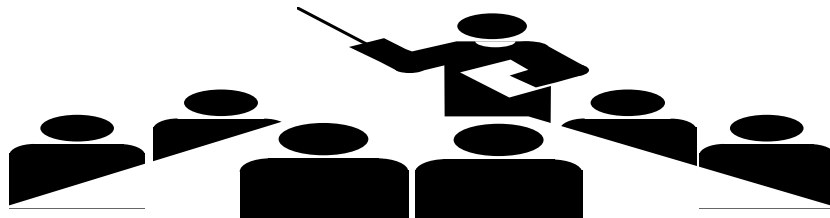


BIBLE STUDY SERIES



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God's Saving Grace

Bible Study

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God's Saving Grace Lesson #1: Saving Grace

GRACE [QUOTATIONS]

- ❑ A man must completely despair of himself in order to become fit to obtain the grace of Christ.
MARTIN LUTHER (1483–1546)
- ❑ For grace is given not because we have done good works, but in order that we may be able to do them.
SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354–430)
- ❑ He who has not felt what sin is in the Old Testament knows little what grace is in the New. He who has not trembled in Moses, and wept in David, and wondered in Isaiah will rejoice little in Matthew, rest little in John. He who has not suffered under the Law will scarcely hear the glad sound of the gospel.
R. W. BARBOUR (B. 1900)
- ❑ When the mask of self-righteousness has been torn from us and we stand stripped of all our accustomed defenses, we are candidates for God's generous grace.
ERWIN W. LUTZER (1941–)

GRACE [DEFINITIONS]

- ❑ God's unmerited favor
- ❑ The undeserved blessing freely bestowed on man by God
- ❑ God's Redemption At Christ's Expense

Common Grace (general or universal grace)

Common grace is so called because it is common to all humankind. Its benefits are experienced by the whole human race without discrimination between one person and another. Thus Jesus reminded his hearers that God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

Special Grace (saving or regenerating grace)

Special grace is the grace by which God redeems, sanctifies, and glorifies his people. Unlike common grace, which is universally given, special grace is bestowed only on those whom God elects to eternal life through faith in his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

- ❑ God's saving grace not only saves, but also transforms and revitalizes those whose lives were previously broken and meaningless. Saul, the persecutor, was dramatically changed into Paul, the apostle; so that he was able to testify: *"By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them [the other apostles], though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me"* (1 Cor. 15:10).
- ❑ God's saving grace is offered to all (Titus 2:10)
- ❑ God's saving grace is received only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- ❑ God's saving grace produces in us good works. (Ephesians 2:10)
- ❑ God's saving grace teaches how to live godly, righteously, and sober in this present world. (Titus 2:11)

- God's saving grace can be divided into three categories: prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace. We shall explore these three aspects of God's saving grace.

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God's Saving Grace Lesson #2: Prevenient Grace

PREVENIENT GRACE [DEFINITIONS]

- Prevenient grace is grace that comes first. It precedes all human decision and endeavor. That is the whole point of grace: it does not start with us, it starts with God; it is not earned or merited by us, it is freely and lovingly given to us who have no resources or deservings of our own.
- "Prevenient grace is the Holy Spirit at work in everyone between conception and conversion. The Holy Spirit woos or prevents us from moving so far toward disobedience, that when we finally understand the claims of the gospel upon our lives, we are guaranteed the freedom to say yes."

Robert E. Tuttle, Jr., *Sanctity without Starch*

- I. God's Initiative:** Grace always means that it is God who takes the initiative and implies the priority of God's action on behalf of needy sinners.
 - A. John declares, "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins"; consequently, "we love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:10, 19).
 - B. God showed his prior love for us by graciously providing this redemption precisely when we had no love for him: "God shows his love for us," says Paul, "in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," so that "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:8, 10; cf. II Cor. 8:9). God took action, moreover, when we were helpless (Rom. 5:6), without any ability to help ourselves or to make any contribution toward our salvation.

- II. The Order of Salvation:** Two views on the *ordo salutis*: 1) the Reformed view; 2) the Arminian view.
 - The Reformed view begins with the idea that Adam's sin is inherited by every individual at birth, so that everyone is born dead in sin. That being the case, God must first, logically, give one a new life (regeneration) before any work at all can be accomplished in his or her heart. After God has called and regenerated the individual sinner, he or she can then turn away from sin and to God (conversion). This step entails repentance and faith. When the sinner repents and believes in Christ, God reckons him or her righteous (justification). The logical consequence of being accounted righteous is living a holy life, so that sanctification follows justification. If one's justification and sanctification are genuine, then the person will persevere in salvation.
 - The Arminian view of the order of salvation asserts that individuals are born into a fallen world with human natures contaminated by Adam's sin. However, God's prevenient grace is such that each person born into this world can, if he or she wills, choose to accept God's offer of salvation. The order of salvation thus begins, logically, with a divine act of universal grace whereby all of humanity can choose God's gift of salvation. Faith, as a free act of the individual sinner, is the consequence of God's gracious offer. On the basis of that faith, God accounts the sinner righteous and begins the work of rebirth and renewal of the sinner's heart (regeneration). This leads to the Christian's perseverance

- III. The Work of the Holy Spirit (Jn.16:5-11)**
 - A. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. He convinces us that we are sinners and are lost without Christ.
 - B. The Holy Spirit convinces us of righteousness. He convinces us that our righteousness comes only from the crucified and risen Lord, who imputes His righteousness upon those who believe in Him.

- C. The Holy Spirit convinces us of judgement. He convinces us of the certainty of judgment and gives us the inner and unshakable conviction that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

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God's Saving Grace Lesson #3: Justifying Grace

JUSTIFICATION [DEFINITIONS]

- Justification (Heb. *tsedheq*, *tsadheq*; Gr. *dikaioo*, to make valid, to absolve, to vindicate, to set right)
- Justification is that judicial act of God by which, on the basis of the meritorious work of Christ, imputed to the sinner and received through faith, God declares the sinner absolved from sin, released from its penalty, and restored as righteous." It is being placed by God into a right relationship with himself.
- Justification is an act of God whereby he "considers" the sinner as righteous. God does not look at the sinner and see righteousness inside him or her. Rather, he looks at the sinner and, though seeing a sinner, considers that person righteous.
- Justification means "just-as-if-I-never-sinned."

I. Justification: a reversal of God's attitude toward the sinner because of his new relation in Christ

- A. It is a *declarative* act by which the sinner is declared to be free from guilt and the consequences of sin (Rom 4:6-8; 5:18-19; 8:33-34; 2 Cor 5:19-21)
- B. It is a *judicial* act in which the idea of judgment and salvation are combined to represent Christ fulfilling the law on behalf of the sinner (Matt 10:41; Rom 3:26; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet. 3:18)
- C. It is a *remissive* act in which God actually remits sin in complete forgiveness (Rom 4:5; 6:7)
- D. It is a *restorative* act by which the forgiven sinner is restored to favor through the imputation of Christ's righteousness (Rom 5:11; 1 Cor 1:30; Gal 3:6).

II. Scripture teaches four basic essentials in the act of justification. Justification involves:

- A. **Remission of punishment**, in which the justified believer is declared to be free of the demands of the law since they have been satisfied in Christ (Rom. 4:5) and is no longer exposed to the penalty of the law (Rom. 6:7).
 - B. **Restoration to favor**, in which the justified believer is declared to be personally righteous in Christ. Mere acquittal or remission would leave the sinner in the position of a discharged criminal. Justification implies that God's treatment of the sinner is as if that one had never sinned. The sinner is now regarded as being personally righteous in Christ (Gal 3:6).
 - D. **Imputed righteousness of God**, which is granted the justified believer through Christ's presence. Salvation in Christ imparts the quality and character of Christ's righteousness to the believer (Rom 3:22-26; Phil 3:9).
 - E. **New legal standing before God** in which, instead of being under the condemnation of sin, the justified believer stands before God in Christ. Christ takes the place of the sinner, the place of curse (Gal 3:15), being made sin (2 Cor 5:21) and being judged for sin; the believer now stands in Christ's righteousness (Rom 3:25) and is viewed as a son (Gal 4:5).
- The ground on which justification rests is the redeeming work of Christ's death. The inherent righteousness of Christ is the sole basis on which God can justify the sinner (Rom 3:24; 5:19; 8:1; 10:4; 1 Cor 1:8; 6:11; Phil 3:9; Titus 3:7).

- The instrumental cause of justification is faith, as the response of the soul to God's redeeming grace (Rom 3:28). Faith is the condition of justification not in that it is considered meritorious, but only as the condition by which the meritorious work of Christ is accepted by the sinner. The final ground of justification is the completed, finished, sufficient work of Christ atoning for the sinner in his redeeming work on the cross.

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Lesson #4: Sanctifying Grace

SANCTIFICATION [QUOTATIONS]

- We are saved and sanctified for God, not to be specimens in his showroom, but for God to do with us ever as he did with Jesus—make us broken bread and poured out wine as he chooses.
OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874–1917)
- When in his mercy God leads a soul in the higher path of sanctification, he begins by stripping it of all self-confidence, and to this end he allows our own schemes to fail, our judgment to mislead us. We grope and totter and make countless mistakes until we learn wholly to mistrust ourselves and to put all our confidence in him.
JEAN NICOLAS GROU (1731–1803)

SANCTIFICATION [DEFINITIONS]

- Sanctification (Hebrew (qds) and Greek (hagias-) to make holy: roots represented in AV by "sanctify, holy, hallow," and varied in RSV by "consecrate, dedicate," are applied to any person, place, occasion, or object "set apart" from common, secular use as devoted to some divine power.
- Sanctification is the divine process by which Christians become more and more like Christ. It is a divine process because the changes in the life of the Christian are produced by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). Those changes are not the result of self-improvement efforts or re-imagining. They are the result of the power of God renewing the heart and mind of the Christian. In the Christian's sanctification, God's resurrection power is at work on a renewal project.

I. Sanctification Explored

- A. The goal: the likeness of Christ [God demonstrated his purpose in creating us in His image (Gen. 1:26)]
- B. The aim: to "grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph 4:15)
- C. The model: the life of Christ
- D. The means: the Holy Spirit
- E. The method: a daily walk with God through prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship, and worship

II. Sanctification and Consecration (Romans 12:1)

- A. A "living sacrifice"
- B. A life "holy and pleasing to God,"
- C. A "spiritual act of worship"

III. Sanctification: God's will for us (1 Thess. 4:3-7) God wants us to "be sanctified," which means putting away all forms of immorality and impurity and living a "holy life."

IV. Sanctification: a process: Sanctification begins the moment of conversion and continues until the end of ones life. Regeneration is instantaneous, but sanctification is a process. It is never complete in this life. We eagerly await the redemption of the body, which comes either with death or translation. (Rom 8:22-23)

V. Sanctification and Spiritual Warfare: Sanctification is a struggle between two forces at work in the Christian: the old nature and the new nature. The new nature desires to do God's will, but the old nature refuses to go along. There is warfare within the Christian's heart (see Rom 7:15-24; Gal 5:17), but with

God's help, the new nature eventually overcomes the old. In both Romans 7:25 and Galatians 5:22-25, Paul concludes on the note of victory over sin in this life through the power of the Holy Spirit; "the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2). Does the Christian ever completely overcome his or her old nature? The Bible gives little hope of that, this side of heaven.