

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



# **THE WAY OF GRACE PART 1 - AWARENESS**

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### Introduction

I am constantly trying to simplify my understanding of the Christian life. I am always trying to boil it down to just a few manageable concepts so that I can take those concepts with me as I move through life. Have you ever had to take a test in school where you were required to memorize a bunch of formulas, and then just as you began the test, you got everything confused? That's kind of how many of us live our lives in the kingdom of God. Mastering a few key concepts then in God's kingdom can have a tremendous impact on our lives and our ministries.

This study is part of my ongoing attempt to do that. Today I want to talk about what I call the way of grace. To understand grace we're going to focus primarily on Jesus. To understand any of the deep things of God, scripture effectively tells us to look at Jesus.

**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.**

Colossians 2:2-4 NIV

Jesus is the mystery of God. Jesus represents the key to our understanding the deep things of God. It says that right? Look at the last verse. We are being told this plainly so that we won't be confused by "fine-sounding arguments." There is a Son of God, who has risen from the dead, who stands as the bridge between the spiritual realm and the physical realm, and who is the new prototype for mankind. Who could possibly be more interesting? Who could we learn from any greater? As I've said previously, if we can get Jesus right, we can get God right. If we can Jesus right, we can get everything right. Get it?

Now, if you search for "grace" in the New Testament, this is the first verse that comes up:

**And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.** Luke 2:40 NIV

This is a wonderful verse about Jesus. He grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom and God's grace was upon him. This is one of the key differences between Jesus and us. The grace of God was always upon him. It started from the beginning and it never left him. Why? I don't know all the reasons, but Jesus gave us a little insight when he said:

**The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."** John 8:29 NIV

Let me translate this statement into today's Bible study. Jesus was saying that God was always with him because he (Jesus) always followed him. Let me try to get a bit closer to the mark. Jesus was saying that the grace of God was always upon him because his life was dedicated to following after that grace. Does that make sense to you? Jesus always lived with the grace of God because he always followed after it. If that's how he lives, then how should we live? The answer must be: the very same way. That's why I say follow after his grace. Live that way.

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## Let's Continue

Many Bible studies would end here but that just wouldn't be fair, would it? You could say, "Hey, what do you mean by follow after grace? Is that like 'walking in the spirit'? Because if it is, I don't know what that means either."

Grace is one of those cool Christian words that we throw around without a lot of understanding because it sounds real good and real spiritual. If you do a quick survey of the word grace, you'll find that grace is not exactly a major Old Testament concept. That may sound a bit strange at first, but if you take time think about it you'll agree. Grace is definitely a New Testament thing. John lays this down with great clarity in the following verse:

**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

John 1:17 NIV

John is saying that grace has been delivered to us through Jesus Christ. We could even say that grace was not a naturally occurring spiritual attribute on this planet (post Adam). It was foreign. It was only here because the Lord brought it here. Paul adds to this concept in his letter to the Romans:

**...so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Romans 5:21 NIV

The concept of grace may not be naturally occurring in our world, but God's word says that it is now one of the dominant concepts of our lives - because grace reigns. Did you get that? Grace reigns. Or we now operate under grace, as Paul continues:

**For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.**

Romans 6:12 NIV

Those of us in Christ operate under a new order - grace. This is the same grace that was upon Jesus from day one.

## More Than Favor

Grace is often defined as "favor". Some Bible dictionaries define it as "unmerited" favor. That means that God likes us even though we don't deserve it. Think about this definition of grace and even if it could apply, you must admit that "unmerited favor" simply does not do justice to what grace is. There is a spiritual component to grace that makes it something more in the kingdom of God. Or think of it this way. When the God of the universe likes you or gives you his grace, there is some type of spiritual effect upon you. Does that make sense to you? Look at Paul's insight into grace that he tells the Corinthians:

**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.**

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**No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.**  
1 Corinthians 15:1 NIV

Notice the statement “his grace to me was not without effect.” Paul is saying that the grace of the Lord did something to him. Paul goes on to say that it was the grace of God within him that empowered him. Grace has a spiritual dimension.

The Word of God over and over describes a Jesus who is full of grace and who released God's power into the earth. From this we could draw the conclusion that grace must have a dimension of purpose and power and timing, because that is the life of Jesus.

Think grace, think purpose, power and timing.

### **Why is this important?**

What I'm trying to say is that the Lord has poured out grace into areas of our lives. By that I mean that there are areas in our lives full of the purpose and power of God at the right moment. Is it in every area of our lives? No, or we wouldn't be discussing it. If it were in every area of our lives, the world would not be in the shape it's in. If it were in every area of our lives, there wouldn't be such a gross misunderstanding of who God is and what he's like. If grace were in every area of our lives there would be more demonstration of who we are and not just what we believe.

Since grace isn't everywhere, then our job should be to find it, or to discover it, or to test where it is in our lives, and then go that way - the way of grace. It sounds simple doesn't it?

### **Not So Simple**

The title of this study is called The Way of Grace Part 1 - Awareness. We need an awareness in our selves of the grace of God. We need part of our spiritual selves to develop a sensitivity to the things of God. We need a sensitivity to when God is involved. We need that awareness and in real-time. What I'm saying is that in order to follow something we must be able to see it or sense it in some way.

How does this work? Well let's look at Jesus in action.

**One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.** Luke 5:17-19 NIV

If I could summarize, Jesus was having a Bible study, and while he was teaching he had an awareness that the power of God was available to heal. This is a moment that cannot be missed. Next, he sees a paralytic being lowered from the roof. Now what if the paralytic was lowered before the awareness of the

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grace. It would have just been a distraction. Wouldn't it. If it were you or I, we might have missed the moment and even have gotten a bit upset at the interruption. However, armed with the knowledge that it was God's intention to heal at that very moment changed the dynamic of the situation. Didn't it. Can you see the grace? Can you see the power, purpose and timing?

Let's try this in another passage.

**Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.**

**When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.** John 6:1-6 NIV

Jesus was looking to get a little rest after he had been teaching and ministering to the sick, so he retreated to a hillside. When he looked up, he saw the crowd coming toward him. They had found him. Again, you and I would have gotten a little upset and said something like, "Can't I get a little break here?" Jesus didn't react that way. The Word of God tells us why, **"He already had in mind what he was going to do."** Jesus, we could say, had the awareness that the power of God was available to perform a miracle. He was aware of the power, the purpose and the timing of God in this situation.

We'll look at both of these passages again in part 2 of this series, but do you see the importance of developing an awareness of God's grace. Jesus was aware and followed after it. We must do the same.

## Conclusion

You may be thinking, "But you didn't explain how to develop this awareness, and now you're in the conclusion?" But I did show you how it works. And I did say that there is a spiritual side of us that needs to be developed to watch out for his grace. That's enough information to get started. The rest is for us to work this out with the Holy Spirit. There is work to be done. This is what I'm doing now. My work is to pray something like this:

**Lord increase my awareness of the areas in my life where you have poured out your grace. Help me as I move through my life to be aware of your hand. Remind me periodically in the midst of my hectic life to search and seek out your grace. Increase my sensitivity to when your hand is involved and when its not. Help me not get lost in my own thoughts, but help me to be open and aware of your movement in the moment.**

Now that's the real work of prayer. I for one am tired of looking back again and again and saying "Darn, that's what God wanted and I missed that moment yet again. Or that was an opportunity to move in the kingdom of God and I refused to allow myself to be distracted."

I hope you get this, because the way of grace is meaningless without awareness.

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### Notes

For Questions or Comments please respond to [info@lostandfoundcenter.org](mailto:info@lostandfoundcenter.org) and visit [www.lostandfoudcenter.org](http://www.lostandfoudcenter.org) for additional information.

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