

Get Ready to Grow in Faith

This month's bible study | *Titus 2:11-14*

God's grace gives us the power to change

Imagine the very best gift you've ever received. Maybe it was a special present for a birthday or a totally unexpected gift received just because the giver wanted you to have it. God's grace is like that—a precious gift that is totally undeserved.

The *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* note about Titus 2:11-14 says this: "Verses 11-14 describe the character and purpose of God's saving grace (i.e. the unearned and undeserved favor, love, help and spiritual enablement) and the effect it should have on believers."

It is through God's grace that we recognize and realize God's gift of salvation and love. He opens our eyes and softens our hearts. Verse 11 says it is the grace of God that brings salvation to all men.

Grace for salvation would be enough of a gift to make the receiver grateful and thankful forever, but God's grace is so great that it doesn't stop at salvation. Verse 12 states, "It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and [helps us] to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (NIV).

Through God's grace we have the power to live in the world and not be consumed by it. Through God's grace we can cease our unhealthy behaviors and addictions. Through God's grace we are empowered to grow in our faith. And through God's grace we experience the hope of Christ's glorious return.

God's grace can be seen in the story of a pastor in the Appalachian region who believed God wanted him to start an outreach to a small university campus in a nearby town. His church purchased a piece of property across from the campus, but it was not large enough to build on, nor did they have the resources to start construction.

Instead, the pastor set up an "office" on the property to avoid delaying the outreach. He put a desk under a tree, connected the telephone and power to a utility pole, and made himself available to passersby. Within 45 minutes a man stopped to talk. He poured out the sorrows of his life to the pastor and in turn received God's grace and salvation. God used the pastor's obedience to provide grace to a desperate person.

God's grace did not stop there. The repentant man was the owner of the property next door, and he donated it to the church so the members could fulfill their outreach to the university. God's unmerited favor was big enough for the church and the students it would reach.

Though the grace God gives is bestowed freely, we should not take it for granted. We are warned by Scripture that this happens, as the article "Faith and Grace" in the *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* points out. It states that "God's grace can be resisted and rejected (Heb. 12:15), received in vain and without effect (2 Cor. 6:1), set aside and disregarded (Gal. 2:21) and abandoned by people who at one time, truly believed and accepted Christ (Gal. 5:4)."

This month, purpose to actively pursue and embrace God's gift of grace with a thankful and accepting heart.