

Doctrine of Grace

- 1) Preliminary considerations.
 - a) Divine grace is the policy of God toward all mankind and the title of His plan (Psa. 84:11, Prov. 3:34, John 1:1-17, Eph. 1:5-6, 2 Tim. 1:9).
 - b) Divine grace encompasses all that God has done to bring fallen, hostile, and sinful men into a just, perfect, and eternal relationship with Himself (Rom. 5:8, 10, **Ephesians 2:1-5** “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ -by grace you have been saved...”).
 - c) His display of grace does not compromise any of the attributes which comprise His essence, for example, His righteousness and love (Psa. 116:5, 2 Thess. 2:16).
 - i) God’s love motivated Him to provide the potential of salvation to all mankind (**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.).
 - ii) He provided salvation as a free gift, on the basis of grace, to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 2:8** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;” 2 Tim. 1:7-10, Titus 2:11-14).
 - iii) However, if anyone refuses to believe in His Son, God will not save that person. Volition is allowed to function and everyone is given the same opportunity to believe.
 - iv) Although He loves the world, He will not balk or waver to send every unbeliever to the lake of fire for eternity (**John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.", **Revelation 20:15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” cf. **Matthew 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;”).
 - d) Grace completely excludes any human merit or achievement as the means to obtain salvation (Rom. 4:1-5, cf. Rom. 11:5-6, **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.).
 - e) Although salvation is a potential for all mankind, the majority will not realize God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:3-4, cf. Matt. 7:13-14, 1 Cor. 1:18).

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- f) Although God's grace may be accepted or rejected depending on the volition of the individual, the rejection of God's grace results in judgment (Heb. 10:29, Jude 1:4).
 - g) However, a period of grace precedes God's judgment. This is apparent throughout the history of the Jews (cf. Neh. 9:17-31, Jer. 44:2-6).
 - h) Sound doctrine is referred to as "the word of His grace" (Acts 14:3, 20:32).
 - i) Various phrases demonstrate the importance of grace in God's plan.
 - i) "The riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7, 2:7).
 - ii) "The God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10).
 - iii) "Grace of God" (1 Cor. 3:10).
 - iv) Throughout the N.T. epistles, Divine grace is commonly referred to in the opening and closing remarks (1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Tim. 4:22, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 John 1:3).
- 2) Vocabulary.
- a) Hebrew terms.
 - i) חֵן (chen), grace, favor, goodwill (Gen. 6:8).
 - ii) חַנּוּן (chanan), to be favorable or gracious, to show compassion (Psa. 9:13).
 - iii) חַנּוּנִים (channun), gracious, kind, merciful (Jonah 4:2).
 - iv) רַצוֹן (ratson), goodwill, delight, favor (Deut. 33:16).
 - v) תְּחִינָה (techinnah), favor, mercy, pardon, compassion (Josh. 11:20, Ezra 9:8)
 - b) Greek terms.
 - i) χαρίζομαι (charizomai), to do something that is agreeable toward another, to show favor or kindness, that which is freely, generously, and graciously given, to forgive, pardon (Rom. 8:32).
 - ii) χάρις (charis), a benevolent disposition towards another, grace, favor, kindness.
 - iii) χάρισμα (charisma), a gift, favor bestowed, or grace that one has received apart from any merit of his own, a gift of grace.
 - iv) χαριτόω (charitoo), to show grace or kindness, to have grace shown to one, to be favored (Lk. 1:28).
 - c) Related terms.
 - i) רַחֻם (rachum), merciful, compassionate (Psa. 86:15).
 - ii) רַחַם (racham), to have mercy, be compassionate (Micah 7:19).
 - iii) ἐλεέω (eleeo), to be greatly concerned about someone in need, to have mercy, compassion.
 - iv) ἔλεος (eleos), mercy, compassion, clemency.
 - v) ἱλάσθητι (hilastheti), to show mercy and compassion towards one who is not deserving, to be gracious (Luke 18:13).
 - vi) οἰκτιρμός (oiktirmos), pity, mercy, compassion (Col. 3:12).

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- vii) οἰκτίρω (oiktiro), to have compassion on, pity.
- 3) Definition and description.
- a) Generally grace is defined as an overt exhibition of good will through kindness or favor.
 - b) Further, it is what one does for another even when no obligation exists.
 - c) Divine grace is the free and unmerited favor or kindness of God toward mankind. It is not a result of any human achievement or works.
 - d) Divine grace is the willingness to bestow overt blessings on those whose status is such that they do not deserve the favor that is shown to them.
 - e) There is often an overlap in meaning between grace and mercy.
 - f) The difference between the two terms in various passages is far from distinct (cf. Heb 4:16).
 - g) Mercy may be thought of as an overt extension of God's grace or grace in action. The term stresses God's concern over our needs even while we were hostile to Him (cf. Eph. 2:3-8).
- 4) General categories of divine grace.
- a) Saving grace.
 - i) Saving grace is everything that God has to provide eternal salvation for sinful, fallen mankind (Rom. 5:1-21, Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 2:11, 3:5-7).
 - ii) The grace gift that God offered for the life of the world was His uniquely begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16-17, 36 6:40, **Romans 5:10** For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.).
 - iii) All one has to do is simply believe in Jesus Christ. Everyone has the same opportunity and this completely apart from any works (Rom. 3:19-28, 4:2,4- 5, 11:6, Gal. 2:16, **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast., cf. **Acts 4:12** "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.").
 - iv) All mankind are sinners, and Christ died for all sinners; therefore all mankind are candidates (1 Tim. 1:14-16, Heb 2:9 cf. 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - v) The one who believes in Christ obtains an introduction into the plan of God, into His grace (**Romans 5:1-2** Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.).
 - vi) Saving faith enables the believer to gain access to all the riches of God's grace (John 1:15-17, Eph. 1:3-11, **Ephesians 2:4-7** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and

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seated us with Him in the heavenly *places*, in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing **riches of His grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.).

- vii) For those that exploit the potential of saving grace via faith in Christ, some of the riches of Divine grace include:
- (1) The believer is now **in** the eternal plan of God. His eternal future is secure (1 John 5:11-13 cf. Rom. 8:38-39).
 - (2) No condemnation, all sin is forgiven (cf. Eph. 1:7, Col. 2:13).
 - (3) Believers are justified or declared righteous (i.e. positional righteousness, Rom. 3:24, **Titus 3:7** that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.).
 - (4) Believers in the CA are members of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9-10).
 - (5) Citizenship in heaven (Eph. 2:19, Phil. 3:20 cf. Col. 1:13).
 - (6) Believers are born again through the Holy Spirit as children of God (John 1:12-13, Gal. 3:26 cf. Rom. 8:15-17).
 - (7) Future glorification and receipt of a resurrection body (Rom. 8:18, 30, Phil. 3:21, Col. 3:4).
- b) Living grace.
- i) Living grace encompasses all the physical necessities provided by God in order for an individual to remain physically alive in the AC.
 - ii) This type of grace is not the exclusive domain of believers. Unbelievers are also recipients of living grace (Matt. 5:45, Acts 14:16-17).
 - iii) Physical provisions include food, drink, shelter, clothing, etc (Matt. 6:11, 25-34, Phil. 4:19).
 - iv) In the case of unbelievers who will eventually be +v and believe in Christ, living grace must include protection and provision until the point they hear the gospel and are saved.
 - v) In the case of the positive believer, living grace includes the necessary protection and deliverance in his niche to allow him to make the MAJG. Also, those who are +v will have adequate time to complete their course.
 - (1) The apostle Paul provides an excellent example. God preserved his life on many occasions in order that he progress to spiritual maturity (2 Cor. 11:24-28, 2 Tim. 3:11, 4:6-8, 17-18).
 - (2) Other examples include Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Jonah (Dan. 2:17-18, 3:24-25, 6:21-22, Jonah 1:15-2:1, 10 cf. Psalms 34:19).
 - vi) Also, as believers our living grace also encompasses the spiritual assets that God provides based on our position in Christ (e.g. IGHS, sound doctrine, LC, fellowship of like-minded believers, etc., 1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 4:7-8, 1 Tim. 4:6).
 - vii) We are to be content with our living grace (Phil. 4:11-13, 1 Tim. 6:8-19).

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- viii) Do not complain about God's living grace provision. He will provide for the actual needs of a believer (cf. Num. 11:1, Phil. 2:14).
 - ix) Although believers are provided living grace, we must not presume that this will shelter us from various pressures and trials in the cosmos.
 - x) In fact a believer may be tested in the area of living grace (Ex. 15:22-25, 16:2-35, 17:1-7, 1 Cor. 4:11, Heb. 11:37-38).
 - xi) Even so, regardless of the opposition in the cosmos or various tests, God will keep the growing believer physically alive to complete his ph. 2 (cf. Job 1:12, 2:6, John 16:33, 2 Tim. 3:12).
- c) Dying grace.
- i) Dying grace is composed of all the special blessings that are provided to an adjusted believer prior to physical death.
 - (1) God provides the adjusted believer with final opportunities to apply sound doctrine (e.g. witness, exhortation).
 - (2) He will also provide inner peace, happiness, stability, etc. to the adjusted believer who undergoes the death test.
 - ii) In regard to dying grace, the believer is in the process of dying or in circumstances where death is imminent. A limited period of time is in view.
 - (1) As in the case of Stephen, the time may be very short. Nevertheless, he still received dying grace as a result of being filled with God the Holy Spirit and his vision of Christ (Acts 7:52-60).
 - (2) Paul, in contrast to Stephen, received dying grace over an extended period of time during his incarceration in Rome.
 - iii) The manner of death is irrelevant and has no bearing on whether or not the believer receives dying grace (cf. Heb 11:37).
 - iv) The adjusted believer under dying grace continues to think Divine viewpoint and apply sound doctrine to the end of his ph. 2. In addition, such a believer ought to exhort and encourage other believers in regard to their commitment to Bible doctrine (2 Tim. 1:1-2, 13-14, 3:14-15, 4:1-5).
 - v) The believer must spiritually mature and finish his course in order to experience this grace in full (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
 - vi) Dying grace includes the clear conscience and confidence of the believer who consistently acclimated to his MPR until the end of his life (2 Tim. 1:3, 12, 4:7).
 - vii) Dying grace is experienced by those that have a proper perspective about this life and look forward to their impending promotion into their eternal life niche. A niche which includes eternal reward and a resurrection body among many other blessings (2 Tim. 4:7-8, 18, cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-8, Phil. 3:7-16).
 - viii) This grace includes enjoyable memories of the applications of other believers (2 Tim. 1:4-5, 16-18).

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- ix) It also includes memories of past blessings from God (2 Tim. 4:16-18).
 - x) Contrary to the positive believer, the maladjusted believer and unbeliever, who neglect or reject God's directive will, do not have the assurance of dying grace. Instead such a believer is assured of the sin unto death and has deprived **himself** of dying grace (1 John 5:16, cf. Psa. 34:12-16, Prov. 1:7, 20-32, 8:32-36, 10:21, Heb. 6:4-8. Also see 1 Sam. 31:3-4, Acts 12:23).
 - xi) In regard to those who make a spiritual recovery and do not reach the point of no return, like the incestuous Corinthian, the sin unto death **may** be cancelled (1 Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Cor. 2:5-8).
- d) Surpassing grace.
- i) Surpassing grace (SG3) refers to the believer's inheritance of special blessings and rewards in eternity, ph. 3. These are above and beyond (i.e. surpass) the "normal" blessings of eternity.
 - ii) Based on the believer's position in Christ, the "normal" blessings of heaven include a resurrection body, the eradication of the OSN, no more pain, sorrow, tears or death, eternal fellowship with God and Christ, etc. (1 Cor. 15:51-53, Rev. 21:4).
 - iii) Surpassing grace (SG3) is derived from Eph. 2:7 which states, "in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
 - (1) For the CA believer, "the ages to come" is a reference to the future, beginning at the rapture and extending into eternity.
 - (2) "Surpassing riches of his grace" refers to all the blessings that believers will receive in their eternal life niche, especially those that exceed the norm (e.g. wreath).
 - iv) Some synonymous terms include:
 - (1) "Inheritance" (1 Peter 1:4 cf. Col 3:24).
 - (2) "Eternal weight of glory" (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an **eternal weight of glory** far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.).
 - (3) "Glory" (Jude 1:24).
 - (4) "Reward" (Heb. 11:26).
 - v) Surpassing grace is a potential for all believers but not all believers will receive it.
 - vi) Evidently in some cases, believers will not receive SG3 but only the normal blessings (**1 Corinthians 3:15** If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire; cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27, 2 Tim. 2:1-5).

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- vii) A believer's portion of surpassing grace (reward) in eternity is directly effected by to his Divine good production over the course of his ph. 2 (Rev. 22:12).
- viii) Bible doctrine specifies what activities or good works a believer is to perform during his ph. 2.
- ix) Further, the WOG gives the believer everything necessary to make the MAJG and be fully equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- x) Good works which are sanctioned by Scripture, performed under the FGHS and with correct motives, qualify as Divine good and will be rewarded (Matt. 6:1-4, 10:40-42, John 15:4).
- xi) Conversely, works not sanctioned by Scripture, performed without the FGHS, or without correct motives, will not be rewarded. These works are classified as human good and do not contribute to our SG3.
- xii) Believers must not forget the importance of good works. As a part of God's eternal plan, good works are commanded and constitute an extremely important part of the plan of God for each believer (Eph. 2:10, 1 Tim. 6:18, Titus 3:1, 8, 14).
- xiii) Apart from Divine good production, the maturity adjustment is impossible (cf. Lk. 8:14-15; Col. 1:9-10).
- xiv) Christ taught that believers are to focus on every opportunity for Divine good production during the limited time we have on planet earth. Divine good production is impossible after death. We ought to be zealous while we still have a chance (**John 9:4** "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work., Cf. **Titus 2:14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.)
- xv) There are a myriad of ways to exploit the provision of surpassing grace. SG3 may be gained through the mental, verbal, and overt application of sound doctrine.
 - (1) When one observes the Lord's Table, the application is largely mental with a minimum of overt energy expended (1 Cor. 11:26).
 - (2) When one is led by the Holy Spirit to encourage another believer verbally, that also qualifies as Divine good production (1 Thess 5:11, 14, Heb. 3:13).
 - (3) Jesus emphasized that our witness to the cosmos must be comprised of the visible applications (Matt. 5:16 cf. Col. 4:5)
 - (4) Each believer must understand that God does not sanction, approve, or reward any activity that is **not** Divine good, no matter how sacrificial, generous, etc. (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-3).
 - (5) By definition, the unbeliever cannot produce Divine good since he is unable to learn Bible doctrine, unable to secure and maintain the filling of the Holy Spirit, and truly is unable to be pleasing to God

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(cf. **Romans 8:7-8** "...because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*; ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.")

- xvi) The basis for the believer's eternal reward (SG3) is accumulated DGP in ph. 2.
- xvii) Regardless of how significant or insignificant, good or worthless, all of the works of CA believers will be judged at the Bema immediately following the rapture of the church. The evaluation at the Bema is a judgment of works for the purpose of reward (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15** Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire., **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad., cf. **1 Thessalonians 4:17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord., **Revelation 22:12** "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.)
- xviii) The ultimate in surpassing grace reward is the wreath. This preeminent reward is available to all who persevere with their MPR until the end of their ph. 2 (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵ And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. **2 Timothy 4:7-8** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. Also James 1:12, Rev. 2:10 cf. Col. 1:22-23).
- xix) Although our good works performed in time are the basis for our SG3, these blessings are based on the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

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- xx) It is left with each believer to decide whether or not to take advantage of this grace provision.
- xxi) The wise believer will eliminate anything in his niche that might hinder his ability to gain eternal reward.
- xxii) Various hindrances include:
- (1) In the angelic conflict, it should be evident that Satan is opposed to any activity that brings glory to God. Therefore, he will seek to obstruct our applications of Bible doctrine (cf. 1 Peter 5:8, **Revelation 2:10** 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.).
 - (2) The OSN, which generally takes the path of least resistance, is not going to enjoy the suffering and attendant sacrifices necessary to produce Divine good.
 - (3) Therefore, OSN activity, which destroys fellowship with God, neutralizes the believer in terms of Divine good production (**John 15:1-6** "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. ³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.).
 - (4) Clearly one cannot apply what he does not know; thus, the lack of knowledge regarding sound doctrine limits the ability of the believer to understand what application is appropriate or necessary.
 - (5) God holds us accountable for the sound doctrine we are taught. If one chooses to miss class, doesn't pay attention, sleeps, gets out of fellowship and put an OSN spin on the Doctrine or rejects the Doctrine, he is still culpable for applying it.
 - (6) The pursuit of the details of life, hampers our Divine good production, saps our spiritual momentum, and may keep us from the maturity adjustment (**Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon., **Luke 8:14** "And the *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked

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with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity).

- xxiii) The various suffering believers experience in their ph. 2 is not worthy to be compared with our future reward (Rom. 8:18, **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.).
- e) Greater grace.
- i) The expression “greater grace” is found in James 4:6 which states, “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1) V. 6 must be understood in light of the immediate context. (2) The conjunction “but” (δέ- de) sets up a contrast and is connected with what James has just discussed in vv. 1-5, especially vv. 4-5 (**James 4:1-5** What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ **You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world appoints himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “The Spirit, which He caused to dwell in us, jealously desires us”?).**
- (a) The context deals with unrestrained OSN activity and the serious problem of maintaining friendships with the world (i.e. –v).
- (b) Friendships with the world constitute spiritual adultery, unfaithfulness to God (“You adulteresses...”).
- (c) In addition, the unwitting believer who befriends the world manifests hostility toward God.
- (d) Hence the believer who desires relationships with –v “appoints himself an enemy of God.”
- (3) The verb “opposed” (ἀντιτάσσω- antitasso) in v. 6 is a military term which means to range in battle against or to meet face to face in battle. The term portrays God taking the field of battle against the arrogant believer.

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- (a) The arrogant believer, based on this context, is the one who desires and maintains friendships in the world.
- (b) In a larger sense, the arrogant believer is the one who pursues his own desires in violation of sound doctrine.
- (c) The believer who places himself in this position, in clear opposition to God, faces a debacle (cf. Psa. 101:5, 119:21, Prov. 14:12).
- (4) In contrast to the unfaithful believer, the faithful believer who doesn't desire or maintain friendships in the world will be given "greater grace" by God.
- ii) "Greater grace" is that which exceeds God's standard grace provisions to the believer. It is composed of God's blessings and provisions for the believer in time who refuses to conform to the world and capitulate to his OSN desires.
- iii) By application, all who faithfully adhere to the principles of sound doctrine demonstrate humility and are candidates for "greater grace."
- iv) God will provide this special grace to the humble believer who refuses to violate sound doctrine for his own benefit, who is diligent in the pursuit of the MAJG, who does not forsake his MPR, who patiently waits for God to provide legitimate relationships with those who are +v, etc.
- v) Believers that pursue the lust grid of the OSN, striving to get ahead at all costs, refusing to submit their plans and relationships to Divine viewpoint, refusing to separate from the cosmos, manifest arrogance and are in direct opposition to God.
- vi) To oppose God in any matter through disobedience is senseless and arrogant.
- vii) Our OSN will attempt to deceive us into following another plan, any plan but God's.
- viii) We must not be self-deceived and compromise the doctrine in our souls.
- ix) The believer who organizes his life around the pursuit of the Truth, who refuses to compromise with the world, who disregards its approbation and rejection will be blessed (cf. Matt. 19:29, Lk. 18:28-30).
- x) Our focus must be on pleasing God by adherence to His directives instead of placating those in the world. What can those in the cosmos possibly give you that compare to God's greater grace blessings? If we are honest with ourselves the only answer is "absolutely nothing."
- xi) Sadly many believers are "men-pleasers" and are more concerned with appeasing their boss in the world rather than their boss in heaven. This believer could be the recipient of tremendous blessing, but instead, opts for DD (cf. Eph. 6:5-8, Col. 3:22-24).

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- xii) On the contrary, the believer who maintains the proper focus is humble and will be exalted at the appropriate time (Matt. 23:12, 1 Peter 5:5-6).
 - xiii) We must remember that God is able and willing to provide blessings in our lives which are superior in quantity and quality to any benefit we might gain through our own efforts (Eph. 3:20).
- 5) The grace orientation of the believer.
- a) We are to be gracious with others (Psa. 37:21, 26, 112:4-5, Prov. 14:21, 31, cf. 1 Cor. 16:3- grace, χάρις- charis, is translated as “gift.”).
 - b) Believers are to stand firm in grace (1 Peter 5:12).
 - c) Believers are to grow in respect to grace and knowledge (**2 Peter 3:18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.).
 - d) As believers we are to exhibit grace in our speech (Col. 4:6).
 - i) When speaking the believer ought to exhibit kindness, courtesy and goodwill.
 - ii) This is similar to our phrase “social grace” which indicates proper behavior and speech in social situations.
 - iii) It is evident from Col. 4:6 and other passages that one’s manner of speaking is important (cf. Prov. 16:21, 21:23, Lk. 4:22).
 - iv) A believer must strive to exemplify this quality in his speech even while engaged in a hostile conversation (cf. Prov. 15:1, 1 Peter 3:9).
 - v) The believer must carefully consider his words before conversing about Divine viewpoint with those in the world especially unbelievers. A haphazard, careless presentation of the facts of Scripture is inappropriate (Prov. 12:17-18).
 - (1) To speak “rashly” is to engage in thoughtless speech which inflicts pain like being stabbed by a sword.
 - (2) In contrast, speech that reflects Divine standards is healing.
 - (3) Thoughtless speech wounds others but wise speech heals or will benefit others.
 - vi) In relation to Col. 4:6, seasoned speech doesn’t compromise the principles of Bible doctrine (Prov. 10:31).
 - vii) The believer must be careful to avoid any verbal sinning at anytime especially out in the world.
 - (1) Avoid slander, abusive speech, and lying (**Colossians 3:8-9** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,).
 - (2) Do not boast about personal wealth or possessions (Jer. 9:23-24, cf. Prov. 23:4-5, Eccl. 5:10).
 - (3) Believers are not to complain against each other (James 5:9).

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- viii) Believers must utilize speech that will edify and encourage others (Eccl. 10:12-13, Eph. 4:29).
 - e) Believers are to continue in grace (Acts 13:45 cf. Acts 6:8).
 - f) Believers are to be strengthened by grace (Heb. 13:9, cf. 2 Cor. 12:9, 2 Tim 2:1).
 - g) We are to conduct ourselves in the grace of God (2 Cor. 1:12).
 - h) Everything that we are and all we have as believers came to us on the basis of grace (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10, Eph. 3:2, 8, **1 Timothy 1:12-16** I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. ¹⁶ And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.)
- 6) Various grace provisions.
- a) All three adjustments to the justice of God are on the basis of grace.
 - i) SAJG (Gal. 2:16, **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.).
 - ii) Rebound (**1 John 1:8-2:2** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**2:1** My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*).
 - iii) MAJG (2 Cor. 13:9-11, Heb. 5:11-6:1).
 - b) Prayer is a very important grace provision. Believers are instructed to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).
 - c) Our spiritual gift (or gifts, χάρισμα- charisma), which we received at the point of salvation, is a grace gift (**Romans 12:6** And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let each exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **1 Peter 4:10** As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.).
 - d) Children are a grace gift from God (Psa. 127:3-5).

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- e) The communicator of sound doctrine is a grace gift from Christ to the Church (Eph. 4:7, 11).
- f) Right woman (RW) is a grace provision from God (Prov. 18:22, 19:14, 31:10-31).
 - i) The woman was provided to the man as a companion and helper in order that he wouldn't be alone (Gen. 2:18).
 - ii) The RW is a fellow heir of grace and should be treated according to her position (**1 Peter 3:7** You husbands likewise, live with *your wives* in an understanding way [lit. according to knowledge], as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.).
 - (1) The wife is a joint heir of the grace of life with her husband.
 - (2) Although the husband is the head of the house, he must exercise his authority in a proper manner without anger, bitterness, jealousy, etc. (Col. 3:18-19).
 - (3) The husband is to live with his wife according to the principles of sound doctrine (i.e. "knowledge").
 - (4) It must not be overlooked that this is a very serious responsibility for the husband as "according to knowledge" encompasses the realm of doctrine.
 - (5) Also the husband must recognize the great value of his wife in the POG and take steps to encourage her in the MAJG (cf. Prov. 12:4, Eph. 5:28-29).
 - (6) The wife who consistently speaks Divine viewpoint can be a great help and comfort to her husband (unlike Job's wife, cf. Job 2:9).
 - (7) Also, the husband ought to listen to the Divine viewpoint expressed by his RW.
 - (8) He is instructed to grant her honor or esteem due to her position in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28).
 - (9) Failure to comply with the requirements in 1 Peter 3:7 will have a negative impact on the husband's prayer life. His prayers will be hindered.
- g) The willingness to make financial applications is called a work of grace (2 Cor. 8:1-7, 19).
- h) The CA is called the dispensation of the grace of God because of our position in Christ and the knowledge which has been granted to us to know the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:1-12).
- i) Every CA believer has access to this grace (**Ephesians 4:7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.).
- j) Even the worst sinners receive grace in abundance (e.g. Paul, **1 Timothy 1:15** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*, cf. 1 Cor. 3:10, Gal. 2:9).

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- k) The grace of God is sufficient to meet every contingency which the believer encounters in the AC (**2 Corinthians 12:9** And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.).
- l) As partakers of God's grace, we are objects of:
 - i) His power. He is actively engaged in the support and defense of the faithful believer (Eph. 1:19, Phil. 2:13, 2 Thess. 3:3).
 - ii) His faithfulness. The believer ought to be comforted by God's absolute faithfulness (Heb. 13:5 cf. 1 Thess. 5:24).
 - iii) His comfort in time and eternity (2 Cor. 1:3-4, 2 Thess. 2:16-17).
 - iv) His intercession in prayer (cf. Rom. 8:26, 34, Heb. 7:25).
- 7) The failure to exploit the grace of God through rejection of sound doctrine is taught in the following expressions:
 - a) "Receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 5:20-6:13).
 - b) "Nullify the grace of God" and "fallen from grace" (Gal. 2:21, 5:4).
 - i) Both passages betray the problems with legalism.
 - ii) Judaizers infiltrated into the Galatian churches and had a negative influence (**Galatians 2:11-12** But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.¹² For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.).
 - c) "Insult the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:25-29).
 - i) This is the result of any consistent failure to believe and apply Bible doctrine.
 - ii) Beginning with the gospel and progressing to consistency in Bible class, assembling under one's P-T.
 - d) "Comes short of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15, unchecked MA sin which leads to the defilement of many in the LC.).
- 8) Distortions of grace.
 - a) Continuing to engage in OSN activity in order that grace might increase. This approach distorts the intent of grace. Believers should not be slaves of sin but of righteousness (Rom 6:1-19 cf. 1 John 2:1).
 - b) Legalism, which distorts both salvation and spirituality into human viewpoint works systems, is a rejection and distortion of grace.
 - i) Legalism stresses human ability, human talent, human effort, and human standards of righteousness.
 - ii) Under legalism, man does the work and man attempts to take the credit.
 - iii) In contrast, under grace, God does the work and He rightfully gets the credit.
 - iv) Legalistic distortions of doctrine destroy grace orientation and may lead to tremendous problems in the LC (e.g. no drinking v. Deut. 14:26).

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- v) The Galatian churches came under the influence of legalism. The distortions of grace, and the subsequent impairment of spiritual growth, form the principle subjects of Galatians (Gal. 1:6-8, 2:1-6, 11-16, 3:1-4, 5:1, 13-15, 6:12-14).
- vi) The Lord was an outspoken critic of legalistic traditions (Matt. 15:1-20).
- vii) Typically legalists attempt to augment the directives of Scripture in order to assert their own ethical beliefs. In so doing, they distort and misrepresent the truth of Scripture (cf. Gal. 4:10-11, Col. 2:16-23).
- c) Religious reversionism, including the no second chance category, is a rejection of grace and will eventuate in judgment of the believer (cf. Heb.6:4-8).
- d) The grace of God is distorted to legitimize sensuality and gross sexual misconduct (e.g. homosexuality, Jude 1:4-7 cf. 2 Peter 2:1-2).
- 9) Concluding remarks.
 - a) Grace is the starting and ending point of the plan of God and characterizes all His dealings with the human race.
 - b) We are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge (**2 Peter 3:18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.).
 - i) This is our MPR, our most pressing responsibility, our number one priority in the CWL.
 - ii) The believer who obeys this command demonstrates his love for God (cf. **John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.").
 - c) The rejection of God's grace always brings judgment, but His grace always precedes judgment (Psalm 7:11-12, 86:15, Rom. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Rev. 2:21).
 - d) Although all the adjustments (SAJG, RBAJG, MAJG) are based on grace, the MAJG not only permits works, it demands them (**Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Also James 1:21-25, 2:14-26 cf. Heb 13:16, 1 Tim. 6:17-18).
 - e) A believer's portion of surpassing grace (reward) in eternity is directly effected by to his good works over the course of his ph. 2. The greater the Divine good production, the greater the eternal reward.
 - f) Good works approved by sound doctrine, performed under the FGHS and with the proper motivation will result in SG3 (cf. **Matthew 6:1-4** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ² "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the

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- hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³ "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing ⁴ that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. 1 Peter 1:3-13).
- g) Hence the wise believer will be firmly committed to the practice of good works. Such a believer will take advantage of the many opportunities that are present in his niche.
 - i) We ought to be zealous in practicing good works (**Titus 2:14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works cf. Titus 3:1).
 - ii) Believers are not to weary of good works. Consider the reward (Gal. 6:9, 2 Thess. 3:13).
 - (1) "Lose heart" (ἐγκακέω- engkakeo) is to lose one's enthusiasm or motivation for good works.
 - (2) Major culprits: OSN, interests in the cosmos, lack of proper time management, etc.
 - h) The believer who doesn't see the importance of good works or has lost motivation to perform them is spiritually impaired.
 - i) As believers we must not allow the various influences of the cosmos to hinder our DGP and thereby compromise our path to spiritual maturity. We must always be on guard! (**Luke 8:14-15** "And the *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ "And the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. Cf. 1 Cor. 16:13).
 - j) The believer who faithfully adheres to the principles of sound doctrine demonstrates humility and will be a recipient of "greater grace." That is, he will receive blessings in time which exceed God's standard grace provisions to the believer.
 - k) It is important to note that blessings in time are not necessarily an indicator of godliness or spiritual growth.
 - l) Temporal blessings will not be the same for every believer (**Hebrews 11:37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated).
 - m) Clearly not all mature believers enjoyed abundant wealth, great health, or other types of prosperity. Some believers will, some will not enjoy prosperity. It is dependent on the will of God for each believer (Gen. 13:2, 26:12-13, Matt. 8:20, 2 Cor. 11:27).

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- n) The believer must learn to be content with the blessings God bestows on him in his proper niche (**Philippians 4:11-12** Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. cf. 1 Tim. 6:7-9, Heb. 13:5).
- o) In spite of the distortions, certain passages teach the principle that God rewards our faithfulness with various forms of temporal prosperity. However, it does not necessarily consist of money or the details of life (**Luke 18:29-30** And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.", 1Tim. 4:8).
- p) Believers are to exhibit grace toward others.
- q) This is accomplished through the practical application of goodwill, kindness, mercy and generosity in speech and conduct (cf. Phil 2:3).
- r) The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme example of grace.
 - i) He is the pinnacle of God's grace to humanity (John 1:1-17).
 - ii) He manifested total orientation to grace as seen in:
 - (1) The humility of His humanity. His obedience manifests humility and He constantly relied on God the Father and acted in obedience to the will of the Father (John 4:32-34; 5:17-20, 7:14-18).
 - (2) His treatment of others (Matt. 15:32, Mk. 3:1-5, 7:24-30, 10:13-16).
 - (3) His total commitment to all truth (**John 1:14, 17** "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth..." ¹⁷ "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.")
 - (4) His entire First Advent epitomizes grace orientation under hypostasis and is the example for grace giving (**2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.).
- s) The last verse of the Revelation, the final book in the Word of God emphasizes the grace of our Lord toward us (**Revelation 22:21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.).

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