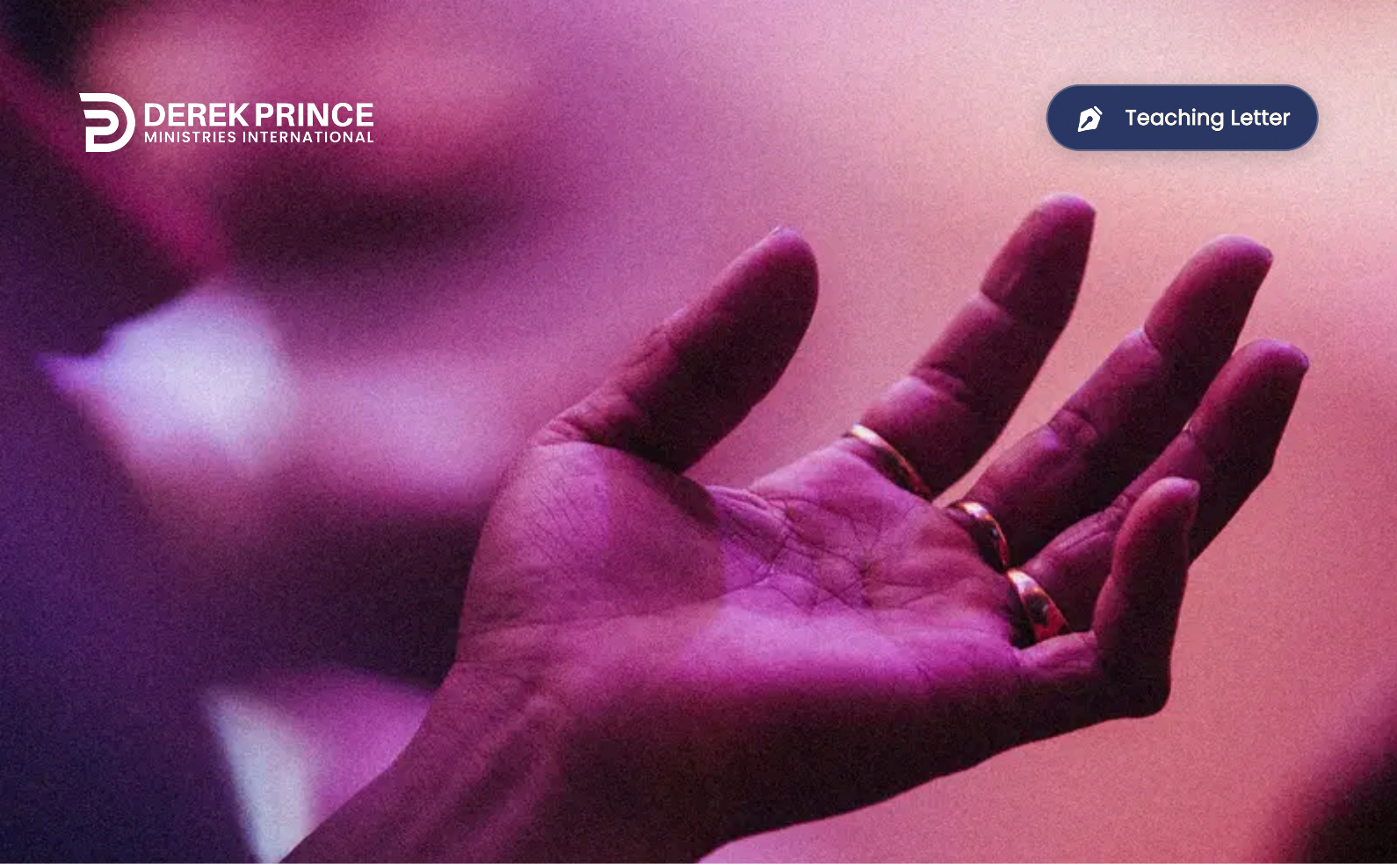

DEREK PRINCE
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Teaching Letter

What Grace Teaches Us



Teaching Letter by Derek Prince

Most Christians consider grace to be a wonderful gift from God—and it surely is! However, in this second installment of our 2-part series on the subject of grace, Derek Prince shares some surprising news: grace actually teaches us! This truth, drawn from Derek's groundbreaking book, By Grace Alone, is an unexpected benefit of the gift of grace. Here's the catch: We need to cooperate in the process.

A Surprising Quality

A particular aspect of God's grace that surprises many people is that grace teaches us. Paul expresses this aspect of grace in his letter to Titus, who was a young man in the ministry serving as a pastor and personal representative of Paul. In the second chapter of his letter to Titus, Paul is telling Titus how to best care for God's people and how to bring out the best in each of them. In this context, Paul addresses various different categories within the total congregation (the young men, the old men, the older women, and so on) and in each case Paul tells Titus what he is to teach them. At the close of the chapter he goes on to say, "Remember it is God's grace that teaches all of us" (see Titus 2:11–12). In other words, Titus is to be an instrument of the grace of God in teaching what Paul tells him to teach.

> "But as for you, speak [or teach] the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience." (Titus 2:1–2)

> "The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." (verse 3)

> "Likewise, exhort [exhortation is a form of teaching] the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works." (verses 6–7)

> "Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things,

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not answering back." (verse 9)

The Grace We Need

For each separate group, there is a particularly appropriate emphasis on the teaching that they need. Paul then goes on to close the chapter with a beautiful picture of the grace of God. What he is really saying is that all these different aspects of teaching each proceed from one source—the grace of God.

> "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (verses 11–14)

Consider some of the lessons grace teaches us. As you do, ask yourself if you are allowing the grace of God to teach you these truths.

First on Paul's List—a Powerful Principle

Grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passion. We will never get far in life if we do not know how to say no and mean it. There are going to be situations in which we are confronted with enticements of evil, or with an easy option in a difficult situation that may not be God's solution. We are never going to succeed in life if we have not learned to reject evil in such a way that the devil and everybody else knows we really mean it. Grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passion.

Second on Paul's List

Grace teaches us to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives. Some people seem to believe that grace means you can do anything you like or anything that feels good. Such beliefs are the exact opposite of what God states in His Word. If you are being taught by grace, it will teach you to live in a self-controlled, upright, and godly manner.

Third on the List

Grace teaches us to wait for the appearing of Jesus Christ. It gives us an objective to which our lives are directed—the blessed hope of the appearing of our great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. I believe a person who is not excited and focused upon the return of Jesus is not really living in the grace of God.

Fourth on Paul's List

Grace reminds us that Jesus died to redeem us and purify us from all wickedness. The whole emphasis in this passage is turning from wickedness, being redeemed from it and being purified.

Fifth and Last on His List

Grace teaches us that we ought to be eager to do what is good. This is a different picture of grace from what some people hear in their churches. Grace never sets a lower standard than the Law; grace sets a higher standard. As we have seen, however, the difference is that the Law teaches from without while grace teaches from within. Law is commandments, which are held up before you and say, "Do this! Don't do that!" You may say, "Fine, that's good," but there is something in you that cannot respond, because there is a rebel in there who just will not yield to the Law.

Changing the Rebel

Grace, however, comes into us and changes the rebel from within. Grace begins to speak to that converted rebel: "This is the way you need to respond. This is the way through this difficulty." Then, when you are confronted with a temptation, grace enables you to say, "No!" This is how grace teaches us. If we do not allow grace to teach us, we end up abusing the very grace that was intended to make us free.

Today, just as it was in Paul's day, there is the temptation to use the grace of God to give license to the old rebel to live any way he wants. There are two warnings in the New Testament against abusing God's grace. In 2 Corinthians 6:1, Paul says: "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."It is possible to receive the grace of God in vain. What does that mean? I believe it means you lay claim to God's grace, His grace begins to operate in your life, but you refuse to let grace teach you how you should live. By refusing to come under the discipline of grace, you go on living your own way, pleasing yourself, and claiming to be in the grace of God. But you are deceiving yourself. If you are living in the grace of God, the truths that grace teaches you will be

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manifested in your life. If they are not manifested in your life, you are receiving the grace of God in vain.

Likewise, Jude 4 contains a very strong warning against abusing the grace of God:

> "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Tragically, the abuse of grace Jude is warning about in this passage continues to occur in churches and other Christian ministries today. Many who claim to be committed believers also claim to be in the grace of God, but they are living loose, immoral lives. Scripture says they have changed the grace of God into a license for immorality.

The Only Way

I believe the only way to avoid abusing the grace of God is to allow that very grace to teach us. We are submitting ourselves to grace by allowing His instruction from the Scriptures to show us the kind of life we ought to lead. Then we allow grace to supply us with the ability to lead that kind of life. Grace is the perfect teacher, because it not only instructs us, but then gives us the ability to live in accordance with that instruction.

Let's ask for the Lord's help in learning from the grace He provides:

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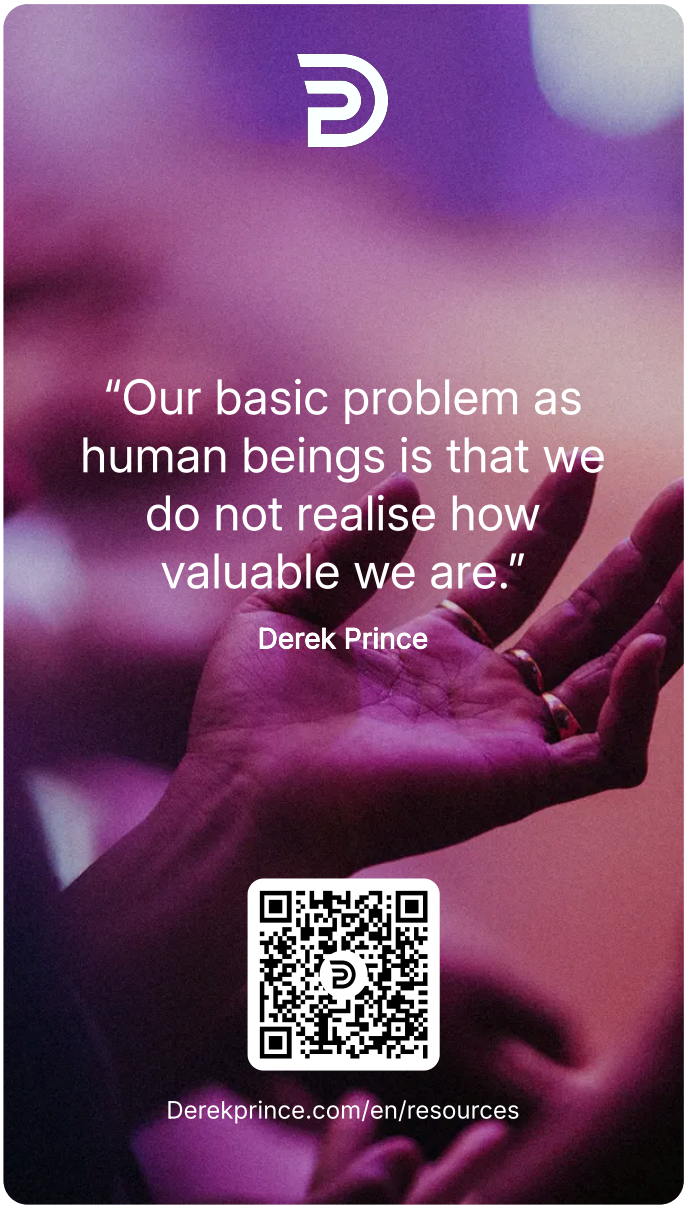
Teaching Letter
Transcript: TL-L167-100-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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