

PARTICIPATING IN THE *Extravagant* GRACE OF GOD

It is important as we discuss the grace of God that we have at least a basic understanding of what His grace entails. We are using two primary definitions in our study. In the first, we understand grace of God to mean His wonderful kindness and in the second we are referring primarily to the outworking of His power which He provides to us to help us walk in obedience to all the will of God.

A. “Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” -Romans 5:20

1. Through Moses, God introduced, among other things, a list of infractions and commandments to the fledgling nation of Israel. In what may seem a strange and even contradictory decision, these lists actually caused sin to increase by expanding the list of do’s and don’ts! Why would God do this if He is so opposed to sin?
2. Firstly, it is important to understand that God is not trying to trap people into sinning (James 1:13). People are and were already trapped in their sins with no hope of escape (Eph.2:12). God was pointing to the all-encompassing magnitude of sin in order to demonstrate that His grace surpassed even that!

B. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.” -Romans 6:11

1. Paul is answering a question that he anticipates one of his readers asking. It goes something like this. “Well if God wanted sin to increase, and I keep sinning, isn’t that ok because then His grace would increase too?” Certainly not! God is not an

advocate of sinful behavior. He simply has taken the occasion brought in by mankind's sinful choices to demonstrate His love for us. Don't you know that once you've been born again, you're not supposed to continue in your former sins? (Rom.6:14)

2. There is a drastic difference between one struggling to resist sin, and failing, and one who continues to practice their former sins with no real regard for the work of the cross in their lives. God sees our hearts and He deals with us accordingly.

C. "Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."-Romans 6:4

1. Walking in the newness of life is now the privilege and the requirement of every new believer in Jesus. Walking speaks of the day to day decisions we make to obey Jesus.

2. It is this obedience to the word of God over time which produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal.5:21-26). It is the fruit of the Spirit which is the proof that God's Spirit dwells in us (2 Cor.1:21-22,5:5). The indwelling Holy Spirit is the proof of our salvation (Jn.14:16-17; Rom.8:7-9; 1 Cor.2:14; Eph.1:13-14).

D. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin." -Rom.6:6

1. The deception of sin exists in the thinking that we are in no way bound by it (James 1:15) or that because God does not immediately punish humanity for its willful sin that it must not be a big deal.

"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." -Ecc.8:11

2. To be freed from sin means that we have been set free from the power of sin, the penalty of sin and the guilt that accompanies sin.
 - a. Apart from Christ humanity is compelled and empowered to sin. The sin nature earnestly desires to satisfy itself apart from the will of God and works in humanity in such a way that we become habitual and perpetual sinners. (Rom.7:7-14)
 - b. The penalty for sin is ultimately our spiritual death in which we cannot participate in the joyful and wonderful eternal life of God and instead we are given over to the full punishment for our sins in hell -a terrible place fashioned for the eternal punishment of fallen angels (Mt.25:41).
 - c. "The failure to do what we ought to have done we call guilt. And the bad feelings that often accompany it we call guilt feelings or a bad conscience."¹ God desires to remove both the inward condemnation that comes with having done wrong and the stain on our eternal record for violating what He considers to be right. Both of these things are wonderfully accomplished when one turns from their sins and follows Jesus.

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-is-precious-because-he-removes-our-guilt>