

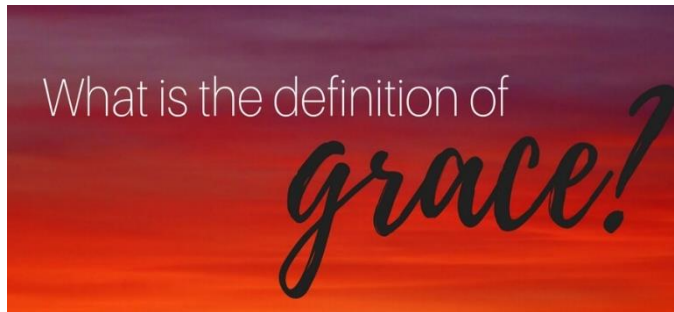
The Meaning and Message of New Covenant Grace

(The Grace Principle, New Nature, Life in the Spirit, Life in Christ)

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If you attend a Bible believing church, you have likely heard about God's grace. It's one of those words that you hear almost every Sunday. It can become a buzzword of sorts. While Christians might hear about it all the time, many miss how God's grace actually applies to their lives. In fact, we use the word so much I think we've forgotten what grace actually means and how beautiful and life-changing God's grace is for Christian living. Grace is still amazing!

Grace Defined



When I attended the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music" I had to read a book by Lewis Sperry Chafer entitled "Grace." Chafer gave this definition of grace: "The word favor is the nearest Biblical synonym for the word grace. In this connection it may be observed that the one

thought which is almost exclusively expressed in the New Testament by the word grace, is, in the Old Testament, almost exclusively expressed by the word favor. Grace is favor, and favor is grace. Thus, in considering the Bible teaching on this great theme, equal attention should be given to all passages wherein either the word grace is used or favor is found. Grace means pure un-recompensed kindness and favor. What is done in grace is done graciously. From this exact meaning there can be no departure; otherwise grace ceases to be grace."

The word that's normally translated "grace" in the New Testament is the Greek word "charis." Grace in the Bible speaks of God's kindness, favor, benefit, goodwill, and blessing bestowed upon people through His divine influence and work. Strong's partial definition of grace is "the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life." The grace (charis) of God is prodding and influential. In other words, God's favor and kindness is something that works in the hearts of people and is then

reflected in their lives. Grace is not only a disposition, quality, or an inclination in the nature of God. It is an influence, force, or a power, an acting of God that works in us to change our lives. Grace can be understood as God's divine influence in the hearts of humanity which includes the passing on of spiritual blessings and benefits that are designed to save and transform people, making God's saints into trophies of grace.

God's grace is *undeserved* and *unmerited* which means we cannot earn God's favor in relation to salvation (Rom. 4:4; 11:6).

Ephesians 2:8-9 declares:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

We cannot trust completely and only in Christ to save us until we realize that we are helplessly, hopelessly lost, hell-bound sinners who are unable to save ourselves by good works or deeds.

As Spurgeon put it:

"We must see that we are convicted and condemned, with the rope around our neck, before we will weep for joy when Christ pardons us."

The *grace system* (as opposed to the law system) is not a debt system ("it is the gift of God"). In other words, grace, as it relates to salvation and eternal life, is not something we must earn or merit and therefore receive through a legalistic system of good works or sacraments. Grace is not free (a gift) if we must do something, become something, or receive something to get it. Grace is always presented as a *gift system* (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 22:17). For instance, our justification before God is "reckoned of grace" and not debt – something we earn (Rom. 4:4). This means through the grace of God our legal record and standing before God is credited with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). The grace related to justification is free (Rom. 3:24). Grace is a free system – not a debt or works system.

God in His grace looks upon us with favor and goodwill to bless us with salvation and eternal life, but we are not indebted to earn this grace in any way (Rom. 3:27; Gal. 2:16) or else grace would no longer be grace.

Romans 11:6 brings out this principle of grace giving:

"And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

You cannot have it both ways. It's either God's grace (God doing the giving) or man's works (man doing the giving). Grace cancels out works and works cancels out grace. Grace and works are two incompatible realms. A gift cannot be earned but only received, and grace is presented as a gift that is given to us ("the gift by grace" - Rom. 5:15, 17; 2 Cor. 9:15). There is only one type of

**FREE
GRACE**

grace presented in Scripture – free grace ("justified freely by his grace" - Rom. 3:24). The very mention and meaning of the word grace speaks of one person showing favor and goodwill toward another person. It never has the meaning of being indebted to a person or under obligation. Grace can only be free. Favor is free! This is because it's God who does the giving – not man. The heart of grace is to give without expecting a favor in return. Grace gives out of love and nothing more than this.

A. W. Pink said:

"Grace can neither be bought, earned, or won by the creature. If it could be, it would cease to be grace."

Jesus taught an important lesson in Luke 5:36

"And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent (tear), and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

In the first parable Jesus was teaching that one should not mix the law (identified as the religious legalism of the Pharisees) with the message of grace. In the first parable, the old garment speaks of the legal system or dispensation of law, while the new garment pictures the era of free grace and forgiveness in Christ. The two are incompatible. Any attempt to mix law and grace would result in spoiling both. A patch taken from a new garment and placed on an old garment would spoil both the new and old garments because they would not match in appearance or strength.

Luke 5:37

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles (wineskins); else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish."

In the second parable Jesus taught that putting old or fermented wine in new wineskins would cause quick fermentation and cause the new skins to burst. So, the old and new dispensations (law and grace) do not mix since the law (a system of works) was not given to save but condemn a person (Rom. 3:19-20). The two systems destroy one another. They are two incompatible realms that cannot exist together. It's one or the other. It's law or grace (legalism or liberty). The one cancels out the other.

J. N. Darby states it well:

“Jesus would do no such thing as tack on Christianity to Judaism. Flesh and law go together, but grace and law, God's righteousness and man's, will never mix.”

Jesus concludes in Luke 5:39:

“No man also having drunk old wine (the fermented) straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”

This final parable pictures the natural reluctance of men to abandon the old for the new, Judaism for Christianity, law for grace, shadows for substance! More specifically, the Pharisees would not give up the Old Covenant which they had turned into a legalistic code to follow for sanctification and salvation. This would be like those who get a taste of old fermented wine and don't want to give it up for the newer freshly squeezed wine from the grapes. This is because their taste buds become desensitized to what is good and wholesome. In other words,

Jesus was teaching that the new wine (freshly pressed wine from the grapes) is the wine that we are to drink for it represents grace, forgiveness, and liberty through Jesus Christ. The old or fermented wine representative of legalism is in contrast and opposed to the new wine of grace found in Jesus Christ. The new wine of grace and the old wine of legalism do not mix. God does not promote mixed drinks! The new wine cancels out the old wine as expressed in Romans 11:6: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

Isaiah 55:1 puts it like this:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

The basic commodities of fresh food, new wine, and milk are seen to be expressions of God's offer of free salvation to His people for they cannot be purchased with money. They are absolutely free! And it is certain that in the Grace Age we must come to Christ "without money and without price" for the price has already been paid in full by Christ when He suffered and died on Calvary's cross (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 3:10). What a beautiful picture of grace.

"It was down at the feet of Jesus,
O the blessed happy day!
That my soul found peace in believing,
And my sins were all washed away.
Let me tell the old, old story
Of His grace so full and free,
Let my heart keep giving Him the glory
For His wondrous love to me.

"It was down at the feet of Jesus,
Where I brought my guilt and sin,
Where He paid my debt and forgave me
For He died my soul to win.
Let me tell the old, old story
Of His grace so full and free,
Let my heart keep giving Him the glory
For His wondrous love to me.

Grace is a free gift, but to receive the gift you must have your hands open! We are called upon to "take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). The enemies of grace are *ceremonialism* which is salvation/justification by keeping the Old Testament law (Acts 15:1). There is also *Galatianism* which salvation/justification by faith, but works are then necessary to maintain one's salvation or justification before God (Gal. 3:2-3). These are forms of legalism or a law system (man earning or meriting God's favor) which opposes the grace system and "frustrate" or set aside, do away with, thwart the efficacy of "the grace of God" (Gal. 2:21). The opposite of the legalistic pathway to Heaven is *antinomianism* which embraces salvation by free grace but then promotes libertinism where a person can live any way they want to (Titus 1:16; Jude 4). This last errant philosophy is also an enemy of grace for the

Bible teaches that there are governing principles under grace that keep a Christian from digressing into ungodly and licentious living (Titus 2:11-12).

Grace can be explained as “God’s favor toward the unworthy” or “God’s benevolence on the undeserving.” In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don’t deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously. There is a popular acronym of the word grace that relates to salvation: “**G**od’s **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense.”

In relation to the Christian life, no Christian can experience sanctification (consecration to God in holy living) without complete reliance upon God’s empowering and life-transforming grace in his life (Rom. 6:14).

Paul exclaimed in 1 Corinthians 15:10:

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

We are nothing without God’s grace. God must lavishly pour His benevolence and blessing upon our lives, not only in relation to saving us, but also to transform us and make us into what He wants us to be. This is what Paul experienced in his Christian life (Phil. 1:6).

Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us of God’s favor toward His people:

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

John Owen once remarked:

“Eye the Father as love. Do not look on Him as a Father always disappointed, but as one most kind and tender. Let us look on Him by faith, as one that has had thoughts of kindness towards us from everlasting.”

The origin of God’s grace and giving is rooted in His own nature of kindness and goodwill. His thoughts toward us are favorable and filled with goodness – not condemnation, wrath, and revenge. This means grace begins and ends with God’s favor. God is the giver, and we are the receiver in relation to both salvation (John 1:12) and sanctification in our Christian lives (John 1:16). The idea that man can earn God’s grace or favor is totally foreign to the nature of grace. This is because

God's grace or the "grace of God" (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; Eph. 3:7; Tit. 2:11) means that God is doing the giving!

It's God who gives to us out of His own benevolence, goodwill, and kindness. In fact, even the unsaved who are presently under God's wrath and condemnation (John 3:36) are still favored by God in the sense that Christ died for them and wants to save them (2 Pet. 2:1) - "for he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). Even the unsaved wicked and ungodly who are enemies of God (Rom. 5:6-8) cannot get away from His grace!

David Guzik wrote this about the nature of grace:

"Grace is not giving to someone because they're a good person. Grace is not giving to someone because they're trying to be good. Grace is not giving to somebody to persuade them to be good. Grace is not giving to somebody because they promise to be good. Grace is not giving someone a lot when they deserve a little. No, grace is given because every reason for the giving is in the giver, not in the receiver.

"You see, grace doesn't even really care if someone deserves it or not, because the reasons are in the giver. Grace doesn't tell you, "You don't deserve this." By the way, we could say that the law tells you, "You don't deserve it," but grace doesn't tell you that. Grace doesn't care. Grace deals with us completely apart from the principle of deserving. By its very nature, grace doesn't look for a reason in the person who receives. And so, we understand this, that grace is unmerited, it's undeserving. And therefore, we have to stop trying to give God a reason to give us His grace. The reasons are in Him. The reasons are not in us. And so, God's giving to us is undeserved."

Acts 15:11 reminds us of the grace of salvation:

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Ephesians 1:7 highlights the grace of redemption and forgiveness:

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Romans 3:24 reveals to us the grace of justification:

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

We don't deserve salvation, redemption, or justification but God out of the kindness and favor of His own heart looked upon us, while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8) and gave His son to die in our place. So grace is the expression of God's own favor or kindness toward us as underserving sinners. God's favor tells us how He sees and feels about the one to whom He extends His grace. God sees each person in a favorable light in the sense that He wants to save them and then sanctify or transform their lives. He views them graciously and favorably and therefore savable and changeable! In God's eyes we are not a piece of moss floating down a stream. God truly favors us and cares for our soul and salvation (2 Pet. 3:9).

J. Wilbur Chapman often told of the testimony given by a certain man in one of his meetings. "I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, 'Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?' As soon as I saw his face, I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, 'Father, Father, do you know me?' Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, 'Oh my son, at last I've found you! I've found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours!' Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had."

This is a wonderful illustration of the way God has showered His grace upon our lives. It's also a good definition of grace. Grace is God freely giving to us everything we need in order to save us and sustain us forever. Grace supplies us with everything we need for salvation, sanctification, and service in our Christian living. The blessings of grace are illustrated in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:21-24). The underserving are given grace beyond measure!



Think about this. When we are disgraced, we are no longer graced, we don't enjoy favor. We are not seen in a good light. The disgraced person only knows shame. There's no honor, there's no glory, there's no approval at all in the disgraced person. But here is the good news. The unsaved are not disgraced by God but actually loved (John 3:16) and looked upon in a gracious manner by God through Christ's death - "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). Indeed, it grace (God's favor) over disgrace.

It's God showing undeserved favor on sinners who should be disgraced and damned forever in the Lake of Fire.

Of course, the believer in Christ enjoys grace (the favor and pleasure of God) in a much more profound way in that God's grace brings every Gospel believer legal acceptance in the very throne room and presence of God (Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 5:12). But grace (God's favor and goodwill) is also operative in the daily lives of Christians to empower and transform them (Rom. 6:1-15; Titus 2:11-12). Yes, it's grace over disgrace! God in His grace looks upon His children as accepted and favored in Christ (Eph. 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:21) and equips them with grace for the race of the Christian life (1 Cor. 15:10). We might fail the grace of God by not applying it to our lives, but the grace of God never fails us (Heb. 12:15).

Here is the main point. Everything that is given to us is prompted by God's gracious, giving nature (John 3:16; James 1:17-18). Grace is not prompted by any work or ability in the unsaved person. This is a difficult truth for many people to accept since the root system of a legalistic works/salvation is embedded in religion and is Satan's key ploy to deceive people (Gen. 4:3; Luke 18:18; Acts 15:1; Gal. 5:1; 2 Cor. 4:4). But here is something wonderful about grace. God gives; we don't give. The nature of grace is God favoring, giving, and desiring to bless us.

As previously mentioned, grace always looks back to God who gives out of His own loving nature, out of His own favor and kindness. It has nothing to do with individuals giving or offering their legalistic and meritorious works (good



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deeds) to God's gracious offer of salvation through Christ (Rom. 3:12; 11:6; Gal. 3:1-3). Nor does it have anything to do with Christians relying on their own personal strength for sanctification and victory (Rom. 7:7-15). Grace is God's favor, blessing, and giving. It has nothing to do with man giving back to God but God giving to man. It's the grace of God – not the grace of man!

Alan Redpath wrote this about the definition of grace:

“Now, what does that word grace mean? You have often heard it defined as the unmerited favor of God. Well, that is a definition, but it is only a limited definition of the word. Now, the word has taken on many different meanings throughout the years. When this word was used in the early stages of history, it meant a desire to

bring to other people goodness, health and strength, beauty and loveliness. Later, it became a little more pregnant in its meaning and began to mean the actual activity which expresses the desire to bring others goodness instead of evil, health instead of sickness, beauty instead of ugliness, glory instead of punishment.”

We must understand that God sees His beloved children in terms of beauty and favor through His Beloved Son Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3, 6; Col. 2:10; Rom. 3:25; 8:33), and that God doesn't just love us out of an obligation to love—He actually does love us unconditionally and eternally based upon His grace (Rom. 8:38-39). We need to grasp the true nature of grace which begins with the divine initiation of the favor, kindness, and goodness of God extended toward us as lost sinners (Luke 19:10; Rom. 2:4; Titus 3:4; John 3:16; Eph. 5:25).

We need to understand God's attitude of grace toward His children who are “chosen” by God (Eph. 1:4-5), “beloved of God” (Rom. 1:7), “kept by God” (1 Pet. 1:5) and destined for “eternal glory” by “the God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5:10). When we begin to grasp the greatness of God's grace, it's then that our eyes will be opened to the significance and importance of grace. As a result, our hearts are lost in the wonder if all! Or as Charles Wesley wrote, “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

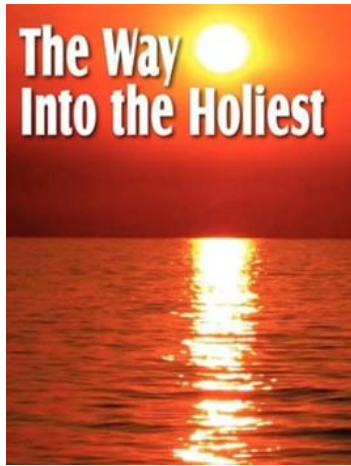
God's favor, kindness, goodwill, and blessing extends to every facet of our lives – physically and spiritually (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; 2 Cor. 16:20). God's common grace and special grace extended to His children are experienced every day. We enjoy so many things from the giving hands of a benevolent and loving God in an underserving sin-cursed world. How often do we take them for granted? I have learned throughout my years as a Christian that if there's anything we need to get a good grasp of it is grace. We need to reflect on it, hide the truth in our heart, and apply it to our daily living. We need a grace awakening! We need a new awareness and understanding of God's grace and how it relates to our lives.

Grace At Work

Grace has a positive influence in the lives of people to bring about God's purposes and pleasures in relation to their lives (Phil. 2:13). As we will discuss, during the Dispensation of Grace (Eph. 3:2) there are two Members of the Godhead that are used to channel and express grace to His people, both saving and sanctifying grace.

They are the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:25) and Christ (Gal. 1:27; 2:20) whose work results in a new relationship and intimacy with the Heavenly Father.

1. The grace feature of new awareness and intimacy with the Father.



One of the Grace Age events related to our Christian lives as New Covenant believers is that we can possess a brand-new intimate relationship with God the Father within the veil (“into the holiest” of God’s presence - Heb. 10:19) based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ (“by the blood of Jesus”) which opened the pathway to God. Through the Spirit’s New Covenant work we can now call Him “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). We no longer must pass through the shadows and rituals of animal sacrifices (Heb. 10:1-4). Instead, we can by faith look to Christ’s sacrifice (John 3:15-16) knowing that we possess an accepted and unchanging standing before God’s throne in the grace of God’s Beloved Son (Eph. 1:6; Rom. 3:24; 5:2). It’s our grace relationship with God “in Christ: that gives us the blessed assurance that He has forgiven us in Christ and forever accepts us in His presence.

So grace believers enjoy special and unique grace features which result in their positional acceptance before God’s throne (Eph. 2:6) and practical sanctification in their Christian life (Gal. 5:18; Eph. 6:1-14). This is how grace is manifested to His people today. It’s through the saving and life-transforming power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. To live under grace (Rom. 6:14-15) is to enjoy the spiritual benefits of one’s union with Christ made available through the work of the Holy Spirit who identifies us with Christ through His baptizing (spiritual immersion) and identifying work with Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Col 2:12). The Holy Spirit then empowers us to live a spiritual life through Christ without any hint of law or the legalism of man’s efforts, “for if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:18).

2. The grace feature of a new internal work of God through His nature and Spirit.

Under the New Covenant work of God everyone possesses the new nature (unlike the Old Covenant) and this feature is joined with the Spirit’s permanent abiding presence (not available in the Old Covenant). The New Covenant work in the Grace

Dispensation emphasizes God's internal work on the tablets of human hearts (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26) in contrast with the Old Covenant inscribed in stone (Ex. 24:12). The *internal* is emphasized over the *external* through the indwelling presence and work of the Holy Spirit.



2 Corinthians 3:3 brings out this important grace feature: “*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ (regenerated lives serve as living epistles) ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*”

The Corinthians and all Christian living in the present dispensation are comparable to “living letters” dispatched by Christ whose very own lives were written and transformed through the inner work of the Holy Spirit. The saints were essentially a living expression of the work of the Spirit of the living God as they lived under the New Covenant. This reminds us that we are the only Bible some people will ever read!

This inner work of transforming grace occurs in the hearts of New Covenant believers and is the quality of New Covenant living which are virtues blossoming into fruit under the gracious influence and work of the Spirit. The moral or righteous nature of the law is fulfilled in us by the Spirit's internal work (Rom. 8:4). The old covenant of the Mosaic law written on stones was inflexible and could not deal with the inner dynamics of changing the hearts of people. The New Covenant promises the internal work of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people which makes them sensitive to God's moral law and promotes obedience out of love and power to accomplish God's will (Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 31:33; 36:26-27; 37:14; Heb. 10:16). This is something that law could not do (Rom. 8:3).



There is some theological tension here. How does the Church benefit from the New Covenant which was made especially for Israel? The Bible teaches the Church receives the spiritual benefits of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:1-13) acknowledging that salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22). The

promised universal blessing predates and looks ahead to the New Covenant (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). The Church is blessed through Israel's covenant but does not replace Israel as a people in the plan of God and cancel out Israel's promises (Rom. 11:1-2; 11:26). There are "trickledown" spiritual blessings contained in the New Covenant which the Church receives. Reading about the New Covenant in the Old Testament will give us the basic blessings that the Church inherits.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 speaks of the New Covenant: **"A new heart also will I give you (a new inner control center governing the spirit, soul, intellect, will), and a new spirit will I put within you (a new nature, a favorable disposition toward God, a new orientation or way of life with new desires, drives, and determination to follow righteousness): and I will take away the stony heart (hard and calloused heart that is insensitive to spiritual things) out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (a soft and responsive heart toward God). And I will put my spirit within you (the Holy Spirit to empower and change the life), and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."**

We see here that grace changes the heart. Praise the Lord, He can make a brand-new heart! Transformation through a new heart is the keynote of the New Covenant. In God's New Covenant work, the Holy Spirit is the agent who writes the moral law of God upon our hearts by giving us a new nature or disposition which promotes us to do God's will and then empowers us to do His will, freeing us from the old nature or sinful disposition (Rom. 8:4).

Galatians 5:16

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

The metaphor of walking obviously implies progress, continual movement, and the development of strength which comes through a moment-by-moment yielding to the Spirit's presence and power. Again, the grace feature of the New Covenant is the Spirit's movement and transformation occurring in our hearts and lives. When we consistently yield to the Spirit and obey His promptings, we can live a spiritual life and demonstrate the evidences of spirituality in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

Under the New Covenant the will is changed from "I won't" to "I will." The will is transformed so that the believers moves progressively from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. New Covenant people would obey God not so much because they have to, but because they want to. All of this is the result of the new nature

and new power of the Spirit working in our hearts under the New Covenant. The new nature and Holy Spirit becomes the internal agents and monitors working inside of the human heart.

This is how grace works in relation to the Spirit's work in our lives. The rigid and inflexible nature of the law written on stones (the Old Covenant) could not have this inward effect on the inner life. Only grace can do this through the promises of the New Covenant. So, the grace feature of the new nature and Spirit's internal work in the hearts of people is the hallmark of the Grace Dispensation. Through the Spirit's work in spiritually identifying us with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection life (Rom. 6:3-15) we become a *new creation* (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10), a *new man* who has been regenerated or born again man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) possessing a *new nature* or disposition (Rom. 7:22; Heb. 10:16) and *new life* in Christ through the Spirit's work (John 3:8; 2 Cor. 3:6; Titus 3:5).

Through regeneration the Old Covenant saints possessed a new nature (Isa. 51:7; Ps. 37:31; 40:8). One could not possess a new nature without being born again. But this brings up the question of how the new nature or disposition promised under the New Covenant, along with the Spirit's work, is different than that of the Old Covenant. Even though the Old Covenant saints were regenerated (John 3:3, 5, 11; 1 Sam. 10:9) and justified (Rom. 4:2-4) in view of the coming Redeemer (Gen. 2:15; 12:3; Gal. 3:8) but their changed hearts did not occur through the Old Covenant.

The Holy Spirit was not inactive during the Old Testament in convicting and regenerating people convicting, saving, and empowering people (Gen. 6:3; Zech. 4:6). The Holy Spirit would temporarily come upon Old Covenant saints to indwell them so they could do great things for God (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29. Exod. 31:3). However, the Spirit did not permanently indwell Old Covenant saints (1 Sam. 16:14; Jud. 16:20; Ps. 51:11) as promised under the New Covenant (John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16). Those who crossed over from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant during the transition period from law to grace in one sense lived in a dispensational time warp.

For instance, the Ephesian disciples who once lived under the Old Covenant, understood how completely different it was to live under the New Covenant when being permanently and personally indwelt, controlled, empowered, and blessed by the Spirit's New Covenant ministry (Acts 19:1-10; 2 Cor. 1:22). Added to this would

be the new personal union and relationship with Christ that would be experienced in the heart and life of every New Covenant believer (Rom. 7:4; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20). The added grace dimensions of the permanent indwelling and new empowerment



through the Spirit, coupled with a new awareness of union with Christ through the Spirit's revelation of Christ to His people (John 14:16-18; 16:13-15; Rom. 8:2; Phil. 1:19) were some of the new and wonderful blessings experienced under the Grace Dispensation. Therefore, passing over the bridge from the Old to the New Covenant system was a wonderful transition and transaction that occurred in the hearts and lives of people.

Larry Pettegrew remarks about this:

“Only those who had experienced old covenant salvation would realize the pneumatological contrasts between old covenant salvation and new covenant salvation.”

The new working of God's grace under the New Covenant would bring something fresh and wonderful into the lives of God's saints (Acts 1:4-5, 8; John 1:16-17). It was something that was not previously experienced (John 4:14; 7:37-39). The Spirit's New Covenant work would produce a new Spirit-generated heart attitude and individual power that was permanently internalized and not experienced previously (Ezek. 36:37; Jer. 32:40; John 14:16; Rom. 8:4).

Now let's reflect some more on the actual differences between the Old and New Covenants. First, God did not promise the new nature through the Old Covenant. Although the Old Covenant demanded that the Israelites have the law of God in their hearts (Deut. 6:5-6) it did not provide the new disposition for them. The Israelite had to experience regeneration to receive the new nature because the Old Covenant did not have this provision. The moral law of God was written on tablets of stone, but it could not be written on the heart.

Second, we must remember that many Israelites were physically born into an old covenant relationship with God but not every one of them were regenerated as promised under the New Covenant (Rom. 2:28-29). This means the law by itself (the tables of stone) did not give the promise of the new nature which prompts us to do God's will.

Third, as previously mentioned, the Old Covenant never spoke of the permanent indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would only temporarily come upon people and then leave them (Judg. 6:34; 11:29; 1 Sam. 11:6; 1 Chron. 12:18; Ps. 51:11). The promise of the New Covenant was a permanent indwelling of the Spirit (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).

The work of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant would bring about the new grace features such as positional salvation in Christ (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:1), the inner disposition of the new nature written on the heart of every believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 8:4), the constant power and provision of the Spirit (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:25) through union with Christ (Rom. 6:1-15; Eph. 1:3; 2:6), the revelation of Christ's presence and power in our lives working together with the Spirit (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10), the new access and intimacy with the Father through the Spirit's ministry (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 5:6; Heb. 10:19), and the ever-present flowing supply of God's life-transforming grace for our daily Christian living (John 1:16; 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 4:16). God's grace and grace features working in the hearts and lives of God's people would be totally different under the New Covenant.

Renald Showers conveys this important note on the differences between the covenants: "The old covenant law was only one way for God to administer His moral absolutes to one group of people (the nation of Israel) during one period of history. Thus, the fact that the Christian is not under any aspect of the old covenant law does not mean that he is divorced from the moral absolutes of God. What it does mean is that the Christian is divorced from that particular way for God to administer His moral absolutes. Through the old covenant the moral absolutes were ministered externally in the form of an external law."

The point of Showers is that God has always had a moral code to follow but it was administered in different ways. Living under the law God revealed God's moral code on tables of stone but the covenant did not provide the power and assistance for His people to keep it and live in victory over the sin nature. Today under the New

Covenant every person shares regeneration, possesses the new nature (the inward law in their heart), and the dynamic presence and provision of the Spirit. What a difference a covenant makes!

The provisions of the New Covenant give the promise of a new nature implanted by the Holy Spirit along with the permanent indwelling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit which results in the “newness of the spirit (Rom. 7:6). Christians living under grace can still follow the moral absolutes of God through the New Covenant and not be lawless even though they are not under the law (Old Covenant). This is because the moral law is in their hearts through the implantation of the new nature and Spirit’s ministry. To live “under grace” and not “under law” (Rom. 6:14-15) does not mean to be lawless but to be removed from the Old Covenant’s external administration of God’s moral precepts and experience God’s new way to administer His moral absolutes through identification with Christ, the new nature, and the Spirit’s empowerment.

Here is the bottom line. The Old Covenant demanded transformation but did not give the power to do so for it did not provide a new nature and the Spirit’s presence and power. It was inflexible as suggested by the tablets of stones (2 Cor. 3:3). But the New Covenant gives us a new nature coupled with the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit (Ezekeil 36:26-27) to enable us to live spiritually and victorious while experiencing the new grace features of the baptizing (1 Cor. 12:13), sealing (Eph. 4:30), and filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) which enables us to live under God’s sanctifying grace without law. “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:18). None of these workings of the Spirit were found in any other dispensation.

The Spirit’s leading in this context has to do with His power which leads us into a life of victory, sanctification, and blessing over the sinful disposition and the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) by experiencing the spiritual production of the “fruit of the Spirit” in our daily living (Gal. 5:22-23) through the controlling power of the Spirit. The Spirit leads us on to victory and lifts us above the flesh.

Of course, the Spirit (*our silent Shepherd*) also guides our steps and shows us the will of God for our lives. Here are some examples. Acts 8:29, “Then the Spirit said unto Philip (through inner conviction), Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” Acts 11:12, “And the Spirit bade me go with them (*through conviction and guidance*),

nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house." Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said (*through inner conviction and guidance*), Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Acts 16:6-7 also reveals, "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost (*through His guidance and confirmation in their hearts*) to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (*gave them guidance and stopped them from going*). Acts 20:22-23, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit (under the Spirit' guidance and direction) unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

Under grace the Holy Spirit leads us in the way of victory and the will of God. Again, living under the law (representative of the tables of stone) did not provide the inner dynamics of the new nature along with Spirit's indwelling, life-transforming, and leading ministry. In addition, placing oneself under the law system (the achievement of sanctification through human effort), which was being promoted during Paul's day by the Judaizers, could not sanctify the believer.

Paul's point was that the Christian cannot overcome the desires of the flesh by remaining under the law system, that is, by staying with the old way of legalism versus the new way of the Spirit. The Judaizers were advocating submission to the law as the way to overcome the flesh, but Paul advocated submission to the Spirit. We can overcome the flesh by siding with the Spirit when we are tempted to sin and directed in the way of victory (Gal. 5:18).

3. The grace feature of a new union and position in Christ.

Because of our union with Christ, we enjoy our unchangeable position or standing in Christ. This position flows out of our identity or spiritual union with Christ (His death, burial, and resurrection). In a practical way, the Holy Spirit confirms our union with Christ as we walk in His power and presence or "after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1,4, 5).



Chapters 7-8 in Romans is an extension and continuation of what it means to live under grace (Rom. 6:14-15). Romans 8:1-4 picks up where Romans Chapters 6 and 7 left off regarding living “under grace. It continues to reveal the greatness of grace in the Grace Dispensation. What is explained in the following verses is an extension or enlargement of what it means to

experience the grace of God today as New Covenant believers. It’s interesting how Paul in some way links saving grace with sanctifying grace in Romans 6-8. Out of our position flows practice. The law could not deliver us in relation to salvation or sanctification. So why place yourself under it? It’s a losing proposition. Grace puts us on the winning team!

The emphasis in Romans 6-7:1-6 (the VICTORIOUS MAN) was our grace relationship with Christ through possessing a victorious union with His death, burial, and resection (Rom. 6:14-15). These chapters and verses revealed *the right way of sanctification* through union with Christ. Romans 7:7-25 reveals the DEFEATED MAN – a victim of the sin nature. When we place ourselves under law (Gal. 4:21), we are overcome by the sin nature. We throw up our hands and say, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:25). And to this we reply, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Paul recognized that as long as he was in his mortal body, he would face the conflict with the indwelling sin principle and would suffer defeat through approaching the Christian life in his own strength. Here he wrote of the “body of death” and in Romans 6:6 he wrote of the “body of sin.” He means that sin works through one’s human body (Rom. 6:6, 12–13, 19; 7:5, 23), resulting in death (6:16, 21, 23; 7:10–11, 13; 8:10). For everyone there is a working universal principle of physical death but for the unbeliever there is also spiritual death.

After demonstrating the *wrong approach to sanctification* by works of the law (man’s efforts), which results in utter failure and defeat (Rom. 7:7-25), Paul now returns to Romans 8 and the REVIVED MAN to confirm that grace will sanctify and change our lives without the law (legalism). This grace truth is clearly revealed in the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying ministry as presented in Romans 8:1-4. In fact, the

entire chapter focuses on the Spirit's work – “the Spirit of life” (1-13); the Spirit of adoption (14-17); the Spirit of glory (18-25); and the Spirit of intercession (26-27). The age of grace is the age of the Spirit.

William Newell writes:

“The Eighth Chapter of Romans is the instinctive goal of the Christian. Whether or not he can tell why—whether or not he can give the great doctrinal facts that give him comfort here, he is, nevertheless, like a storm-tossed mariner who has arrived at his home port, and has cast anchor, when he comes into Romans Eight!

It begins with no condemnation (Rom. 8:1) in Christ and ends with no separation (Rom. 8:35-39) in Christ.

Henry Ward Beecher once said:

“I defy any man to get out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eight except by that one word, “Christ.””

How very true! Griffith Thomas said of Romans chapter 8: “It is undoubtedly the chapter of chapters for the life of the believer ...”

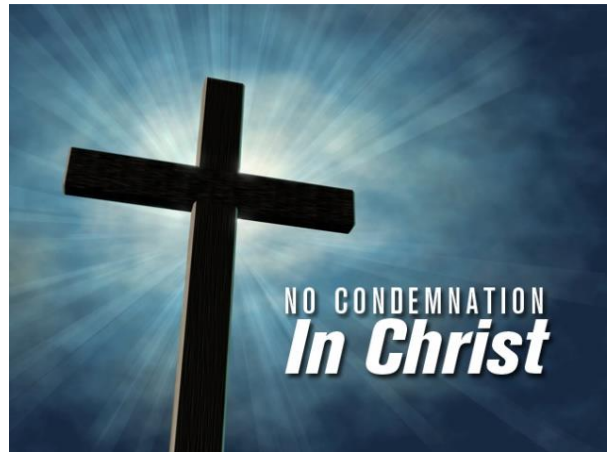
As we will summarize, because of grace feature of our union and position in Christ we receive many spiritual blessings such as no condemnation and no more enslavement to sin. In exchanging a legal/law relationship with a grace relationship we are given a new life, new nature, a new relationship with the Father, a new marriage to Christ, and a new indwelling power in the person of the Holy Spirit. Out with the bad and in with the good! This is our story when living under grace.

I will give some running commentary (without grammatical consideration!) on the verses in Romans chapter 8 to give the overall sense of what Paul is teaching. Hopefully we will be able to better grasp the greatness of Romans Chapter 8 which has been called “A Cathedral of Christian Truth” for New Covenant believers which they need to know, experience, and enjoy. If we are going to live under grace and according to the grace principle or rule for New Covenant Christianity, then we must understand these profound and liberating teachings.

Up to this point, Romans has repeatedly revealed the glory of God's grace (Rom. 3:24; 4:4, 26; 5:2, 15, 17, 20, 21). In chapters 6-8 grace continues to be revealed in relation to its saving and sanctifying effects in the lives of God's people. Romans chapter 8 brings everything to a head! It is the grand finale of grace. Drum roll please!

Romans 8:1 declares:

“There is therefore (looks back to the struggle of chapter seven, and the thankful shout of verse 25) **now no condemnation** (the reassurance of salvation by grace) **to them which are in Christ Jesus** (positional forgiveness, righteousness, and security before God through identification with Christ’s saving work even though we possess inherent sinfulness, imperfect sanctification, and struggle with the sin nature as revealed in



Rom. 7:24-25), **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (the reassurance of sanctification by grace, there is not only no condemnation, there is also new life, there is not only position, there is progress - the ‘walk’ is not a prerequisite to salvation but the pattern of the believer in Christ who is not condemned - the ‘walk’ is not instrumental to salvation but evidential of salvation, sanctification is the natural result, fruit, and proof of the no condemnation/justified position, but also the encouragement that progressive sanctification occurs because of the Spirit’s power and victory, which is brought out in Romans 8:2 and which is the promise and practice of those who are in Christ, as restated in Romans 8:4-5).

Romans 3:20 shows the “therefore” of condemnation; Romans 8:1 gives the “therefore” of no condemnation.” The Bible reveals that “to them who are under the law” (Rom. 3:19) there is condemnation but “in Christ” there is no condemnation. The "THEREFORE" is "the Believer’s Emancipation Proclamation." Therefore is an adverb which introduces a result, consequence, or conclusion based on what has been established previously. Although believer’s struggle with sin and sometimes blow it in life (Romans chapter 7), and looking back even further, although we were at one time sinners separated from God, enemies of God, and headed toward hell (Romans chapters 3, 5); despite our terrible plight, past, and personal failures in our Christian life, the Believer’s Emancipation Proclamation states: “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*” Out of Adam and into Christ (1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2;13). This is the story of our lives. This is grace beyond measure! Grace frees us from the condemnation (a legal sentence of judgment) for our sins because Christ took the judgment. As a result,

we possess a standing in Christ, fully acquitted and justified (a legal standing of righteousness) in God's presence.

Dwight L. Moody told of the young man who did not want to serve in Napoleon Bonaparte's army. When he was drafted, a friend volunteered to go in his place. The substitution was made, and some time later the surrogate was killed in battle. The same young man was, through a clerical error, drafted again.

"You can't take me" he told the startled officers. "I'm dead. I died on the battlefield."

They argued that they could see him standing right in front of them, but he insisted they look on the roll to find the record of his death. Sure enough, there on the roll was the man's name, with another name written beside it. The case finally went to the emperor himself. After examining the evidence, Napoleon said, "Through a surrogate, this man has not only fought, but has died in his country's service. No man can die more than once, therefore the law has no claim on him."

This is exactly what Romans 8:1 is teaching us. Christ became our substitute on the cross, bearing our own legal sentence of condemnation (our wrath, judgment, and hell) that we deserved. As a result, the believing sinner is now placed "in Christ" (union with Him) and therefore receives the benefits of Christ's sacrifice on his behalf being declared legally or forensically forgiven and justified in the presence of God forever.

Lewis Sperry Chafer called this chapter: "The consummating Scripture on security." This is because our optional acceptance in Christ before God's throne guarantees our salvation and security. God sees us through Jesus Christ and the provision of forgiveness and justification that He has provided for us.

The law of double jeopardy is a universally recognized principle of justice. It applies to Christ's being condemned in our place and only one person can be condemned.

Warren Wiersbe wrote of this:

"The 'law of double jeopardy' states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins, and since you are 'in Christ,' God will not condemn you."

C. H. Spurgeon comments on Romans 8:1:

"I like the old translation. There was a martyr once summoned before Bonner. After he had expressed his faith in Christ, Bonner said, 'You are a heretic and will be damned.' "No," said he, quoting the old version, 'There is therefore now no damnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus.'

"Oh, for faith to lay hold on this! Oh, for an overpowering faith that shall get the victory over doubts and fears, and make us enjoy the liberty with which Christ makes men free! You that believe in Christ, go to your beds this night and say, 'If I die in my bed, I cannot be condemned!' Should you wake the next morning, go into the world and say, 'I am not condemned!' When the devil howls at you, tell him, 'You may accuse, but I am not condemned!' And if sometimes your sins rise, say, 'I know you, but you are all gone forever. I am not condemned!'"

Let's update this. When someone says to you, "God to hell" you can in return say, "I cannot go to hell because Jesus already went through my hell on the cross and freed me from condemnation forever." In a courtroom, when a person is found guilty, he or she faces punishment. But the wonderful thing about God's courtroom is that when we admit our guilt and express faith in Christ, we are offered grace and acceptance before God for "in Christ" there never can be condemnation for the believing, blood-bought sinner!

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

There are many Christians who don't truly understand the basic truth regarding their secure, eternal, unchanging position in Christ. They still think that condemnation can come upon them. When they sin, they think that because they have committed sin that they are under the condemnation of God.

Donald Barnhouse wrote:

"A soul that comes to the full realization that he ought to be in hell but that in reality the Lord Jesus took his hell, and that there is therefore, now, now, NOW, no condemnation for him because he is in Christ Jesus, is likely to be quite moved by the truth."

Dr. Govett points out that the adverb “therefore” (Rom. 8:1) indicates that this is the same man that is described in chapter seven. There he was struggling in his own strength to achieve triumph and victory. But here Paul takes his place ‘in Christ” and rejoices because of God’s delivering grace. Because of saving grace he will never be condemned (experience God’s wrath) for his shortcomings and because of sanctifying grace through the Holy Spirit he no longer must live in carnality and defeat. Grace saves the day! Grace changes everything!



To state it succinctly, Romans 8:1 declares that each believer “in Christ Jesus” is given the promise of no condemnation but they also are given the promise of victory for they are reassured they can walk “after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1, 4, 5) experiencing the transforming nature of grace and authenticate or give proof of their salvation in Christ (James 2:17-21). There is an inseparable connection between

justification and sanctification in one’s union with Christ. Both occur because of the “in Christ” position. Life begins with regeneration and justification, but it continues to blossom with sanctification and transformation. Hence, we move from “no condemnation” to “new life” in Christ through the Spirit’s ministry.

While walking through the forest one day, a man found a young eagle who had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and put it in his barnyard where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens. One day a naturalist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the king of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens. The farmer replied that since he had given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly. Since it now behaved as the chickens, it was no longer an eagle. “Still it has the heart of an eagle,” replied the naturalist, “and can surely be taught to fly.” He lifted the eagle toward the sky and said, “You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly.”

The eagle, however, was confused. He did not know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them again. The naturalist took the bird to the roof of the house and urged him again, saying, “You are an eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly.” But the eagle was afraid of his unknown self

and world and jumped down once more for the chicken food. Finally the naturalist took the eagle out of the barnyard to a high mountain. There he held the king of the birds high above him and encouraged him again, saying, "You are an eagle. You belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly."

The eagle looked around, back towards the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the naturalist lifted him straight towards the sun and it happened that the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he stretched his wings, and with a triumphant cry, soared away into the heavens. It may be that the eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia. It may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard. But as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to lead the life of a chicken."

Here is the point of application. No longer must we be controlled by the sinful disposition within us and live as we once did forever bound to sin. Sin must no longer be our master. The Holy Spirit has entered our life, identifying us with Christ, we have died to sin's mastery and control and are raised with Christ to share His risen life and "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) through "the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). This means we are not only "in Christ" positionally in relation to salvation's benefits but also "in Christ" so receive sanctification's benefits within the Christian life (Rom. 6:1-15), so we can live victoriously through the Spirit's ministry ("after the Spirit" – Rom. 8:1, 4, 5). Both salvation and sanctification are the result of the "in Christ" position through union with Christ, sanctification being the fruit and proof of the no condemnation/justified believer.

The phrase "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1) is not a qualifying clause that indicates legalism or a works-salvation, but the practice and proof of a justified and non-condemned person, indicating that holiness of life or progressive sanctification is inseparably bound to our union with Christ (Rom. 6:1-15; 7:1-6). Again, in Romans 8:1 Paul is picking up on his final thought about fleshly living from Romans 7:25 and reminds us that Christians, to a lesser or greater degree, do not consistently live or walk according to their sinful dispositions that exist within their human natures but experience new life and victory as reconfirmed in Romans 8:9-14. To "walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" was not a legal requirement related to justification but a reassuring and encouraging remark that reminds every believer that grace not only saves us but sanctifies us.



2 Corinthians 5:17 relates our in Christ position to deliverance over sin: “**Therefore if any man be in Christ** (this means we actually share Christ’s life and nature through a living and dynamic union with Him) **he is a new creature** (a new fantastic creation of God, regenerated by God, possessing new life, a new nature, new drives, and a new determination to live a holy life): **old things are passed away** (we have been severed from our past position in Adam and slavery to sin with all of its dominating and empowering effects in our life); **behold, all things are become new**” (our present union with Christ with all of the newfound spiritual blessings of freedom, liberty, victory, a new nature, and new desires, which we now possess as a result of our new life with Christ).

Galatians 6:15

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision (*external observance, outward ritualism*) availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision (*absence of rituals*), but a new creature” (*a regenerated or born-again individual with a new nature, new life, new drives, and new orientation to live for God*).

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (*regeneration – receiving God’s life and nature to live differently and victoriously*) unto good works (*reformation*), which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Paul is teaching that the difference is not external, as it is with circumcision or uncircumcision, but rather internal. The important thing is the transformation of the individual (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), that they become a new creation in Christ and can now live effectively and victoriously for God.

Findlay writes:

“The true Christianity is that which turns bad men into good, which transforms the slaves of sin into sons of God.”

At the very moment we express faith in Christ, we are transferred from the old position “under law” into the new position of living “under grace” (Rom. 6:14-15) which frees us from the power of sin through the indwelling Spirit and Christ. There are many Christians who are living beneath their spiritual privileges in Christ and the working of the Spirit. There are too many Christians who are victims instead of victors.

Romans 8:2 goes on to say:

“**For the law** (looking back to verse 1 and why we walk after the Spirit – the reason is that a new principle and force operating within us now governs our life, a new principle of conduct or rule of life counteracts and offsets the old principle or way of life - Rom. 3:27; 7:23) **of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** (contextually, the Holy Spirit regenerates us by placing us in Christ and identifying us with His death, burial, and resurrection which is also intended to be transformational or sanctifying in nature; in Christ relates to our immersion, union, and identity with Christ’s resurrection and regenerating life resulting in a whole new sphere of victorious living in Christ, as in Romans 6:3-5; 7:4, which comes through the work of the Holy Spirit who is the life-giver, energizer, and revealer of Christ within us, translating the life of Christ into Christian behavior since our birth must be followed by growth - John 3:6-7; 16:13-14 -14 - the rule or principle of life in the Spirit is to live a Christlike life because the Holy Spirit is the source of this life within us pointing us to Christ, we are in Christ as the branch is in the vine, but the Spirit is the source of our spiritual vitality as restated in Romans 8:9 – “the Spirit of Christ” - the life-giving Spirit, as in 2 Cor. 3:6, works with our in Christ union and relationship which means to experience the Spirit is to experience Christ at the same time - Rom 8:9–11) **hath made me free** (a once-for-all positional and legal transaction of release and freedom from the enslavement of our sinful disposition, a transaction which occurred at the time of regeneration, as discussed in Rom. 6:1-8, but a positional victory that should be applied to our daily living and walk, since the sin nature tries to illegally control our lives as in Rom. 6:11-23 - Romans 8:1 reveals we are free from the penalty of sin but Romans 8:2 that we are free from the power of sin) **from the law** (an old principle and way of governing our life as revealed in Rom. 7:23-25) **of sin and death**” (the universal law of sin and death, the downward gravitational

pull of our sinful inclinations and disposition, which is reminiscent of our preconversion days, when we were under the dominion and enslavement to sin, and which ultimately leads to physical death of the believer, as in Romans 7:25, but also a person's eternal, spiritual death and condemnation for the unbeliever who is unsaved and not in Christ – Rom. 6:16, 23; 8:1).



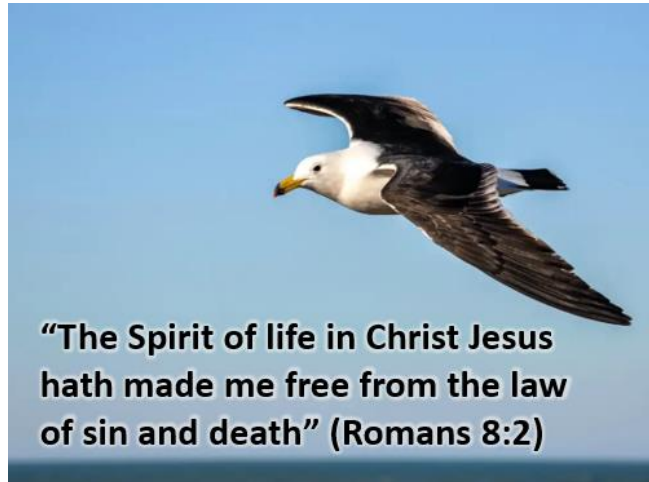
The word "law" (nomos) is used in this context to stand for the regulative principle which exercises a control over a person. Gareth Reese concludes: "The law here seems to be used with the same meaning it had in 3:27 and 7:21, a 'rule that governs actions, a principle of procedure.'" Law in this use is not a reference to the Mosaic law or to other divine commandments or requirements. Nomos is a general "principle" or rule, norm and/or standard. It is the principle by which someone lives and operates. Nomos is used in the sense of a principle of operation earlier in the letter, where he speaks of "a law of faith" (Rom. 3:27) and as he does in Galatians, where he speaks of "the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).

Here is the obvious point. The law of the Spirit is higher and more powerful than the law of sin and death. It's a principle related to God's grace. Our rule or principle of life by which we live is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." It is this principle of life that liberates us from sin's power and mastery over our lives for the Spirit's unites us with Jesus Christ, regenerating us, and giving us new life in the risen Lord ("newness of life" – Rom. 6:4).

Webster's 1828 says principle is "In a general sense, the cause, source or origin of any thing; that from which a thing proceeds; as the principle of motion." Stated another way the law is not a written law but a *regulative principle* which exercises a control over the life of the believer. On the positive side, the regulative control over a believer's life is exercised by the Holy Spirit ("the law of the Spirit"). This control is in the form of the "supernatural energy" giving us both the desire and the power to do God's will (Ezek. 36:27; Philip. 2:13).

What is the nature of death that the believing sinner has been freed from at conversion? The Bible teaches we have been freed from spiritual and eternal death. This is a separation from God that results in the unbeliever being judged for his sins throughout eternity (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14). We can enjoy this blessed freedom

from the *penalty* of sin. But our freedom does not stop here. We can also bask in freedom from the *power* of sin. Sin must no longer be a tyrant and ruling power within our body. Paul acknowledges this at the end of Romans chapter seven. Four times we are called upon to walk “after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1; 4, 5) if we want to experience our freedom in Christ from “the law of sin and death.”



Romans 7:24-25

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Instead of condemning sin in the flesh, instead of delivering men from the dominion of sin, chapter 7 of Romans has shown that the presence of the law gives sin more opportunity to work its deadly thing and thereby increase its domination over our lives. But Paul concludes in this section that there is a definite freedom to experience. He terms it as freedom from his “body of death” and it comes through Christ and the Spirit’s internal sanctifying work (Heb. 8:10). In Romans chapter 7 Paul tried sanctification via legalism (reliance upon human effort to keep the moral law and maintain victory) but ends with the confession that only Christ can deliver him from the power of indwelling sin.

The operational and governing principle of sin and its association with death (physical death of the body) in relation to the Christian life is abundantly clear from Romans 7, where we as Christians experience the power of sin operating in our lives which ultimately results in death. Every cemetery reminds us of this! The death principle is still in effect for believers in relation to their physical bodies which Paul identified as “the body of this death” related to “the law of sin” (Rom. 7:25). But the good news is that through our positional victory in Christ who has “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) we also have been set “free from the law of sin and death” (a downward dragging of the sin nature that ends in death). The believer

has been released from this dreadful and repeated cycle of defeat and death having been given the promise of resurrection through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:11

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Hallelujah! Even physical death is defeated in Christ! Beloved, through the Gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection we have been freed from both the penalty and power of sin which are associated with spiritual and physical death. Because of our spiritual union with the risen Christ, Paul instructs us that the "operating principle" ("law") of the “Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2) is stronger than the principle associated with sin, and in fact has the inherent power to free us from the operating principle of sin and death, which controls all those who are still "in Adam" and which can still exert its empowering effects upon those who are now "in Christ." The “law of sin and death” is like the law of diminishing returns. But Paul knows that the grace principle of the Spirit’s ministry through Christ has the potential to set his believing readers free from the power of sin.

Under grace we live by a new principle or rule of life in the Spirit and Christ that governs our actions; it is a principle of procedure that we follow. This principle states that we have been delivered from the gravitational principle and pull of sin. The old principle has been defeated. There is a new sheriff in town. There is a new law for the new life, a new spiritual principle that results in a new spiritual life! This animating, life giving/producing principle. or rule of life is the Holy Spirit Who acts as the Imparter of life (Titus 3:5) through identification (union) with Christ and which frees us from the indwelling power of sin (Gal. 2:20). This is grace on spiritual steroids!

John Wesley's testimony is well known concerning the beginning of his life of real faith (in his 35th year, after 13 years in a relatively commonplace ministry): "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for

salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

When we trust Christ to be our Savior, in a positional sense, we are saved or delivered “from the law of sin and death.” This occurs when we are placed in Christ and through a once-and-for-all legal and spiritual transaction receive forgiveness of sins, justification (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:1), but also the deliverance from the sinful disposition that ruled our lives for so many years (Rom. 6:6; 8:3; Gal. 5:24). The expression “set free” is an aorist tense, and thus points back to a definite time in the past, namely, the deliverance from the dominion of sin through identification with Christ (Rom. 6:3-7). It is an event that took place in the past, but which still has continuing results.

The “law of sin and death” certainly points to the power of sin ruling in our lives which results in death (both physical and spiritual death). Here is the good news. Those who were once under condemnation for their sins not only receive penal deliverance from their sins but also sanctifying deliverance from sin’s power. They are release from the fear of physical and spiritual death knowing that there is no more condemnation and a glorious resurrection that follows (Rom. 8:11). In short, the believer must no longer live under the principle of sin and death.

Louis Talbot remarks:

“The Holy Spirit is called ‘the Spirit of life’ because He is the One who created in the sinner new life in Christ Jesus, and He is the One who gives deliverance from the power of sin.”

This seems to be what Paul is teaching in Romans 8:2. It is the truth that deliverance from the power of sin can only come through the provisional grace system of the Spirit relating us to Christ’s person and sanctifying work so we can walk after the Spirit.

Ray Pritchard writes that the fact that you have been set free means "You don't have to sin any more. You don't have to live in defeat any more. You don't have to be down any more. You don't have to go years and years and years committing the same old dumb sins over and over again. Why? Because the law of the spirit of life of Jesus Christ has set you free. Therefore, if you choose to dwell in sin, if you choose to be defeated, it's because you've chosen to live that way, not because you must live that way.”

For Paul life in the Spirit is synonymous with life in Christ, to have one is to have the other, to live in the one is to live in the other, to please the one is to please the other. The Holy Spirit regenerates us by placing in union with Christ and it's here where life begins. It begins with regenerating life from the Spirit, but this life goes on to sanctify us as we live out our identity in Christ. We might look at it as "spiritual biology" occurring in our hearts and lives whereby the Holy Spirit communicates Christ's life to us so we can grow and live victoriously.



Tom Constable aptly remarks:

"The law of sin is like the law of gravity: it pulls us down. But the law of the Spirit is like the law of aerodynamics: it overcomes the law of sin, lifts us up, and enables us to be victorious over the flesh."

In other words, life lived in the Spirit's power defies the law of sin's gravitational pull. It free us from the law of sin and death! The phrase "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2) reveals how God channels His grace to us today. The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Godhead ("the Spirit of life") who regenerates and brings new life into every believing individual (Titus 3:5). He does this through His baptizing work of placing believers in Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) and identifying them with the death, burial, and resurrection life of Christ (Rom. 6:4, 8, 11). At the very moment we express faith in Christ, according to God's record, we are identified or brought into union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Through our spiritual identity or union with Christ we receive a position of freedom from both the penalty and power of sin as we experience our regenerating and resurrection life in Christ.

Romans 6:7-8 explains it this way:

"For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

William Coltman comments on "being free from the law and sin death" (Rom. 8:2):
"Thus, I am delivered from the down-dragging power of the old nature by the principle of counteraction; a new force comes in and offsets the old."

Louis Talbot shares a personal illustration: “I started to the hospital to call on a man, a member our church. Every time I picked up my foot, I placed it down again. I looked at the blue sky, and thought to myself, “I should like to be up there!’ But the *law of gravitation* kept me on the ground. When I arrived at the hospital, I asked where I should find my friend. On being told, I entered the elevator, pushed the button that was to take me to the sixth floor, and up I went. *The law of gravity* was still working; but there was another, a greater law working now, the *law of electricity*. This law was stronger than that of gravitation. It overcomes; it nullified; it counteracted the law of gravitation.”

This is what happens when a person reckons themselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God (Rom. 6:11, 13). The Holy Spirit who reveals Christ’s life to the believer begins to operate, and thus counteracts the old rule of life. Instead of experiencing the dragging down weight of “the law of sin and death” (a sinful ruling force over our lives) we can plug into the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (a grace ruling force) which is a completely different rule, principle, or way to live our lives. It’s the way of victory and blessing through the Spirit.



This new rule or force in our lives is rooted in the principle of grace and involves living under the realm of the Spirit’s transforming presence and power. Living under the grace position (Rom. 6:14-15) becomes both a saving and sanctifying transaction which results in the believer experiencing the revelation of Christ’s life through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit points us to the risen life of the Lord Jesus, freeing each Gospel believer from the downward pull of “the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2) or the rule of condemnation, defeat, and servitude to sin.

Reflecting on the downward pull of “the law of sin and death” and Paul’s experience in Romans 7, we are reminded that we should remain a healthy self-distrust in ourselves.

Charles Spurgeon gave this insightful comment:

"Beware of no man more than of yourself: we carry our worst enemies within us!"

Distrust yourself, dear friend, for you accurately gauge your own judgment when you do that. The well-instructed believer is very much afraid of himself; he dares not go into temptation, for he feels that a man who carries a bomb-shell within him ought to mind that he keeps away from sparks, and that he who has a powder-magazine in his heart ought not to play with fire. When I hear my Master say, 'One of you shall betray me,' I may have a shrewd suspicion that he refers to Judas, but it will be wiser for me to say, 'Lord, is it I?' rather than to ask, 'Lord, is it Judas?'"

We must consciously be aware of our frailties but at the same time live on the higher plane of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" to live free from the power of sin. We must choose which principle we will follow – "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" or "the law of sin and death." The principle of grace should be the ruling factor in our life (not the law principle) so we can bask in freedom from sin's power.

Wayne Barber writes:

"The law of sin is that principle in us that pulls us downward into death and that used to control and condemn us. Now, it can only operate when it is put under law by our own foolish choices. It commands us to work "in the energy of our flesh," and then condemns all that we do. It has no control over us unless we foolishly fall into the trap of performance and law, which is the beachhead for this principle to operate."

"Moses' law has right but not might.

Sin's law has might but not right.

The law of the Spirit has both right and might."



This important passage in Romans 8:2 informs us that although the principle or "law of sin and death" can keep a Christian from living the kind of life God wants him to live, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" sets the Christian free from the ruling power of the law of sin and death. In the same way, the law of gravity acts to keep a plane from flying. But when a plane reaches a certain speed, the law of aerodynamics takes over and frees the plane from the effects of gravitational force.

Back in the nineteenth century our sixteenth president realized something radical must be done about slavery in our country. Unwilling to look the other way any

longer, on September 22, 1862, he presented what came to be known as the Emancipation Proclamation, an official document condemning human slavery. Abraham Lincoln, realizing that slavery is completely against human dignity, officially abolished it from the United States on that day.

Tragically, little changed in the daily life of our nation, even though the slaves were officially declared free. You know why; you've read the stories. The Civil War was still going on. The plantation owners never informed their slaves. The vast majority of the former slaves couldn't read, so they had no idea what the news was carrying. There was no mass media then to announce those kinds of presidential pronouncements. And so for the longest time, slavery continued even though it had been officially brought to an end. The war ended in April 1865. Do you know when Lincoln's declaration was officially enacted? When the people finally began to leave their enslaved lives and make their way toward freedom?

It was December 18, 1865 - more than three years after he first released his proclamation. Lincoln had been dead for months. The word traveled out of the streets of Washington and down into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, across the back roads of the Carolinas and into Georgia, then Alabama, then Mississippi, then Louisiana, then Texas, then Arkansas, announcing what had been true for more than a thousand days. Even then the word somehow either wasn't believed or wasn't acted upon. Those officially emancipated people, thinking slavery was the way they were condemned to exist, continued to live in bondage though they had been declared free men and women since the fall of 1862.

Now if you think that seems shocking, let me tell you something equally as shocking: believers in Jesus Christ still live enslaved to the domination of a power that no longer has power over them. What has freed us is the great Emancipator, Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross set us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). Like an Emancipation Proclamation, it was made known to the world at large: Sin has been put to death, Satan is defeated, and death no longer has its sting! We share Christ's risen and victorious life and now free! We must now "reckon" this to be true and act upon it by faith and claim our freedom from sin's power.

Romans 6:11

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We are free from the law of sin and death forever! It must no longer rule over us. God is our new Master.

Listen to another part of our Emancipation Proclamation, our Freedom Statement: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). In simple terms, this freedom liberated us from the necessity to sin. Truth be told, you don’t have to sin. But do you know why you sin? It’s because you want to! That doesn’t sound very affirming but it’s the ugly truth. Every time you sinned last week, you wanted to. The same this week. You weren’t forced to. It certainly wasn’t the new nature operating within you. You gave in to the old nature that you had been enslaved to so much of your life.

Some Christians will conclude: “There’s just that part of me that I can’t help. I just react like that. It’s just the way I am.” But it’s not the way you have to be. It’s the way you choose to be. Think of it like this. You’re driving in the mountains. You come to a very sharp series of curves. The state officials who work with traffic signs have options. They can build a clinic at the bottom of the curve so that when you go over the cliff and crash, emergency vehicles can come quickly to help you. Or they can put up a sign that says, “SLOW, CURVE AHEAD.” The sign conveys the thought that you don’t have to speed around this curve; you don’t have to go over the cliff. You can slow down. Here is the spiritual application. When you realize that you’re faced with a temptation, you can stand up against it with the Spirit’s assistance “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). We are free to choose right over wrong and freedom over sin.



You don’t have to yield to sin. We no longer must serve sin (Rom. 6:7). This doesn’t mean we’re freed from ever sinning again; it means we’re freed from its domination. I can live my life in such dependence on the Spirit of God that the flesh does not get its way for an extended period of time. Of course, I can never live completely free of the flesh because the old nature (flesh or sinful disposition) hasn’t been eradicated (Rom. 7:17, 20). But thanks to the power of the Spirit, I can

be on the side of victory in my life so that I walk a whole new kind of life (“in newness of life” – Rom. 6:4).

“Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each vict’ry will help you,
Some other to win;
Fight valiantly onward,
Evil passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He will carry you through.”

It's important to realize that Romans chapter 8 makes the clear distinction between walking in the flesh versus walking after the Spirit (vs. 4, 5, 8), minding the things of the flesh or minding the things of the Spirit (vs. 5), being fleshly minded or spiritually minded (vs. 6), and remaining in the flesh positionally or in the Spirit (vv. 8-9). The grace believer has been positionally transferred through regeneration into a different sphere or realm of living, from the *fleshly* (the unsaved position under enslavement to sin) to the *spiritual* (the saved position under freedom and liberty from sin), where through the Spirit a complete spiritual provision is granted to each Gospel believer so they can now live godly and victoriously.



Just as a fish lives in water and a man lives in the air, so a believer lives in the realm of the Spirit (“after the Spirit”; “the Spirit of life”; “walk in the Spirit”; “led by the Spirit”; “filled with the Spirit”). He not only lives in the Spirit, but the Spirit lives in him (“by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” - Rom. 8:11). In fact, if he is not indwelt by

the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” - Rom. 8:9).

It’s also important to note that the believing sinner is no longer in the flesh positionally like the unsaved (Rom. 8:5, 8) but the flesh is still in the believer (Rom. 7:16, 20). Likewise, the flesh may still have its fling in our unguarded hour (Rom. 13:14), but the Spirit remains within each believer. However, when living

experientially in the realm of the Holy Spirit we will enjoy newfound victory and blessing as we progressively move away from “the law of sin and death” (the old rule of life) to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (the new rule of life) as stated in Romans 8:2. Through the ministry of the Spirit, Christ is actually living in the believer (“the Spirit of Christ” – Rom. 8:9). It is amazing to think of the Lord of glory dwelling in our bodies. The force of death is already working in our bodies, and they will inevitably die if the Lord doesn’t return in the meantime. The good news is that we no longer must allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies (Rom. 6:12).

Charles Wesley wrote some of his hymns to promote his brother John's doctrine of entire sanctification. The second verse of his "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" asks God to "take away our bent to sinning." Although a Christian will never reach perfection in this life (Phil. 3:13), I like the concept that our bent to sin would not dominate our lives as it once did. As we continue to grow in grace we no longer must be enslaved to sin as we once were. We need to keep making progress in our Christian life.

Romans 8:3-4 concludes with the continuing manifestation of grace for New Covenant believers: **“For what the law could not do** (looking back to the no condemnation in Christ, after the Spirit, Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and freedom from the law of sin and death [Rom. 8:1-2], it’s apparent that the Mosaic law could not save us but neither could it sanctify us – it could not justify us but neither could it transform us – it could not deliver us from damnation or the dominion of sin – Rom. 3:20; 7:12), **in that it was weak through the flesh** (because the law must operate in the sphere of sinful flesh, the human deficiency of sinful depravity and the fallen sin nature of man was unable to meet the perfect standard of God’s righteous law and therefore the law could not bring about spiritual deliverance in the realms of salvation or sanctification), **God** (what the law could not do God has done) **sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh** (identifying with humanity but without taking on a sinful or fallen human nature - Phil. 2:7; 2 Cor. 5:21 - Jesus was a true man but not a sinful man – Heb. 7:26; 9:14), **and for sin** (made an offering or sacrifice for sin to pay the necessary price or penalty for our guilt in breaking the law but at the same time freeing us from the power of sin through His death – 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:25; 6:3, 6, 10; Gal. 2:20), **condemned sin in the flesh** (the law could not execute judgment on sin but only excite it, as in Rom. 7:5-10, but dealing with sin judicially and legally upon the cross, Christ pronounced a sentence of judgment on our sinful disposition or human nature, which is the

source of sin, the seat and origin of transgression, releasing us from the power of sin, since sin was deposed from its rule within our flesh or human nature – Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24).

“That (the purpose of the execution) **the righteousness of the law** (when God puts his Spirit in our hearts, he writes his law on our hearts through regeneration and the implantation of God’s nature; this is the righteous character of the law, the unchanging moral absolutes of God are internalized within us at the time of conversion, which is the New Covenant promise, as stated in Hebrews 8:10, when the Holy Spirit writes the sensitivity to God’s moral law upon our heart through the new nature, providing us with divine motivation and incentive through the new nature, but also divine enablement through His power to live for God, so that no external law is necessary for sanctification – Eph. 5:18) **might be fulfilled in us** (not by us but in our human nature or the “fleshly tables of the heart” as explained in 2 Cor. 3:3, whereby the Spirit places the new nature and supplies us with the promptings and power to live for God), **who walk not after the flesh** (a metaphor indicating behavior, a course of life as in Eph. 2:2 and Gal. 5:16, 25 - Christians, some more consistently than others, no longer live under the dominance and control of their sinful human natures and inclinations – all of us in God’s family manifest Christ’s character and righteousness but are at different levels – 1 John 3:8-10), **but after** (according to) **the Spirit**” (who rely on the Spirit’s power, as stated in Rom. 8:1, who live in the realm of the Spirit following the impulses and dictates of the Spirit, experiencing the Holy Spirit’s inner work of communicating Christ’s life, victory, and resurrection power to us on a daily basis, resulting in a new way of life – Rom. 6:4; 7:6 – just as a fish lives and functions in the medium or sphere of water, Christians must live and function in the new realm of the Spirit and become “Spirit-wise” as opposed to “flesh-wise”).

The grace and great feature of the permanent abiding presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9) and His internal work in our hearts, writing the sensitivity of God’s unchanging moral law upon our hearts through regeneration (the moral absolutes of God that have always existed), along with His empowering us to live a righteous life is the hallmark of the Grace Dispensation. New Covenant Christianity is an “inside-outside” job (“to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” - Eph. 3:16). God transforms the heart (the inner man) and then works on the outside (Rom. 6:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:4).

You will notice again that the moral aspect of God’s law is not fulfilled *by us* (through human effort and legalism) but by the inward working and power of the Holy Spirit. Walking “after” or according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4) means walking in submission to and dependence on the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). Walking according to the flesh means behaving as the flesh dictates and allowing our sinful nature to govern our lives. The Spirit guides and directs our steps in the way of victory (Gal. 5:25).

The New Covenant promises the new grace feature of the Spirit’s abiding presence and internal empowerment for our daily living. When Israel proved unable and unwilling to remain faithful to that Mosaic Covenant, God graciously intervened and promised a New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; 32:40), new (*kainēs*) both in time and in quality. It was inaugurated by Christ in His sacrifice on the cross (Luke 22:20) and is entered into by faith (Phil. 3:9) and lived out in dependence on the Spirit (Rom. 7:6; 8:4).



Again, the New Covenant emphasizes the *internal* work of the Spirit in the heart as opposed to the *external* nature of the Ten Commandments. The Church receives the blessings of the New Covenant through Israel for “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). But the Church does not replace Israel in the plan of God as Replacement Theology wrongly asserts (Rom. 11:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:32).

So to reiterate, the grace features of the Dispensation of Grace includes the saving and transforming work of the indwelling Spirit and Christ (Rom. 8:1-4). The emphasis is on possessing a new spiritual union with Christ “through the operation of God” (Col. 2:12) which results in living under the grace features of the New Covenant (Romans 6-8). Living under grace means that we now possess an unalterable position of acceptance before God in Christ (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 5:1-2; 8:1) and the internal manifestation and work of the Holy Spirit who points us to our relationship with Christ.



To live “after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1, 4, 5) means to walk in the Spirit’s presence and power (Gal. 5:16, 25) as He makes our union with Christ relational and real to our lives. The New Covenant features would then include no condemnation in Christ, the new nature working in conjunction with the

Spirit’s power (Rom. 7:6; 8:1-4), and the wonderful new companionship of Christ living within us (Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:10) because the Holy Spirit has baptized us into Christ (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27) and reveals His life to us on a daily basis (John 16:13-15).

New Covenant Grace

Grace in the New Testament, as it relates to New Covenant believers, has two significant aspects. If we keep this in mind it will help us to understand the working of grace in our lives today. Grace not only saves us, but it also sanctifies us. Grace is at work in our salvation, but also in sanctification, which is basically living a life set apart unto God through holiness and service. This is seen throughout the New Testament and specifically where the word “grace” appears in the contexts of salvation and Christian sanctification.

There is grace (the saving work of God) that results in our spiritual and unique blessings in Christ (Acts 18:27; 20:24; Rom. 3:24; 5:1-2; 5, 17, 20; 11:5-6; Eph. 1:6-7; 2:7-9; 3:2; 2 Cor. 8:9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:13).



Romans 5:1-2 speaks of our positional acceptance before God’s throne through the expression of grace found in the Lord Jesus Christ: “**Therefore being justified by faith** (declared legally righteous by faith in Christ), **we have peace with God** (a peaceful relationship with God, God’s wrath is kindled against us, we are no longer the enemy of God) **through our Lord Jesus Christ** (the saving work of the Gospel

of Christ’s death and resurrection): **By whom also we have access** (into the presence of God) **by faith** (in Christ) **into this grace wherein we stand** (an

unchanging state or position of grace through justification - declaring us legally righteous before God's throne), **and rejoice in hope of the glory of God**"(the glory we will experience when we are in God's presence).

Our standing of forensic forgiveness and legal justification and acceptance before God is based solely upon God's grace. Grace positions us in Christ out of which flows all the glorious transactions related to salvation (1 Cor. 1:30).

There is grace (the sanctifying work of God) through the Holy Spirit and inward revelation of Christ that produces holiness and growth in our lives (John 1:16; Rom. 6:14; 12:3; 16:20, 24; Gal. 2:20-21; Eph. 1:2; 3:7; Col. 1:2; 3:16; Rom. 12:3; 15:15; 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:2, 4; 3:10; 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:15; 8:1, 6-9; 9:8; 9:14; 12:9; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 2:16-17; Heb. 12:28; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:1; Titus 2:11-12; Phm. 1:25; Heb. 4:16; 13:9; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:2, 10; 4:10; 5:5, 10; 2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18; 2 Jn. 1:3).

Romans 6:14 speaks of the victory of sanctifying grace in our Christian lives: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Although some authors view this as saving grace, the context clearly reveals Paul is addressing the subject of sanctifying grace in the Christian life.

Grace is the rule of life for Church Age saints as it relates to sanctification. However, the Westminster Confession and Reformed Theology place believers under the law in relation to sanctification or holy living. The reformed confession reads: "Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it direct and guides them to walk accordingly."



Dr. Martin Llyod Jones agrees with the "under law" position for sanctification: "The Christian must never say farewell to the law. Thank God, we are no longer under it as a way of salvation; but we are to keep it, we are to honor it, we are to practice it in our daily life."

J.C. Ryle also opts for the law in sanctification:

"Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God's law, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life. The Holy Spirit will always lead him (the believer) to a spiritual use of the law in the pursuit of sanctification."

Louis Berkhof, a Reformed Theologian, concludes that Reformed men stand strong in the conviction that believers are still under the law as a rule of life. Thus, according to Berkhof, Mt. Sinai provides the key to sanctification and holy living. In other words, according to Reformed Theology, believing that the moral law predates sin and expresses the perfect will of God, Christians need the law to be restrained and use it to keep them in line with sanctification. But the Scriptures argue against placing grace believers under the law for sanctification.

God's saints today cannot be grace believers and law believers at the same time. Grace believers do not embrace legalistic salvation nor legalistic sanctification. The idea that we must follow something, do something, obey something, and depend on something other than grace to sanctify us will result in defeat in the Christian life. The Bible states that we live under grace to experience sanctification (Rom. 6:14-15) which contextually relates to our victorious union with Christ (Rom. 6:1-13) brought about by the Spirit's baptizing work and His power and ministry occurring in our hearts and lives (Romans 8:1-4).

This means the rule of life (the governing principle, a principle of procedure and practice) for sanctification is not under law but under grace and pertains to the grace features given to New Covenant believers such as abiding in Christ, being filled with the Spirit, understating our union with Christ, recognizing ourselves dead to sin, our position as a new man, seeking those things above, and looking unto Jesus (1 John 2:28; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 6:11, 13; Col. 2:6; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:1; Heb. 12:1-2; Gal. 2:20).

To rely on the law written on tablets of stone for sanctification will result in defeat (2 Cor. 3:3, 6) "for how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18). But with the death of Jesus Christ, we are forever accepted in God's presence (Rom. 5:9) and with the Holy Spirit indwelling God's people we are fully empowered from within (Rom. 7:6) to follow God's moral laws (Rom. 8:4). So, it's grace for both salvation and sanctification. It's the grace way all the way!

Of course, it's true that the Scriptures are part of the sanctifying process in our Christian lives (John 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The moral law reveals the nature and will of God and is important to reflect and act upon (James 2:8; Rom. 13:9). But this is not grounds to place the believer back under the law as a rule of life, using it as an important force, power, and overall guiding principle for sanctification. In doing this we return from where we started in our unsaved position, using the law through legal obedience to obtain sanctification, and ultimately being condemned by the law when we don't measure up.

Paul reprimands the believers for doing this in Galatians 3:1 -3:

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you (*placed you under a spell and deceived you*), that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

William MacDonald gives a helpful note on this Galatian problem:

“One question should be sufficient to settle the whole matter. Let them go back to the time of their conversion—the time when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in their bodies. How did they receive the Spirit? By doing, or by believing? Obviously it was by believing. No one ever received the Spirit by keeping the law. If they could not obtain salvation by works, could they expect to grow in holiness or Christian maturity by the law? If the power of the Spirit was necessary to save them, could they complete the process by fleshly efforts?”

The Galatians were guilty of following and using the law as a means of sanctification with the intended purpose of finally securing their salvation. They were guilty of legalism by backloading the Gospel with the need for sanctification and securing one's salvation. Paul concludes that the law cannot sanctify or secure anyone for this only comes through Jesus Christ – His saving and delivering power over sin (Rom. 8:1-4). So stop placing yourselves under the law! It won't work. Living under the law means you are following a legal code that cannot deliver you. This is because it does not provide you with strength or the spiritual assistance to grant you victory and certainly cannot in the end secure your eternal destiny.

Reformed Theology stresses we are not under the law from a soteriological perspective but under the law from a sanctifying perspective. In this case, you

cannot have your cake and eat it too! The Bible teaches we are either released from the entirety of the law in relation to salvation and sanctification (Rom. 10:4; 6:14-15) or we are under it. There is no in-between or straddling the line.

All our obedience to God's moral law and the Scriptures in general must come from a grace-oriented perspective which is centered upon the Spirit's role in sanctifying us from within and hiding God's truth in our hearts (Col. 3:16). Our sanctification does not rely on merely reading the Bible, memorizing it, prayer, attending a church, and such like. As important as these things might be for Christian living, we must remember that grace changes us from within and our focus should always be upon the principles of New Covenant grace which God has given to sanctify us – the new nature, walking in the Spirit, newness of Spirit, looking unto Jesus, union with Christ, Christ lives in me, etc.

In other words, transforming grace, as outlined in Romans 6-8, is the way we live our lives on a daily basis. Grace is the method or way that God deals with the believer in relation to his salvation, service, and sanctification (Titus 2:11-12). We have been freed from the 613 commands of the Mosaic Law as a way of life, rule of life, and regulatory principle to follow. Our lives are no longer governed by the law principle, but the grace principles as outlined in the New Testament epistles.

Grace and Freedom From the Law



Free from the law oh happy condition! Why? It's because "them who are under the law" (Rom. 3:19) are condemned to die the sinner's death and go hell. But more than this, they are destined to live under the dictates of the old disposition without any hope of spiritual deliverance.

Free from the law! This is the song of grace believers! It's a song of deliverance. We have been "made free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2) or the law system that resulted in a life of condemnation and servitude to sin. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14) and "ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). The Scriptures are very clear on this point. We have been set free from the Mosaic Law even morally as a legalistic code that once condemned us to Hell, and which could

not deliver us from sin's penalty and power (Rom. 8:2-4). From the New Testament (New Covenant) perspective, we have been freed from the law system and are now living under the grace system which frees us not only from the penalty of sin but also the power of sin.

Galatians 3:13

"Christ hath redeemed us (*set us free*) from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree."

Galatians 4:31

"So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Galatians 5:1

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

2 Corinthians 3:17

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The Scriptures teach that through faith in Christ we have been set free from the spiritual penalty of God's wrath that every individual must incur for being lawbreakers and sinners (Rom. 6:23). Under the New Covenant we no longer have the guilt producing character of the law which could not provide a conscience that was free from the guilt of sin through the provision of eternal forgiveness (Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:22). Faith in Christ also frees us from a life of servitude to sin since the law could never provide sanctification and victory over the sin nature. Therefore, God's New Covenant believers can bask in the freedom that grace brings.

The Judaizers and legalists of Paul's day tried to impose the law (Old Covenant) on people, but this brought bondage and not freedom or liberty from the penalty or power of sin. Historically, we know that many Israelites, excluding the believing remnant, failed to gain a righteous standing before God because the people tried to win God's favor by works ("... they sought is not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ..." Rom. 9:32-33). In other words, some of the Jews would not admit their inability to keep the law perfectly and turn by faith to God for forgiveness. Instead, there were those who kept trying to keep the law by their own

efforts. Many Israelites during the past and Paul's day missed the purpose of the law. It was given to drive them to grace.

Galatians 3:19 reminds us:

“Wherefore then *serveth* the law? (*what was the purpose of the law*) It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come (*Messiah, Christ*) to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”

1 Timothy 1:8-10

“But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man (*it was made to convict sinners*), but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”

There is an inappropriate, legalistic use of the law which Paul disavowed; but there is also a proper use of the law that Paul embraced which was to use it as a convicting and condemning tool to point people to the grace found in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19, 24). Law righteousness or gaining God's favor through good works is always opposed to grace righteousness which received God's imputed righteousness through the expression of faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9; Gal. 3:21).

It's clear that the law was created to show man that he was a sinner (Rom. 3:19-20) – not save man. The law could not regenerate or save anyone therefore to use it as a means to gain or merit salvation (legalism) was an absurdity. The law was used by God as a way to drive mankind to grace. Welsey used to say that if you preached 90% law and 10% grace people will get saved! Here is the point, there was a legalistic/salvation mindset about the law during the Old Testament and this carried over into the New Testament era and became the primary false teaching Paul had to deal with. God intended the Messiah to be the provider of salvation (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:8). However, the Jews did not allow Him to fulfill this function for them. From the very beginning they embrace law instead of grace (Ex. 19:8).

The early church made the decision that there was a major difference between law and grace. The conclusion was that legalism (a works salvation) was not God's appointed way to save people.

Acts 15:10-11 is the summary:

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples (*a yoke of bondage as in Gal. 5:1*), which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

The decision was made that the grace way of salvation was God’s way for sinners to be made right with God (Acts 4:12).

The Pharisees with their ex-cathedra rules (Matt. 5:20; 15:3; 23:2; Mark 7:7-13) and Judaizers with their ceremonial Mosaic regulations misused the law and turned it into a legalistic code necessary for salvation and justification before God (Acts 15:1, 24) and therefore Paul repeatedly explains how believers were not living under a law or legalistic system to obtain salvation or sanctification in the Christian life. This was not the purpose of the law (Rom. 3:19-20). For this reason, Scriptures and Pauline theology specifically counters this misuse of the law and legalistic teaching throughout the epistles (Rom. 3:27-28; 4:2-6; Gal. 1:6; 2:16, 21; 3:10; Eph. 2:9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5). Pauline usage of the term law is used as an expression that describes a form of legalism that developed where the law was seen to be an instrument of justification. Paul never taught that we was living “under the law” but the unsaved Jews who he was trying to reach with the Gospel of grace were placing themselves under the law and in need of spiritual deliverance (1 Cor. 9:20-21).

Since the law was never given to produce salvation or sanctification (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:19-20; 6:14-15), when a person uses the law as a means of salvation or sanctification, it becomes a wrong use of the law and a legalism (a way of human effort) related to both salvation and sanctification. Paul reasons that every Gospel believer has been set free from the law system as a means of salvation and even sanctification in the Christian life. We discover that Christ’s death ratifies the New Covenant (Matt. 27:51; Col. 2:14-17; Luke 22:20) and therefore frees or liberates us from the Old Testament Mosaic Law (morally, ceremonially, and civilly) as a system necessary to produce salvation and sanctification. Grace frees us from experiencing God’s wrath and punishment for violating the law (Gal. 3:10-13), it frees us from using the law as a way of salvation through legalistic observance (Gal. 5:1; Rom. 10:4), as a way of sanctification or holiness through legal compliance (Romans 6:14-15; 7:7-25), and as a way of holy living by strict meticulous laws (Acts 10:11-16; Col. 2:16).

These intricate laws (Exodus 30:19-21; 35:3; Lev. 1-7; 5:2; 11; 19:19; 35:2-3; Numb. 6:18; Duet. 22:10-11; 23:1-4, 12-13; 21), which were previously used as typical lessons and teaching tools (Heb. 9:9, 23-24) to express God's desire for holy living and worship, have been rescinded for New Testament living (Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Col. 2:16-17). However, the moral and ethical principle of holiness which they taught (Lev. 20:25; 22:4) remains intact for daily living and worship under grace which are fulfilled through the Spirit's New Covenant ministry (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:15-16).

The good news is that through grace we have been delivered from our law relationship that demanded perfection but gave no power or assistance to live according to God's holy standard ("delivered from the law" - Rom. 7:4-6). We have been freed from a condemning and powerless relationship with the law and have now been given a grace relationship with Christ based upon acceptance before God and power to live victoriously through the Spirit's abiding presence (Rom. 8:1-4; John 7:37-39). Again, it must be confirmed that from the perspective of salvation and sanctification, we have been released from every aspect of the Law – ceremonially, civilly, and morally.

We are not obligated to use the law as a path to salvation or provision for holy living. This is a wrong use of the Mosaic code (Rom. 3:19-20, 24; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 6:14-15; 7:14-25). Therefore, we are no longer relationally bound to a system that cannot produce salvation before God (Rom. 3:21-22; Phil. 3:9) or righteous living (Rom. 6:14; 8:3-4). We are now relationally bound to Christ (Rom. 14:8; 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 2:20) whose life gives us the promise of liberty and hope from condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2) and sin's power (John 8:36).

When a person lives "under grace" (Rom. 6:15) it means that grace is to be the believer's rule of life (governing principle, a procedure for practice) in the present dispensation. This means that grace is to govern the entire life of the New Testament believer. Grace is to be the force, focus, and motivation for living the Christian life since believer's have been freed from the law and are said to no longer be "under law" in any sense – not even for sanctification ("for ye are



WE ARE NOT UNDER
THE LAW BUT
Under Grace

not under the law, but under grace” - Rom. 6:14). Unlike the Old Testament saints, Gospel believers today, living under the New Covenant, are the direct recipients of God’s grace in Christ which is linked to their salvation (Eph. 2:8-9), sanctification (Rom. 6:14-15), and service (1 Cor. 15:10).

Since we are no longer to place ourselves under the law but live under grace, let’s summarize what it means to live under grace.

➤ **We no longer live under the Law dispensationally (Eph. 3:2; Rom. 6:14-15).**

From a dispensational perspective the Mosaic Law has ended as an outworking of God’s stewardship (the way God has chosen to work in the past) with all its legal regulations, requirements, and curses. The ending of the Law is evidenced by the statements of Scripture such as, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain” (Matt. 27:51), “the end of that which is abolished” (2 Cor. 3:13; Eph. 2:15), “not under law” (Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:18), “that which is done away” (2 Cor. 3:11), “till the seed should come” (Gal. 3:19), “no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:25), “took it out of the way” and “Let no man judge you” (Col. 2:14-17), “being changed” (Heb. 7:12), “disannulling of the commandment going before” (Heb. 7:18-19), and “taken away” (Heb. 10:9).

From a dispensational perspective we are no longer bound to observe the days, diets, and distinct rules (Col. 2:16; Eph. 2:15) that were given to govern the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant of the Mosaic law while God was working with only one group of people (Ex. 31:13, 16-17; Lev. 26:46; 27:34; Romans 9:4-5). The ceremonial rules and regulations regarding sacrifice were given to provide typical lessons about God’s requirements for salvation (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:24) and ultimately provided a picture or shadow (Heb. 10:1) of salvation through Christ in figures (Heb. 9:9, 24) and patterns (Heb. 9:23) relating to sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:11, 23-26; 10:19-20).

Tabernacles, temples, and typical lessons in feast days (Lev. 23) are no longer God’s plan for the Church. These ceremonial laws were also object lessons designed to teach practical holiness in the Christian life (Lev. 11:44-47; 19:1-2; 22:31-33) and worship (Lev. 23:2-4). They could be viewed as teaching tools to help the people understand that God was holy, and they were required to live in a holy fashion (Ex. 19:3-6). The intricate laws between the clean and unclean and the entire Mosaic

code was a perpetual reminder of God's holiness (Lev. 19:2; 20:7, 26) and that Israel was to be set apart from the pagan nations around them (Ex. 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 14:1-2; 28:1) under the Old Covenant of the Mosaic law.

➤ **We no longer live under the law judicially.**

From a judicial (forensic) perspective, the Mosaic Law has ended for every Gospel believer as a system that condemns us and consigns us to Hell under its dreadful curse since Christ took the curse in our place when He died on the cross (Gal. 3:10). Those who are unsaved today are still under the sentence of the Mosaic Law (Rom. 3:19-20). This is why Christ must "redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:5).

Romans 3:20 confirms that "by the law is the knowledge of sin" and Romans 3:19 reveals our awful plight when we were under the judicial judgment of the law in our unsaved state. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Before expressing faith in Christ, we were under the law which is a system that could not deliver salvation – "what the law could not do" (Rom. 8:2). The law system was a strict legal code that could not save us and free us from God's wrath, but only condemn us, bringing upon us the legal sentence of judgment and damnation that we deserved for breaking God's law. 2 Corinthians 3:7 identifies the law as "the ministration of death."

Ray Pritchard remarks that "the law can only reveal sin, it can never redeem from sin. It could condemn, it could never save. It could say, do this, do this, do this. It couldn't change you on the inside so that you would want to live like that. It couldn't change the "want to", because the "want to" is not an exterior matter, it's a matter of the heart. Somebody said it this way. The law is like a ten foot pole. You could never say to a ten foot pole, "I want you to make this man to be ten feet tall." A ten foot pole can't do that. All it can do is measure a man's height and reveal how far short he is from reaching the ideal height. In the same way the law could never save, it could only reveal how far short we fall."

2 Corinthians 3:6 brings out the liberating message from the law's condemnation: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The “letter” in Pauline usage is an expression that describes a form of legalism, where the law is seen as a instrument of justification. In this verse Paul once again reminds us of the vast difference between the letter (legal nature of the law) and the Spirit. The life lived under the regime of the letter (law) brings condemnation and death (Rom. 7:10-11) whereas the life lived under the government or ruling system of the Spirit brings spiritual life.

J. M. Davies wrote:

“This ministry of the letter that killeth is illustrated in the 3000 killed at Sinai, at the inauguration of the Old Covenant; and the ministry of the Spirit, the life-giving ministry, is illustrated in the 3000 saved on the day of Pentecost.”

For those who do not place faith in Christ, the Mosaic law continues to convict them and judge them, so they might come to faith in Christ (Gal. 3:24). We have seen that the law (Old Covenant) could not provide regeneration, salvation, sanctification, and a new way of life. Therefore, to place oneself under the law was to place yourself under demands, death, damnation, and defeat. The Bible teaches from a New Testament perspective that we are no longer living under the law since it did not possess the dynamics to produce salvation or sanctification.

➤ **We no longer live under the law in relation to soteriology.**

When countering the teaching of legalism which was so prevalent during Paul’s day, we are reminded that we are not under the law as a means to gain or merit our salvation. From a Pauline and legalistic perspective, the Mosaic Law has ended for every Gospel believer, as a system of works that must be performed to produce salvation or justification before God (Rom. 10:4 Gal. 4:21-31; 5:1-4). Legalism (the way of human effort) is denounced and replaced by the grace way and faith way of salvation and justification (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24) which has always been God’s way in every age (Rom. 4:3-8).

Romans 10:4

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

➤ **We no longer live under the law morally.**

The Scriptures teach that our victory and sanctification does not stem from being under the governing principle of the law but according to the grace rule of life (Rom.

6:14-15). Of course, living under grace (victory through union with Christ) does not mean we abandon the moral law of God. What it means is that we do not place ourselves under the law as a means to obtain sanctification by our own strength for this brings certain defeat (Rom. 7:14-25). According to Pauline theology, living under the law, which means trusting in our human power to follow God's moral law, does not sanctify us (Rom. 8:3).

There is a difference between living under God's moral law and following the moral law. Living "under the law" refers to sanctification by legalism (man's ability and strength in keeping the law). The law reveals the character and will of God and it's something we should love and obey (Ps. 119:97, 113, 163; Gal. 5:14; Jam. 2:8). However, living under grace means the law is written in our hearts by the Spirit's ministry and we live under the grace feature of the Holy Spirit's internal power (Rom. 8:4) – not our outward observance of the moral code to obtain victory. Hence, the believer no longer lives under the law even morally in the sense that he should not rely on "tables of stone" instead of the law written on the "fleshy tables of our heart" (2 Cor. 3:3).

Sanctification and victory cannot be obtained from an external legal system for it possesses no internal delivering power from sin. This is why our grace relationship with Christ (union with Christ) is necessary to grant us victory (Rom. 6:14-14; Col. 2:12). What is needed is the internalization of God's moral law within our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit's indwelling life and power (Rom.8:2-4). We are not to live "after the law" but "after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1, 4, 5). There is no law/legal system that is related to the believer's sanctification.

If we follow the grace rule to govern and lead our lives, walking in the Spirit's presence and power, we are no longer under law. Galatians 5:18, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." This means placing oneself under the moral law as the means to sanctification, through outward conformity without inward conformity, through outward performance instead of inward power, results in moral defeat and failure (Rom. 7:18-19).

➤ **We no longer live under the law relationally.**

From the perspective of relationship, the bond we once had with the Mosaic Law has ended for every Gospel believer. We no longer live under the law relationally as

a system that kept us under its bondage to sin and judgment. The Bible teaches we are “dead to the law” (Rom. 7:4) and “delivered from the law” (Rom. 7:6), no longer possessing a relationship with the law. This means we have through Christ’s sacrificial death been severed from the old damning, lifeless, and powerless relationship with the law which could not produce salvation or sanctification in the lives of people.

“Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission.
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.”

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,
Once for all, O brother, believe it;
Cling to the Cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.”

Romans 7:4-6

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law (the old condemning and enslaving relationship we had with the law) **by the body of Christ** (through Christ dying on the cross); **that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead**” (Christ is our new husband in a new marriage relationship), **that we should bring forth fruit unto God**” (transformed way of living). **For when we were in the flesh** (bound to the sinful disposition or old nature in our unsaved and unregenerate state), **the motions of sins, which were by the law** (stirred up, aroused, generated by the law because of man’s sinful inclinations as in Rom. 8:3), **did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death** (used and controlled the members of our body as in Romans 6:13 &19, the fleshly fruit of sins that would result in death or separation from God – Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 6:23).

“But now (since we are saved) **we are delivered from the law** (the old condemning and enslaving relationship under law in our unsaved state), **that being dead** (spiritually dead) **wherein we were held** (under the penalty and power of sin); **that we** (who are now saved by grace) **should serve in newness of spirit** (referring to the new administration of God’s moral absolutes through the Spirit’s divine enablement or power to live victoriously over sin, experiencing a newfound freedom and liberty from sin’s bondage as a result of the New Covenant work of the Spirit taking place in our hearts, and we can now serve and live for Jesus Christ out of love, gratitude and joy instead of the fear of being condemned and judged

by God’s legal code and standard) **and not in the oldness of the letter**” (the old unloving, insensitive, enslaving, legalistic, powerless, condemning and empty relationship we had with the law in our unsaved state).

As a wife is no longer married to her husband when he dies, so a Christian is no longer under the Law. The term “spirit” (Rom. 7:4) can refer to either the human spirit or the Holy Spirit” depending on the context and way that it is used in the Greek text. Actually, both the human spirit and work of the Holy



Spirit work together to express the new resurrection life we have in Christ, which elsewhere is termed “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The “newness of the spirit” speaks of the new life that is expressed and experienced within the realm of our human spirit by the role and work of the Holy Spirit. The “newness of the spirit” relates to how a born-again Christian can serve God with a new *motive* (love) and *means* (power) which is created by the Holy Spirit’s aid upon our human spirit or heart. We are prompted to do God’s will through the new nature and then empowered or energized to do it through the Holy Spirit which results in a totally new approach to Christian living under the New Covenant (Phil. 2:13). This is why we sing:

“Breathe On me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.”

2 Corinthians 3:7-8

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?”

The giving of the law and the past dispensation was glorious in that it revealed the holy character of God to His Old Testament people (Israel). But as we contemplate God’s new order of administering grace to the lives of New Covenant Christians, through the Spirit’s inward ministry and work upon their hearts (“the ministration of the spirit”), we see even a greater display of God’s glorious power, wisdom, and work. The new order with grace as its focus is more glorious because it involves a better covenant (Heb. 8:6), better promises (Heb. 8:6), a better sacrifice (Heb. 9:23;

10:10-12), and a better way to administer God's moral and unchanging absolutes (2 Cor. 3:7-8; Rom. 8:4). The inward sanctifying ministry of the Spirit in the present administration or dispensational outworking of God (Gal. 5:18) is the hallmark of New Testament Christianity (2 Cor. 3:1-17).

So the "newness of the spirit" (Rom. 7:6) reveals to us the wonder and amazement of the present economy of grace and the marvel of the Spirit's new in-working ministry. The Spirit impresses upon our hearts our love relationship with Christ (Rom. 7:4) and provides us with liberating power to live free from sin. Both the love relationship and liberating power from sin is new. Why do we serve the Lord? Not because the law is our taskmaster, hovering over us, and demanding us to do it, or else suffer God's wrath and judgment. A thousand times no! We serve the Lord because Christ is our husband (Rom. 7:4) and we want to please Him. We serve out of a new motive – a Spirit-directed love for Christ instead of legality. We also serve God out of a new means – the Spirit's power and assistance. Have you been experiencing this newness in your own heart and life?



To summarize, we are no longer living under the jurisdiction and direction of the law. Instead, we have been freed from these Mosaic regulations dispensationally, relationally, legalistically, morally, civilly, and ceremonially. We are now to be led by the Spirit's New Covenant ministry upon our hearts and lives (Gal. 5:18, 25; Rom. 8:14) as it reflects New Testament living which is outlined in the epistles (2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:14-16).

The Bible teaches that Christians today no longer live under the Mosaic law dispensation (Rom. 6:14). God has turned the tables and introduced a whole new dispensation or economy by which His people can now live. Their conduct and lifestyles are to be lived out under the umbrella of grace instead of by a Mosaic code. Living under the grace dispensation frees us from the intricacies of Mosaic laws and many of the practices and rules for conduct that were expected under the Mosaic code (Matt. 23:13).

The New Testament epistles speak about the believer's release from the Mosaic law and the freedom that this brings under the new grace dispensation (Rom. 10).

I know of no person today who is willing to be placed under all the minute Old Testament laws that pertain to dietary regulations, farming, clothing, worship, and holy days (Matt. 23:23; Exodus 30:19-21; Lev. 5:2; 11:29-32; Numb. 6:18). The Bible teaches that such laws have been rescinded (Col. 2:16, Heb. 9:10) and that we are no longer commanded to live under the strict outworking of the Mosaic dispensation (Rom. 6:15) with its inflexible procedures, practices, and penalties (Duet. 27:15-26).

I am very thankful that I don't have to live under the practices and penalties of Mosaic law. The law was a rigid system designed to bring Israel to Christ (see Gal. 3:24-25) and teach the typical lessons about Christ in picture format (Heb. 9:9, 23-24). In case you have not noticed, tabernacles, temples, and typical lessons in feast days (Lev. 23) are no longer God's plan for the Church. The ceremonial laws were also object lessons designed to teach practical separation or holiness in the Christian life (Lev. 11:44-47; 19:1-2; 22:31-33) and worship (Lev. 23:2-4). They could be viewed as teaching tools or object lessons to help the people understand that God was holy, and they were required to live in a holy fashion (Ex. 19:3-6).

The intricate laws between the clean and unclean and the entire Mosaic code was a perpetual reminder of God's holiness (Lev. 19:2; 20:7, 26) and that Israel was to be set apart from the pagan nations around them (Ex. 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 14:1-2; 28:1) under the old covenant of the Mosaic law. However, under the New Covenant and grace living these laws have been rescinded and are no longer required to be followed by New Testament Christianity. There is a sense of freedom that we should experience from the many rules and regulations that God required for those living under the law.

These laws no longer have any jurisdiction over our lives (Col. 2:16). They have been revoked and we are no longer bound to observe them today. There is a newfound freedom that can be practiced from Mosaic regulations of the past. The question is this, how far do we take this freedom? As mentioned previously, the Mosaic laws with all of their dietary regulations, days, and distinctions between clean and unclean (Lev. 11:47) have been rescinded (Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5), but the principle of holiness which they taught remains intact (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Time does not change principles. God still wants us to represent His moral holiness in all of our actions and decisions in life. God still wants us to be faithful in our service and dedication to Him.

God still wants us to remain separate, distinct, and holy from the pagan influences that surround us, without enforcing the exactness of the ceremonial Mosaic regulations of the law upon people, which typically taught the doctrine of separation and holiness. The ceremonial law taught Bible separation in typical forms, lessons, and pictures. The ceremonial teachings of the law were similar to a Sunday school teacher presenting truth to children in picture format. The pictures were designed to convey the truth that God wanted His people to live separate from sin and sinners. God presented typically what He wanted His people to portray practically in their lives.

God still wants us to live separate from our pagan neighbors (2 Cor. 6:14-17), but not in a ceremonial or isolated way, since we no longer live under the Mosaic regulations of the past. The truth is this. We should be able to work and live among pagan influences but not become like pagans. The old adage is still true. We are to live *in* the world but not become *of* the world. The same principle of separating from worldly influence is applied in the New Testament without all the baggage of the ceremonial regulations (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Pet. 4:4). We must live above the fallen world and display redemptive holiness to pagan people who live among us (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12).

God wants to take us out of the past dispensation and into the new and present dispensation. The distinctions might be summarized in this way.

- God wants us to live holy today (1 Pet. 1:15-16) but not in a legal or ceremonial way since we no longer live under the Mosaic regulations of the past.
- God wants us to make distinctions between the holy and unholy (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:11) but not in a ceremonial way.
- God wants us to live separate and distinct from the pagan people around us (2 Cor. 6:14-17) but not in a ceremonial or isolated manner (Mark 16:15).

Even though the regulations for ceremonial laws have been removed, what these laws revealed remains relevant and instructive for believers today (Rom. 15:4). When studying the Old Testament Mosaic laws, we can see the pictures God was painting and the typical lessons He was teaching. This is why all Scripture is

profitable for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16). Nevertheless, the Christian is no longer to observe the strict outworking of the law's rules and regulations (Rom. 6:14). He has been given freedom from the laborious and miniscule rules of the Mosaic code.

The point is this. We have been ceremonially freed from observing the distinct Jewish laws related to farming, animals, clothing, washing, worship, Sabbath days, diet, sacrificing animals, hair, oaths, vows, keeping castrated people from our church services in order to represent holy, clean, and undefiled worship, disposing of our waste in the fashion of the law (Exodus 30:19-21; 35:3; Lev. 1-7; 5:2; 11; 19:19; 35:2-3; Numb. 6:18; Duet. 22:10-11; 23:1-4, 12-13; 21), and intricate laws regarding tithing (Matt. 23:23 – “ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin”).

Let's think this through Biblically. If we were to obey all 613 Mosaic laws, we would be bound by rules that would restrict shellfish and eating pork (Lev. 11), picking up sticks or making a fire on Saturday (Ex. 35:3; Numb. 15:32-33), planting different seeds in our garden, or the wearing of clothing which are made from two different fabrics (Lev. 19:19). Again, the Bible teaches that such laws have been rescinded (Col. 2:16, Heb. 9:10) and that we are no longer under the strict outworking of the Mosaic dispensation (Rom. 6:15) with its strict procedures, practices, and penalties (Duet. 27:15-26).

Of course, God's moral laws never change. They existed prior to the Mosaic law and therefore mankind knows intuitively that it's wrong to steal, murder, and commit adultery with another man's wife (Rom. 2:14-15). Although believers have been released from the Mosaic law regulations as an outworking of many miniscule rules, which taught typical lessons about Christ and separation, they are still obligated to follow the unchanging moral and ethical laws of God which do not change throughout the dispensations. This occurs through the Spirit's filling ministry (Eph. 5:18) and His leading or empowerment (Gal. 5:25) so the believer can effectively live for God.

God's New Testament saints who live under the grace dispensation (the free dispensation) are no longer called upon to live in the shadows and teachings of the past (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). We don't use animals and object lessons to guide us in our spiritual growth but the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18) and the New Testament Scriptures which are given to the Church (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:16). We don't bring animals to the altar and slay them, nor are we required to make

distinctions between clean and unclean meat for consumption (Acts 10:11-14). The church is never commanded in the New Testament to follow the many tedious rules that pertained to God's dispensational purpose for Israel, under Law, which have no further purpose or typical lessons behind them under grace (Matt. 23:23; Exodus 30:19-21; Lev. 5:2; 11:29-32; Numb. 6:18).

Nevertheless, the timeless principles taught by these laws (holiness, separation, reverent worship) should still be followed under grace ("That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" - Rom. 8:4), but these laws are not required to be implemented in the exact manner as they were under the Mosaic system. For example, God wants us to display holiness in our lives today (1 Pet. 1:15-16) without using all the object lessons and intricate laws that He required under the Mosaic system. We can still maintain a holy life today, even when we choose to sow different seeds in our garden (Deut. 22:9), buy a garment with wool and linen sown together (Deut. 22:11), or eat a pepperoni pizza (1 Tim. 4:4). Grace frees us from the intricacies of the Mosaic system and gives us the freedom of choice.

Here is the main point. After Israel rejected the Messiah (Acts 1:11) and Christ died on the cross (Mark 15:38; Gal. 3:19), God officially turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 26:20) to form the New Testament Church composed of both Jew and Gentiles (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 3:1-10). Israel was temporarily set aside by God (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:15); therefore, the purpose and practices of the Mosaic Law ended, since they were designed specifically for the nation of Israel (Rom. 9:4). God spelled out His new purpose and commands for the New Testament Church in the epistles or the New Testament document ("whether by word or epistle" - 2 Thess. 2:15).

There were also major differences between the way God implemented His laws in the old Mosaic dispensation (Old Covenant) and the new grace dispensation (New Covenant). Under grace the strict outward character of a legal system on stones has been done away with (2 Cor. 3:3) and the new character of the grace dispensation is presented through the indwelling presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; John 14:16-17; Eph. 2:22). Of course, God's moral laws never end, nor do they change. They existed prior to the Mosaic Law and therefore mankind knows intuitively that it's wrong to steal, murder, and commit adultery with another man's wife (Rom. 2:14-15).

Although believers have been released from the Mosaic Law regulations, as an outworking of many minuscule rules, they are still obligated to follow the unchanging moral and ethical laws of God and the righteous principles taught behind the Mosaic regulations of the past (Rom. 8:4). God presented *typically* what He wanted His people to portray *practically* in their lives. No Christian is lawless!

We must remember that nine out of the Ten Commandments are restated in the New Testament teachings of grace in the present dispensation, at least in principle form (1 John 3:11-15; 5:21; James 5:12; Eph 4:28-29; 5:3; 6:1-3; Col 3:5-10; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; Rom. 13:8-10), and these are all valid for believers to follow in the present dispensation, with the exception of the Sabbath observance (Col. 2:16).

This is because nine of the ten pertain to the moral law of God and are rooted in God's essential holy and righteous character which must be observed by everyone in every generation or dispensation and under all conditions. However, since God has not given 613 specific commandments in the New Testament, as He did in the Old Testament, this means that living under the grace dispensation grants the believer with newfound freedom and some special and personal liberties, which the Old Testament saints did not possess. We have been liberated from the many intricate laws that the people had to follow in the Old Testament and have been given freedom to choose how we want to live in relationship to amoral issues (Romans 14). We will deal with this later.

Let us remember that all the ceremonies of the law have been fulfilled by Christ (Matt. 5:18) and every demand and debt that the law ever mounted against us has been paid for through Christ (Col. 2:14). Therefore, the temporary purpose, program, and pictures of the law have all been done away with through Christ (Gal. 3:19; Matt. 27:51). God has now written His moral law upon our hearts (Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 3:3). All of these conclusions would lead us to believe that Christians today no longer live under the Mosaic system. We have been completely freed from all the law.

In the New Testament teaching, this means we are no longer "under the law" as way of salvation, sanctification, or as a special dispensation system where God requires obedience to many intricate and complex laws. Instead, we now live "under grace" (Rom. 6:14-15) which means grace saves us, sanctifies, and sets us free from the many rules and regulation that God required under the law. Under

grace we have been given the inward witness and work of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18), as a new dynamic and manifestation of the grace of God in the present dispensation (Gal. 5:18), which is termed the dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2).

In the present order (Grace Dispensation) in which now live, we can say grace, as found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20), directly saves us (Titus 2:11), distinctly sanctifies us (Rom. 6:14-15; Titus 2:12), and decisively frees us from the many rules and regulations that Israel needed to follow under the Mosaic code, such as Sabbath laws, dietary laws, ceremonial laws, and civil laws (Col. 2:16), which were historically designed to portray Christ (1 Cor. 5:7) and proclaim that God was holy and desired that His children live and worship in a holy manner (Lev. 10:10; 11:44; 23). The Mosaic Law as a whole was given to teach the Jews about Christ (Luke 24:27) and help them to see their need for Christ when He entered the world (Gal. 3:24-25).

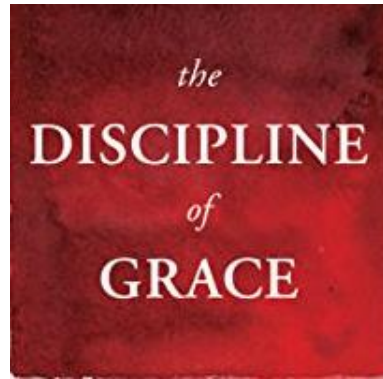
Once again, the temporary purpose, program, and pictures of the law have all been done away with through Christ's death on Calvary (Gal. 3:19; Matt. 27:51). Nevertheless, the moral or righteous character of the Mosaic law has not changed and should be worked out in the believer's heart and life ("That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" - Rom. 8:4). The Holy Spirit reveals Christ's inward life to us (Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; John 14:17-18; 2 Cor. 3:17; 15:26; Gal. 2:20).

The Holy Spirit also writes or internalizes God's moral code upon our hearts which relates to the new nature, providing us with the sensitivity and incentive to do God's will (Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10). The Spirit also inwardly directs our lives to follow God's will and purpose (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 2:13; Acts 8:29; 16:7; 21:4) and provides us with His new dynamic liberating power (Rom. 8:1-2, 13-14; Gal. 5:16-17, 25; Eph. 3:16; 5:18; Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:18) to live holy, fruitful, and Christlike lives (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Cor. 3:18) while following the commands and principles taught in the New Testament document (Eph. 6:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 1 John 2:14; Heb. 4:12).

Grace and Disciplined Living

Although we have been liberated from the judgment and enslavement to the law system (Gal. 3:10; Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:5-6) with all of its miniscule rules and intricate

regulations, and are now living under the grace system, this does not mean we are to live without grace-based discipline in our lives. Living under grace results in believers practicing holiness (Romans 6:1-14; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2 Cor. 7:1), which includes separating from and refusing to support apostasy or unrighteousness in any way (2 Cor. 6:14-17), respecting their bodies as the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20), repudiating fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11; Titus 2:11-12), refusing to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2), not fellowshiping with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), and proving all things (1 Thess. 5:21). Grace takes us away from sin. It does not promote rebellion and sin in our lives.



Leonard Ravenhill said:

“When there’s something in the Bible that churches don’t like, they call it legalism.”

This is true. The “moral norms” of the law have not been cancelled in relation to godly living. But they are fulfilled in the context of grace living – through union with Christ, the new nature, and internal work of the Spirit (Rom. 6:14-15; 8:4; Gal. 5:16; 2 Cor. 3:3). However, it seems that many Christians create a legalistic smokescreen which is designed to hide or cover up their own fleshly desires. Using the scapegoat “legalism lingo” to cover up their carnality, they don’t allow grace to discipline their lives. They use the theological cuss word of “legalism” to justify their sins.

A lot of Christians are riding the legalist bandwagon today who want grace without discipline. Without realizing it the church has slid into antinomianism which simply means to live without any ethical laws and restrictions. We are not living under the law, but this does not mean we are lawless! The Spirit’s work taking place in our hearts and lives produces sanctification (holiness) and not sinful rebellion against God (Gal. 5:22-23).

Carl Hoch explains it in this way:

“The Spirit is not an anarchist. He provides guidelines and directives that encompass the New Testament documents. But the fundamental difference is that the Spirit is not the inanimate, inflexible, impersonal letter of the law, but the living, intelligence, and personal monitor.”

In other words, the New Covenant and the Grace Dispensation has a moral monitor placed within and this boils down to the Spirit's internal work in our hearts who guides us in truth and victory (John 16:13; Gal. 5:25). Along with New Covenant freedom comes New Covenant responsibility. The good news is that living under grace (the New Covenant system) does not demand obedience without providing divine enablement. But we can be sure that grace is transformative in nature.

Titus 2:11-12 directly speaks of grace liberating us from sin:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

The New Covenant does not promote a relaxation of morals and ethics. Just the opposite is true – it produces moral and ethical living. These verses teach that grace not only saves us from the *penalty* of sin but also *power* of sin. It reminds us that we need to be disciplined by grace. This is the real freedom that we experience when being released from the law relationship. It does not mean we have liberty to participate in questionable activities that promote carnality under the disguise of freedom. The *discipline of grace* is seen in Titus 2:12.

Living under grace is not a “live and let live” philosophy that seems so prevalent among Christians today. It's not a license to sin (Rom. 6:1-2) and use our liberty under grace as a disguise or “cloak of maliciousness” (1 Pet. 2:16). Grace liberates us; it does not make us liberal. For many Christians today grace has gone wild! They have jettisoned the teaching and disciplinary aspect of God's grace which is designed to produce deliverance and freedom from worldliness and godlessness (Rom. 12:2).

Warren Wiersbe wrote:

“Freedom does not mean I am able to do whatever I want to do. That's the worst kind of bondage.”

Actually, freedom means I have been set free to become all that God wants me to be, to achieve all that God wants me to achieve, to enjoy all that God wants me to enjoy. And as we have seen, grace working in our heart changes the “I must do this” to “I want to do this” (Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 7:6; Ezek. 36:26) which results in

possessing a newfound freedom to do God's will and not be bound to the old way of life.

Augustine once said:

"Love God, and do what you please. What you please then will be good."

The discipline of grace and the freedom it brings is seen in Paul's life where he brings his body "into subjection" by the power of the Spirit's work (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Discipline is the key to freedom. Structure and discipline is not legalism as so many teach today in the modern church movement.

Winston Churchill once said:

"I spent the first twenty-five years of my life wanting more freedom, and the next twenty-five years of my life wanting more structure, and the last twenty-five years of my life realizing that structure is freedom."

Grace disciplines our lives. Grace trains us in the school of holiness. There are some "No-No's" in this school which we must learn to renounce ("ungodliness and worldly lusts") but also some good things that grace introduces into our lives for God's grace teaches us how to live "soberly, righteously, and godly." The full implications of the message of grace moves us to sanctification and separation from the world. Even saving grace, Christ hanging on the cross (Titus 2:11), teaches us that God hates sin and so should we! When the Christian truly appreciates this grace, it teaches or instructs him to deny ungodliness and live godly. In other words, when we possess gratitude toward saving grace, it results in holy living. The Scriptures repeatedly conclude that every facet of grace frees us from living in bondage and slavery to sin (Rom. 6:1-23).

Think of it this way. When grace is misunderstood *license* is the result (Rom. 6:1-2; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). When grace is understood *liberty* is the result (Titus 2:11-14; Rom. 6:14; 2 Cor. 3:3,18). When grace is ignored, *legalism* is the result (Acts 15:1; Romans 7:7-25). Both extremes (license and legalism) must be avoided. On the one hand, people abuse their liberty and use grace as an excuse to do whatever they want, living without any godly standards or restraints (antinomianism).

On the other hand, there are those who believe spirituality and victory is obtained through following a specific checklist and their "set" or checklist or rules is the true set. In this case, the Spirit's power and inner transformation (a grace relationship)

is often overlooked and exchanged for rules and regulations (a legal relationship). Paul would conclude that we must guard ourselves from the system of sanctification through legalism (Rom. 7:14-25), compliance to a law principle, but also from the competitive “holier-than-thou” spirit behind legalism (2 Cor. 10;12).

Paul confirmed in Philippians 1:21, “For to me to live is Christ...” The ruling, governing, and regulatory principle of our lives should be our relationship with Christ. Out of this love relationship (not a legal relationship) flows love, new desires, transformation, and victory (Gal. 2:20). Paul did not say, “For me to live are lists, rules, and endless regulations.” He based His life on the grace way for transformation and victory – not the legal way. Of course, this is not to say that a list per say is wrong which follows Biblical maxims and directives. What is wrong is when we rely on a list of standards to make us spiritual and victorious and overlook the importance of the Spirit’s transforming power and inner work in our lives (Rom. 8:1-4; 2 Cor. 3:18).



There is a fable of a kite that once said to itself, “If I could just get rid of that man who is holding me back, then I could fly above the clouds and kiss the stars.” One day the string broke. Now at last the kite was free to fly without any restrictions and soar to heights that it had never gone before. But much to its surprise, it did not rise above its present height. The kite had not realized a fact of aerodynamics: the string holding a kite down is the same string holding it up. In a similar way, Biblical standards and directives which are formulated from the

timeless moral principles of the Word of God, do not hinder our Christian liberty or freedom because they seemingly hold us down. On the contrary, good Biblical guidelines or standards, when applied to our lives and coupled with the Spirit’s power, can keep us from collapsing in our spiritual walk. Good Biblical standards actually hold us up while at the same time they hold us down!

There is a twofold problem. Some of the brethren may establish strong Biblical directives for living while at the same time sidestepping God’s inner transforming

power to obtain victory. However, other brethren have ditched Scriptural directives and forgotten that living “under grace” does include the disciplines of grace. Let us remember that God would never save us by grace so we could live in disgrace. Grace teaches us to live differently and acts as a moral directive for our lives. Many Christians have a lopsided or warped view of grace. They have forgotten that grace not only liberates them from the law’s condemnation and bondage (Rom. 7:6; 8:15; 2 Cor. 3:17) but also enslaves them to another Master that they must obey (Rom. 6:16, 22; 1 Cor. 7:22; James 1:1; Col. 4:1).

Because believers are Christ's slaves living under grace they are restricted by the wishes of their Lord and Master. Many want to celebrate the liberation that grace brings into their lives but forget about the purifying impact that grace is to have upon their lives (2 Cor. 7:1). As we have seen, grace places constraint and control over our lives and teaches us to live godly and righteously in the present world (Titus 2:12). Grace reforms our lives (Rom. 6:1-14).

While living under grace, Philippians 1:10 reminds us that we should “approve things that are excellent.” The word “approve” means to discern, examine, and test with the sense of approval. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 declares that we are to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” The “things that are excellent” refer to holy, righteous, good, wholesome, the best things, the superior things! Excellence and superiority should be practiced in our personal lives and church ministries as “able ministers of the new covenant” (2 Cor. 3:6).

Lehman Strauss wrote:

“As we develop in this gift of discernment there is a growing appreciation of those things that are best in God’s eyes as set forth in His Word, and that becomes the finest quality of Christian character.”

There are always those who interpret grace as meaning license or freedom to do as one pleases. In one sense, this is true if we are allowing grace to free us from sin and discipline our lives. However, we need to be careful of “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude vs. 4). Some characterize grace as total freedom to imbibe their flesh, but when a person comes to this conclusion, they are brought under bondage (2 Pet. 2:19). The Bible teaches that grace is not a sanction for sin! On the contrary, grace provides us with freedom from sin (John 8:36). Grace frees us to obey (“yield yourselves servants to obey” - Rom. 6:16).

Ernest Pickering has wisely said:

“The New Testament is not all about what we can do, but it is also about what we cannot do.”

There is plenty of Grace-Age instruction which enables us to discipline our lives. God has summoned His people to live separate from pagans and the culture within a pagan society (2 Cor. 6:14-17). This is the doctrine of Bible separation – not legalism. All true separation has a five-fold characteristic: 1) It is God-directed (Rom. 6:11-13; 12:1; Col. 3:23-24, 1 Pet. 2:9); 2) It is Word-informed (John 17:17; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17; Ps. 119:9, 11, 24, 99); 3) It is Spirit-empowered (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16; 23; 25); 4) It is Grace-motivated (Rom. 6:14-15; Titus 2:10-12); 5) It is Christ-centered (Rom. 7:4; 13:14; Phil. 1:21; 3:10).

We cannot solve the problem of legalism by abolishing all standards and laws. It's true that God has not given us 613 specific and very intricate commandments under the Grace Dispensation. This means there is some latitude in the believer's conduct and decision-making process regarding days, diets, and more contemporary issues that related to Christianity (Roman 14). However, there are hundreds of commands, instructions, and accountability that are part of living under grace that have a moral and ethical base, and which cannot be ignored (Rom. 13:1; 8-10; 1 Cor. 4:2; 11:14; 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 3:1-3; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; 2 John 1:6). They are commands that must be followed in relation to the new grace arrangement through the Spirit's enablement and power. Where actions and entertainments are amoral in nature, freedom and liberty exists. Furthermore, the focus of grace living and our grace relationship with Christ (Rom. 7:4; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 3:10) is not to be lived out by a strict checklist of dos and don'ts.

R.B. Ouellette once said:

“Behind every policy we implement there should be a principle from the Bible, and behind each principle there should be a Person we are trying to please – the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Grace is sometimes viewed and interpreted to mean that Christians should live with a type of “radical individualism” without any regulatory principles, rules, commands, guidelines, accountability, and discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:1) which ultimately lacks reverential fear toward God (Heb. 12:28). This mindset sidesteps the meaning of “living under grace” according to New Testament

revelation for grace disciplines people in godly living – not godless living. This radicalized form of grace also ignores how God’s New Testament Scriptures (“the perfect law of liberty” – James 1:25), which highlight the moral aspect of God’s law, is directed toward Christianity and should be used in concert with the Holy Spirit to grant us guidance and victory. Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones correctly observed:

“Nothing is more dangerous than to put a wedge between the Word and the Spirit, to emphasize either one at the expense of the other. It is the Spirit and the Word, the Spirit upon the Word, and the Spirit in us as we read the Word.”

The same spiritual results between the filling of the Spirit and being filled with the Word of God (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16) would suggest that the Spirit never works contrary to the Word of God. As believers, we are no longer under the law of bondage, but we are under the law of liberty - liberty to do what is right (James 2:12). In fact, when grace is working in our hearts we can actually do what we want because what we want will be according to the Word and Spirit.

Here is the important distinction. When living “under grace” we should follow all the New Testament commands as a result of the Spirit’s teaching ministry (John 16:13) and under the internal working of the new nature and the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25). The liberty that saving and sanctifying grace brings into our lives is not only “freedom to do” (freedom to live outside the minute Mosaic law regulations) but also “freedom not to do” (a new liberty to live separate from the world and free from the power of sin – 1 John 2:15-17). Much of what is occurring today in local churches under the guise of worship, among other things, can be identified as “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4). It’s not the real fire!

Legalism (a law relationship) is not necessarily created from a list or code of conduct. It’s how we view the list that makes the difference. Are we depending upon specific rules and regulations to give us the power to live a holy life and transform us. The problem is not so much with the list that might make Biblical statements and declare a solid Biblical stand theologically and regarding clear violations of sanctified living. The problem is with the heart. We should not base our victory and walk or relationship with Christ on a checklist. We don’t live by legality but a love relationship with the Lord (Rom. 7:4) and the Spirit’s power to

transform our lives. We don't need a new list but the "newness of the spirit" (Rom. 7:6).

John Miles, the president of the Grand Rapids School of Bible & Music wrote about standards and rules. He said: "Rules are made in times of quiet to protect and guide us in times of stress. Rules are simply goals, fulfilled through God's power, that can help discipline and direct us to God-honoring lives. Rules can make group living more pleasant, declare a stand, and help establish order in lives that are undisciplined."

Some Christians have taken the freedom that grace has brought and turned it into a license to sin (Gal. 5:13; Rom. 6:1-2). The instruction and discipline of grace does not grant us a free-for-all lifestyle. Living under grace results in believers practicing holiness (1 Pet. 1:14-16), respecting their bodies as the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20), repudiating fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11), refusing to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2), and proving all things (1 Thess. 5:21). Holiness is the outgrowth of grace. A believer can violate the principle of transforming grace when they engage in ungodly living and lustful practices. In their quest to be free and open to everything, they begin to lose their true liberty in Christ.

Dr. Wendell Heller once said:

"We have our minds so open our brains are falling out."

Imagine that you owned a fine cafeteria. One day you hear this tremendous commotion out in the alley where the garbage dumpsters are. You open the back door to see what's going on, and you see the most pitiful-looking human being you have ever seen in your life. There is a man fighting with several stray cats over the food scraps in the dumpster. He is a virtual living skeleton. It's obvious that he has been living on the edge of starvation, and probably has been for a long time. There is nothing about this fellow to provoke you to like him or express affection to, but you are moved to pity.

"Hey, hey!" you yell. "Get out of the garbage. Don't eat that stuff! Come over here." Let's say the fellow trudges over to you, half-seeing you through hopeless eyes. "Listen," you say, "I can't stand to see you eating garbage like that. Come into my cafeteria and eat." "But I don't have any money," is the man's reply. "It doesn't matter," you say. "My chain of restaurants have done very well, and I can

afford it. I want you to eat here every day from now on, absolutely free of charge!" You take his arm and lead him inside the restaurant.

The fellow couldn't believe his eyes. He had never seen food like this before: vegetables, salads, fruits, beef, fish, chicken, cakes, pies... In my wildest dreams, he had never even imagined such things could be so. The fellow looked at you intently and asked, "Are you saying I can eat anything I want?" "Yes, anything." "Really, ANYTHING I want." "Yes, I said anything you want." Then slowly, with a gleam in his eye, he asked, "Can I eat some garbage?"

Now what would you think of this man? You would think he was insane, wouldn't you? In the face of all this delicious food, the man could only think to ask whether or not he could eat garbage. But it's the same thing when people ask if they can sin away their lives because they are living under grace.

Romans 6:1 is a rhetorical question:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

Paul reacts: "God forbid" (Rom. 6:2). Let it never be! Perish the thought! This is because grace sanctifies and disciplines our lives resulting in God's glory. When people are saved by grace and introduced to the indwelling life of Christ and influenced by the work of the Holy Spirit, they will not want to play with the garbage of the old life. They will not want to live in the garbage dumpster for the rest of their lives! They will want to eat the glorious transforming fruits of grace and enjoy the blessings of grace as illustrated by the Old Testament love scene: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love" (Song of Solomon 2:4).

The Grace Relationship

The Bible teaches that when we are transferred from living "under law" to living "under grace" (Rom. 6:14) it means our old condemning and powerless relationship with the Mosaic law, even the moral law of God (Rom. 7:7), has been severed (Rom. 7:3 – "free from that law") and a new spiritual relationship with Christ has emerged ("married to another" – Rom. 7:4). Grace brings a Christian into a new loving relationship with Jesus Christ (not a legal relationship) which releases the believing sinner from his relationship to the law of God ("dead to the law" – Rom. 7:4; Gal.

2:19) that once condemned him for sinning, while at the same time enslaved him to sin (“the motions of sins, which were by the law” - Rom. 7:5).



This means the law stirs up the activities of sin (“the motions of sins, which were by the law” - Rom. 7:5) and reveals us as sinners (“for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin” - 3:20). It’s like the sign that reads, “Fresh Paint - Do Not Touch.” The sign stimulates us to touch the paint and see if it’s wet or dry. The law became a stimulus to sin (“the strength of sin is the law” – 1 Cor. 15:56) since the old nature naturally rebels against a righteous standard (Rom. 8:3). As a result, this old condemning relationship with the law also became an enslaving relationship to sin and one which could provide no deliverance. The only way to be rescued from our state of condemnation in sin’s power was to be placed in Christ and receive the Spirit’s transforming ministry and live “after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1).

John Bunyan said:

“Run, John, run, the law commands
But gives us neither feet nor hands.
Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings.”

The wings of grace relate to God’s delivering power (Isa. 40:31). I’m reminded that trying to live the Christian life without the grace of God would be like trying to catch a feather in a hurricane. It would be impossible (2 Cor. 9:8).

Although grace was experienced in the Old Testament it “appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11) in a new and marvelous way under the New Covenant. The dispensational difference from the New Testament perspective is that we are no longer living under the old administration of the Mosaic law with all of its shadows, pictures, types, legal obligations, requirements, and curses. Relationally, our condemnation under the law and bondage to the law’s requirements for perfection ends when we place faith in Christ. Romans 10:4 concludes: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

Through grace we have been delivered from our law relationship that demanded perfection but gave no power or assistance to live according to God’s holy standard (“delivered from the law” - Rom. 7:4-6). We have been freed from a condemning and powerless relationship with the law and have now been given a grace relationship with Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 3:10) which not only saves but sanctifies us, granting us the inward power to live victoriously through the Spirit’s abiding presence (Rom. 8:1-4; John 7:37-39).

From the perspective of salvation and sanctification we have been released from every aspect of the law – ceremonially, civilly, and morally (Col. 2:16; Gal. 5:18). We are not obligated to use the law as a path to salvation or provision for holy living. This is a wrong use of the Mosaic code. We are no longer relationally bound to a system that cannot produce salvation before God (Rom. 3:21-22; Phil. 3:9) or righteous living (Rom. 6:14; 8:3-4). We are now relationally bound to Christ (Rom. 14:8; 1 Cor. 7:22) whose life gives us the promise of liberty and hope from condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2) and sin’s power (John 8:36) through the Spirit’s life of transforming work (Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 3:18). These are the predominant grace features and realities related to New Testament Christianity and living.

Today grace believers are given the privilege to live “under grace” (Rom. 6:14) and we are not “under the law” (Gal. 5:18). Although God’s grace was functioning throughout the Old Testament times in that it provided salvation for people (Rom. 4:3) and God showed grace to His people (Ex. 33:13; 34:6-7), it began to function in some new sense during the present dispensation.



A new sacrifice (“a new and living way” – Heb. 10:20) and a new working of the Holy Spirit (“newness of spirit” - Rom. 7:6) were introduced that magnifies the working of God’s grace. Grace is the Golden Rule that is to direct and transform the lives of present-day believers. Our new mode of living, sphere of existence, and motivation for living is said to be “under grace” in that a new arrangement for both salvation and godly living has been introduced in the present economy or Dispensation of the Church. It is a brand-new arrangement of grace that now governs and guides our lives as New Testament saints.

Earl Radmacher said:

“To be under grace means we are living under a new administration from God, with a new set of principles with grace as its focus.”

Living “under” something such as grace (Rom. 6:14-15) indicates a rule or principle of life under which people place themselves and the regulatory precept that they allow to direct their lives. Living under something means to subject oneself to its assistance, power, rule, direction, and regulation. Living under grace indicates how saints govern their lives today and what force and power they allow to motivate and direct them in all their daily decisions and actions. It’s clear. New Covenant Gospel believers have been given the great privilege to live under the grace system and not the law system of condemnation and slavery to sin.

George Zeller comments:

“If the law is a ‘MINISTRATION OF DEATH’ (2 Cor. 3:6-9) then how can it be the believer’s rule of life? If the law has been ‘done away’ (2 Cor. 3:11) and ‘abolished’ (2 Cor. 3:13; Eph. 2:15) and ‘disannulled’ (Heb. 7:18-19) and ‘taken away’ (Heb. 10:9 and compare Heb. 8:6-13), then how can a believer be under the law as a rule of life?”

We might add, why would anyone want to place themselves under law (legalism) as a rule of life. Placing yourself under law means damnation and defeat! You experience fear and bondage when living under the rule and iron thumb of the law instead of living under grace which leads to life, security, liberty, and spiritual transformation.

God’s law does not grade on a curve! It cries out, “Guilty” and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). As a result of our guilt we are condemned to die the sinner’s death and live under enslavement to sin. We have no hope under law. Our only hope is to be transferred into the realm of grace.

Today grace is the basis for our salvation and Christian living. Our salvation, security, sanctification, and spiritual growth are all based upon the grace principle (Eph. 2:8-9, Gal. 5:18; Titus 2:11-12; 2 Pet. 3:18). Our rule of life focuses on grace and not law. Grace is the method or way that God deals with the believer in relation to his salvation, service, and sanctification. Therefore, all New Testament believers are to be “grace believers” who have experienced God’s saving grace, through Christ’s death on the cross, but who also are experiencing His sanctifying grace in their lives.

Being “under grace” in Romans chapter six is referencing our union with Christ’s death burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-15). Our sanctification or holiness is based upon our union and new identity with Christ. Romans 6:15, “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” Why? It’s because grace frees us from power of indwelling sin through union with Christ (His death, burial, and resurrection). Both aspects of saving and sanctifying grace in the Christian life are unique to New Covenant believers. We must affirm our grace relationship with Christ and let God work within us (Phil. 2:13) “until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). This is the secret of the spiritual life. If any progress is to be made God must do it for we are “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

C.H. Mackintosh said:

“As to the believer’s rule of life, the apostle does not say, ‘To me to live is the law;’ but, ‘To me to live is Christ’ (Phil. 1:21). Christ is our rule, our model, our touchstone, our all.”

To state is succinctly, living “under grace” (Rom. 6:14) and the believer’s rule of life highlights our union and identity with Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; Col. 2:12) and the victory we have through His life-flowing resurrection power which is revealed to us through the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2; Phil. 1:19). The Spirit internalizes God’s moral code in our hearts (Rom. 8:4) and empowers us in daily living (Gal. 5:18, 25). It’s the Spirit and Christ working in concert with one another that becomes the unique grace features of the Grace Dispensation. In a specific way, living under grace therefore means that Christ and the Spirit’s ministry within us is the focus, force, and dominating feature that motivates our lives and maintains our spirituality.

The Spirit (Christ’s replacement – John 14:16, 27) came to reveal the life of Christ to us (John 14:18, 20; 16:14) on a daily and moment-by-moment basis. Christ’s personal presence, power, and complete provision (John 1:16; Col. 2:10) is revealed to us through the Spirit’s revelation of Christ’s saving and sanctifying work in our lives. With the Spirit’s help, we experience a personal and dynamic relationship with Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 3:10; 2 Cor. 12:9). The Spirit’s life and Christ life are inseparably bound together as we live under grace.

Again, the grace of God was found throughout the Old Testament in the sacrificial system of atonement (Gen.3:21; Heb. 9:22) which pointed to the coming grace of Jesus Christ as prophesied by the prophets of old (1 Pet. 10). Genesis 6:8 says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." The law of Moses did not nullify the promise of salvation by faith through grace (Gal. 3:14-17). God can't reveal Himself without revealing something of His grace. However, we can be absolutely certain that both the *message* and *means* of grace experienced by believers today (Grace Age believers) is vastly different than what was experienced during the Old Covenant under the Mosaic law.

The Old Testament saints under the Old Covenant lived in the shadows ("a shadow of good things to come" – Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17). They lived under a sacrificial system that could only temporarily cover but not take away sins (Heb. 10:3-4), The Old Covenant could not provide positional and permanent forgiveness and acceptance before God's throne (Heb. 8:12). Their basis of forgiveness and imputed righteousness (Rom. 4:1-8) was *anticipated* before the death of Christ (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Gal. 3:8; Isa. 53:10-12) but *actualized* in the death of Christ (Heb. 9:14-15). In other words, God's grace in the Old Testament was applied to believers in anticipation of the full revelation of the grace in Jesus Christ. In Him God's salvation truth was fully revealed and accomplished (John 1:17; 19:30).



Old Covenant saints were saved, regenerated, and justified on the basis of looking forward to Christ's death while New Covenant believers are saved, regenerated, and justified (reckoned righteous) through the actual sacrifice Christ and their unique grace position in Christ (Rom. 8:1). Under the New Covenant we enjoy the full Light of the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ who "has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). We enjoy grace in a new way. The New Covenant delivered the actual promises which were hidden in the murky shadows and symbolism (types) under the Old Covenant.

The New Covenant is a "better covenant" with "better promises" (Heb. 8:6-12) instead of the incomplete and shadowy promises of the Old Covenant which eventually gave way to the fuller and more glorious promises of the New Covenant.

As New Covenant believers, we must remember that there is a better way! There is a better sacrifice, better promises, and better provisions. Isaac Watts, the great 18th century English hymn writer and preacher knew that the New Covenant was better than the Old Covenant. He wrote:

“Not all the blood of beasts, On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, Or wash away its stain.
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name, And richer blood than they.”

William MacDonald writes:

“Christ’s ministry is infinitely better. He offered Himself, not an animal. He presented the value of His own blood, not the blood of bulls and goats. He put away sins, not merely covered them. He gave believers a perfect conscience, not an annual reminder of sins. He opened the way for us to enter into the presence of God, not to stand outside at a distance.”

We might also add that under the New Covenant God would put God’s law in the hearts of the people in a new and unique way through the Spirit’s dynamic internal ministry (Heb. 8:12; Rom. 8:4; Eph. 3:20). God would write the moral law in the hearts of His people, something that was permanent and perpetual, in conjunction with the Spirit’s new work. God also through the Spirit’s New Covenant work gradually and conforms His saints into His moral likeness through progressive sanctification which was something not possible under the Old Covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of the wonderful transforming nature of grace:

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (*a mirror*) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Oswald Chambers said:

“God's grace turns out men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not milksops.”

The secret of experiencing Christlikeness (“changed into the same image”) during the Grace Dispensation is the ministry of the Holy Spirit who progressively works in our hearts to make us more like Jesus Christ. We are changed from one expression

of His glory to another, meaning we are progressively changed into the beauty and splendor of Christ's likeness through character change, increased faith, fruitfulness, and general spiritual growth.

So as we look in the mirror we are to see a reflection of the "the glory of the Lord" or different manifestations of Christ's radiant beauty and splendor (glory) occurring in our lives! This is grace at work! It's part of the New Covenant work of the Spirit taking place in our lives. This Christlike transformation is not a matter of instant change. There is no experience in the Christian life that will reproduce His image in a moment. It is a process, not a crisis experience. It is a gradual but ever-increasing glory that occurs "by the Spirit of the Lord."

Grace is transformative. Grace therefore refers to how God influences His people inwardly to do His will and become more like Christ. Grace not only provides the motive but the power to live for the Lord.

The Old Covenant revealed what we ought to be – what God demands of us but does not provide us with the delivering and transformative power. However, the New Covenant reveals what we possess in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:3) and enables us to become more like Christ through the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. Moses had an external glory that faded away, but New Covenant saints possess a glory that continues to blossom in the hearts and lives of God's saints. The New Covenant with the saving provisions of Christ's death on the cross, with the provisions of the Spirit's work and ministry (internally, powerfully, transformationally) are fully realized in the lives of New Covenant saints.

The law or legal system on tablets of stone could only produce ugly ducklings but the grace system can produce transforming swans of beauty that resemble Christ ("changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" – 2 Cor. 3:18).

As told my John MacArthur: "You remember the story of the 'Ugly Duckling?' I'm sure you probably do. Let me refresh your memory. He was more awkward and less attractive than the ducks he grew up beside, and so they ridiculed his differences. Fleeing their abuse, he took shelter in a home whose pets were a chicken and a cat.



He was rejected there, too, because he couldn't lay eggs like a hen, and he couldn't purr like a kitten. 'You just don't understand me,' he told them, but he was treated only with scorn. Then one day he beheld the graceful and elegant swans, the most beautiful birds he had ever seen, and a strange feeling came over him.

"He turned somersaults in the water. He stretched his neck trying to follow their flight. And he uttered a cry so loud that it frightened him. When he finally lost sight of them, he dived right down to the very bottom of the water, and when he came up, he was quite beside himself. He had no idea what the birds were called or where they were going. He only knew that he loved them as he had never loved anything before. Another winter came, with all its struggles, and at last spring melted the ice of the ponds. And as the ugly duckling was swimming, he saw again two of those beautiful birds. They swam straight toward him, and the closer they came, the more frightened he became. And then when such beauty was right in front of him, he bowed his head in humility and covered his face with his wings.

"However, when he bowed his head, he saw his own reflection in the water for the very first time, and in speechless amazement, he saw that he, too, was a swan. He was no longer an ugly duckling. Slowly uncovering his wings from his face, he lifted his head from the pond. He didn't raise it proudly and high as an ostrich would, but humbly as a swan, slightly bent over in an expression of gratitude. Then he swam off with his fellow swans."

The fable of the Ugly Duckling illustrates the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant written on stones which had no saving or transforming power to deliver sinful people (Rom. 3:19-20; 8:3). Under the New Covenant, God saves a person by grace and then sanctifies the same person by grace, working from the inside through the permanent residency of the Holy Spirit to bring about beautiful Christlike change in their lives. The law never could deliver people from their ugly duckling state, but grace can!

The Grace Dispensation

Grace believers live during a new era of time called "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph. 3:2) which is actually a new stewardship or economy, a specific way that God has chosen to work to fulfill His purposes related to the Church. Today in the new administration God is revealing His grace in an open, new, fresh, distinct, and

dynamic way in the death of Christ on the cross and in the lives of God's New Testament saints. We do not live according to the law principle but the grace governing principle. This is because the law could not produce salvation or sanctification (Rom. 3:28; 8:1-4). Therefore, it was necessary to release the believer from the law and replace the law with something new – the “new covenant” (1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:15), the “new and living way” or a fresh and recent sacrifice in Christ (Heb. 10:20), “the newness of the spirit” (Rom. 7:6), and “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The Grace Dispensation emphasizes the significance of new things (2 Cor. 5:17) in relationship to God's new work and manifestation of grace in the lives and hearts of people today.

John 1:16-17 introduces the newness of this Grace Dispensation:

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

We should know something of what it means to live in the grace and truth that Jesus Christ brought (John 14:6). This includes not only the truth that grace saves us from start to finish without law or legalism (Rom. 3:28), providing eternal forgiveness and free justification before God (Rom. 3:24), but also the truth that grace supplies us with power to live victoriously and differently in our Christian life. I suspect that John in verses 16-17 may have intended several ideas from this Greek preposition “anti” since it can mean several things (instead, for, upon, in exchange). He could have been thinking of God's grace in Jesus Christ superseding His grace through Moses (the sacrificial system). This understanding fits well with John 1:17 where grace and truth are said to have come through Jesus Christ. In other words, God's New Covenant grace in Christ has replaced the Old Covenant expression of grace through the sacrificial system (“New Testament grace in Christ *instead* of the Old Testament grace system”).

On the other hand, John may also be conveying in John 1:16 that a continuous flow of grace (a maximized and uninterrupted form of grace) would be manifested in the lives of New Covenant believers in replenishing them with power and assistance in their daily living (“grace for grace”) through the “fulness” (pleroma) of God (Eph. 4:13; Col. 2:9-10). This is made possible for Christ brought the



revelation of grace and truth into the world (John 1:17) so we could share in the new blessings of grace (the *pleroma* of God) as New Covenant saints.

One manifestation of the unmerited favor of God in Christ is hardly gone when another one arrives (“grace upon grace”). It is grace piled upon grace. The sense would be that we have received the fullness of blessing (“grace upon grace”) from the one who is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Because “all the fullness (*pleroma*) of Godhead (Deity) dwelleth bodily” (Col. 2:9) in Christ He provides the “fulness” (*pleroma*) we need as God’s people (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 4:12–13; Col. 1:28; 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3). This abundant supply will never be exhausted or diminished.

I suspect that John may have intended both these concepts of grace. God’s grace in Jesus Christ would supersede His grace through Moses (the sacrificial system) but at the same time it would continue to supply grace to the Christian day by day in a variety of new ways. Christ’s entrance into the world was the full revelation of grace and truth to all mankind but He expresses a continual flow of grace to His saints in a new, special, and dynamic way. The Christian life is the constant reception of one evidence of God’s grace replacing another. Sometimes in very challenging and life-changing circumstances we must find the grace we never knew or experienced before in our lives (2 Cor. 12:9; James 4:6).

John Phillips states:

“God’s grace is like a mighty Niagara, thundering unendingly out of eternity into our hearts. That is something no Old Testament prophet ever imagined.”

Yes, today as New Covenant believers we have a new arrangement and awareness of God’s grace working in our hearts and lives. The expression “grace for grace” (grace upon grace) conveys the idea of continuous replacement, perpetual replenishment - one measure of grace replenishing the other in ever greater quantities. Grace follows grace like ocean wave follows wave, washing on the shore of the lives of believers’ successive blessings.

This reminds us that we cannot live on yesterday’s grace. We need a new batch of grace for today and the next day. The wonderful thing is that God is always there providing us with the grace to live for Him. God’s ocean of grace is more than enough to take us through life spiritual supplied and victorious. Christians living under the New Covenant receive grace and then more grace—grace served on top of grace—grace and then, in place of that, even more grace! The point is that Christ

is full of grace, and those who know Him get showered with His grace to help them live a victorious and transformed life.

The “gravity of grace” works like the earth’s water system, which always flows from the highest to the lowest point. Just as the waters of Niagara roll over the fall and plunge down to make a river below, and just as that river flows ever downward to still more low-lying areas where it brings life and growth, so too it is with God’s river of grace (Jn 7:38, 39). Grace’s gravity carries it to the lowly in heart, where it brings life and blessing. Grace goes to the humble (James 4:6).

2 Timothy 2:1 speaks of God’s strengthening grace:

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace (*the strengthening grace*) that is in Christ Jesus.”

2 Corinthians 4:15

“For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace (*strengthening and enabling grace*) might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”

Jesus said, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9). Hebrews 4:15 reminds us “that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15). God’s grace keeps pace with whatever we face! Old age, pity, blame, bitterness, fear (generated by economical struggles, fading health, losing a mate) can be replaced with grace for today (John 1:16; 2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 1:7) and bright hope for tomorrow (2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

R.B. Ouellette wrote:

“If you are not delivered from your troubles (circumstantially or physically), you can still be delivered in them (spiritually and victoriously - Ps. 46:1). Rest in God’s grace and allow it to be sufficient for whatever you need (2 Cor. 12:9). Be willing to change your prayers and accept God’s answer.”

What’s abundantly clear is that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, He dishes out grace in heaping, huge servings (“grace for grace” – John 1:16) so we can experience the new grace dynamic of God’s power, strength, and unceasing spiritual provision (Phil. 2:13). Grace always gives and provides a way of deliverance or escape (1 Cor. 13:10).

“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase.
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His pow'r has no boundary known unto men.
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.”

James 4:6

“**But he giveth more grace** (strengthening, enabling, victorious, and transforming grace). **Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud** (those who are self-reliant, self-righteous, and live independent of God and for selfish pleasures), **but giveth grace unto the humble**” (those who admit they are empty and recognize their need for grace and God’s help).

Grace is the way out of your sin and trouble! There is no other way but the grace way. If you are in need of grace, humble yourself before God, and rely totally upon Him to supply you with the grace you need in the moment that you need it.

“He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father’s full giving is only begun.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.?

Spurgeon again comments:

“A man may have too much money or honor, but he cannot have too much grace.”

Grace changes lives. Grace changes everything! We need to stop living in a world of make-believe and start living in a world of grace!

Hebrews 4:16 gives this summons:

“Let us therefore come boldly (*confidently, openly, with assurance, without reservation*) unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

God’s throne is no longer a throne of wrath for the Gospel believer but a throne of grace and mercy because of the justifying grace of Jesus Christ giving us full acceptance and peace before God (Rom. 5:1). In a very practical way, we need to take time throughout the course of the day to focus on Christ, remember His love, quote a promise and by faith receive the grace needed for that hour. Yes, we can find the grace we need for every trial and in every moment. God’s grace never runs dry but is like a well continually bubbling up to supply our spiritual needs (John 4:14).

Jerry Bridges wrote:

“Our worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God’s grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God’s grace.”

There is a refrain in an older hymn that goes like this:

“Not to the strong is the battle, not to the swift is the race,
Yet to the true and the faithful vict’ry is promised thro’ grace.”

Romans 8:37 triumphantly proclaims that “we are more than conquerors (super conquerors) through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37). This means our “in Christ” position provides us with victory over death, damnation, and the Devil. We are victors through grace! We triumph through Christ (2 Cor. 2:14). As someone said, “we make slaves out of our enemies and stepping stones out of our roadblocks.”

Someone else said:

“We are born the first time as losers; we are born the second time and we are conquerors.”

With this in mind, confess your spiritual bankruptcy to God and receive by faith the strengthening and victorious grace that you need for acceptable living and service.

There is no reason to dry up when we have an ever-flowing stream of grace that comes from the throne room of God where we are seated in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6) and are given the spiritual blessing or riches of His grace. In short, there is plenty of grace to go around. Grace is associated with “the power of Christ” and God’s sufficiency and carries the promise to meet our needs on every level (“for when I am weak, then am I strong” - 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Pastor David Thompson, my homiletical instructor, concluded:

“Since the prominent feature of the Grace Age is indwelling Holy Spirit, we may naturally conclude that Grace Age life which pleases God will be uniquely in line with the supernal Divine enablement of infinite power.”



The special transforming feature of the Grace Dispensation is to experience the work of the Holy Spirit’s permanent indwelling (John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9) which involves empowering us to live victoriously and courageously (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:4 Ga. 5:16; Eph. 3:20) while transforming us into the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). God’s enabling and victorious grace always provides a way of

escape for us (1 Cor. 10:13). The Age of Grace is the Age of the Spirit (“the ministration of the spirit” – 2 Cor. 3:8) – not the “ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3:7). The work of grace occurring in our hearts and lives is based upon the inner work and power of the Holy Spirit.

Charles Spurgeon once said:

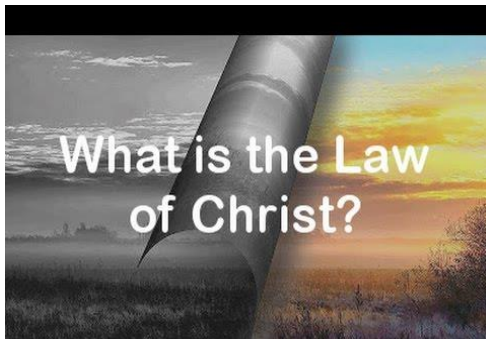
“Sin seeks to enter, grace shuts the door; sin tries to get the mastery, but grace, which is stronger than sin, resists, and will not permit it. Sin gets us down at times, and puts its foot on our neck; grace comes to the rescue ... Sin comes up like Noah’s flood, but grace rides over the tops of the mountains like the ark.”

Sometimes an easy conversation between friends can have ramifications far beyond what either person expects. Such was the case in the summer of 1872 near Dublin, Ireland, when two prominent evangelists were conversing about ministry. The two

men were the British evangelist Henry Varley and the renowned American evangelist Dwight L. Moody.

The morning after an all-night prayer meeting, as the two men strolled around the grounds of the mansion where the meeting had been held, Varley uttered a brief but thought-provoking statement to Moody. This is how it was recorded in his own diaries: “The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.” (Moody responds) “A man! Varley means any man. Varley didn’t say he has to be educated, or brilliant, or anything else. Just a man. Well, by the Holy Spirit in me I’ll be that man.” It’s the new grace feature of the Spirit’s internal work and power that enables us to live victoriously and effectively for God as New Covenant believers.

Grace and the Law of Christ



In the present grace economy or dispensation, we are called upon to follow “the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and not the Law of Moses. The word “law” in Galatians 6:2 refers to a standard, governing principle, precept, or rule of life that highlights the message of loving God and our fellow man which Jesus taught while He was here on earth. The “law of Christ” which under grace is written on our hearts (Rom. 8:4) boils

down to the command to love God wholeheartedly and one’s neighbor as oneself (Matt. 22:36–40; John 13:34–35; 15:12; 1 John 3:23).

Although we are living under grace, the Scriptures clearly tell us that we are also living under “the law of Christ” within this special grace period. The law of Christ is the law of love which fulfills all the rest of God’s law (Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:8, 10). This love is expressed toward Jesus Christ and ultimately toward others. In other words, the believer is bound to love, honor, serve, and please the Lord Jesus, not by the Law of Moses, but by the law of love. The believer is “enlawed” to Christ and from this loving relationship (not a legal relationship) flows all our obedience.

Under grace we are not free to do as we please. Instead, we are under law toward Christ, which means that we will be obedient to God because we love Him. The law

of Christ, which is love, takes the place of the legal restraint which the Mosaic Law had imposed (“I must do this or else”). Love (“I want to do this”) is what should motivate us to follow all of the New Testament commands Christ gave (John 14:15) and which are directed and applicable to the Church.

1 John 5:3

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

The underlying directive under this law of Christ is love – love for the Lord and others. Of course, this expression of love for God and others is spawned or produced by the Holy Spirit for “the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal. 5:18) and “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 5:5). This is the work of God’s grace and not the Mosaic law since the Bible states in Galatians 5:18 that when we are “led of the Spirit” we are “not under the law.” Grace then becomes the answer to how a person can truly love and live according to the moral and righteous standard of the law.

Under Grace or Under Law?

Romans 8:4 once again explains the grace feature in this way:

“That the righteousness of the law (the moral character the law – Rom. 3:8-10) **might be fulfilled in us** (through the Spirit’s inner work of writing and impressing God’s moral code on our hearts), **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (through the Spirit’s daily empowerment to live victoriously).

A legal relationship with the law cannot produce love in the heart or provide any assistance to live a holy life that is honoring to God. Living a fruitful and holy life is solely dependent upon the Spirit’s assistance and work in our hearts. This is New Covenant grace at work in our hearts and lives.

It is a great privilege to be living under grace. The riches of grace our showed upon us today (Eph. 2:7). Let’s reflect on this one more time. In our lost estate we were once living “under the law” (Rom. 3:19). We lived under the slavery, fear, and bondage of the law, which condemned us to Hell and gave



us no power and assistance to live differently. But now we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9) which means that we have been liberated or freed from the fear of being condemned by the law (Rom. 7:3; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:7) and have been transferred into the realm of living “under grace” (Rom. 6:14). This means we possess an indissoluble union with Christ, sharing in the victory He has provided for us so we might be “freed from sin” and its dominion over our lives (Gal. 6:4-14). Romans 6:18, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

In addition, at the moment we were transferred into the realm of living under grace, through being identified with Christ through the Spirit’s baptizing work (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), God’s moral code also becomes internalized in our minds and hearts (2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10). The internalization of the moral character of God’s law within our hearts (not on tables of stones) is the result of the Spirit’s ministry who plants this law within our hearts and then empowers us to live a moral and ethical life (Rom. 8:4). Grace believers have a new incentive and power which has never before been experienced.

If this is not enough, the Holy Spirit also reveals the life of Jesus Christ to us for Jesus said that through the Spirit’s New Covenant ministry, “I will come to you” (John 16-18). In other words, the Spirit would reveal the life of Christ to us which consists of His inward personal presence and fellowship, His power, and Christ’s daily provision (John 15:1-11). Our marriage to Christ is a love relationship – not a legal relationship. Our marriage to the law was a bad marriage. That partner has died, and we are severed from the old relationship and are now married and joined to Christ in a saving and sanctifying union (Rom. 7:4-6). We are now married to Christ (Rom. 7:4), under His law of love (Gal. 6:2), and possess a loving relationship with Him (Phil. 1:21; 3:10) that seeks to obey God out of love instead of the fear and dread of condemnation under the law. The old relationship we had with the law has died and a new relationship has emerged with Christ (Gal. 2:20).



We have mentioned this already. There is a dynamic duo occurring in our hearts while living under grace. No, it’s not Batman and Robin! Paul explains that the transforming work of our union with Christ is a work of grace (Rom. 6:1-14), which is ultimately experienced through the Holy Spirit, who makes the risen life and ministry of Jesus

Christ come alive to each one of us (Rom. 7:6; 8:3-4). Romans 6:14 (the Christ life) along with Galatians 5:18 (the Spirit's life) informs us that the Holy Spirit reveals the victorious power and life of Jesus Christ to us (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10). The Spirit is Christ's replacement (John 14:16, 27) and He came to reveal the life of Christ to us (John 14:18, 20; 16:14), His presence, power, and spiritual provisions, so we can experience our saving, sanctifying and all-sufficient supply in Jesus Christ (Col. 2:10) and have personal relationship with Him on a daily and moment-by-moment (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 3:10).

The grace transaction of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, placing us in Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:13), bringing us into a vital union with Christ, and revealing the wonder of His saving and sanctifying grace in our lives (Rom. 6:14), is captured in one of the great hymns of the faith.

“Dying with Jesus, by death reckoned mine;
Living with Jesus a new life divine;
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine,
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.”

The Spirit's life and Christ life are inseparably bound together as we live under grace. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit work together, like a dynamic duo in “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19) and “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2) which consist of the Spirit's regeneration and a new way of life made possible through identification with Christ's resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5, 11). When the Spirit's power and assistance is mentioned (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:18) it also becomes a reflection of Christ's power and sufficiency (2 Cor. 12:9) for the Spirit is showing us the Son and our abiding relationship with Him (John 15:1-3). Thus, we can sing:

“New life in Christ, Abundant and free
What glories shine, What joys are mine
What wondrous blessings I see
My past with its sin
The searching and strife forever gone
There's a bright new dawn
For in Christ I have found new life.”

The revised Faussett commentary gives us a helpful note on the dynamic due of Christ and the Spirit working together when it states: “The terms ‘Spirit of God,’ ‘Spirit of Christ,’ and ‘Christ’ are used interchangeably. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ is Christ. “Being ‘in Christ’ and being ‘in the Spirit’ are the same thing; and in the thought of the apostle, ‘Christ,’ ‘the Spirit of Christ,’ and ‘the Spirit of God’ are practically synonymous. At the resurrection Christ became a Life-giving Spirit to mankind” (Somerville). Paul identifies the Spirit of Christ with Christ because Christ indwells his believers through his Spirit.”

Essentially and yet paradoxically, life in the Spirit is life in Christ, living in the sphere of the Spirit is living in the sphere of the Son with the nuance or subtle difference that the Spirit wants us to have a relationship with the Son (Jesus Christ) for we are married to Him, possessing a spiritual union with His life (Rom. 7:4). Christ indwells us through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18; Rom. 8:2, 9; Phil. 1:19) and therefore when we are strong in the grace of Christ (2 Tim. 2:1; 2 Cor. 12:9) it's the result of the Spirit's work who is revealing Christ to the believer (Gal. 2:20). In a wonderful dynamic duo ministry, the Spirit and Christ work together to transform God's New Covenant believer who lives under grace.

The dynamic duo is seen in the prayerful, emotional, doxology of Paul in Ephesians 3:16-19: “**That he** (God the Father) **would grant you, according to the riches of his glory** (God's magnificence and splendor as In Eph. 1:18), **to be strengthened with might** (as in Eph. 1:19-22) **by his Spirit in the inner man** (the Holy Spirit providing spiritual power within our innermost being – our affections, emotions, thinking, and will are controlled by God – Rom 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16); **That Christ may dwell** (be at home, enthroned) **in your hearts by faith** (that through faith or constant dependence on Christ, constant surrender to Him, and constant recognition of His indwelling we might experience Christ's presence, practice the presence of God, allowing Christ to become the dominating factor in our innermost desires, attitude, and thoughts, with the prospect that Christ would feel welcome in our life); **that ye, being rooted and grounded in love** (Christ's love for us – Rom. 5:5), **May be able to comprehend** (grasp) **with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ** (experientially in our hearts and lives), **which passeth** (surpasses, exceeds, immeasurable) **knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God**” (the complete resource of God's presence and power, His moral character being communicated to us through the interworking of the Spirit and Christ – Eph. 1:23).

When it comes to grasping Christ's love for us, F. B. Meyer comments in this way: "There will always be as much horizon before us as behind us. And when we have been gazing on the face of Jesus for millenniums, its beauty will be as fresh and fascinating and fathomless as when we first saw it from the gate of Paradise."

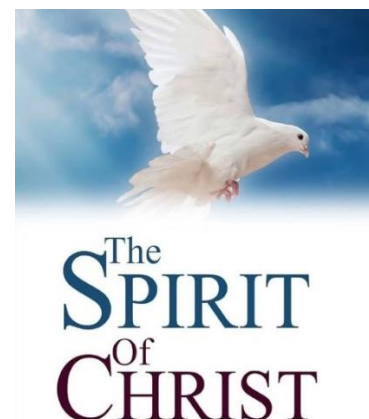
John 14:23

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode (home) with him."

Of course, the experiential nearness of Christ and the Father to the believer who loves Christ can only happen through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who reveals the life of the Father (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) and Christ (John 14:16) to each child of God. To make an "abode" or home is what Ephesians 3:17 teaches. It speaks of nearness and practicing the presence of God through spiritual intimacy and fellowship (2 Cor. 6:18). Although the Holy Spirit is not Christ nor the Father His grace ministry is to reveal their presence to us. In sharing the Godhead with Christ and the Father (1 John 5:7) the Holy Spirit can reveal the unique presence of both Christ and the Father to us and make the entire Godhead come alive to us from a relationship standpoint.

Again, we see how the working of the Spirit and presence of Christ complement one another. Through the inner working of the Holy Spirit the life of Christ is communicated to us as the Spirit and Son work together supplying believers with spiritual power and blessings. Our personal relationship is with Christ (Rom. 7:4; Phil. 3:10) but the Christ life and the Spirit life are inseparable in their outworking for they are both God and share the same powers within the Godhead (Col. 2:9). Christ indwells us through the person of the Holy Spirit for Christ said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

In other words, Christ would indwell His Church through the Spirit's residency (John 14:16-18), but the ministry of the Spirit would represent and reveal Christ's life to each believe and bring them into a relationship with Christ that was intimate, close, and powerful (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10). The interworking of these two members of the Godhead ("the Spirit of Jesus Christ" – Phil. 1:19) express the new



features of God's grace to us – the indwelling moral law of God written on our hearts, indwelling power, God's fullness and sufficiency, a new relationship and motive of love in living and serving the Lord (Romans 6-8).

Carl B. Hoch correctly asserts:

“In conclusion, for Paul life in the Spirit is almost synonymous with life in Christ. To have the one is to have the other. To live in the one is to live in the other. To please the one is to please the other. If Christianity is Christ, it is also the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the other Paraclete. He is the gift par excellence of the risen, ascended, Christ to his church.”

Once again, in Romans chapters 6-7:6 we see Christ's role for Christian living “under grace” (Rom. 6:14-15). It is union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection life so God's children can experience power and victory over sin. After illustrating defeat when not relying on grace (Rom. 7:7-25), Romans 8 quickly returns to grace and amplifies and reinforces chapter 6 emphasizing the Spirit's role under grace. The Holy Spirit internalizes and impresses God's moral code within our heart and supplies us with unlimited power we need for daily living, which is a revelation of Christ living within us. In Romans 6:7-6 we see *victory through grace*, in 7:7-25 we see the *defeat through law*, but in Romans 8 we witness *revival through the Spirit* for a believer who lives under the Spirit's power and daily provision lives in the realm of spirituality, victory, and newness of life.

In summary, God's internal moral code written upon our hearts, along with the ministry of the Spirit and indwelling Christ is the way grace is communicated to New Covenant believers today (2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 7:6; 8:2). These grace features become the hallmarks of the Grace Dispensation and how we live our Christian lives. The Holy Spirit and Christ synergistically work together to provide us with sanctification and victory. The Spirit is the internal love connection between Christ and the believer “for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:14).

The Spirit's fruit is representative of Christ's character being communicated to us (Gal. 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit indwelling our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19) is also a manifestation of Christ indwelling our bodies (Col. 1:27) for both complement one another in their work in the believer. It's the Spirit and Christ and Christ and the Spirit. So God's grace is experienced in a new and dynamic way in the present dispensation.

Paul said the “law was holy” (Rom. 7:12) for it revealed God’s moral character. The New Testament writers never considered the Old Covenant to be bad. The Old Covenant written on stones (representative of the entire law) was simply ineffective. This is because the law could not save or sanctify anyone for that was not the purpose of God’s law (Rom. 3:19-20). It had no ability to produce functional righteousness and godly principles within the heart and life without the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4) The law written on tables of stone was inflexible and insufficient to save and sanctify anyone. This still holds true today. Therefore, to place oneself under the law as a system that cannot not save or sanctify (transform) your life is ludicrous. It’s the grace system that saved and sanctifies our lives. Therefore, you need to be living under the right system, the gracious system, if you want to be saved and experience growth in your Christian life.

Grace and Salvation

As far as salvation is concernce, we were eternally chosen by grace (Rom. 11:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:9), awakened by grace (Acts 18:27), saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), and secured by grace (Rom. 5:21; Tit. 3:7) without any human works. Salvation by grace includes the New Testament teachings regarding God’s election, propitiation, forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, and justification. All of these different aspects relate to our salvation and are a demonstration of God’s sovereign and saving grace upon our lives. Salvation is all of grace!



Titus 3:4 -5

“But after that the kindness (*grace and goodness*) and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration (*a metaphor for the cleansing of our sins – John 3:5*), and renewing (*renovation, complete change*) of the Holy Ghost” (*the Holy Spirit implanting God’s life and natures within us making us into a new creation – 2 Cor. 5:17*).

Regeneration washes away the old element of our sins but also renews us by giving us a new element which is God’s life and a new nature (the divine nature - 2 Pet.

1:4). Both the regenerating and the renewing are produced by the Holy Spirit. This was the result of God's grace being displayed in the world. Our salvation roots are in a definite historical event, "when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared." This occurred when the Lord Jesus appeared in the world over 2,000 years ago.

The appearance that Paul referred to here was Christ's Incarnation. God took the initiative. Christ came into the world to die for sinners and this tremendous act was rooted in God's own kindness, love, and mercy. Through Christ's entrance into the world and death upon the cross He becomes "God our Saviour." The price has been paid so mankind can be saved. God's kindness or grace was motivated by His love and mercy toward sinners.

Romans 5:20 is an amazing statement about God's amazing grace:

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound (*increase and be recognized*). But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (*superabound*).

A. W. Tozer remarked:

"Abounding sin is the terror of the world, but abounding grace is the hope of mankind."

The law system condemns us as sinners to an everlasting Hell, but God's grace revealed in the sacrificial suffering and death of Jesus Christ was greater than our sinfulness and condemnation. The word "abound" means to overflow and this is the nature of grace. What a contrast! No matter how great human sin becomes, God's grace overflows beyond it and abundantly exceeds it. This is why grace can pardon and save the vilest sinner!

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured—
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!"

The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest mentions this about God's grace:

"Grace signified in classical authors, a favor done out of spontaneous generosity of the heart without any expectation or return. Of course, this favor was always done to one's friend and never to an enemy. But when charis comes into the New Testament, it takes an infinite leap forward. For the favor God did it, Calvary was for those who hated Him."

Yes, God's grace expresses love to those who hate Him and who are considered His enemies (Rom. 5:5-8; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). The sacrifice of Christ is the most important grace event that marks the Grace Dispensation. Ephesians 2:8 literally reads, "For by the grace ye have been saved." Looking back to what was previously mentioned about the believer's position in Christ within the heavenlies (Eph. 2:5-6), the article attached to grace ("the grace") is apparently pointing to a new revelation of grace, a new feature about God's grace.

The great emphasis in the present dispensation is upon the grace of God saving a person in view of their position in Christ. It is favor bestowed on the unworthy and undeserving. Grace is seen in the sacrifice of Christ which provides forgiveness, justification, redemption, and salvation for lost mankind as a result of one's positional identity in Christ (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24; Titus 2:11). The riches of God's saving grace are to be the theme of our song today and throughout eternity (Eph. 1:7; 2:7; Rev. 5:12)!

One day we will even be glorified by grace (the final state of our salvation) at the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Rapture - "the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). It's grace from start to finish. Grace takes us from the guttermost and saves us to the uttermost! Yes, we are filled with sinful degradation and wickedness, and we are miserable wretches, but God loves anyway and wants to bring His favor or grace upon our lives despite our sinful depravity.

When the father of Dr. Harry Ironside lay dying, the descending sheet which Peter saw in a vision was dominant in his mind. Over and over he mumbled, "A great sheet and wild beasts, and ... and ... and." Seemingly he could not recall the next words and would start over again. A friend whispered, "John, it says, 'creeping things.'" "Oh, yes, that is how I got in! Just a poor, good-for-nothing creeping thing! But I got in—saved by grace!"

Grace and Sanctification

Many view God's grace as a "get out of hell free" card or something we need to access eternal life. Of course, this is true. But grace is much more than this for it reaches into our daily living as Christians. We must beware of "graceless Christianity," Christianity with less grace, or just a little bit of grace, or a wrong understanding of grace. Grace does not make me *liberal* in my Christian living but *liberates* me from my sinful past. The grace of God's favor and blessing upon our lives not only saves us but also changes us!

The Bible teaches that we also grow and experience sanctification (holy and consecrated living) by living under grace, experiencing the working of God's grace in our hearts and lives (2 Pet. 3:18; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:14-15).



SANCTIFICATION BY GRACE

Grace disciplines our lives and frees us from the shackles of sin (Titus 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 8:7). We also are strengthened and sustained by God's grace (2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 4:16), helped, and comforted by grace (2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:16-17), serve by His enabling grace (Heb. 12:28; 1 Cor. 15:10), are gifted by grace (Eph. 4:7; Rom. 12:3; 15:15; 1 Pet. 4:10), give to God's work and others being empowered and motivated by grace (2 Cor. 8:1, 6-7, 19; 9:14), and even sing by grace (Col. 3:16).

God's grace in relation to the Christian life is often associate with power to serve the Lord, accomplish His will for our lives, and to face the trials of life in God's strength. Therefore, grace is seen as the divine influence upon our hearts, working in us to sustain us and enable us to serve and live for Him.

Ephesians 3:7

"Whereof I was made a minister (*servant*), according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

Our priviledge to minister or serve Christ is the result of an underved gift given to us by God's grace (a grace gift – Eph. 3:2) which includes the power to effectively use our gift for the Lord. God grants us the gifts to serve Him but also by His grace empowers us.

2 Corinthians 12:9 again reminds us:

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...”

Sometimes we must find the grace that we never knew! God’s strengthening grace is always available to help us pass through trials victoriously. Spurgeon told of an evening when he was riding home after a heavy day's work. He felt weary and depressed, when as suddenly as a lightning flash he thought of 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” He said, “I should think it is, Lord,” and burst out laughing!

The old saying is true:

“The will of God will never lead us where the grace of God cannot keep us!”

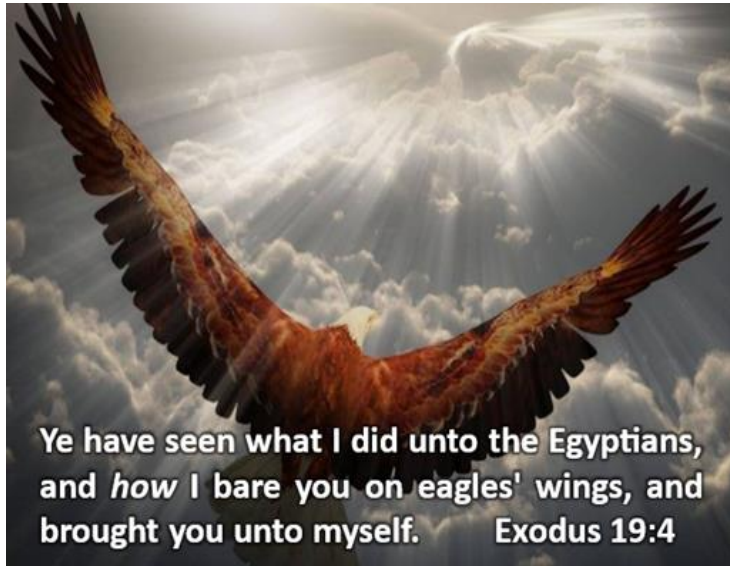
Carl Hoch remarked about the power and strength of grace:

“The Old Covenant came with the sign Batteries not included whereas the New Covenant sign reads much differently – Batteries Included!”

Many years ago my wife and I visited Epcot in Disney, Orlando Florida. Someone had given us free tickets, so why not go! Anyway, when we were there, we went on a simulated ride called Soaring! It took us up and down throughout the entire United States moving through the air like a rocket. I mean we were moving at a fast pace and scanning every city and area of the world! You know, we need to soar on the wings of grace! For it’s God’s grace, His influence and power working in our hearts that delivers us from the power and enslavement to sin. We don’t have to live in the past – we can soar into the future on the wings of grace! We don’t have to live under the power of sin, we can soar away from sin’s allurements on the wings of grace! God’s grace will deliver us and make our lives meaningful and enriched again.

Grace was graphically illustrated in God taking care of His ancient people by bearing them on the wings of an eagle. God blessed, protected, and delivered them on the wings of grace.

Exodus 19:4 illustrates God’s grace as wings: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”



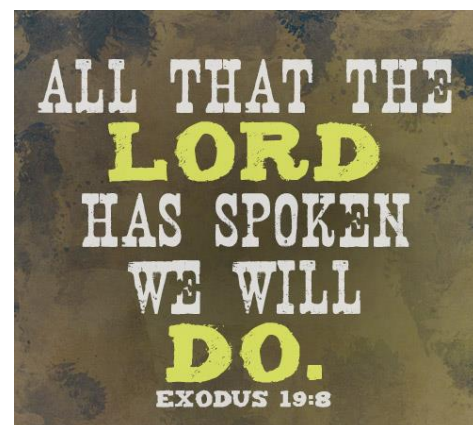
God's grace was seen when He delivered His people from the bondage of Egypt. Today it's no different. We have God's eagle's wings to deliver us from the world and our bondage to evil passions that seek to rule over our lives. The wings of grace, the inward working of God's power today will deliver us and start us once again on the right track.

Isaiah 40:31

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint."

If God's saints under the Old Covenant could experience God's delivering power, how much more today for those who are living under grace and the New Covenant! The Spirit's permanent residency grants us new divine enablement and a new dynamic to live victoriously. The wings of grace can deliver us today. Remember this. We don't fly away from our troubles; we fly above them! Grace enables us to soar above life's troubles and temptations and claim the victory that is ours in Christ. The wings of eagles are a beautiful picture of how God's grace delivers us and allows us to go on in life (2 Pet. 2:9).

Exodus 19:7-8 records the people's self-sufficiency and how they exchanged a grace relationship for a law relationship: "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD."



Do, do and do more! This is what a law relationship means. This is what it means to place yourself under law instead of grace. It means that we are committed to doing something on our own power to receive God's blessing instead of receiving His blessing freely by His grace. Folks, the power is not in what we do but what grace does for us.

A law relationship is a relationship independent of God's help and grace. But the people exchanged the eagle's wings (the grace relationship) for a legal relationship with God. In a rather independent spirit and boastful way they declares – "We can do it." How did that work out? They no sooner said this, and they were building a golden calf and committing idolatry. A law relationship does not deliver us! We need a grace relation (eagle's wings) to deliver us from the power of self, sin, and Satan.

This past Thursday I was in my study. It was early in the morning. My wife and I heard a loud thump outside of the house. Something had crashed into the side of the house. So I went out to investigate. As I turned the corner, I noticed a large hawk flying away. He was sitting on the corner of the house. Apparently his giant wings and body had hit the upper edge of the house as he was landing. As I reflect on that hawk flying away gracefully into the sky, I am reminded of the wings of God's grace. The eagles' wings that we need while passing through trials and difficult days. God's grace is sufficient to deliver you and make you into what God wants you to be. We need eagle's wings. We need to fly on the wings of grace!

“When the race still lies before me
And the wind is blowing strong.
When the witnesses surround me
And my strength is almost gone.
When the valley plunges deeper
And life shatters all my dreams.
Then I lift my voice to Jesus
And He gives my spirit wings.

God gives wings
God gives wings as eagles.
God gives wings to fly
And strength to rise above.

God gives wings
God gives wings as eagles.
When my feet begin to stumble
And my dreams begin to crumble
I mount up on eagles' wings."

2 Peter 3:18 also speaks to our growth in grace (the grace of sanctification):
"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

The way we grow today is through the expression of God's grace and favor being poured out in our daily lives. It's better to grow in grace than to digress into ignorance and disobedience. Growing in



grace means we allow the sanctifying aspect of God's grace to change us, such as growing in character traits (2 Pet. 1:5-7) and abandoning worldly lusts (Titus 2:11-12).

The term "grace" when applied to spiritual growth in Second Peter (2 Pet. 3:18 with 2 Peter 1:2- 8) speaks of God's divine enablement, His sanctifying power, supernatural transformation, endless spiritual resource and supply, and complete blessing and fulfillment that He showers upon our lives (John 1:16; Rom. 6:1-15; 16:24; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 5:28; 2 Tim. 2:1; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10). Without God's sustaining, empowering, and life-transforming grace being communicated to us, we will live in defeat and become stagnate in our spiritual walk and growth.

First, we grow in grace. This is the *manner* of our growth which means that we all need the sanctifying aspect of God's grace to change us. We were saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), but grace does not end there! We also need to grow by being changed through God's grace (special favor and blessing), which is evidenced in God's saints today through His sanctifying and supernatural power to deliver us from sin and transform our lives. We are to live in the sphere of God's grace operating in our hearts and lives, causing us to grow and mature. We can't make it without His grace!

Second, we grow “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” This is the *main focus* of our growth in grace which speaks of growing through an intimate awareness of Christ’s daily presence and help in our lives through our union with Him (2 Pet. 1:2-7; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20). Also, we grow as we obtain a better understanding of God (“the knowledge of God” - 2 Cor. 10:5), through possessing a proper knowledge and awareness of who God is, what He represents in His essential nature and being, experiencing His ongoing transforming power (Phil. 2:13), and being obedient to His ways by making Him lord over our lives (Eph. 4:15).

Griffith Thomas said this about 2 Peter 3:18:

“Their position as ensphered by grace is here brought to their notice. Grace surrounds and upholds, grace is the atmosphere of their life, and as they abide in it they are to ‘keep on growing’ (Greek).”

Somebody remarked:

“If you are not growing in grace, you probably have become a disgrace!”

Yes, saved by grace! But you also are sanctified by grace! Paul concludes that the law was given to show people that they were sinners (Rom. 3:19-20), to condemn them (Rom. 3:19), and demonstrate their need for grace by pointing them to Christ (Gal. 3:24-25). It was never given to provide salvation and sanctification. However, the Pharisees and other legalists (Acts 15:1) turned the Mosaic law into a saving and sanctifying system which brought spiritual bondage upon themselves and others (Gal. 2:4; 4:3, 9, 24-25).



To live under the law system can only result in God’s condemnation and wrath for breaking its laws and enslavement to sin for the law has no delivering power. According to New Testament terminology, the law or legal system of Paul’s day was known as “the works of the law” (Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) while the grace system became known as “the gift of God” (Rom. 5:5, 17; Eph. 2:8-9)

which brings liberty and freedom to every Gospel believer from the legal and condemning system of law (Gal. 5:1).

You cannot live under both systems at the same time. Pick your system! The beauty of living under the grace system of deliverance (Rom. 6:14; Eph. 2:8-9) is that we can experience freedom from God's wrath forever, a new release and liberty from the power of sin, and possess the absolute assurance of salvation and security in Christ for the "God of all grace" "hath called us unto his eternal glory" (1 Pet. 5:10).

Romans 5:21 speaks of eternal life and the security of grace:

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Titus 3:7 adds:

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Only a fool would choose to live under law and not grace! The truth of grace should blossom and reverberate in our hearts and when it does, we will find comfort in the security of our "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3) that only grace can bring. We will experience a new relief and rest by no longer fearing God's wrath and judgment (John 3:36; Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:9-10). At the same time, we will begin to experience a new dynamic and delivering power so we can live victoriously over the sin nature and make new strides in our Christian life through the transforming power of grace that is at work in our hearts and lives (Titus 2:11-12). Saving grace is God's provision for the believer's sinful past (Eph 2:8-9) while enabling grace His provision for day-to-day Christian living.

Too many of us as Christians are like the poor European family who saved for years to buy tickets to sail to America. Once at sea, they carefully rationed the cheese and bread they had brought for the journey. After 3 days, the boy complained to his father, "I hate cheese sandwiches. If I don't eat anything else before we get to America, I'm going to die." Giving the boy his last nickel, the father told him to go to the ship's galley and buy an ice-cream cone.

When the boy returned a long time later with a wide smile, his worried dad asked, "Where were you?" "In the galley, eating three ice-cream cones and a steak dinner!" "All that for a nickel?" "Oh, no, the food is free," the boy replied. "It comes with the ticket." Like this family, many Christians don't realize the giving nature of grace and the sufficiency of grace for their lives (2 Cor. 12:9). Yes, we are saved by

grace, but we are also supplied by grace to live the Christian life. It comes with the ticket!

2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work.”

Grace and the Heavens

Beloved, we are not LAW believers in any sense. We are GRACE believers! Grace Age believers experience the new manifestation of grace through the finished work of Christ’s death and resurrection which is made available to them through a saving and sanctifying relationship with Jesus Christ through the Spirit’s baptizing and energizing work (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:1-4). In fact, grace believers have been elevated to a position of acceptance before the Father in Christ the Son. “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” – the Beloved Son (Eph. 1:6).

“Near, so very near to God, Nearer I could not be;
For, in the Person of His Son, I am as near as He.”

There is grace occurring right now in the heavens – the very throne room of God! As a result of our new access into God’s presence through Christ, we can therefore possess a new access and awareness of God’s fellowship and presence unknown to the previous generation of saints “by the new and living way” (Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension) so we might “draw near” to God possessing a new intimate relationship with Him (Heb. 10:19-22).

Hebrews 10:19-20

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (*the very presence of God*) by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”

“Into the holy of holies with God,
Now I would enter through Jesus’ own blood.
Silence my fears Lord and open my heart,
That I may learn truths that Thou does impart.”

Ephesians 2:5-7 reveals the wonderful grace feature of our union with Christ in the heavenly realms, our spiritual sphere of existence within the very throne room of Heaven where we share Christ's life. It's here where we freely receive all of God's spiritual favor, blessings, and goodwill: **"Even when we were dead in sins** (spiritually dead, separated from God's life, a recipient of God's wrath – Eph. 2:1-3), **hath**



"made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"
Ephesians 2:6

quickened (made us alive spiritually, given us a new birth as in Col. 2:13), **(by grace ye are saved;)** **And hath raised us up together** (has brought us into a living union with the resurrected Christ – Rom. 6:4-5, 8 – bringing us out of spiritual death and unto spiritual life), **and made us sit together** (sharing a spiritual union with Jesus Christ as He sits on the throne – Col. 3:1; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22) **in heavenly places** (literally "the heavens" – the location of Christ in the physical throne room of Heaven – Eph. 1:20, but also a sphere of spiritual existence with Christ, a place that exists in the unseen spiritual realm where each believer shares an invisible relationship with Christ and from whence all their spiritual blessings of the Christian life originate – Eph. 1:3) **in Christ Jesus** (the believer's position before God's throne which is essentially a spiritual location that involves sharing Christ's POWER, PRIVILEGES, PERFECTIONS, POSSESSIONS and complete PROVISION for our lives, a position that is actually put into PRACTICE and experienced in our daily union with Christ on earth, who dwells in our hearts - Gal. 2:20).

"That in the ages to come (throughout the eternal ages) **he might shew** (demonstrate, display, and prove) **the exceeding** (surpassing, extraordinary, immeasurable) **riches of his grace in his kindness toward us** (the riches of God's grace are expressed in His goodness – Titus 3:4) **through Christ Jesus"** (through Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension and the spiritual benefits we will possess throughout eternity because of our union with Him).

This is grace beyond measure! This is amazing grace as the hymn writer John Newton put it. Throughout eternity we will be “To the praise of the glory of his grace!” (Eph. 1:6). We will not get any credit, but God will get all the glory!



“Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
When we’ve been there
Ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we first begun.”

The Bible declares we are all sinners who have missed the mark of the glory of God’s moral perfection (Rom. 3:23). We are not righteous in God’s eyes neither can we do anything good in God’s sight for our so-called good works are even tainted with the sins of pride and legalism (Rom. 3:10-12). None of us can trust completely in Christ to save us by His grace (Eph. 2:8-9) until we come to some awareness that we are helplessly, hopelessly lost, and unable to save ourselves by our own good works. As Spurgeon put it, “We must see that we are convicted and condemned, with the rope around our neck, before we will weep for joy when Christ pardons us.” Not until we see ourselves as dreadful sinners will we turn to God’s amazing grace to save us.

When we think of what Christ has accomplished for us on the cross and is doing for us today as our risen High Priest in the heavenlies (Heb. 7:25), and how He continues to work in us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-4), we can most assuredly conclude that God’s grace is amazing! It takes away our breath and humbles us. It brings both tears and rejoicing to our hearts while we reflect on how amazing God’s grace is toward sinners like you and me. A sinner chosen by grace (2 Tim. 1:9), a sinner saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), a sinner forgiven and declared legally righteous before God by grace (Rom. 3:24), a sinner transformed by grace (1 Cor. 15:3), a sinner soon to be glorified by grace (1 Pet. 1:13). It truly is amazing!

“And every day I'm amazed
That God would spend the day with me.
I'm overwhelmed by His grace
That He would feel such love for me.
To Him I'm worth saving.
My heart is craving
To know Him in His righteousness
And understand His ways.
Every day - in every way - I'm amazed.”

1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.”

This lovely title (“the God of all grace”) reminds us that His dealings with us are not based on what we deserve, but on His own favor, goodwill, kindness, and thoughts of love toward us. The idea of “all grace” suggests the superabundant, overflowing, and endless supply of His grace (John 1:16) in relation to both our eternal salvation and everyday sanctification in our Christian life.

One consolation we receive from God’s grace is that He has called us to His eternal glory. The word “glory” (a favorite word of Peter) speaks of the magnificence, splendor, exalted state, and our future position and condition that we will enter into someday if we know Christ as Savior. We are headed toward “glory” which includes our place in Heaven and all the spiritual blessings that await us in the future – a new home, a new body, a new fellowship or intimacy with God, a new state of moral perfection, unlike anything we have experienced before. Everything will be new and wonderful for we are “called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.” We are looking forward to “the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:13) – a redeemed and glorified body!

“O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look at His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.”

Our future glory enables us to look beyond the sufferings of this life to the time when we shall be with the Savior and be like Him forever in a glorified body. It enables us to keep an eternal perspective on things in view of “a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). The half has not been told! We have been picked up from the scrap heap and called to His eternal glory! We have been saved from Hell and destined for the glory of Heaven but will also throughout eternity experience the glory of a redemptive body that is free from all sin, sorrow, pain, and despair. All of this (and more!) because of God’s amazing grace! Beloved, the best is yet to come!

“Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, O the joy when I shall wake
Within the presence of the King!
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story, saved by grace:
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story, saved by grace.”



Another consolation we receive from the God of all grace is that He will “make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet. 5:10). In other words, grace not only promises us future glory but also present help through the daily grind of life down here on earth. God’s strengthening, enabling, sustaining, and life-transforming grace enables us to keep our spiritual equilibrium in life by *shaping* or maturing us (“perfect”), *stabilizing* us (“stablish”), *sustaining* us (“strengthen”), and *settling* us on a strong foundation (“settle”). God’s grace working in our hearts builds up a strong foundation underneath our lives, a foundation of truth, of strong conviction, and unwavering faith.

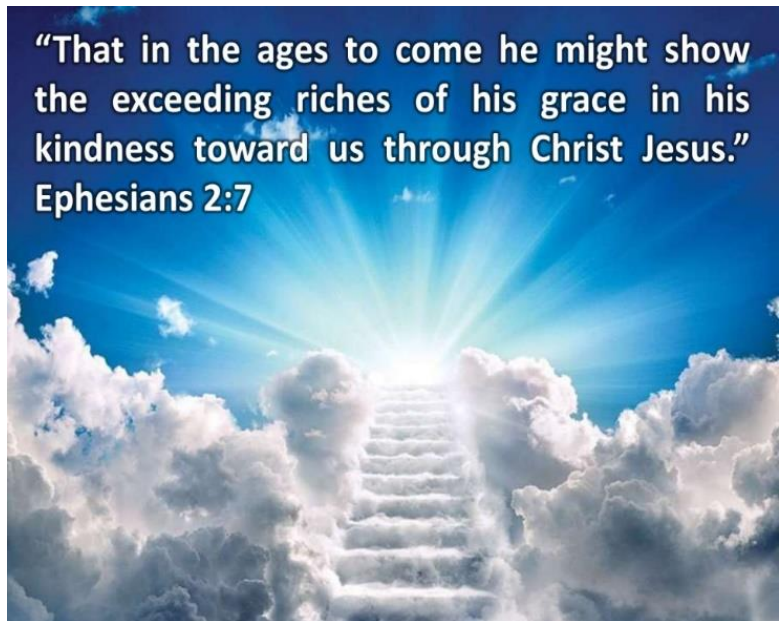
God’s divine favor and influence upon our lives through our relationship with Christ and work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4) results in our spiritual maturity and stability so we can face life’s challenges and changes. We need grace for the race (Heb. 12:1) or else we will get off course. The God of all grace with His supernatural, superabundant, and sufficient grace (2 Cor. 3:5; 9:8) showered upon our lives will enable us to face trials and come out victorious.

“As I travel day by day.
‘Oft I meet with pain and sorrow
And there’s trouble in the way.
But I have a sweet assurance
That my soul, the Lord will lead.
And in Him there is strength for every need.

When the tempter brings confusion
And I don’t know what to do,
On my knees I turn to Jesus
For He’ll always see me through.
Then despair is changed to victory.
Every doubt just melts away
And in Him there is hope for everyday.

Oh, His grace is sufficient for me.
And His love is abundant and free.
And what joy fills my soul,
Just to know, just to know
That His grace is sufficient for me.”

Yes, the Lord is the God of all grace! He bestows His favor and goodwill upon us continually in this life and throughout eternity. The Bible teaches that throughout the eternal ages of time we will “show” or demonstrate the “exceeding (*surpassing, transcending, immeasurable, tremendous*) riches of his grace” (Eph. 2:7) to the heavenly throng, by declaring what it cost the Father to send



His Son, what is cost the Son (the Lord Jesus) to bear our sins at the cross, and by what God has done for us as sinners in saving us, making us His children, and

glorifying us. Grace is a subject that will never be exhausted throughout the eternal ages. Someone has created a pyramid of grace from Ephesians 2:7.

The Pyramid of Grace

His kindness toward us ...

His grace in His kindness toward us ...

The riches of His grace in His kindness toward us ...

The exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us!

What should be our response to God's amazing grace? It should be the wonder of worship which includes joy and singing.

“Come thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace.”

The message of grace should be upon our lips and in our hearts - “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Grace is to be the theme of our life. In Colossians 3:16, grace is to be understood as the work of God (His divine influence) moving in our hearts to produce thanksgiving, gratitude, and joy (2 Cor. 4:15) in response to His gracious work on our behalf. Yes, God even produces in our hearts the grace of singing!

“There's within my heart a melody;
Jesus whispers sweet and low,
'Fear not, I am with you, peace, be still,'
in all of life's ebb and flow.”



In summary, God's grace refers to His ongoing acts of kindness and goodwill extended to His people through untold spiritual blessings given to them which includes not only salvation but also the strength and transformation they need to live the Christian life (Eph. 1:3). The other evening, I was eating at Chick-fil-A. After refilling my drink I said,

“Thank you” and the traditional response from the worker was this: “My pleasure!” Something suddenly struck me as I sat down at my table. Grace is God saying to us, “It's my pleasure.” It's God's own good will, benevolence, and pleasure (Eph. 1:9; Phil. 2:13) that motivates Him to love us, save us, and sanctify us.

Philippians 2:13 again highlights the New Covenant grace feature:

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will (*giving us the desire*) and to do (*giving us the power*) of his good pleasure.”

In conclusion, grace is greater than our sin (Romans 5:20), more abundant than we expect in our Christian life (1 Timothy 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:15), and too wonderful to put in words (Eph. 2:7). “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

God’s people who have been divinely influenced, saved, and transformed by God’s favor, goodwill, and kindness become trophies of His grace which ultimately results in “the praise of the glory of his grace” (Eph. 1:6). This means that throughout eternity God will receive all the glory! And yes, there is a sense of “glory” or magnificence, splendor, and grandeur associated with God and His grace. God’s grace will bring wonder and amazement to all throughout the eternal ages and eons of time. We will forever sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5:12).



“We shall live on high,
Far above the sky,
In that land of glory and bliss;
Jesus is the light,
There will be no more night,
Just as long as eternity rolls.
Just as long as eternity rolls;
Just as long as eternity rolls;
By His grace divine,
Heaven will be mine,
Just as long as eternity rolls.”