

# Grace in the Life of a Country Boy

When I surrendered all to my Father, I received a passionate love for the Word of God. As I have read and reread the Scriptures, I seem to get things from the Word that just do not fit with what I hear from some pastors and theologians.

One of those words or concepts is 'Grace'. They say that it is *the unmerited favor of God*, but proceed to use it in ways that just do not make sense in my small brain or agree with my reading of basic dictionaries.

For instance 'Redeeming Grace'! That really sounds good, but... redeeming, that would be the process or action of buying back and grace, *the unmerited favor of God*??? So, 'redeeming grace' would come out as, '*being in the process of buying back the unmerited favor of God*'?

Yes, I know that Jesus does fit into the picture, but, that happened 2000 years ago. Redemption is a done deal, as I read it in the Word of God! Jesus redeemed me by paying the price on the cross. (Rev. 5:9-10) I must humble my self, repent, and accept that work in my life, in order that I might realize/accept the Truth or realize the reality and purpose of being redeemed, in my life. Redemption is what makes the Christ Life a possibility. (1 Pet 1:18-19)

So also with the word 'Grace'. The Strong's Greek Dictionary, that I have, does not use either 'unmerited' nor 'favor' in its definition. Strong's Dictionary defines Grace as follows, "**graciousness** (as gratifying), **of manner or act** (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; **especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude**)"

Now I want you to know that some of that just shot right over my head, but some of it stuck and fit into this big puzzle that God is putting together, in my heart and mind, about who He is and what His Heart is toward me (*What He is trying to do for me and what He wants me to be for Him, by His provision.*). A *gracious* person or one that has *graciousness* sounds like someone that is kind or gentle. WordWeb, from the Internet defines *graciousness* as "Characterized by kindness and warm courtesy especially of a king to his subjects" Wow!!! That sure sounds like my Heavenly Father!!

That was not the part that really stuck though. Years ago, before I began using Strong's, I came across a dictionary that had a definition, for grace, that ran something like this. "The help given, by God, to man, in overcoming temptation"! Later, as I read Strong's definition, I saw that it was even better! Strong's definition added a new concept, "Divine influence"!

As a kid growing up I came under all kinds of influences. Most of them were definitely not 'divine'! Of course the bad influences had the greatest holding power in my self-centered senses. One of the best influences in my life was probably my Mother. Her influence was the kind that went in and then got buried deep under the mess of all the other 'garbage of the world' which was entering through my senses, mainly the eyes and ears.

This new idea of what Grace was, now had meaning as I surrendered ALL of myself to my Heavenly Father! Under His Divine influence, He helped me begin to eliminate all the wrong influences and clean up the mess left by the worldly influences. This allowed the buried seeds of my Mother's influences to begin growing.

The new influences from the Spirit of God's Word began to change my life. As I spent more time listening to the Spirit, it changed how I thought, talked, acted, etc. (my heart). I was a new creation!! A growing spiritual baby, on my way to maturity!

Yes, I was truly '**saved by grace**', but not in the same way that the preacher's and theologian's teachings had come across to me! In case you did not know it, the Greek word which is translated into English as 'saved', according to the Strong's Dictionary, means "saved, delivered or protected". I now am experiencing the Truth! **I am "delivered and protected" (saved) from sin and the 'world's garbage', (by) staying under the Spirit of God's Divine Influence (grace).**

I have, in the last 40 years, at times, walked out from under grace (*the divine influence*) and **what a mess it reflected in my life!** It is wonderful to stay in God's grace (*divine influence*) as well as to daily grow under/within that *divine influence* (grace). I could not do without that Real Grace!

My Heavenly Father has helped me to shut out the world's media from my home. The worst being television and the Internet. Yes, there is possible good on both, but remember, some of the worst deception comes from **twisted truth**. **Stay with the Word of God** plus!!! Plus??? Yes, Plus!!! Plus the **Divine Influence** (*Instruction, guidance* Neh 9:20; John 16:13, 1John 2:26-28) of the Holy Spirit!

As you sit down in your quiet place with the Word of God and maybe with a good dictionary, encyclopedia and concordance, (*computerized tools sure do speed up the searches*) **ask the Holy Spirit to direct and teach you**. (1Corinthians 2:9-14, Ps 143:10, 1 Tim 4:1, Luke 6:40) I am a living reality of the Truth in being delivered (*saved*) by divine influence (*grace*)!

I, to this day, frown on, and do not, as a practice, read commentaries. I do not want the confusion and possible error of man's thinking! I want to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. It is sooo.... sweet!!

So what is the Word of God all about? It is a manual to introduce you to a Living God, whose Spirit will dwell in you, enabling you to fulfil His desire for your absolute love for Him and thus, stay under His influence to be Holy, as He is Holy!

This is a little of my experience of Grace! Paul in his letter to Titus gives what I have found to be an excellent Biblical description of the function and purpose of grace (*the divine influence*) in the believer's life.

## **The Function And Purpose Of Grace**

**Titus 2:11-14** For the grace (*Divine Influence*)\* of God has appeared, bringing salvation (*defence or rescue*)\*\* to all people.

2:12 It **trains us** to...

*reject godless ways*

and...

*worldly desires*

and...

**to live self-controlled,**

**upright,**

and

**godly lives** *in the present age,*

2:13 as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our **hope** in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2:14 **He gave himself for us...**

**to set us free** from every kind of lawlessness

and...

to **purify** for himself a people who are truly his,

**who are eager to do good.** (*NET Bible*)

\*Strong's Greek Definition of New Testament Grace - graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude)

\*\*Salvation as used in Titus 2:11 - defender or (by implication) defence.

## Titus 1:15-2:15 (NET)

15 All is pure to those who are pure. But to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their minds and consciences are corrupted.

16 They profess to know God but **with their deeds they deny him**, since **they are detestable, disobedient**, and **unfit for any good deed**.

1 But as for you, communicate **the behavior** that goes with **sound teaching**.

2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, **self-controlled**, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

3 Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good.

4 In this way they will train (denotes teaching in the sense of bringing people to their senses, showing what sound thinking is) the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be **self-controlled**, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, **so that the message of God may not be discredited**.

6 Encourage younger men likewise to be **self-controlled**,

7 showing yourself to be an example of good works in every way. In your teaching show integrity, dignity,

8 and a sound message that cannot be criticized, so that any opponent will be at a loss, because he has **nothing evil to say about us**.

9 Slaves are to be subject to their own masters in everything, to do what is wanted and not talk back,

10 not pilfering, **but showing all good faith** {KJ fidelity G4102}(Translation Note... "showing that genuine faith is productive." ...The point of the text, then, if this understanding is correct, is an exhortation to slaves to demonstrate that their faith is sincere and results in holy behavior. If taken

this way, the text seems to support the idea that saving faith does not fail, but even results in good works"), in order **to bring credit to the teaching of God** our Savior in everything.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.

12 It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

13 as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

14 He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.

**15 So communicate these things with the sort of exhortation or rebuke that carries full authority. Don't let anyone look down on you.**

May you as a reader find the True and Living God, know Him as the Deliverer He wants to be with in you!

### Net Notes

13 13 tn Or "to be subject to their own masters, to do what is wanted in everything."

14 14 tn Or "showing that genuine faith is productive." At issue between these two translations is the force of ἀγαθὴν (agathēn): Is it attributive (as the text has it) or predicate (as in this note)? A number of considerations point in the direction of a predicate ἀγαθὴν (e.g., separation from the noun πίστιν (pistin) by the verb, the possibility that the construction is an object-complement, etc.), though is not usually seen as an option in either translations or commentaries. Cf. ExSyn 188–89, 312–13, for a discussion. Contextually, it makes an intriguing statement, for it suggests a synthetic or synonymous parallel: "Slaves should be wholly subject to their masters...demonstrating that all [genuine] faith is productive, with the result [ecbatic ἵνα] that they will completely adorn the doctrine of God.' The point of the text, then, if this understanding is correct, is an exhortation to slaves to demonstrate that their faith is sincere and results in holy behavior. If taken this way, the text seems to support the idea that saving faith does not fail, but even results in good works" (ExSyn 312–13). The translation of ἀγαθὴν as an attributive adjective, however, also makes good sense.

15 15 tn Or "adorn," "show the beauty of."