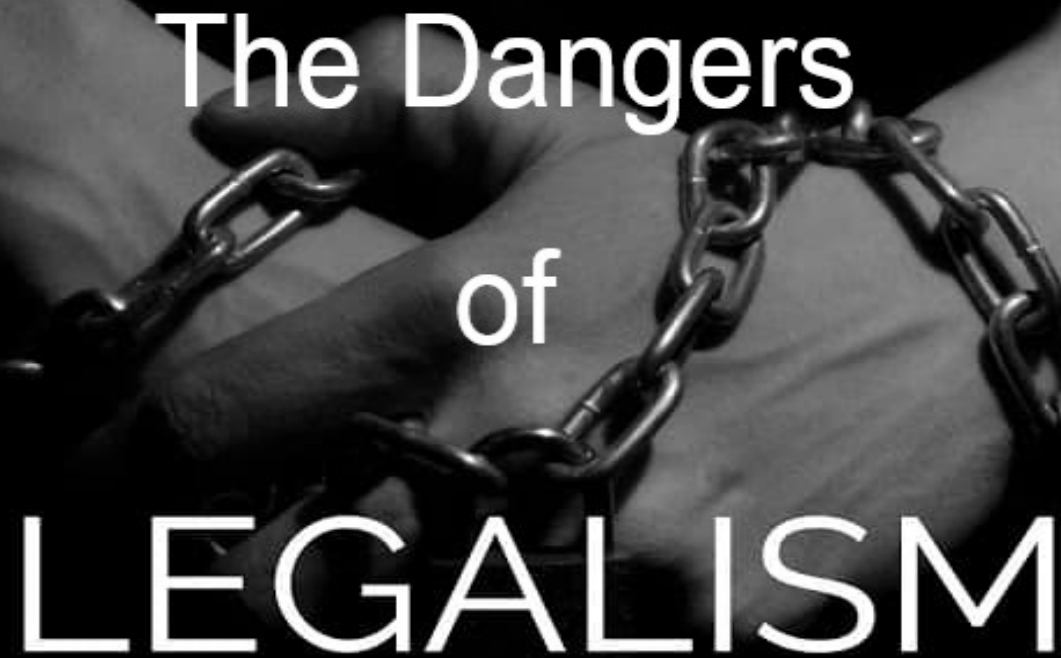
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The Dangers
of
LEGALISM

Can having the wrong understanding of God's grace be harmful to one's spiritual growth?

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not *attained* to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by *faith*, but as it were by the *works* of the law. For they stumbled at that *stumblingstone*; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on *him* shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:31-33).

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the *works* of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by *the works of the law* shall no flesh be *justified*” (Galatians 2:16).

NOTE: *Legalism* is a Christian term that describes any system of rules, observances, and good works as a means of measuring up or earning salvation or gaining spiritual holiness. Any belief system that suggests or stresses emphasis on what you do rather than what Christ has done is a red flag.

Did Jesus observe and address legalism in His day?

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Then said Jesus unto his disciples,
If any man will come after me, let him
deny himself, and take up his cross,
and follow me.

Matthew 16:24 (KJV)

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“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful *outward*, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but *within* ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:27-28).

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their *lips*, but their *heart* is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the *tradition of men*, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.” (Mark 7:6).

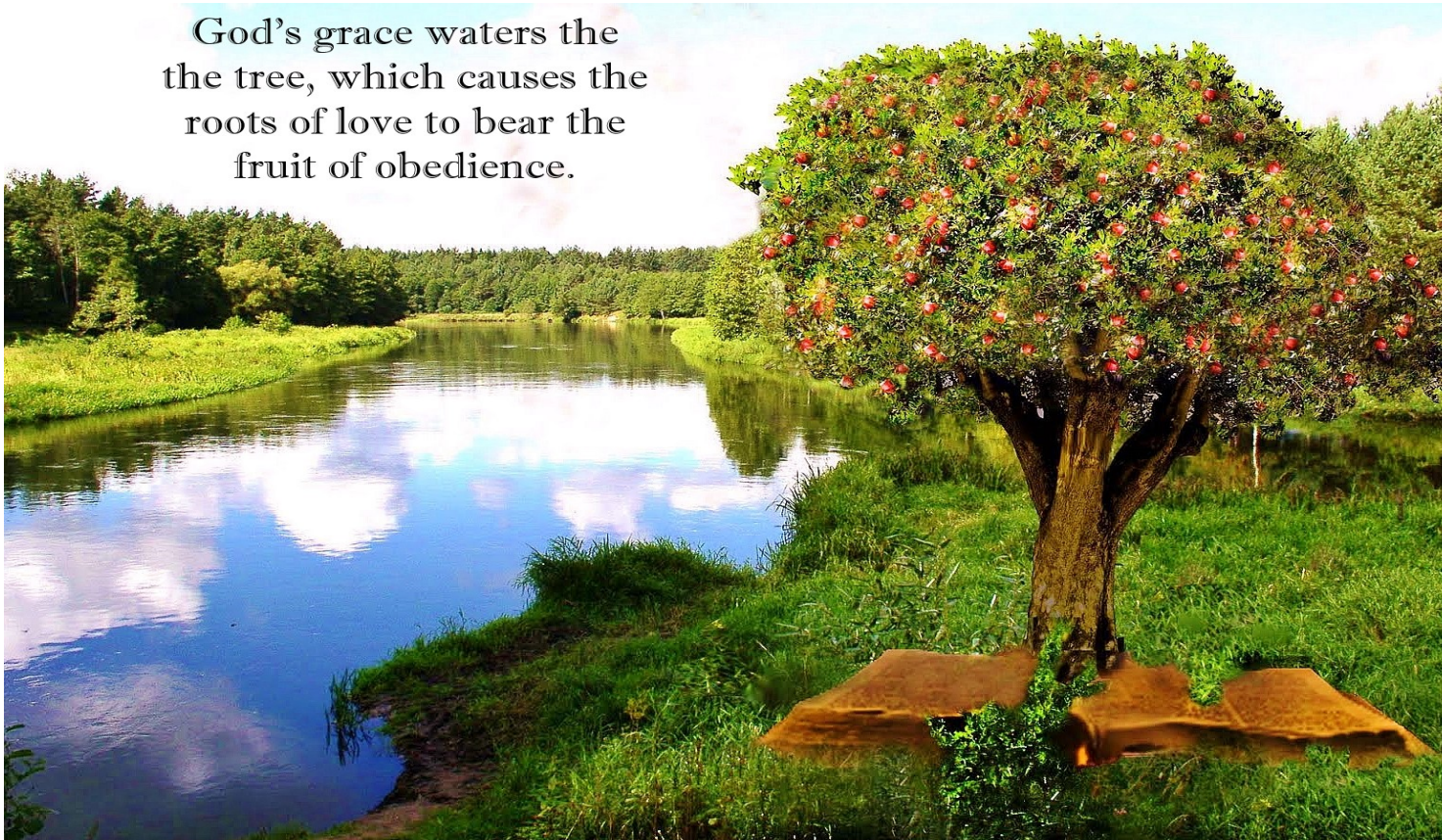
What was the apostle Paul's conclusion and experience regarding legalism?

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the *concision*. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the *flesh*” (Philippians 3:2-3).

NOTE: Paul concludes outward religiosity to be on the opposite side of God's grace. Self-righteousness, self-dependence, & outward expressions of religious piety are dangerous to one's spiritual growth.

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God's grace waters the
the tree, which causes the
roots of love to bear the
fruit of obedience.



What does a heart changed by grace look like?

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man *love* me, he will keep *my words*: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

“Whosoever *abideth in him* sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (1 John 3:6)... Whosoever is *born of God* doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth *in him*: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9).

NOTE: The last two passages does not mean sinlessness; rather, the meaning refers to a continual practice of habitual sin.

Also, one must understand our *complete reliance* upon *God's grace* and *Holy Spirit* in our lives:

If we *overestimate* (*place too high*) the role of the *Spirit* in our lives, we can neglect our role in terms of *dependence* and take a mystical approach to our faith...relying upon our *feelings*.

If we *underestimate* (*place too low*) the role of the *Spirit* in our lives, we can neglect *His presence* and become *self-reliant* and take a more rational approach to our faith...relying upon our *thinking*.