



God's grace is designed to transform us. It's intended to be lifechanging. Grace is about God accepting us the way we are but at the same time loving us enough not to leave us that way.

God's grace changes us for the better. It's been said that if your religion doesn't change you, then you'd better change your religion. We're going to look at grace today as an agent of change – both on the inside and on the outside. When God's offer of grace is accepted, the work of God's grace begins in our lives and continues throughout our lives.

Titus 2:11-14 - "11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." (NIV)

### **GRACE IS WELCOMING**

Paul says in Titus 2:11a, "For the grace of God has appeared..." The word translated as "APPEARED" is where we get our word "EPIPHANY" - epiphaneia.

It's a term that refers to Jesus coming to earth as God in the flesh. "APPEARED" conveys the idea of being made known. Jesus made God known. Jesus told Philip in John 14:9b, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father (NIV)." Paul describes it this way in Colossians 1:15, "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." (NIV)

Jesus also made Himself known. He traveled all over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. He went to the region we know today as Lebanon and journeyed in the Gentile lands on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. People knew him or knew about his teaching and his miracles. We can't understand grace apart from the personal appearance of Jesus Christ. Jesus' first appearance was the grace of God demonstrated to its fullest. Why? God's demonstration of grace through His son Jesus invites us into relationship with Him. God's grace has been declared. It's been announced. It is not a secret. It invites us to come to Him. Grace says, "You're wanted."

### **GRACE IS SAVING**

While God welcomes us with His grace, He also saves us by His grace. Let's go back to the front porch of the house. We're attracted. The light is on. The welcome mat is out. But we can't get in. We don't have the key! Someone has to unlock the door for us. Titus 2:11 - "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people (NIV)." We cannot use the key of our own righteousness or the key of good deeds to go to God's home. Those keys will not open this door. The only key to heaven is the key of God's grace through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 – "8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast." (NIV)

We cannot earn God's favor. We cannot do enough good deeds. We can never be righteous enough on our own. Isaiah 64:6 even said, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." (NIV) Grace means that we can stop worrying about being good enough. God says, "I know that you're not good enough. That's why I sent someone who is good enough – my Son Jesus – so that He could do what you couldn't do." God's grace forgives, pardons, and justifies.

Salvation is justification. Justification is a legal declaration that says, "Guilty, but no penalty." We deserve the penalty for our sin. God demands justice for our sins. So God provides justification through His son. Justification gives us a right standing before God through Jesus. It imputes or assigns the righteousness of Christ to us so as to declare us righteous because of our acceptance of grace through faith.

When you're having a hard time to transform, think of the saving grace of God. Think of the blood of Jesus on the cross that is used by God to pay for all your sins. We are guilty but God didn't give us the full penalty. God the father made His Son assume the penalty so we can be declared NOT GUILTY.

### **GRACE IS PURIFYING**

Once we accept Jesus Christ into our lives, the Holy Spirit enters our life to start a RENEWING process. GOD purifies us by decontaminating and refining us. Titus 2:12 - "It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age (NIV)." Notice that I said that this work of grace is a process. The effects of living in a fallen world have harmed everybody differently. We all face different issues, struggle with certain sins, and deal with past hurts of varying degrees, hindering our ability to live the life God desires for us.

Grace also teaches you to say, "Yes," to what is right – to be self-controlled, upright, and godly. God not only gives you grace to live with Him in heaven, He also gives you grace to live for Him on earth. We are taught to look INWARD – to evaluate where our desires come from and how we can best develop godly desires so that we're self-controlled. We are taught to look OUTWARD, to allow others to see the work of grace in our own lives, so that our walk is upright. And we're taught to look UPWARD, to keep our eyes focused on God, so that others might learn what it means to be godly.



- 1.) What do you understand about grace before this hearing the message?
- 2.) How do you treat grace in your life?
- 3.) How does grace affect your Christian walk?

**Pray for each other in your group.**