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Teaching Letter

How to Receive God's Grace



Teaching Letter
By Derek Prince

Grace versus works. The conflict between these two concepts of the freedom of grace versus the bondage of legalism is at the core of Christianity.

In this first installment of a two-part Teaching Legacy series taken from Derek Prince's book, By Grace Alone: Finding Freedom and Purging Legalism from Your Life, Derek addresses this conflict in a very practical way. In fact, he provides a simple two-step solution that enables us to access God's grace more fully in our lives.

How Do We Do It?

The ability to receive God's grace is of vital importance for each of us. There are two aspects to this transaction. The first is negative and the second is positive.

1. Stop Working

The negative aspect may be summed up in two simple words that are very surprising to most people: Stop working. You must stop trying to earn God's approval. As long as you are trying to earn the grace of God you cannot receive it. God cannot give you His grace on the basis of what you do because that would be a false basis. If God gave grace to you based on what you did, you would have a false picture of yourself, of God, and of everything that is involved in His relationship with us.

This first requirement, which is very difficult for religious people, is absolute and God will not change it. Paul states:

> "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." (Romans 4:4–5)

Notice the vitally important words: To him who does not work. Then, once you stop working, you must simply trust God, who justifies the ungodly. This, of course, is humbling because it means you are putting yourself in the category of those who need to be justified because they are ungodly. This is the part that is very, very difficult for religious people to see. They cannot conceive of themselves as being categorized with the ungodly.

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To the one who trusts God, who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. From this point forward you are living on God's credit; you are no longer living on the produce of your own labor. This is God's grace, because your faith is credited to you as righteousness. You are not considered righteous because of what you have done, but because you believe in God who justifies the unrighteous. This is the negative aspect of receiving God's grace. We must stop working.

2. Receive Jesus and Yield to Him

The positive side is simple: You receive Jesus and yield yourself without reservation to Him. All God's grace is in Jesus Christ; He is the only channel of God's grace. When we receive Him, all the grace of God is made available to us. The first chapter of John's Gospel makes this clear. Let's look at John 1:11–17.

We begin with verses 11–12:

> "He [Jesus] came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

The critical transaction is whether or not we receive Him. Once we receive Him, we are given the right to become children of God. It is a gift. We cannot earn it. The only thing we can do with a gift is to receive it.

Verse 13 indicates the result of receiving Him:

> "[These] were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Those who receive Him are born anew. They experience a new inner spiritual transformation, renewal, and rebirth. We need to see that this inner transformation is directly linked with the grace of God manifested in Jesus. Jesus is always the source of all grace.

John covers this in verse 14:

> "And the Word [this is the eternal Word, Jesus] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Notice the emphasis on the glory of God that was upon Jesus: He was full of grace and truth.

Then John adds in verse 16:

> "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace."

In other words, when we receive Jesus, all God's fullness that is in Him is made available to us. For every grace there is in Jesus, a corresponding grace is made available to us.

Then John sums it up in the verse we have considered so many times, verse 17:

> "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The emphasis that John is making is on grace.

- "Full of grace and truth."
- "Grace upon grace."
- "Grace and truth."

The point is clear: To receive that grace, we must receive Jesus. The decisive, positive aspect of this transaction, then, is receiving Jesus and yielding to Him.

It is not an issue of being holy, saying prayers, going to church or trying to become a better person. These are actions that may have some merit in their own place, but they are of no value in receiving grace. The key decisive transaction is yielding ourselves to Jesus, handing ourselves over to Him without reservation, and opening ourselves up to Him and all that He is able to bring into our lives.

Grace for Grace

The results of this transaction are twofold. First, there is a new birth; a completely new kind of life starts within us. It is not physical life; it is a spiritual life that will ultimately affect even our physical lives. Then, out of Jesus dwelling in us through the new birth, we receive of His fullness grace for grace. For every grace that is in Christ, the new birth opens the way for the corresponding grace to be manifested in us. It is all contained in Jesus.

Jesus is like a beautiful diamond with innumerable facets, all of which glitter and sparkle with beauty and with grace.

Every facet of that diamond is a particular grace. Figuratively speaking, when we take that diamond in through the new birth, the way is open for that grace in all its facets to shine out of our lives.

I have proved this in my own experience time and time again. For many years my greatest personal problem was anger. I learned to yield to Jesus, however, and my problem of anger began to be replaced by His grace of gentleness. I can testify that this has worked in my life over the years. People who have known me only in the last years of my life would never believe that I had this problem with anger, because it has been replaced by the grace of God. I take no credit for this transformation; it has been by His grace. I did not earn it. I did not work for it. I just believed in His grace.

Yielding Your Problems

What if your problem is timidity? You yield to Jesus, and the grace of His courage is made available to you. As you believe, your weakness of timidity is replaced by His grace of courage. The same would hold true if you have a problem with lust. Let the grace of the purity of Jesus be manifested in you.

In applying this, it is important that we never focus on the negative. Do not spend your time worrying about your problem, because that does not produce anything but more of the same problem. You turn away from the problem and yield to the corresponding grace of Jesus. If you have a problem with foolishness, accept the grace of wisdom that is in Jesus and begin to allow it to operate through you. You will be amazed at the results.

Worry is a common problem. First, stop worrying about worrying! It only compounds your worry. Yield to Jesus and let the grace of His peace take the place of the problem of your worrying. Usually we must yield to His grace again and again until it takes root and begins to rule in our lives. We must never become discouraged, however. We must do continually as John said, “Believe in Him.” This is learning to rely on His grace day after day.

Let’s respond in prayer to the helpful instruction we have just received:

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