



*“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:11–12)*

Grace is not unmerited favor. Nowhere in the Bible will you find such a notion. It belongs in books that begin with “Once upon time.” God favors you in nothing, you are by nature vile, corrupt and completely disobedient. Grace is unmerited obedience. God works an obedience to the Holy Spirit that we do not deserve. For this reason Jesus is a “source” of salvation only for those who overflow with obedience by the power of this grace.

And once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.  
(Hebrews 5:9)

God defines grace for us in the book of Titus. Any sermon, publication, commentary or ministry that does not define grace this way does not really preach God’s grace. According to God, grace equals obedience. The person touched by God’s grace is filled with His will. He overflows with righteousness and lives in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Read it for yourself. But, as you do, notice the first verse that tells us that this is the “salvation” that “has appeared to all men.” No other kind of grace can deliver us from hell.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.  
(Titus 2:11–14)

Grace, according to God’s definition, gives us the power to say “No” to sin. It gives the power to “live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.” True Christians are obedient in “this present age” through this powerful grace.

You can tell that most individuals have not been touched by God’s grace simply because of their hostility to the crucified life. If you dare to suggest the need to deny ourselves, or obey Scripture more than they personally believe necessary, you will encounter all kinds of excuses, whining, moaning and grumbling. They will protest that it is a “negative gospel” or, of course, the old favorites: legalism and salvation by works.

Those filled with God’s grace are “eager to do what is good.” A church filled with God’s grace will always look for some new way they can obey God’s commands more. Scripture and God’s Holy Spirit always reveals something new to obey, for God’s commands are “boundless,” (Psalms 119:96).

You can always spot a people genuinely touched by God’s grace. They are eager and excited to find things in the Bible they can obey by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, those who have accepted a false message of grace are rebellious, self-righteous, and simply like to claim salvation and God’s blessings. Titus tells us that those God redeems have been redeemed from “wickedness” (that is from disobedience) and are purified unto obedience by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Peter tells us that God only gives the Holy Spirit to those who “obey him.”

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. (Acts 5:32)

Therefore Paul writes in Romans that sin shall not be our master, for under grace we have the power to obey.

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:14)



## Mercy

Grace is the power to obey God, while mercy allows our sins to be forgiven. This distinction is made throughout the Bible.

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and love. (2 John 1:3)

If a man accepts mercy but refuses the obedience that grace brings, he forfeits God’s forgiveness. The unmerciful servant found this out the hard way and was “tortured” for his lack of obedience. Although he was forgiven by mercy, he found that forgiveness revoked because he refused to obey grace. Therefore, his debt of sin was reinstated. If we are not obedient to forgive others, God will not forgive us our sins.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they felt greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. “You wicked servant,” he said, “I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.  
(Matthew 18:31–35)

The Bible tells us to approach the throne of God and seek two things. First, that we might receive mercy that forgives our sins. Secondly, so that we might find “grace to help us in our time of need.” By seeking mercy, we ask God to forgive our sins. And by seeking grace, we ask God for the power to enable us to obey.

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.  
(Hebrews 4:16)

Anyone who seizes the mercy of God, but refuses the grace of God, is nothing more than a rebel and a thief. Many people selfishly desire and claim God's mercy but, at the same time, they refuse true grace because it would cost them too much. It would require them to really deny themselves, pick up a cross and hate their own lives, but they are unwilling to do so, (John 12:25).



## Obedience

Obedience shows that a person has received mercy and grace from heaven. In fact, every church should preach a message of obedience. Certainly it is an obedience that comes from faith, but it is obedience nonetheless.

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.  
(Romans 1:5)

Jesus said that we must make disciples, teaching them to "obey everything" (Matthew 28:20). The disciple that only obeys their church's doctrine is not filled with God's grace. A true disciple is led of the Spirit because they hate their own life, deny self and pick up a cross. Again, every church should preach obedience, as Jesus said:

"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."  
(Matthew 5:19)

For example, disciples of Jesus cannot just choose to ignore what the Bible teaches about things like dress, appearance, music, baptism, women's roles in church, living as though not married, following the voice of the Holy Spirit, walking in the Light, giving up everything, not compromising with the world, having all things in common, persecution, suffering against sin, despising money, and all the other holy ways of God. If they do choose to ignore these things, they should not expect to go to heaven. Anyone not reflecting an eager desire to discover new ways to deny self and obey God by the power of the Holy Spirit is not born of God.

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. (1 John 2:29)

We can be easily led astray by those who speak confidently of "freedom in Christ." They think freedom means to have all the benefits of God, but without the cross doing its painful work in a Christian's life (1 Peter 4:1). Do not be led astray. Only those who obey God by the power of grace are really born again.

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. (1 John 3:7)

The vast majority of people in church have resisted true grace, revealed by their disobedience to the Scriptures and to the Living God. They claim the mercy and forgiveness of God, but their actions show that they deny Him. Instead of denying self, they deny God. People who walk in the true grace of God find such people "detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good" (Titus 1:16).



## Righteous by Faith

God forgives our sins and thus freely gives righteousness and justification through Jesus. The gift of grace then works the obedience of Jesus in us alongside forgiveness. Obedience becomes as much a free gift as mercy and forgiveness. Just as in Adam's sin we became disobedient by nature, so in Jesus we become obedient by nature. For we have His nature in us.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

As we have seen, no one can claim the mercy of God while refusing the obedience of Christ and expect to go to heaven. God requires all who call on the name of the Lord to surrender each day to the power of grace that works obedience to His will. In offering ourselves to God, by accepting His mercy, we offer ourselves "to obedience, which leads to righteousness."

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

Don't be fooled. God cannot and will not be mocked. Those who seek to please their flesh will go to hell. It doesn't matter if they claim Jesus as their Savior or not.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

(Galatians 6:7–8)



## Conclusion

God defines grace as the power that teaches us to say "No," to be self-controlled, upright, and godly. It provides us with an attitude that hungers for the commands of God. A man can only claim that grace has touched him to the degree these things become a reality in his heart. Grace manifests only to the degree that obedience by the Holy Spirit is present in a man's life. This is true faith in Jesus—not salvation by works, but true salvation by grace. Where grace finds a humble life that allows it to work the will of God, (1 Corinthians 15:10).

And we must continue to surrender to God's grace every day. For, although mercy will cover our sins, anyone who tramples on the blood of Jesus by resisting His grace will be in real danger of forfeiting not only grace, but mercy as well.

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29)

Do not misunderstand God's mercy or patience. God is patient so that we might have time to become obedient. God grants us mercy that grace might empower obedience, (2 Peter 3:9). The person who fights against God's powerful grace loses mercy and will burn in hell.

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