

tinue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

In verses 14-15, he further explains: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!"

Notice James 2:17, 20: "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

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*Grace is the unmerited, loving favor and graciousness of our Creator. It is a wonderful gift that should motivate us to live in the way that pleases our gracious God.*

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So, just as the grace of God is necessary for salvation, so, too, are the good works "which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

### **What is grace and what will be its result?**

As we've seen, grace is the unmerited, loving favor and graciousness of our Creator. It is a wonderful gift that should motivate us to live in the way that pleases our gracious God.

What will become of those who live by God's grace? They will be saved, and they will be in God's coming Kingdom! In due time, Christ will return and will establish the Kingdom of God on this earth. The world will then learn of the mercy and grace of God, and they will accept His ways.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28).

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## What Is Grace?

*Millions of professing Christians have undoubtedly heard about grace, but how many understand the significance and importance of what grace means?*

Just what is grace anyway, and how is it related to man's salvation? The Bible explicitly says that grace is a gift from God. It is the unmerited, loving favor and graciousness of our Creator.

### **God is gracious**

These are the words that the Lord proclaimed to Moses: "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7).

King David also wrote that God is gracious: "The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and



His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:8-9).

The apostle Peter called God “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10).

What is grace? Grace is the very character of God’s nature, abounding and overflowing outwardly in acts of pity, mercy, compassion and liberal giving.

### Why does God give us His grace?

First, we have to realize that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Those sins carry the death penalty. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death.”

Sin, which is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), earns a wage—and that wage is death. But Christ has paid that penalty for us through His sacrifice.

It is through Christ’s sacrifice, His shed blood, that God gives us His grace.

Notice Romans 3:24: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” It

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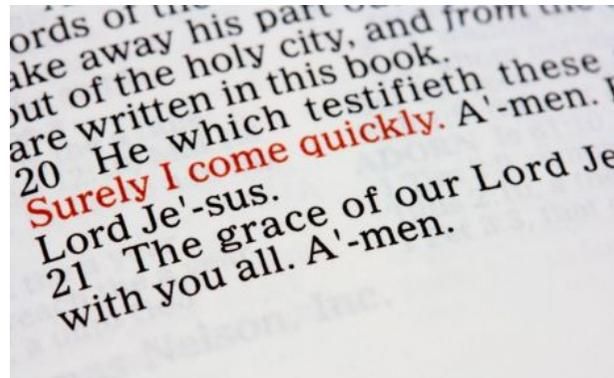
is through Christ that we receive God’s grace; and if we didn’t receive that grace, we would die in our sins and never have an opportunity to live forever.

Ephesians 1:5-6 shows that it was God’s plan all along to be gracious to mankind in forgiving them of sins and predestining humans for adoption and acceptance by Him: “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

### To whom does God give His grace?

Grace is a free gift. It cannot be earned, but neither can one automatically receive it. Notice some examples of those who receive God’s grace.

- Those who have faith: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2).
- Those who are humble: 1 Peter 5:5 says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” James also confirmed this: “But He gives more



grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (James 4:6).

- Those who are forgiven: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

Of course, it is God who always determines who will receive His grace:

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion’” (Romans 9:14-15).

### What then is man’s responsibility?

Christ died in our stead by paying the death penalty for us, and through His grace He forgave us. Acts 15:11 says, “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

God, through His grace, gives us the blessing of having our sins forgiven and eventually receiving eternal life. But we now have to change direction in our walk of life, leaving behind our old and sinful ways of life.

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*It is not a matter of law or grace, but rather law and grace.*

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We can never earn God’s grace, as Ephesians 2:8-9 points out: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

With that in mind, notice verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

After a person repents of sin and is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit, he or she must begin to live by those “good works” as a new creature, whose mind is now focused on serving God and fellow man. One’s outlook and lifestyle must be different from what it had been.

### Law and grace

There is often misunderstanding concerning the law of God and the grace of God. The two are actually interconnected. It is not a matter of law *or* grace, but rather law *and* grace.

This is how the apostle Paul explains this subject in Romans 6:1-2: “What shall we say then? Shall we con-