

DOWNLOADING GRACE

FROM HEAVEN

by John Edmiston



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INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION

Grace is God's unmerited favor, an easy way to remember it is by the acronym "God's Riches At Christ's Expense". God's grace is vast and theologians talk about various kinds of grace such as:

Prevenient Grace -that leads us to salvation

Saving Grace / Justifying Grace - that gets us saved and born-again and is discussed at length in Romans.

Sanctifying Grace / Sustaining Grace - that helps the believer walk with Jesus and grow in wisdom and in love and in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23).

The studies in this book are focused entirely on Sanctifying / Sustaining Grace.

THE EASIER WAY

There is an easier path in the Christian life, the path of grace, the path of having God Himself work in us because we simply cannot do it ourselves. In these studies I will attempt to explain how to live in grace, in the simplest and most practical of terms.

Grace supplies us with heavenly things such as wisdom, patience, kindness, self-control and above all love. These things come from heaven and not from earth, and certainly not from our own best efforts.

Let's take the example of patience. We have all "tried to be patient" and it hasn't worked. We just get more impatient! In addition, there is no place on earth where you can go to buy patience. And trying to manufacture something like patience all by yourself simply does not work. However, we need patience on a daily basis, often in a very immediate way.

Since we cannot purchase it, and we cannot manufacture it, and learning patience is tedious and slow, we need a much better way. That way is to download patience directly from God's heavenly storehouse!

That is true of every heavenly virtue, every fruit of the Spirit, and everything that is good, wise and holy. For in ourselves, that is in our flesh, there is no good thing. We desire to do good, but we cannot carry it out (Romans 7:18). We simply do not have what it takes, therefore we have to get it from God in Heaven!

The Good News is, Christ has purchased all these wonderful virtues for us on the Cross! The good things we need (spiritual not material, you cannot download money...) are ours for the asking!

Here is a rather simple analogy. Heaven is like a gas station with huge underground tanks full of good qualities that we need – wisdom, patience, kindness, peace etc. We drive in, and our spiritual tank is low. For instance, we are right out of patience, self-control and peace. So we go to the gas pump and "by faith" we ask God to fill our tank up again. After our spiritual tank is full, we find out that Christ has paid the price and that we can come back to the Heavenly Gas Station any time we have a need!

(Hebrews 4:14-16) *Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.*

Heaven has what we need, in fact Heaven has everything we require, and all these beautiful things have been placed under the authority of Jesus Christ, who gives it to us freely, providing we ask in faith!

Wisdom is the most fundamental of virtues, Proverbs 8:22,23 says it is “the first of all His ways”, before anything else was created. This is what James teaches us about downloading wisdom from God:

(James 1:5-8) *Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to everyone generously without a rebuke, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith, without any doubts, for the one who has doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. Such a person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he undertakes.*

So how does a Christian receive wisdom? By asking in faith! You do not have God’s spiritual wisdom in your flesh. You cannot get it just by studying (without faith or the help of the Spirit). You cannot buy it in a supermarket or dig it out of the ground! You have to seek it diligently and ask God for it by faith. And since wisdom is the first thing, the fundamental virtue, this applies to all the other Christian virtues as well.

In the book of Job, in chapter 28 there is a stunning description of the elusiveness of Wisdom:

*But where can wisdom be found, and where is understanding located?
No man can know its value, since it cannot be found in the land of the living.
The ocean depths say, “It’s not in me,” while the sea declares, “I don’t have it.”
Gold cannot be exchanged for it, and silver cannot be weighed out for its price.
Wisdom cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire.
Gold and glass do not compare with it, and articles of fine gold cannot be exchanged for it.
Coral and quartz are not worth mentioning. The price of wisdom is beyond pearls.
Topaz from Cush cannot compare with it, and it cannot be valued in pure gold.
Where then does wisdom come from, and where is understanding located?
It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing and concealed from the birds of the sky.
Abaddon and Death say, “We have heard news of it with our ears.”
But God understands the way to wisdom, and He knows its location.*

(Job 28:12-23)

The spiritual qualities of life, the qualities we truly need to be in the image of God, are not anywhere on this planet. They are ONLY in God. We have to get them from God. You cannot get them from a book. You cannot even get them from a theology book. You have to obtain wisdom, love, joy and peace directly from Jesus Christ alone! Even the wisest people in the natural world do not understand the wisdom of God:

(1 Corinthians 2:6-9) *However, we do speak a wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. On the contrary, we speak God’s hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind — God prepared this for those who love Him.*

God has hidden His wisdom in a mystery (Christ) and this mystery is beyond the human senses and beyond the human intellect: *What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind....*

and later on in verse 14:

(1 Corinthians 2:14) *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

So the natural person cannot receive much in the way of grace because such grace is foolishness to him or her! Which is why the brilliant, educated and sophisticated Nicodemus needed to be born-again (John 3:1-18) in order to enter the Kingdom of God!

So God's wisdom, grace, love and so on are all hidden in Christ! You can try all you like to get hold of them some other way but you will just end up frustrated by your lack of Christian growth!

(Colossians 3:1-4) *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Your Christian life is hidden in Christ with God! So in order for your Christian life to "work" you have to set your mind on things above!

Let's go back to 1 Corinthians where Paul explains how this happens:

(1 Corinthians 2:9) *But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*

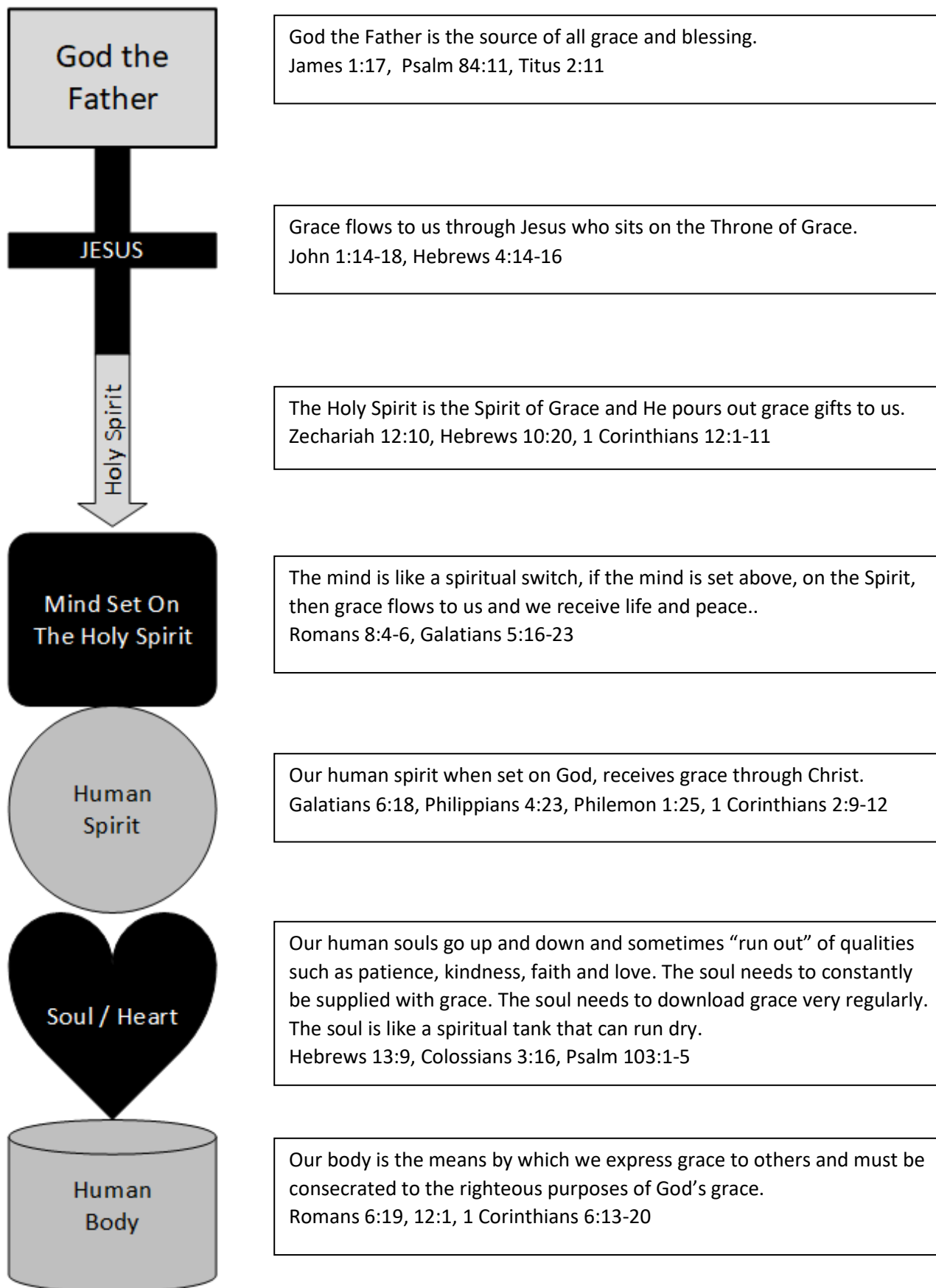
So we receive the wonderful invisible things of God through the Spirit of God, who takes truth from God, and reveals it to us! The Holy Spirit is our teacher and instructor (John 14:26, 1 John 2:20,27), This is how grace works! Grace is spiritually imparted, by God's Holy Spirit, to our spirit, soul and body, through faith, when we set our mind on things above!

So the Heavenly Gas Station is open for business! And we receive all of our salvation "by grace through faith". The good things are free and graciously given, unearned in anyway, paid for by Christ. However, we must appropriate them through faith. The doubter will receive nothing from the Lord (James1:8)!

These spiritual qualities are called "living water" in the New Testament and we are told to be thirsty for them and to seek them diligently by faith:

(Revelation 22:17) *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

Grace is free, grace is the living water of God that is "without price". We are totally dry in our Christian life without grace! And how do we get grace? We "drink", we "thirst" we seek, we download, we ask diligently. How? By setting our mind on things above, and asking in faith, just as James told us to ask for wisdom. These studies will explain, in detail how to do that!



WHAT IS GRACE?

1. Is grace achieved by works, or received by faith? (Ephesians 2:8-10)
2. How does grace relate to the power of God being active in our lives? (Acts 4:33)
3. Can we grow in grace or is just a fixed thing we receive at conversion? (2 Peter 3:18)
4. How does grace relate to receiving good things from God? (2 Corinthians 9:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4-8)
5. How can we receive more grace when we need it? (Hebrews 4:16)
6. How does this affect how we are to walk with God? (2 Timothy 2:1)
7. How does grace relate to spiritual gifts? (Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:7-12)
8. What are we to do with the grace that we receive from God? (1 Peter 4:10)
9. Are you aware of God's grace moving in your life?

PRAYER: *"Lord Jesus, please help me to be aware of Your grace, and of my need for grace!"*

PRAYING TO RECEIVE GRACE FROM HEAVEN

1. Read Hebrews 4:14-16 – Who is on the Throne of Grace? What does this verse tell us about the process of receiving grace whenever we need it?
2. In Luke 18:1-14 there are two parables about praying to receive grace a) from an unjust judge and b) from Heaven. What do we learn from these two parables?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-12 – How do we get to know about the good things that God has created for us?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 1:19-22 – Are God’s promises available to every Christian through Christ? Do you have to “deserve them”?
5. Read James 4:2,3 – Why do people fail to receive grace?
6. Read James 1:5-8 - What is one of the main reasons people fail to receive anything from the Lord?
7. Read John 14:13,14 and 1 John 5:14,15 - What kind of things can we ask for?
8. Read Luke 11:5-13 - What does Jesus teach us about how to ask for God’s grace?
9. Read Ephesians 3:14-21 What can we learn from Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians to receive faith, love and grace?

PRAYER: *“Lord teach us how to pray for the grace that we require each day!”*

BELIEVING THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE GRACE FROM HEAVEN

Grace is received through faith, and blocked by unbelief, doubt and pride. We must believe in order to receive the wonderful invisible, spiritual things of God.

1. Read Matthew 17:20, 21:21,22; Mark 11:22-25 and Luke 17:6 - What does this tell us about the role of faith in receiving things from God? How do we “believe that we have already received”?
2. If the “mountains” in the passages above are the large, immovable obstacles in our internal life, the thing we can never get over, and the “mulberry tree” is a deeply rooted problem or anxiety within us, we can just cast them into the deepest sea by faith. For instance you can cast all your bitterness, hurt, fear, rage, anxiety, and dread into the “sea” by commanding these things to “go”. For instance you can say “Bitterness, in the name of Jesus, I cast you out from me, into the deepest sea, be uprooted from me and be gone from me forever! Then we have to ask for a portion of grace to replace the thing cast out. So after casting out bitterness we may ask to receive a soft heart from God and joy, peace and the ability to forgive. Please try this quietly with a few areas of difficulty in your own life.
3. How can our mind or our feelings get in the way of believing that we have already received?
4. Read Matthew 15:28, Luke 7:50, 8:48, 17:19, 18:42 - What does Jesus say about the role of faith in healing (which is one form of the generous grace of God)?
5. Check out the connection between believing and receiving in the Gospel of John – John 1:12, 6:35,40,47; 7:38,39, 17:18
6. Check out the connection between believing and receiving in the book of Acts: Acts 3:16, 10:43, 11:17, 14:8-10, 26:18
7. Read Galatians 3:1-5,14 - How do we receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit? Where were the Galatians going wrong?
8. What areas in your life do you need to need to believe God for? Where are you saying things such as: “That will never change I will always be X..” How can you believe that God will download the change into you? Are you willing for God to update you and reprogram you?
9. Read Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:23,24 and John 11:40 - What is Jesus’ promise and our problem?

PRAYER: *“Lord increase our faith so that we can believe in Your free supply of grace in our lives.”*

RECEIVING GRACE FROM HEAVEN

We have to receive the grace of God, to welcome it, to internalize it, to cherish it, treasure it and value it and to never trample upon it or take it for granted.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:1,2 and Hebrews 10:29 - What is the problem here? Compare this with the parable of the Sower (Four Soils) in Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 why do some people brush aside the grace of God when it is offered to them? What is the good soil (1 Thessalonians 2:13)?
2. Read John 1:16,17, Romans 1:5, 5:17 Who do we receive grace from?
3. John 3:27 and 1 Corinthians 4:7 What does it mean to receive something from Heaven?
4. What sort of things can be received from God? Acts 20:24, Romans 5:11, 11:20, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 2 Corinthians 1:4, Hebrews 6:7, 10:36
5. Read James 3:13-18 - What is the difference between wisdom from above and carnal, fleshly wisdom? What is the problem with receiving things from “the spirit of the world”?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 What does this long passage tell us about how we receive wisdom and knowledge from God?
7. Read James 1:5-8 Why do some people receive nothing from the Lord?
8. Read Ephesians 2:5-10 Where has Christ placed us in the heavenly realms? Did this happen by works or by grace? Once we have received grace what are we to do with it (verse 10)?
9. Read Acts 8:17, 19:6, 19:11; 1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6 - How can the prayers of pastors and other spiritual leaders help us to receive the grace of God?

PRAYER: *“I believe that I am receiving joy from Heaven”* (or any other thing you need such as patience, kindness, etc.) Repeat for about two minutes or until it “clicks” for you. You will notice quite a difference!

CONTINUING IN HEAVENLY GRACE

We are easily tempted, distracted, and knocked off-course. One minute we are full of grace, then we can easily slip back in to self, or into the world, into the flesh or even into the control of the Devil. If we are emotionally threatened we tend to jump into our selfish fight-or-flight mechanisms and lash out or run away like the disciples at Gethsemane. In great difficulties we doubt. In a hurry, we lose patience and kindness. When lonely we can slip into fleshly activities. Staying on track is known as *abiding in Christ*, or *continuing in grace*.

1. Read Matthew 26:41 - How can we escape temptation? What is our frequent problem?
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:9-11, 1 John 2:15-17 What kinds of things lead people away from God's grace?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18,19, 10:13,14, 2 Timothy 2:22 - What are we to run away from at high speed?
4. Read Romans 8:4-6, Colossians 3:1-4, Philippians 4:6-8 – Where are we to focus our minds so we can live holy lives full of God's grace? How does regular worship and bible study help with this?
5. Read John 15:1-12, there are many clues here about how to remain in Christ and how continue in grace:
 - What happens if we do not continue in grace and become "dry"? (John 15:6)
 - What happens if we abide in Christ continually? (John 15:5)
 - Can we do anything worthwhile without grace from Jesus? (John 15:4,5)
 - What does it mean to abide in the words of Jesus Christ? (John 15:7)
 - How will continuing in grace help our prayer life? (John 15:7)
 - How does abiding in Christ (continuing in grace) help us to glorify God? (John 15:8)
 - How does love help us to abide in Christ? (John 15:9-12)
6. Read 1 John 2:28 How does abiding in Christ help us on the day Christ returns?
7. Read Acts 13:43, Hebrews 3:12-15 – How can we encourage others to continue in the grace of God?
8. Read Romans 15:4,5, Jude 1:24,25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17 - How does God encourage us?
9. What are some things you can do right now to stay on track as a Christian believer?

PRAYER: *"Heavenly Father, please deliver me from temptation and keep me from falling. Please fill me with Your grace so that I will abide in Christ and be a holy and loving and fruitful Christian. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

IMPLEMENTING THE GRACE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED

In Ephesians 2:8-10 we find out that we are saved by grace, through faith, not by works, and not of ourselves. Then Paul goes on to say in verse 10: *“For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.”* The output of grace should be good works. We are created for good works. That is our purpose. We are not saved by good works, but we are designed by God to do specific good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to do. We download grace, we continue in grace, and then as we continue in grace we produce some output in the form of good works. We are blessed in order to be a blessing.

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Timothy 6:17-19 How does grace result in good works? Why did God create us?
2. Read Acts 9:36-39 How was Dorcas a wonderful example of a believer who did good works? Would you like people to think of you the way they thought of Dorcas?
3. Read Ephesians 4:1-3 and Colossians 1:9,10 What does it mean to “walk worthy” of the calling we have received? How will this be evident in our lifestyle and our behavior?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16,17 - What do the inspired Scriptures equip us for?
5. Read Philippians 4:8,9 What is the result of “doing what we have learned..”?
6. Read Colossians 2:6,7 “as you have received.... walk..” (Walk = lifestyle, continual behavior) What happens if we refuse to live in accordance with the grace that we have received? (Matthew 18:21-35)
7. Read Colossians 4:17 What was Archippus to do? How important is it that we pay attention to the special areas of grace that we have received from God?
8. Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 How are we to serve God and carry out good works? Which of Peter’s instructions speaks to you? Who should get the glory?
9. What special skills has God given you so that you can be “blessed to be a blessing” by your good works?

PRAYER: *“Lord help me to not waste the grace that you have put into my life. May I be blessed to be a blessing! Please strengthen me and lead me so that I may accomplish all the good works that you have prepared beforehand for me to do!”*

OBSTACLES TO GRACE

God tends to treat us in the same way that we treat other people e.g. in the Beatitudes: *“Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy”* (Matthew 5:7) and to show grace to those who are humble and receptive e.g. in Isaiah **(Isaiah 57:15)** *“For this is what the high and lofty One says, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “He lives in the height and in holiness, and also with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. However, this also means that some people are blocked from receiving grace, such as those who are proud, haughty, greedy, cruel, idolatrous, hard-hearted, unbelieving, unforgiving, or wicked. (Isaiah 57:21) “Yet there is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”* In this study we will look at some of these obstacles to receiving God’s grace.

1. Read James 2:13, Matthew 7:1,2, Matthew 5:7, Psalm 18:25-27 What principle (about God’s grace) can we deduce from this?
2. Read Luke 18:9-14 What is the difference between the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer? How did God respond to each of them? Who got the most grace? Who was refused grace?
3. Read James 4:4-10, Ephesians 4:30-32, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, Which attitudes will block our ability to receive God’s grace? Which attitudes will help us to receive God’s grace?
4. Read Matthew 5:3,10; 7:21, 25:31-46, 1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5 Which people are welcome in God’s heavenly Kingdom? And which kind of people have no heavenly inheritance at all?
5. Read Matthew 6:14,15 and Matthew 18:21-35 How important is it to have a forgiving heart?
6. Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11, Psalm 41:1-3, Proverbs 19:17, 21:13, 28:27, James 2:13-16 How does our attitude to the poor and needy affect our ability to receive God’s grace? (see also Matthew 25:41-46)
7. Read Luke 6:20-38 What are some of the keys to having an overflowing abundance of God’s grace? What are some of the obstacles to receiving the grace of God?
8. Read James 1:5-8, 4:8; Matthew 6:24, 14:22-33 How does doubt rob us of the blessings of God? How can we work to eliminate our doubts?
9. Which areas of your life are you going to change so that God’s grace can flow to you?

PRAYER: *“Create in me a clean heart O God, and remove every wicked way from me!*



About The Author

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Books By John Edmiston

Biblical EQ: A Christian Handbook For Emotional Transformation (www.biblicaleq.com)
The Spiritual Continuum (www.spiritualcontinuum.org)

SOME QUICK PRAYERS FOR DOWNLOADING GRACE

“I believe that I am receiving the perfect peace of God”

“I believe that I am receiving the love of God that casts out all fear”

“I believe that God is giving me wisdom, right now, which finds a solution.”

“I repent of my anger, and receive a soft and forgiving heart by faith”

“I repent of my harshness, and by faith I receive the kindness and mercy of God toward others”

Prayers That You Can Pray: <https://newtestamentprayer.com/prayers/index.html>

MP3 Prayers: https://newtestamentprayer.com/podcasts/healing_prayers.html