

## GRACE

Often the word “grace” is associated with prayer at the meal, someone’s name, or controlled or flawless movement such as a swan on lake; but the word also pertains to the love and favor of God toward men. It is the last description of this word that is the subject of this letter and, I should add, is central to Christianity.

You may know the scripture, *for by grace you have been saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is a gift from God.* Being a gift, grace is neither earned nor deserved; instead, it is simply a gift - but a gift above all other gifts. In the Bible, grace is offered to wicked people – even though they continue to do wicked things. In the Gospel of John, Jesus was *sent from the Father, full of grace*; in turn, *from the fullness of Jesus’ grace, we have all received one blessing after another.* Many other accounts of grace given to man are described beginning in the book Acts and continuing through the book of Revelation – but why are we given grace?

Simply, because God loves us and has endowed grace to us without conditions or prejudice; he has enabled us to receive his mercy and his blessings in order that we might be reconciled unto him and to live with him forever. Without grace, we would have no chance of reconciliation, no chance of salvation, no chance of redemption, no chance at all!

As hard as this circumstance may seem, the advent of grace should be a relief of unparallel proportion; it is an enabler for any meaningful friendship, for marriage, and for our relationship with Jesus as described above and in many places of the Bible. Our salvation rests on Grace!

As a final “Point of Grace”, Jeff Bridges (a Christian writer, Navigators) clarifies that injustice cannot be overlooked on the basis of grace. Grace enables our salvation and relationship with God; yet it not a substitute or replacement for our humble commitment to him and love for him. Though we may receive grace in that it is a gift of God, we must accept this gift with the gratitude, thanksgiving, and appreciation that lead to love, honor, and respect.

A gift is not to taken for granted or taken lightly - but comes with a cost bore by the gift giver. In the case of grace, the cost was beyond measure and understanding...but the benefits, dividends, and rewards are as well.

God, however, cannot exercise mercy at the expense of His justice. He cannot choose simply to overlook sin because He feels sorry for us. God's justice must be satisfied. Yet many people seem to have that concept of grace. They think of God as loving and kind, as one who will pardon our sins without regard to justice. But if God pardoned our sins in that manner, that would not be grace. That would be a miscarriage of justice.

In a **WORD**