



Module : Understanding and Accessing GRACE

Session 4 : Grace's Primary Effects

Focus : Grace Configures Identity and
Determines, Authorises, & Empowers Function

In prior sessions, we have demonstrated that the entirety of our salvation experience is by grace, from the moment of our initial entrance into the Kingdom right up until our maturation as fully developed sons of God. Salvation is past, present and future, i.e. we have been saved, are being saved and will yet be saved. Our spirits experience a renewal and regeneration at the point of our conversion (past). Our souls continue to experience renewal in the area of our mind, will and emotions progressively through time (present). Our bodies await final redemption when immortality is attained at the return of Jesus Christ (future). Grace is at work all the way through.

S A L V A T I O N B Y G R A C E

Called	by	Grace	Gal. 1:6,15-16
Saved	by	Grace	Eph. 2:8
Believe	by	Grace	Acts 18:27
Repentance	by	Grace	Rom. 2:4
Forgiveness of Sins	by	Grace	Eph.1:5-7
Redemption	by	Grace	Eph.1:5-7
Justification	by	Grace	Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7
Sanctification	by	Grace	Titus 2:11,12
Glorification	by	Grace	Rom.5:1,2; 2 Thess.1:9-12

Having commenced our walk with Christ, as children of God by grace, we are to **CONTINUE** in grace so as to grow in our sonship.

❖ CONTINUING IN GRACE

When Barnabas came to Antioch to observe a mighty move of God taking place there as many were being ushered into the Kingdom, the Scriptures indicate that **HE SAW THE GRACE** of God.

Acts 11:23 Then when he arrived and **WITNESSED the GRACE of God**, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with **resolute heart to remain true to the Lord**.

What did he see? He witnessed the tremendous change in the lives of people through the Gospel

message. Grace is obvious to the observer. Grace always seeks to incarnate itself in human life so as to alter it and restore it back to its former design, determined in God before the foundations of the world. Grace at work or grace in action is evidenced by transformed lives as God's glory is put on display in and to creation. This is true when we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is also true as we continually grow in Christ receiving a continuous supply of His grace. As we consistently behold Him through the revelation of His Word and receive 'grace upon grace', we will be progressively transformed from 'glory to glory' (2 Cor. 3:18). **Continue in GRACE** so that GLORY is displayed in ever-increasing degrees.

The initial encounter with God's grace got you born again from above (John 3:3-5). Now the continual experience in grace is meant to mature you as God's son. Having begun life in Christ in GRACE, you must now continue in grace.

Acts 13:43 Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to CONTINUE in the GRACE of God.

Continue = epiméno = To remain in addition, abide into; continue in any state or course, to be constant or persevere in.

The propensity within each of us to depart from relating to God in and by His grace is real. We will cover this real possibility in a later session. Hence the command to CONTINUE in grace becomes an imperative.

❖ GROWING IN GRACE

We are not meant to stagnate in grace, but rather to grow in grace. Grace is an economy that is vast and which must be completely explored.

2 Peter 3:18a But GROW IN GRACE and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The word GROW in the text above is interesting. **Grow = auxano =** to exceed, increase and grow.

*For someone or something to grow (auxáno), it must be acted upon by an outside power or have the element of life within him or it. This is seen clearly in the use of the verb auxáno. For example, the lilies grow (Matt. 6:28; Luke 12:27); the seed is grown (Matt. 13:32); the fruit comes from the seeds (Mark 4:8); the mustard seed grew to a tree. In all these instances, **it was something living that could***

grow because of the element of life within it. This growth, however, was not because of any special ability of the seeds, but because of the quality of life so implanted by God Himself.¹

We derive the English term, 'auxins' from the Greek, 'auxano'. Auxins are plant hormones that promote and stimulate growth. Inherent within the grace of God received at your entrance into the Kingdom, is the very life of God Himself, designed to exponentially grow and increase through time. You received God's grace into your spirit. You must GROW in the grace of God. The life of God is inherent within His grace. This grace within you must amplify to the fullest measure or degree.

1 Pet. 1:2b May GRACE and peace be yours in the **FULLEST MEASURE.**

Fullest measure = plethuno = To make full; hence, to multiply, increase.

Saving Grace is commonly called 'unmerited grace or favour'. But this is only the 'introduction into this grace' (Rom. 5:1,2). There is nothing we do to earn or merit it. It is not by our own works. It's intent is not to just bring salvation to us in order to escape Hell, but to embark upon a glorious journey of growth into maturity as the sons of God, who will manifest His glory to all of creation, accurately representing Him in all respects, both in nature and in the execution of purpose.

To attain to this, we now need to start tapping into and access other dimensions of His many-sided grace. **These other sides to God's grace are accessed through the adoption of specific internal positions, attitudes, mindsets, pursuits, etc.** In this sense, **much of God's grace is merited**, i.e. to venture forth into the fullness of grace will demand of us particular dispositions as indicated in His Word. For example, pride recruits resistance or opposition from God, whereas humility attracts more and more grace from God – He 'opposes the proud but GIVES grace to the humble' (James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

There is nothing we really have to do initially to ENTER the economy of the GRACE of God (it is unmerited at our initial entrance into salvation), but there is much required of us in order to GROW into the FULLNESS of the variegated nature of this grace. In this sense it is merited, as we set our hearts on obeying specific principles in His Word, which will fuel our maturation as sons of God in Christ. Grace for salvation is unmerited; grace for maturation is merited. This is akin to the comparison of good works being unable to save you, but once saved by grace through faith, you are expected to produce good works (compare Eph. 2:7-9 with Eph.2:10; see also Matt.5:16 and 1 Tim.6:18).

¹ Complete Word Study Dictionary; Strong's #837 – Auxano; This commentary here by Spiros Zodiahtes

JESUS GREW IN GRACE

How did Jesus MATURE to the place where He was able to be ‘THE RADIANCE OF HIS FATHER’S GLORY AND THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS NATURE’ (Hebrews 1:3)? The simple answer is: He GREW in GRACE!

This distinction of grace for salvation being unmerited favour and growth in grace being conditional upon certain requirements, is aptly demonstrated in two verses of Scriptures concerning the growth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider:

Luke 2:40 The Child continued to GROW and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the GRACE OF GOD was upon Him.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus kept INCREASING in wisdom and stature, and in FAVOUR (*i.e. GRACE*) with God and men.

The Greek word translated ‘grow’ in verse 40 is **auxano**, explained above. The Greek word translated ‘increasing’ in verse 52 is **PROKOPTO**, meaning ‘**to strike a way forward through repeated blows**’. The verb ‘prokópto has in it the **character of human achievement/effort**. It is **advancement**, not because of the inevitability of its internal constitution (as suggested by the word ‘auxano’), but because of **conscious effort**.

In verse 40, Jesus grew as the natural, effortless result of the principle of life within Himself. This took place humanly within his physical body, as well as in His capacity for wisdom. Then the text indicates in reference to this, that the GRACE of God was UPON HIM. When the grace of God attends us at the start of our relationship with God in Christ, grace too rests upon us. This is what Barnabas saw at Antioch (Acts 11:23). In this grace is the principle of life and potential to grow, and there will most certainly be expressions and indications of this growth in some measure. This will be, in large respect, the doing of the Lord with very little effort on our part. But there comes a time when we have to consciously focus, like Jesus did in verse 52, and INCREASE in GRACE by deliberately applying our effort through repetitious, consistent and diligent observation of principles designed for this intent.

In verse 40, the grace of God was UPON Him; in verse 52, He INCREASED in it. Some significant things occurred within Jesus between verse 40 and verse 52 that generated this result, e.g.

- His humility
- His willing subjection for 18 years to the spiritual parenting of Joseph and Mary.

In future sessions we will explore specific attitudes and expressions of obedience within Jesus that afforded Him the opportunity of INCREASING IN GRACE. Seek to increase in the GRACE deposit God has freely bestowed upon you. In subsequent sessions, we will illustrate the means through which this growth in Grace will take place.

Once again, I exhort you, like Peter did, “**GROW in GRACE** and in the KNOWLEDGE of our LORD and SAVIOUR, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18a)

2 Pet 2:2 GRACE and peace be MULTIPLIED unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

TWO PRIMARY EFFECTS OF GRACE

The NIV Bible, in **1 Cor. 15:10**, reports Paul emphatically stating that God’s grace to him was ‘**NOT WITHOUT EFFECT**’.

Previously I have stated the following in reference to the effects of grace:

- The goal of grace is to manifest God’s glory. This glory is beheld when the Word is OBEYED, i.e. when the Word of God becomes flesh in your flesh (John 1:14-18).
- Paul indicated that God called him BY GRACE to reveal HIS SON within him (Gal.1:5;15-16). Grace seeks to unveil the SON OF GOD in us. God’s glory will showcase His varied attributes visibly to creation. These are built and then expressed in and through us as His sons. Thus God’s nature in us as SONS must be clearly demonstrated. This GRACE, the basis of glory, configures our identity and nature as sons of God (this point is covered more below). We are to OBEY God in reference to complying with all of His principles designed to shape and profile us as His sons. Thus, obedience to His word becomes an intentional focused outcome of grace (Rom.1:5).
- Glorifying God in our lives includes OBEEDIENCE to His specific will for our lives relative to the unique purpose that God has for each of us in executing some aspect of His will - that benefits not only us personally but the corporate community (church and world). We each have a WORK to do. In this regard Grace is designed to EMPOWER OUR FUNCTION in seeking to execute God’s will.

John 17:4-5 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

The multi-faceted grace of God most certainly has far more effects than that cited above, which will be discussed in later sessions. But for me, the points mentioned above capture the essential and core outcomes of the grace of God.

We may summarise the above in two broad strokes as follows:

1. Grace configures my IDENTITY as God's son:

- Grace matures my nature and character as God's son.

2. Grace determines, authorises and empowers my FUNCTION relative to my specific role:

- Grace configures my specific calling in the unique role that God has for me in His Kingdom.
- Grace determines and directs my efforts in working for God
- Grace empowers and energises my efforts in working for God.

More simply stated,

Grace shapes WHO I AM and WHAT I DO.

What you do (works) is borne out from who you are (being). Who are you? You are a son of God. Once your identity has been firmly established, the execution of your function and destiny will naturally result. Never attempt to explore function without first solidly cementing your identity – who you are in Christ. If you attempt to DO God's will without functioning from the basis of a secure identity as His son, you will always be striving to cement and receive validation for who you are by what you do. The opposite, rather, is true, viz. what you do should flow forth from an established identity of your sonship in Christ, and your efforts have absolutely nothing to do with proving who you are, but emit from who God already affirmed you to be as His son.

CONSIDER TWO PRIMARY EFFECTS OF GRACE IN JESUS' LIFE:

Grace attended Jesus' life from birth, being exhibited on Him at the age of twelve. From that point grace INCREASED exponentially, without any WORKS being done right up until He was thirty years, when His Father affirmed and validated HIS IDENTITY – His sonship. The first notable effect of grace in Jesus' life was its capacity to mature Him within His identity as God's Son.

From this juncture, He executed and finished His Father's business by the power of His grace. John is correct when He summarised Jesus' life as FULL OF GRACE and TRUTH AND OF HIS FULLNESS WE HAVE RECEIVED GRACE UPON GRACE.

Grace made Him who He was; and Grace empowered and authorised His function. Grace shaped His person, conditioned His personality and then sanctioned His purpose. The same will hold true

for you and I. Do not seek to DO, without first 'becoming'. Grace will **make** you before it **mandates** you to function in a particular way. In fact, I believe an authentic validation and affirmation of your sonship in Christ by Your Heavenly Father is actually the factor that authorises and energises you. Grace attends a son. Grace does not attend the work the son is called to do per se, but the person of the son in his work. When the 'person' is grace endowed, the work done will be grace empowered. Sonship will recruit to itself ever-increasing downloads and impartations of the grace of God; then God's work attendant with the son will have Divine permittance (authorisation) and also empowerment.

At the risk of labouring the point, I re-iterate:

Grace shapes my identity as a son
 Grace determines my specific role and function.
 Grace sanctions my right to function
 Grace empowers my willing and obedient desire to do God's will.

CONSIDER TWO PRIMARY EFFECTS OF GRACE IN THE APOSTLE PAUL'S LIFE :

Two key Scriptures that assists us to understand grace more fully and which demonstrate some of the elements contained in the description of grace above is Gal. 1:15,16 and 1 Cor. 15:9,10. These passages of Scripture demonstrate that grace configures one's identity, mandate and function.

Paul experienced these two essential grace effects in his life and ministry:

(1) Grace configured his identity as a son of God.

Gal. 1:15,16 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and **called me through His GRACE**, was pleased to **REVEAL HIS SON** in me so that **I MIGHT PREACH** Him among the **GENTILES**.

Paul was called by the grace of God, whose intent it was to 'reveal His Son' within him. The revelation of the SON within Paul was meant to shape him as a son of God. Paul was convinced that all of this was essential for another purpose of God, i.e. that he "**might preach Christ among Gentile nations**". He was neither eligible nor authorised to preach, until the Son was revealed in him. Before GRACE seeks to empower you for use by God, Grace will first prepare you as a son. Your making as a son is in fact your authorisation to function in the empowerment that grace will afford you by virtue of maturation into sonship.

- (2) **Grace determined, sanctioned and empowered Paul's specific ministry calling as an apostle of God.**

Again, note the text above, there is a WORK that God has for Paul, i.e. to PREACH Christ. But not just to preach Christ generally, but specifically to the GENTILES.

1 Cor. 15:9,10

- 9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
- 10 But **BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM what I AM**, and **His grace toward me did not prove vain**; but **I LABOURED** even more than all of them, yet not I, but **the grace of God with me**.

Grace is what causes you to **become all that God has destined you to be and to do all that God has assigned for you to do**. One should grow in grace constantly. Grace will cause you to function at a level beyond your natural capacity. Paul was called to function as an apostle of God. In verse 9, viewing things naturally and based on his prior persecution of the church, Paul felt the least of all apostles and also disqualified from apostolic function. But then he shifts gear and perspective, and calls to mind that the GRACE of God in his life corrects both issues.

Paul is essentially saying two things in verse 10:

1. "I **AM** what I am by grace.
2. "I **WORK** – yet not me, but God's grace with me'

The grace of God qualified him where his personal history disqualified him. Where human failure, weakness and even sin disqualifies us from becoming the man or woman God intended us to be, and thus fulfill a specific assignment in which we are called to 'labour', then GRACE removes all natural disqualifying elements and validates our identity (who we are as sons of God), our mandate (the specific call to ministry function we have) and the degree of our function (the effectiveness with which we work). Where your historical failure rooted in your ignorance or immaturity in Christ seeks to disqualify you from fully engaging the purposes and specific roles or functions that God has for you, GRACE will render you eligible, authorised and enabled to fulfill those assignments.

[A BRIEF ASIDE]: Do not judge someone after their historic failure, weakness or sin in their past, which God has forgiven; Appraise them according to the present work of grace in their lives. Usually God does not require your permission to change people who co-operate with His intended work in their lives. You might perceive someone after an outdated impression you still have of them based on their prior immaturity, when in fact, God has already transformed them by GRACE without your awareness. Upgrade your perception of people. Judge them by the work of grace.

Paul wrote to Philemon to update and upgrade his view of Onesimus, who was once 'unprofitable', but because of the work of grace in Onesimus' life, he now proved productive and beneficial. Philemon's opinion of Onesimus was obsolete and he could have potentially robbed himself of the benefit that the now transformed Onesimus could be to him (see the book of Philemon)].

Focus on these two statements: 'I am – by grace'; 'I work – by grace'.

I AM by Grace —————→ **Identity and Specific Ministry Role**

I LABOUR by Grace —————→ **Work and Function**

Paul both Lived and Laboured by Grace

Note that in Gal.1:15-16 the grace of God in Paul DETERMINED his specific area of focus as an apostle. His apostolic work was directed at the Gentiles and not the Jews as Peter was.

Gal. 2:8 For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision [i.e. Jews], the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.

This was God's determination and Paul had no choice in the matter. God will grace you for a specific function and role to a specific people or people group. Paul, by natural accounts, was more qualified to minister to Jews and Peter more qualified in natural terms to minister to the Gentiles. Paul was educated in the best Jewish schools and under the tutelage of one of the most celebrated Jewish Rabbis, viz. Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Is God wrong to take an educated man like Paul and position him to minister to irreligious Gentile nations; and on the other hand, take an uneducated fisherman like Peter and position him as an apostle to minister to educated and religious Jews steeped in Mosaic tradition? The answer is NO.

Herein do we see the sheer power of God's grace. Grace is meant to function most efficiently and powerfully in contexts where human skill and ability are rendered impotent. God was attempting to demonstrate in both Paul and Peter that the unique direction their respective apostolic ministries would take, would not in any way be primarily reliant upon what they, by human reckoning, deemed so. You and I would do well to recognise this principle consistently in our walk in Christ and bid to do His will. Rely more on grace than your own sufficiency. Also allow grace to decide/determine/direct the specific emphasis of your role and function in life.

Grace is designed to shape, sanction and enable God's will for you in life. Grace attends sons of God wherever they may be stationed in life, within the context of the church or outside of it. We often distinguish between the secular and the sacred, a distinction that really does not exist at all. All of life is sacred and spiritual. Your secular engagement in life is as important to God as someone He has specifically called to occupy some spiritual role in His Kingdom. There is no

distinction between the two. Both need grace to function efficiently. All of us are in 'full time ministry.' Your daily job is the sphere or context which God has designed for you to represent Him and His purposes accurately. That domain in which you work, play or live is your area of ministry function. You need grace to be effective therein.

May I encourage you to allow God's grace to be fully expressed within your life. May grace configure you as God's son; when this is firmly set in place, you will sense both an authorisation and an enablement to do specific aspects of His will.

[Note: In subsequent sessions, we will provide greater detail as to how the two primary effects discussed in this session can be completely attained and thoroughly experienced by us all.]

Grow in Grace and let it have its total effect in you.

1 Cor.15:10a

(NIV)

**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and
his grace to me was NOT WITHOUT EFFECT**

With love in Christ,
Randolph Barnwell

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