

Heirs of the Grace of Life: God's 'One-Way-or-the-Other Plan'

Discover Your Spiritual Identity: The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People

"Likewise, you husbands, live considerately with your wives, giving honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they too are also heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

The Definition of Grace

The word "grace" can be defined four primary ways:

1. Grace is unmerited love from God (Eph. 2:8-9).
2. Grace is divinely imparted ability (1 Cor. 15:10).
3. Grace is the abundant generosity of God toward us (2 Cor. 9:8).
4. Grace is the sum total of all the activity of God in our lives (1 Cor. 15:10).

Strong's Concordance explains that grace is: "The divine influence on the heart and its evidence in the life."

You may ask, "How could grace be unmerited love and divinely imparted ability—simultaneously?" Those two qualities are so different. Consider a simple analogy. When a man and woman come together in marriage, their physical union is first an expression of love. However, once that consummation of marriage takes place and conception results, what begins as an expression of love ends as an impartation of ability. Imparted to the fertilized egg in the mother's womb is the potential

ability to be a fully functional human being: a child who sees, hears, smells, walks, talks and thinks.

In like manner, when grace made its entrance into our lives, what began as an expression of love from God (forgiving our sins) ended as an impartation of ability (granting us “power to become sons of God,” John 1:12).

Bridging the Impassable Gulf

In his definition of grace, William Barclay spanned the huge chasm between fallen human beings and the lofty God of all creation: “The word grace emphasizes at one and the same time the helpless poverty of man and the limitless kindness of God.”

The bridge across this “impassable gulf” was reared by God, not by man. It was His compassionate idea, not our desperate plan—constructed with two heavenly “materials” of the highest quality:

1. The Word of His grace (Acts 20:32).
2. The Spirit of grace (Zec. 12:10).

Through His grace-filled Word and by His grace-filled Spirit, God lowered this spiritual bridge into the dark, wretched, turbulent depths of our inherited depravity. Then He beckoned us to cross over, returning to a heaven-on-earth paradise of communion with Him. Moreover, He promises that no matter how tough life may get, His “grace is sufficient”—for His “strength is made perfect by weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

The Requirements

We could never earn grace because salvation is “not of works, so that no one should boast” (Eph. 2:9). “Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace” (Rom. 11:6). Yet even though this marvelous gift is freely given, three attitudes of heart are required to usher us into a receptive position:

1. Faith. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

2. Humility. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5).

3. Sincere love. “Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph. 6:24).

All three of these heart-attitudes must be woven together for grace to flow powerfully and effectively into our lives. Any child of God can confidently claim being “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1)—unbeatable and unconquerable by anything he or she faces in this valley of the shadow of death.

The Inexhaustible Supply of Grace

If you are saved, here’s an important question—when was grace first extended to you? Second Timothy 1:9 gives the amazing answer: “[God has] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not by our works, but by His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Before the earth existed, before this tiny orb was spinning on its axis, traveling around the sun, God’s offspring were a part of His plan—anticipated with much affection and forethought.

In His limitless knowledge, even before you were you—the Creator anticipated every valley you would ever pass through, every mountainous challenge you would ever face, every pit of human weakness you would ever fall into and every strategy the evil one and his cohorts would ever raise against you. In advance, He gave you more than enough grace to make it through every negative or challenging circumstance to fulfill your God-given destiny.

So we need not beg God to give us grace to overcome our

difficulties or fulfill our callings. Why ask the Father for something He's already given? According to our main Scripture, grace is part of our inheritance. So instead, let us praise God that abundant grace is our present possession, enabling us, not only to survive, but to thrive, in every situation.

God's One-Way-or-the-Other Plan

I love to refer to grace as "God's-one-way-or-the-other plan," because one way or the other, our Father intends for grace to bring absolute victory to us, both now and forevermore. The primary Scripture enshrining this idea is Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

Sin is one of our most powerful adversaries. At the moment of salvation, when grace first made its appearance in our lives, we were cleansed from sin by the precious blood of Jesus. From that point forward, grace also strengthened us to live above sin, coaching us how to function in a God-pleasing way. Titus 2:11-12 reveals: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world."

Through the internal influence of the Word and the Spirit, the God of all grace awakens divinely imparted ability in those who have been begotten of the Word and born of the Spirit to resist and overcome sin (which is God's highest desire for us). But if by chance, God's offspring err—and that happens often—there is still abundant hope. If we abide in the three required attitudes of heart (faith, humility, and sincere love), grace in a sense, 'changes its face.' Instead of being divinely imparted ability, giving us power to live above sin, it once again manifests as unmerited love, giving us the power to recover from sin. So, one-way-or-the-other grace makes certain that we abide in that victory the cross and the empty tomb secured for us.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) says, “Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Editor’s Note: In the archives of his weekly Charisma Podcast Network show, Discover Your Spiritual Identity, Mike Shreve teaches on our calling to be heirs of the grace of life. These powerful teachings are found here, here and here. Watch “Heirs of the Grace of Life” on Discover Your Spiritual Identity TV on YouTube here. For a more in-depth article, visit [.{eo}](#)

Mike Shreve has taught on the spiritual identity of believers for over 30 years. This powerful revelation is featured on his weekly podcast on and a weekly TV program on “It’s Supernatural Network” (ISN)—both titled Discover Your Spiritual Identity (also posted weekly on YouTube here). It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. A product of the Jesus movement era, Mike has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970 with an added emphasis on healing and the prophetic.

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