# *Frustrating the Grace of God, No. 6 The Principles of the Doctrine of Grace - CSP006*

This is our study of frustrating the grace of God, segment number six. In John 1:17, we read, "For the law (that is the Mosaic Law system) was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." The old system of the law, which depended on human effort to be able to obey those 613 commandments, was a way of life. It was delivered to Israel by Moses from Mount Sinai. But the New Testament grace way of life (truth and grace) came by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 1:14, we read, "And the Word (a symbolic word for the Lord Jesus Christ) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory; glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." So the subject of grace has been characteristic of God from the very beginning. Nobody has ever been saved, except on the basis of grace. All salvation in the Old Testament was on the basis of the kindness of God, in extending salvation on credit until the Savior came, to cover our moral guilt.

But after that, living the life with God; for God; and, serving Him in the Old Testament was a tough row to hoe, because it was based upon man's own ability, which always broke down. This, of course, was the purpose of the Mosaic Law – to show man that on his own he is a sinner; he can't change it; and, and he can't make it. The result is that along came the Lord Jesus Christ and said, "I'm going to open a new era. I'm going to create a new kind of believer. This believer will have the resources of God surrounding him, and in fact, *in* him, so that he will be a distinctively new kind of human being, functioning under the grace system." The grace system was inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

## Peace

The basis for God treating Christians in freedom and under the grace system is stated in Hebrews 12:14, which we have already looked at: "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." A Christian is to enjoy and pursue peace with God because he has been permanently reconciled to God's standard of absolute righteousness. This has come about through faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior. That means that he is, at that point, in the eyes of God, as perfect as Jesus Christ. Anybody, if he is not in Christ (if he has not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior), will stand before the living God drenched with the stench of his sin and his moral guilt. There's no place for him to go then except the lake of fire. So anybody who understands that principle is going to be very uneasy until he knows for sure that he has been reconciled to God's required standard. That's no less than the person of Jesus Christ himself.

The religious world about us does not understand that. They compare a man to the best man that they know, and they say that's acceptable with God. However, the best human being is not acceptable. Only one person is acceptable, and that is the Son of God.

## Sanctification

Secondly, in verse 14, we're told that we Christians are also to pursue sanctification. That's another word for holiness. Here it's referring to our position in Christ (positional sanctification) – being placed in Him by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. So we are declared holy, and we are permanently set apart for heaven.

## Those Who Stop Believing

Someone this morning asked me, "What about the question that was raised where somebody says, 'Well, I don't believe anymore,' but they genuinely did believe. They genuinely were born again. They had genuinely trusted in Christ as Savior, and something came into their life (some great tragedy), and they said, 'No, I don't believe in God anymore. I don't trust Him as Savior.' What's going to happen to them when they die?"

Well, Timothy, in one of his epistles, takes up that very subject, and he makes a declaration that God is true; and, even when we are not true, He will continue to be true to us. So once He has saved us, He's going to keep His Word. He will not go against His Word. You may say, "No, I don't want to go to heaven. I don't trust in Jesus Christ anymore." If that was a genuine acceptance of Christ, you may be so far out in carnality that you're spiritually berserk; and, mentally, too. And they're going to take you into heaven kicking and screaming, whether you like it or not. God cannot be false to Himself. Though you may choose to be false, He will be continue to be true to you.

This business of salvation as a gift of God is all that the Bible ever knows about the way of salvation. But you get into men's ways, and there you have the contamination of human beings. So verse 14 says, "No one will see God without peace with Him, and sanctification (holiness)," because no one can enter God's holy presence who is not compatible with His holy character. That means that the justice demanded for our sins (which is death) has been satisfied, and that we have imputed to us the character of absolute righteousness. So we are compatible with the character of God. Nobody can come up with this on his own. Once the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life and makes him aware of this, that's when that person believes the gospel. Up to then, as shocking as this may be to us, and as simple as it is in Scripture, you would think that anybody who heard this would say, "Oh, yeah. I'm going to take that. I'll accept that." However, that is not true. It is characteristic of the unsaved man to be blinded to the gospel until the Spirit of God opens those eyes.

With the divine provision of reconciliation and sanctification, the church age believer comes forever under the canopy of God's grace. And he is a new creature, a new species of human being from that Old Testament saint. The Christian under grace has enormous spiritual assets so that he can live a life that is not subject and not enslaved to sin. He will never do this perfectly. The sin nature will always trap us sometimes. For the Christian, the old death way of life in Adam is replaced by the new living way of life in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we're told that the Christian of the church age enjoys new things. The new things are being permanently indwelt by God himself, and of possessing the mind of God the Holy Spirit, through the knowledge of doctrine. The Christian thus enjoys a spiritual power system for godly living, and he has a capacity now for divine good works in serving God the father.

This is a mistake that unsaved people make in thinking that if they do good things, they will gain merit with God. If you are not born again spiritually, you're not under the canopy of grace, and therefore everything you do (that is fine, self-sacrificial, and even honorable) is tainted by the sin nature because that's where it comes from. Therefore, you can never appease the justice of God against your sin. Therefore, anybody who is trying to satisfy God in that way, as most religions are (including Roman Catholicism), those people will never go to heaven, because what are they offering? They're offering something that is not up to the standard of the person of Jesus Christ in his absolute righteousness.

So what is the Christian to do? Knowing that this is what we have become, we have the capacity really to produce divine good service for which God will reward us in eternity. We are under that protective canopy of the grace of God. We have the ability to walk through this world unscathed by its sin and its delusions. We are potentially positionally a holy people, and we are potentially that in our experience.

## Children of God

1 John 3:2-3 say, "Beloved (speaking to Christians now), we are children of God." You are not a child of God until you have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. We are not all the children of God. Liberals like to say that. Only those who are in the family of God (through the new birth, through Jesus Christ) are the children. "Beloved, we are the children of God here on earth, but it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He (Jesus Christ) appears in the rapture, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Out there in outer space sometime, when we meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the experience of the rapture, as many of you will, you will immediately be transformed into the sinless perfection of Christ Jesus. As He is a human being with sinless perfection, you too will be a human being in His image. That's what this means.

In verse 3 he says, "Well, so what? Everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as He is pure." Therefore, knowing that this is what we are going to become in holiness in Christ, that should be the great motivation as to how we should live. That's why the Christian should be aware that the world is a contaminating place. As you walk through it, even as His servant, you must be unspotted from the filthy quality of the world's system. You must be a child of God who walks as a representative of the most high God.

Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, prayed for us to walk through this world. He said, "Father, I do not ask that you take them out of this world." If we're out of this world, then who's going to rub shoulders with the world and give them their witness. But when we rub shoulders, we are in dangerous territory. We must be careful. The Bible is full of examples, and our experience as well, of Christians who have been walking with the Lord, and suddenly they start playing around the edges of sin, and suddenly like a firestorm, they're sucked into it. They are crushed even as believers.

The Christian is to see to it, therefore, that he does not frustrate the working potential of God's grace in his life by breaking his temporal fellowship. When the fellowship is broken, that's when you are in a dangerous condition relative to Satan.

## Do not Come Short of the Grace of God

So Hebrews 12:15 says, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God." The church age believer is to observe his own spiritual condition because he is his own priest. He is to be honest with himself when he is in temporal fellowship, and when he is out of temporal fellowship. 1 Peter 2:9 points this out to us that we are the priests of God: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood." We do not have anymore a separate group of people who are the priests of God. You are your own priest. You represent yourself before God, and therefore you have the responsibility of the integrity that is required of a priest of God. No church organization and no religious rituals can carry you in the crises of life. It is only the grace of God, so don't frustrate it. That is what's going to carry you.

I don't know why Christians fall short of the grace of God. I don't know why Christians frustrate the grace of God. But it does happen. I am well aware of the fact that it is clearly observable that within a family group, some members of that family have a natural attraction to the things of God. They have a natural desire to walk a holy life. They have a natural inclination to want to be in the Word of God, and to want to get acquainted with the God who is out there. Yet, others in that same family have no inclination and have no warmth toward the things of God. They have no powerful attraction toward it. There is something (and I cannot explain it), in the way of a character with which we are born so that some people, even if they're not reared in a solid Christian family where you have a father for a solid Christian example and a mother who is backing up that Christian example, yet, some of the children will become trophies of God's grace in a magnificent way. On the other hand, others who have had that same kind of opportunity will be siphoned off to the world system. The world will suck them in, and they will be injured spiritually.

I know that whatever it is that propels people in one direction or another, it is the grace of God that makes a difference. Some of the members of the family rise to living under the grace of God. Their lives become eternally significant. Others do not rise to living under the grace of God, and their lives are going to be wounded and made useless. Your church cannot do that for you. Religious ritual cannot do that for you. Only the grace of God can carry you through life. That grace can only function when you're using the dynamic power system of being in fellowship with the Spirit of God. That is what the Bible calls being filled with the Spirit. You are in the study of the doctrines of Scripture, so that the mind of God becomes your mind. That is a reality. As we'll show you in a moment, several relationships in life, like prayer and other things are all directly hinged upon your being under the grace of God and functioning in it – not frustrating it.

Furthermore, confessed sin has to be forgotten because you and I are going to sin, and we are to put it behind us as one that has been forgiven by God, and God has forgotten it. When He has forgiven us, we're back in the power system. The Christian who is in fellowship with God the Father is filled with the Spirit. Therefore, he's able to operate under that quality of love that only the Spirit of God can give us – "agape" mental attitude love. The key feature of that is personal self-sacrifice in behalf of the Word of God (the mission of God) and of people that we deal with. Sacrifice is a characteristic of "agape" love. If you do not have that mental attitude of love (this is not emotion), you're not going to knock yourself out here at the local Berean ministry. If that mental attitude love is there, then it will be toward God. It will be toward your mate and your family. It will be toward the people about you. Only God can give you that. When you have it, there is a tenderness that wells up within you to want to reach out to people to show them the better way of living under the grace of God.

## The End of Human History

Today, you should remember that we are rapidly coming to the total of 2,000 thousand years since the Lord Jesus was walked the earth. We are coming to the end of the sixth millennium from creation. It's a little hard to peg the date of creation exactly, and therefore there is some leeway. But I can tell you that the number seven is an enormously important number in Scripture. It is a number of perfection. Again and again, as in the seven days of creation, God completes what He's doing in increments of sevens. We are very close to having concluded 6,000 years of human history. And make no mistake about it: it hasn't been millions and millions of years. Human history and mankind on this earth has been a matter of thousands of years (6,000 years, as best accurately we can figure). So what should be the seventh millennium, but the final perfection of the plan of God for mankind?

If that is the case, then that means that Jesus is very close to having his Father turn to Him. (He's sharing his Father's throne now. He's not on the earth to have his own Davidic throne.) The Father will give him the nod, indicating that it is time for Him to go down and bring the church up to the New Jerusalem. So He will come. The angel will sound the trumpet. The voice of God will call out. You and I, without blinking an eyelash (in fact, it says, "In the twinkling of an eye"), we're out of here. Wherever you are; whatever you're doing; and, whatever the situation, you and your physical body will move out to meet Him in the air. However, you will notice that there's a huge number of people up there already moving up ahead of you. Those are the Christians who have died. They come out of the graves first. Everyone now has a perfect body, probably around the age of 35. That's the prime of life. In any case, we're out of here.

He will then take us heaven. The final seven years will begin. Then that last millennium (the seventh) will be Christ ruling on this earth. All of you people will be running this world. So if you're sick and tired of what goes on in Washington, just remember, those of you who go about the Lord's business are going to be given a throne of authority some place on the face of this earth. Therefore, since we're that close to the end of human history relative to the rapture, we live in what we can call the intensified stage of the angelic warfare. Is there anybody that would doubt that the devil is more active clearly in our time than in any time we can remember? Even in our lifetime, we've seen the rise of the intensity of evil. We see the intensity of Satan. In the last few years, the United States has gone down rapidly in the intensity of evil which is accepted, and the indifference toward the holiness of God. We live in the intensified stage of the angelic warfare. Therefore, no Christian at this stage should be so foolish as to frustrate the grace plan of God in his life.

Remember 1 Peter 5:8, and keep it before your mind always as you walk through this world: "Be sober. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." We take no pride; we take no satisfaction; and, we take no joy in seeing, even among ourselves as believers, the devil managing to snatch some believer who gets careless and who opens himself up to this roaring lion. Then, suddenly, a child of God who has stored all kinds of treasures in heaven, and has been a significant impact on the lives of those about him, a brother and a sister in the angelic warfare, falls by the way. Yes, they go to heaven. They go with a lot less rewards, than they could have gone, but it can always happen.

So nobody could live your life for the Lord but you yourself. Do not blame other people when things are not like they should be and the way you want them to be. Just blame yourself, Paul says, "I am what I am by the grace of God." The Christian who functions under the dynamic system of grace, is going to make it, and make it big. The Spirit of God gives you the power. The Word of God gives you the guidance.

Hebrews 12:15, therefore says, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God." "No one" means no Christian. "Comes short" means "to fall short of a standard." It is in the present tense. This Greek word means always be on guard that you don't fall short of the standard. What is the standard? It's the grace of God. It is active, in that you yourself do something for this. It's a principle. It's a rule of life. See to it that no Christian person falls short. That's what the word actually means – to fall short of the grace of God (from the grace of God), the ultimate source of divine treatment for us (the grace of God).

If God cannot treat you in grace, then He cannot save you. If you are saved, and He cannot continue to treat you in grace through the Spirit of God and the knowledge of the Word of God, then He cannot bless you. The grace life is not only the only way to go; but, it's the only way you can go. Most Christians, however, do not know the church age grace way of life. They are legalists; they are religious; and, they frustrate the grace of God in themselves.

This is why there is a special blessing (I have no doubt) upon people who, over the years, have been loyal supporters of the ministry of Berean church. It is because the technique of explaining Scripture to people is respected and followed – the principle of living by the grace of God, and not trying to be out there hustling. People are not encouraged to go out there hustling to try to please God. They are encouraged to be something under the grace of God, who then will use them in great service. Because of that, this church has a very special place in the heart of God.

## The Principles of the Doctrine of Grace

Here are some things we should summarize about the grace principle:

1. What we mean by grace is that it is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross. God's grace has always been there. His love has always been there, but He could not express it until the Lord Jesus Christ removed the barrier of our moral guilt. Now grace is all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross. It is the work of God alone on the behalf of man. It is the title for God's plan for man. Jesus Christ provided complete salvation. The Holy Spirit now applies it, and the Father gives the results of blessing from salvation in eternity.
2. Grace depends on who and what God is only. It is based on the essence or the character of God. It never depends on man's character. When you think that salvation is dependent, for example, on man's character, then you will say, "I hope I'm going to heaven." When you say that, you are clearly saying, "I just don't know if I'm good enough. I just don't know if I'm deserving enough." A man recently said that very thing to me when he said, "I really hope I'm going to prove that I am worthy of going to heaven." This man is dying. I said, "Well, you're not. You're not worthy any more than the rest of us. And if that's what your basis is for hope for heaven, you're never going to see it. The only way you can get to heaven is by what God alone can do for you and give you salvation as a gift. That He will give you, out of His grace, because He's free to do that because your sins have been paid for. If you do not accept Him on that basis, then you will end up in the lake of fire. All the people around you, including yourself, in the lake of fire, will be there forever with all of their sins paid for. The grace of God has done all that is necessary, but you frustrated it by not accepting his gift.
3. Grace is God doing the work of divine good, and man receiving it in a non-meritorious manner. When I was growing up as a Lutheran, we kept hearing the phrase, in catechism class and elsewhere, of "the means of grace." Reading the Bible is a means of grace. Prayer is a means of grace. When I learned a little more about Scripture, I said, "Wait a minute. If grace is unmerited – it's a favor of God that you don't deserve and cannot earn, how can I do something to get the grace of God? Reading the Bible? Performing good service? Prayer? There is no such thing as the means of grace." When I said that to a Lutheran pastor of a significant cathedral, he said, "Well, that is not what we believe." Yes, but what he didn't believe was what the Bible teaches about grace as non-meritorious. This is a very tricky realm in the religious world. Grace is God doing the work of divine good, and man receiving it in a non-meritorious manner. Faith is not an act. Faith is not a work. It's non-meritorious. It's just saying that God is not lying. The opposite of grace, of course, is legalism, or religious rituals, where man does the work, and then he merits the credit for what he has done – for salvation or whatever. Legalism is human good thus offered to God to secure His blessings.
4. Grace provides sanctification – making a Christian just like Jesus Christ. The word "sanctification" means "setting apart. As you know, there are three stages of sanctification. First is positional sanctification. That is our position in Christ. We are united to the Lord Jesus Christ so that we possess everything that He is and all that He does. We have His absolute righteousness. We're as good and as perfect as He is in the eyes of God. That's our position. That's why we cannot be lost again. Our position is secure.

But then there is a second kind of sanctification. That is experiential setting apart. Experience of sanctification is when the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives, and He produces the fruit of the Spirit in us because we are functioning on the grace power system. So all that we are, internally and externally, is because of the grace of God. We operate on that in our experience.

Then there's the ultimate sanctification, which is where we get a resurrection body, which will be just like that of Jesus Christ, with no sin nature anymore. This will be a body without any sorrow or pain. It is a perfect body, in the prime of life. We're free from the sin nature, to live forever in a perfectly holy body in sinlessness. Grace provides sanctification. That's how we get it. You do not get it by your effort. This is what Roman Catholicism teaches – that sanctification is a process, and you get more sanctified as you do more works and you make more effort over your lifetime.

1. Every believer has tasted the grace of God at the point of salvation. 1 Peter 2:3: "If you have (and you have) tasted the kindness of the Lord." Verse 2: "Like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow (in respect to salvation)," since you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." So every person can know a little about the grace of God from salvation. You get it because God has given it to you. There is a lot to learn after that, but everybody knows that much of the experience of grace. The Christian remains in this grace, under God's maximum love, no matter what he does. He's born again spiritually into God's family, and you can't reverse a birth. You can be a prodigal son and go out and live with the pigs. But you're still a son. You come to your senses and make confession. Then the Father receives you back, and He holds a party for your return. The believer thus, in grace, is always in grace whether he chooses to enjoy it or not. If he chooses to enjoy the grace of God, he'll save his life span for great rewards in heaven. If he does not choose to live under the grace of God, he will waste that opportunity.
2. God is constantly waiting to pour out his grace on every believer. That is such a magnificent hope and promise. God is just waiting to pour out the blessings of grace upon us – to be able to meet Him in so many capacities, and function with such great effectiveness. The prophet Isaiah pointed this out. Isaiah 13:18-19: "Therefore, the Lord longs to be gracious to you. And therefore, He waits on high to have compassion on you, for the Lord is a God of justice. How blessed are all those who long for Him. O people of Zion, inhabit in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When He hears it, He will answer you." Here's the promise to Israel. And that promise is infinitely greater to us who are His royal family. God is waiting to pour His grace blessings upon you, once you come under that fellowship with Him, and get out of the system of the world.
3. Disorientation to the grace principle is the greatest hazard of the Christian life. Nothing could be more terrible than for you to lose your way, and fail to function under the grace of God. That's what Hebrews 12:15 is all about, because that generates, as we shall see in a moment, into some terrible things.
4. Grace is the basis of salvation. Grace is the only basis of salvation. My 90-year-old sailor friend at the pool, expressing Church of Christ doctrine, said, "Yes, grace is the basis of salvation, but water baptism is the entrance into that grace." There you have that subtlety, again, of the devil, that you do something to merit grace, which is unmerited. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (salvation) is not of yourself. It is a gift of God, not as a result of work, that no one should boast. In Romans 4:4, the apostle Paul says, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteous. Works does not bring salvation.

Romans 5:20: "And the law came in that the transgression might increase, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." God gave the law to show man that he was sinful. As a matter of fact, as soon as God tells you, "Don't do something," the rebelliousness of the old sin nature says, "I want to do it," like a rebellious small child. You tell him not to do it, then that's what he wants to do. When God did that, He was making clear that man cannot save himself, and the more man rebelled, the greater was the grace of God to carry him through. Disorientation to the grace principle is a great hazard. Grace is the only basis for salvation.

There is one more principle pertinent to this in the Old Testament. This grace principle was enunciated in Psalm 103:8-12. Grace is the basis of salvation: "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness." Loving kindness is the Hebrew word for the New Testament word "grace." "He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep his anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving kindness (His grace) toward those who fear Him. As far as East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgression from us." The whole concept of the Old Testament was grace, grace, grace. The people who were willing to admit that they had nothing to offer God, those were the ones that came into heaven.

1. There is one other thing that we can start, but we won't be able to complete in this session. It is a very important relationship to grace. Grace is the basis for living the Christian life after you're saved:
   1. What is the basis for *prayer*? The grace of God. Hebrews 4:14-16: "Since then, we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are – yet, He did not sin." That is true except for one thing. He hasn't been tempted "as we are" with the old sin nature. Jesus did not have a sin nature, but in every other way, He was tempted with everything that we're tempted with. Verse 16: "Let us, therefore, draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need." That is prayer. Prayer is based upon the grace of God. That's why we go to the trouble of gathering as a church on Wednesday night. That's how we get the power of God functioning in doing the ministry to which He has called us.
   2. It is the grace of God that carries us through our *sufferings*. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I would rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses; with insults; with distresses; with persecutions; and, with difficulties, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak. Then I am strong." Those nine words there are the spiritual maturity structure of the soul, and we will not go into that in detail here. It is the spiritual maturity structure of grace that God will build within our souls through the Word of God that carries us in our suffering. It is grace that is the basis for releasing the power of God in our lives. It is not something that we do. 2 Timothy 2:1: "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It is being strong in Christ Jesus that releases the power of grace in our lives.
   3. Then *spiritual growth* is dependent upon the grace of God. 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him, be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity." Grow in the grace. How do you do that? By the knowledge of doctrine.
   4. It is grace that gives us *stability* in life. Boy, when tough times come; when the crises come; and, when the tragedies come, you very readily know who is under the grace of God and who isn't. 1 Peter 5:12: "Through Silvanus our faithful brother, for so I regard him, I've written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it." Peter has been describing the functioning of the grace of God, and he says that's where you want to stand. If you want to be a stable person in the devil's world, this is where you stand.
   5. If you want to serve the Lord, it is the grace of God that enables you to carry on your *daily service*. Hebrews 12:28-29: "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." I find interesting combinations in that illustration. We have received a kingdom based upon the work of God. We are in the church phase of that kingdom. We cannot be shaken. Let us show gratitude for that grace, that we may offer to God divine good service – not human good service – acceptable service, and to do it with reverence and awe. I do it with reverence and awe because I'm serving a holy God. Why?

Verse 29 (what a verse to put next): "Our God is a consuming fire." If you play around with pretense of service, or not having it, and you're dealing with a God who can discipline. That is bad business. That's why the Christian who does not function on the grace of God, when that person has to rise to capacity to meet something that the devil has thrown against him, he doesn't have that grace. He has nowhere to turn. He's been functioning out of the grace of God, so all he has is the discipline of God.

* 1. Grace is the basis of *producing divine good works*. 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain. But I labored even more than all of them; yet, not I, but the grace of God with me." Paul said. "When I was saved, it was an act of God's gift – His grace. When I lived my life as a Jew, compared to my compatriots (my peers), I was head and shoulders above them because I let grace make a prince out of me. I let grace enable me to walk tall. Therefore I was able to serve God with even more capacity and achieve more divine good than all of them." But he says, "Make no mistake. Yes, I've achieved a great deal. God has enabled me to do enormous things in His work. But it's all been because of His grace. He has made it possible. It wasn't because of anything in me.

So grace is the basis for living the Christian life from start to finish. So again, we raise the question, why would anybody want to be so foolish as to frustrate the functioning of the grace of God in his life, when that's makes our eternity so much more enriched, and our lives now so much more significant?

When we walk outside of the plan of God; when we are out of fellowship with our heavenly Father; and, when we do not walk by means of the Holy Spirit (which is the grace way of life), then we're not filled with the Spirit, and then we have useless lives. It's a terrible thing to waste a Christian life, and frustrating the grace of God is the way to do it. May it not be so.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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