

The Authority of Grace

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“For ye are not under the law, but *under* grace” (Romans 6:14*b*).

“No man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

“But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved....” (Luke 5:37-38).

Every believer has been placed under the government of grace. Unfortunately, not all believers experience the authority and victory of grace in their daily lives. Though they may be stimulated by a church service and experience a temporary release in their emotions, two days later they discover they have not changed at all. Why? They could not retain the new wine of the Holy Spirit of grace because they received it into their old capacities that lacked spiritual substance.

This booklet will show that when we receive truth into our new capacity (in Christ) through

the new wine of the Spirit of grace, then grace becomes the final and personal authority for our lives. By that authority we can experience personal deliverance from our old sin nature so we can function freely in the newness of life in Christ.

Chapter One

THE FOUNDATION:
GRACE AND TRUTH

God's grace is the final authority in the life of a believer; it is the referee in every detail we face. The Word of God says in John 1:16, "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." If the Holy Spirit were to reveal what this means in light of the dispensation of grace (in Ephesians 3:2), you would be extremely broken and desire to be alone with God just to worship Him and thank Him. Because of the Finished Work, from His fullness we have *already* received grace upon grace.

John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but *grace* and *truth* came by Jesus Christ." I want you to remember those words—"grace *and* truth." Truth can never be separated from grace, neither can grace be separated from truth.

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps" (Psalm 85:10-13).

Mercy and truth met together. Therefore, when that meeting took place at the Cross, mercy also met grace. They met in the Person of Jesus Christ. When Psalm 85:10 says that righteousness and peace kissed each other, it is speaking of the Father's righteousness. And in Ephesians 2:14, Jesus Christ is our peace. So, in perfect holiness and righteousness, God the Father kissed Jesus Christ the Son, who represented man as the Sin-bearer (though He never sinned).

What does it mean that "truth shall spring out of the earth"? Through Christ, grace *and* truth can now spring up from the earth through the fullness of His Body (see Ephesians 1:23). The Father's perfect righteousness looks down from heaven and is pleased.

We can never read a verse in the Bible apart from grace, and we can never read anything about grace apart from truth. When Jesus Christ finished the work on the Cross, He represented

the pure grace of God as He also satisfied the Father's justice in truth. Blood-bought, born-again Christians need to understand that at Calvary, grace initiated to faith the gospel of salvation—so grace also met *faith* at the Cross. And when the faith of a man responds to the initiation of God's grace, a marriage takes place. That is what happens the moment a person is saved.

Adam, the Condemned Man

In the parable of the wine and the bottles, the new wine represents the Holy Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29). The old bottles, or wineskins, represent the condemned man Adam and his limited, natural capacity. The new bottles represent the new man, regenerated with a new capacity for the purpose, plan, and provision of God. When the new wine goes into old wineskins, they break, and everything that person received is lost, practically speaking. Why? His natural capacity could not contain the strength of God's substance and was destroyed; therefore, the new wine goes out.

“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not

condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:17-18).

Think about the first part of verse 18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned." *If we believe on Him, we are not condemned.* Yet, hundreds of people who are born again and on their way to heaven walk around like someone who is condemned. A condemned man is guilty. A condemned man needs to sublimate. A condemned man easily becomes emotional; he always has to have his soulish, emotional needs ministered to, and he always needs someone or something to feel fulfilled.

Adam is a condemned man. He will never be any better. His bruise is incurable and his wound is grievous (Jeremiah 30:12). He will never change. In fact, God has never tried to change him, and He is not going to change him. God will have nothing to do with Adam.

If you want to live in Adam, you can have him. You have a free volition. God will never interfere with your right to try to fulfill Adam. Positionally, Adam was sentenced to death and executed, but experientially, he does not want to die. He wants to preserve whatever is left in his

condemned life. His emotions are miserable. He may be happy for a day here and there, everything can be fine for one week, and the next week he's off again. He is not condemned by anything he does—he was condemned already.

The condemned man also takes his place in marriages. A marriage is terrible when Adam gets involved. Adam in the husband goes against Adam in the wife, and on any given night, one Adam is "better" than the other Adam. Either the husband gets mad and withdraws in his reactions, or the wife withdraws and goes through periodic soulish cycles.

The Judgment of Grace

"For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: the day shall declare it, because it shall be

revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:9-15).

This portion of 1 Corinthians 3 deals with the judgment seat of Christ (*bema* in the Greek). A judgment for believers, the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ will be based entirely on grace.

Romans 6:14*b* says, "Ye are not under the law, but *under* grace." Grace is what God did for us. It doesn't depend upon our ability, though we must receive God's initiation of grace toward us. Then we can enjoy grace that is in us and let it work through us. This is why 1 Peter 4:10 says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the *manifold* grace of God." "Manifold" means "many-sided." In other words, we are to receive and give grace on every single side, for every part of our lives. *This* is revival.

Holy Temples of Grace

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple, him shall God

destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself" (1 Corinthians 3:16-18a).

In light of the future judgment for believers at the Bema Seat, we must realize that our bodies are temples for the new wine of the Holy Spirit of grace. Therefore, we must be extremely careful what we allow inside our temples.

A Spirit-filled believer should be able to look in the mirror and say, "My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is not my own. I belong to God; therefore, anything that I do on earth I will do through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. He has made me holy, and I will not use my vessel to receive negative, worldly thoughts."

On the other hand, Christians who receive the Word of Grace into old capacities are putting new wine into jealousy, new wine into insecurity, new wine into a poor self-image—new wine into the old man. And what happens? It pours right out on the ground.

Christianity doesn't work for people who continue to put new wine into the old bottles. What they take in to their natural capacities will destroy them.

Every initiation of grace is precious. God's system is grace: giving a gift to someone when

he doesn't deserve it. But Satan requires an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Picture millions of sinners—wretched people, self-righteous people, and people who live in human good—all on the road to hell but going from different directions. Then picture a meeting in eternity past when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit looked down through time and saw the terrible condition of the world lost in sin. There Jesus said, "I will go and take care of it all. I will die not just for the sins of those who will believe in Me but for the sins of the whole world" (see 1 John 2:2).

Chapter Two

SANCTIFIED: ONCE FOR ALL

Jesus Christ came to earth to do the Father's will. "...He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" (Hebrews 10:7, 9-10).

The Christian who refuses to walk in the condemned man says, "My sins have been paid for once and for all. When I fail I'm going to name it, move on, and leave it behind me no matter what it is."

Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Remember, we have already been sanctified "once for all" through faith in Jesus Christ, the One Offering. We are complete in Him.

The Holy Spirit also gives witness of these things: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws [doctrines] into their hearts, and in

their minds will I write them. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16-17).

God does not remember our sins, and according to Psalm 103:10, He does not deal with us after our sins or iniquities. "...For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalms 103:11-14).

Do you imagine that God is remembering how terrible you have been at times? The Bible says that "their sins and iniquities will *I remember no more*" (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

Approaching God with Boldness

"Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus..." (Hebrews 10:18-19). Understanding that God deals with us as a loving Father with grace initiations, we are able to have boldness toward Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

In Leviticus 16:14, when the high priest went

into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, he took the blood of the bullock and sprinkled it with his finger *on* the mercy seat. Then he sprinkled the blood seven times *before* the mercy seat. According to Exodus 28:33-35, the high priest wore a robe trimmed around the hem with bells of pure gold. As long as those standing outside the holy of holies could hear the bells ringing, they knew that the high priest had not died in the presence of God but that God had accepted his sacrifice of the blood.

Compare that scenario to Hebrews 4:16, which is for us today: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Unlike the high priest who went in once a year, we can come unto Him boldly twenty-four hours a day, every day, just as we are.

Are you backsliding? *Come boldly*. Have you fallen? *Come boldly*. Have you gone back into sin again? Name it, forsake it, turn your back on it, and come boldly to find grace and mercy to help in your time of need. Rush into the Holy of Holies in heaven (Revelation 11:19). There is a mercy seat sprinkled seven times with the Blood of Jesus Christ. Through the Finished Work, Christ has opened for us "a new and living way,

which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Hebrews 10:20).

One Judge, One Sacrifice

We have "an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins [(because there is only *one sacrifice* for sins *forever*, according to Hebrews 10:12)], But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot

the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? [*(Remember, this is speaking of 'new wine'.)*]

“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:21-31).

Why would God say these things if everything is grace and grace is everything? Because, grace is always coming toward me. But it must live in me, and it must flow through me toward others. I must become a living epistle of grace (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). Then, I will receive grace rewards because I was graced-out.

Cast Not Away Your Confidence

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back [*from grace*], my soul shall have

no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving [and deliverance] of the soul" (Hebrews 10:35-39).

What is Hebrews chapter 10 teaching? Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice, therefore He can deal with any problem in my life. And if I have a problem with my emotions, I end it with God once and for all.

After a notoriously evil person died, someone said, "Well, at least he won't be doing those terrible things any more." Adam in any of us is a terrible person, and when he dies, he will not be doing terrible things any more. The person who stole will not be stealing any more. The person who murdered will not murder again. The person who gossiped will no longer gossip. The man who straddled the fence indecisively will not be doing it any more. Whatever we were in Adam, when we finally die to self and accept our place of co-crucifixion with Christ, guaranteed: we will not be doing those things any more.

I have never seen dead people coming out of their graves to do bad things. They are dead, and they are buried. He that dies once dies no more (see Romans 6:9-10).

Deliverance through the Finished Work of Grace

God always provides a way for grace to teach us.

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach...”—God’s Word is in your mouth, and in your heart because of grace.

Now notice the conclusion: “...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:6-9).

That passage is not speaking about salvation but *deliverance*! When you realize that Christ is not far off, you will be delivered from Adam. The deliverance is already *in* you through the absolute Finished Work of grace.

For this reason, God’s righteousness is re-

vealed from faith to faith (Romans 1:17). Remember that grace married faith, and the substance of that marriage is righteousness. Born from that union, a child of God confesses who he is (a product of grace), what Christ has done (imparted His righteousness), and he grows from faith to faith and grace to grace.

Grace Initiation, Not Restitution

Christians who understand grace do not require restitution, or pay-back, with one another (unless a judicial crime is involved), because they are good stewards of the many-sided grace of God.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also” (Matthew 5:38-40).

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43-44). This

is something we can never do in the flesh.

Jesus goes on to say, “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” (Matthew 5:46). If we love those who love us, remember: so do the publicans. We are no better than they.

Christians have misunderstood Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This doesn’t mean that we are perfect on earth, but it means we are to love others with the perfect love of God which demonstrates grace and is manifested through mercy.

Chapter Three

DAMAGED CAPACITIES TURNED BY GRACE

What good does it do for God to put new wine into the old wineskin of a homosexual's body? The new wine goes right out. It does no good to put new wine into the drug addict, the alcoholic, or the self-righteous, religious person. Put the new wine in someone who is up and down in their emotions, and it just leaks right out. But according to Matthew 9:17, when the new wine goes into the new bottles, *both* are preserved.

Luke 5:39 says that if you drink the old wine, you won't desire the new. In other words, if you go back on drugs, you won't want the new wine of the Holy Spirit. If you go back into homosexuality (and *choose* to live that way), you won't want the new wine. But if the new wine goes into new bottles—new capacities—through the Holy Spirit of grace, then you are free from any

identification with the old.

If you can't smile and you can't laugh, get the new wine of the Holy Spirit inside you, and you will be so happy that people may think you are intoxicated at nine o'clock in the morning like the disciples at Pentecost (see Acts 2:13)!

Joy: The Effect of the New Wine

God didn't create you to be sad or to go around with a frown on your face. You were designed to have the joy of the Lord as your strength (Nehemiah 8:10). When Jesus Christ gives you His joy, then your joy is full (John 15:11).

Joy is the strength to laugh, to be happy, and to be free. With this kind of joy, you don't even see the heat when bad times come (see Jeremiah 17:8). When people come to you deeply concerned over what you're going through (because you are "getting the heat"), you can say to them, "What heat?" But because they feel bad about what you're going through, they might try to make you feel bad about it too.

Truthfully, the graced-out Christian doesn't see the heat when it comes. In the scorching trial, their leaf remains green. But people who *do* see the heat never see the good when it comes.

Their leaf withers, and they withdraw from their provision.

Every born-again Christian can enjoy an abundant life. We are free to grow in purity, and as we go from faith to faith, the righteousness of grace is revealed. If we should sin, we simply name it, forsake it, and continue on with God. It is most important, however, that we don't make a provision for our flesh to continue in sin that grace might abound—*God forbid*.

That is what the Bema Seat is all about. It will reveal what we did with what we knew and received of the grace of God. Our sins will not be mentioned, but He will bring up every message we heard on grace—and each one is recorded in God's book of remembrance (see Malachi 3:16).

The Authority of Grace in the Local Assembly

According to Ecclesiastes 12:11, every Christian is to have one shepherd, or pastor-teacher—a pastor who knows categorical doctrine, exegetes the Scriptures, and knows isagogics (the historical frame of reference). The pastor is charged to be a soul winner, to love, to invest, and to have a vision for worldwide ministry. Under the pastor-teacher's covering, the be-

liever can grow in the ministry with a single-eye (Matthew 6:22) and a single heart (Ephesians 6:5). He can go forward to receive a full reward in heaven at the Bema Seat.

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things which we have wrought, but that we receive a *full reward*” (2 John 8). To receive the full reward means to go all the way with God under one pastor-teacher in one local church. It means that though a person may never go on the foreign mission field, he still receives the rewards of those who do because he is one with the worldwide vision of the ministry and abides faithful in his call.

Certainly, Christians may receive from many godly portions in the Body of Christ worldwide that complement true doctrine. But if this same believer were to leave his call to a worldwide ministry and settle for a little church that gives money to missions once a month (but never sends anyone out), he would lose rewards he could have had through identification with a worldwide vision.

Don't be a half-baked, sentimental Christian who settles down in a lukewarm environment listening to a so-so gospel. Get some convictions! Get right with God, and follow through with

your decisions!

Stop Trying to Deal with Adam

Man must live by every single Word of God (Matthew 4:4) because we will be judged by every Word of God (John 12:47-48); but God has given us grace to fulfill what He has called us to do (see Ephesians 3:7-8).

The apostle Paul wrote that we are collaborators with God, and he beseeched that we would “receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1). He went on to quote from Isaiah 49:8: “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed” (2 Corinthians 6:2-3).

This is the message: God has provided a grace table.* Don’t receive it in vain. *Now* is the accepted time to be delivered from Adam’s nature.

Stop trying to deal with Adam. Some people only confess who they are in Adam: “I’m neurotic. I’m psychotic. I’m depressed.” But the old sin nature has *always* been neurotic, psychotic, and schizophrenic. So instead of trying to deal

with what we've always been, why not crucify the person who has made us that way?

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Why not get rid of the root (Adam) instead of always dealing with his fruit?

I've never seen a dead man get drunk, take drugs, argue, get depressed, or speak out of negativity. A dead man has never threatened to take his life.

The answer to our problems is to be crucified and resurrected in Christ. Why should I live in a life that has been condemned when I have a new life in Christ that the old man could never match, even though Adam lives in me?*

We have the *new* man. We choose to walk in the new man (Romans 6:4). When we choose to walk in the newness of the Spirit, we have Christ's nature (Romans 7:6). We are being renewed daily in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4:23). Everything is new, and there is nothing old in it.

What if we fail three or four times? Then

each time we do, we name it, forsake it, and go on so quickly that we hardly notice we failed. The only reason we name our sin is so that we won't continue to live in it.

Life in Christ isn't difficult; it's impossible! But Jesus Christ finished the work. He put His blood on the altar seven times, which is God's number for perfection. *It is finished.*

Do you like the new man? Is there anything old in him? Does he have problems? Of course not. The new man is filled with power, love, joy, and faith. There is no condemnation in him. He never judges or blames others. The new man is so satisfied with God that when you see a Christian who walks in the new man, you want to be just like him because he reveals the newness of Jesus Christ's life.

Do Not Receive the Grace of God in Vain

Many marriages look good superficially but are filled with pettiness and lack substance in communication. Often, what appears to be harmless quarreling is actually covering up years of ingratitude and familiarity, which can lead to secret contempt toward the spouse. Though they can't put their finger on the problem, they know there is something deeply

wrong. Usually, it can be attributed to receiving the grace of God in vain.

Hebrews 12:15 instructs us to look “diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

If we receive the grace of God in vain, then we will go right back to thinking, speaking, and living in the condemned man. But it doesn't have to be that way! We can draw near to God's throne of grace twenty-four hours a day and drink in the new wine of grace and truth without condemnation. Once we have internalized grace and truth, we can walk in God's plan and purpose, going from faith to faith, revealing the substance of God's righteousness, and manifesting the authority of grace through love.

**For more about this amazing provision, read Table of Grace, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

***Read The Finished Work of Christ, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998, for an expose of Adam's dilemma.*

CONCLUSION

One of the most unusual tragedies of our day is to see Christians falling from grace (Galatians 5:4). But when a believer falls from grace, he falls deeper into it. Positionally he stands in grace (Romans 5:2). But in a falling man's experience, he just doesn't know enough to accept it; therefore, he doesn't grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ in the Lord.

Forever and ever, every Blood-bought, born-again believer will be under grace. Nothing can pluck us from the hand of God. Still, it is so sad to see Christians who refuse to walk in the authority of grace, which is the only way to a victorious life.

God is waiting to be gracious to us (Isaiah 30:18). He is waiting for you and I to put on the new man every morning and to keep the new man on all day long. If we put on the new man, then our bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Spirit, will manifest the grace processes of

God's nature.

As the guests of God in Satan's territory, we are on earth to reveal the attributes of grace: forgiveness, patience, joy, purity, edification, and integrity. Let's go forward redeeming the time. Receive His sufficiency to reveal the authority of God's grace for every situation.