

THINKING IT THROUGH:

1. When did grace first come into the world?
2. What is the difference between mercy and grace?
3. When did you receive God's grace?
4. What is the difference between salvation by works and salvation by grace?
5. Mercy is reactive, while grace is proactive. How does this affect the Christian's life?
6. What is the relationship between law and grace?
7. How can a person receive God's grace in vain?
8. What does "the evidence of the grace of God" mean?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Grace is

Day 1: Read John 1:1-18. What came through Jesus Christ?

Day 2: Read the summary of Elijah's life, Romans 11:1-6. What did you learn about grace?

Day 3: Read the summary of Paul's life, Galatians 1:13-24. What did you learn about grace?

Day 4: Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What did you learn about grace?

Day 5: Read Titus 3:3-8. What did you learn about grace?

Day 6: Read Ephesians 1:3-14. What did you learn about grace?

Day 7: Read the parable of the lost son, Luke 15:11-24. What did you learn about grace?

Memory verse:

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16

LESSON 7

THE GRACE OF GOD

A COVENANT OF GRACE

Many people define grace by an acronym “**God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**” What does that mean? We can better understand grace if we know the difference between justice, mercy, and grace. **Justice** gives us **what we deserve**:

For the wages of sin is death. (Ro.6:23 NKJV)

The penalty for one sin is eternal separation from God in a place called hell. Since we have all sinned, God is just in sending every person to hell. On the other hand, **mercy** does not give us **what we deserve**:

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. (1Ti.1:16 NIV)

Mercy is reactive. Rather than sending us to hell for sin, God decided to forgive us when we believe and receive Jesus’ death as payment for our sin. Finally, **grace** gives us **what we do not deserve**:

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (He.4:16 NKJV)

Grace is proactive rather than merely negating the penalty for our sin. It empowers us with the inner strength to say “no” when we are tempted; it enables us to overcome our sins. Grace also grants us the privilege of adoption by God as sons. This adoption allows us the opportunity to spend eternity with Him in heaven. For many, grace means that while we were sinners God justified us:

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Ro.3:22-24 NRSV)

The actions of Christians are merely the evidence that we have received the grace of God. In this way, our works do not earn us salvation but are the proof that we are saved:

When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. (Ac.11:23 NIV)

Grace draws us to God, transforms our lives, and equips us for service. Therefore, the whole of the Christian life can be summed up in one word: grace. Every good thing is completed for God by Christ through the Spirit of grace.

There are **different kinds of gifts**, but the **same Spirit**. There are **different kinds of service**, but the **same Lord**. There are **different kinds of working**, but the **same God works all of them in all men**. Now **to each one the manifestation of the Spirit** is given for the common good. (1Co.12:4-7 NIV; He.2:4)

I have heard many people who were taught how to preach in seminaries; however, they were not gifted by God. Ministers in the church, apart from God's gifting, are counterproductive:

*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**.* (Jn.15:5 NASB)

We can try to minister to people by our own initiative, but we will fail to be effective. Only when we minister through Christ will we succeed. No Christian is exempt from God's purpose or gifting. No Christian has all the gifts. Diversity of God's gifts is similar to our bodies. We are not made of just one part but of many parts working to one goal. It is in the collective ministering of Christians that the fullness of Christ can bring wholeness to the world:

*But to **each one of us grace was given** according to the measure of Christ's gift... And **He gave some** as apostles, and **some as prophets**, and **some as evangelists**, and **some as pastors and teachers**, for **the equipping** of the saints for the work of service, to the **building up** of the body of Christ.* (Eph.4:7; 11-12 NASB)

God's gifts are developed with use. I may give my son a baseball glove, but using it will make him proficient in catching a ball. We receive gifts by God's grace, but we must use them in order to bless others. Through our faithfulness in using God's gifts, we are blessed:

*For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.* (2Ti.1:6 TNIV)

If God's grace chooses us, changes us, and equips us, then mankind cannot claim any merit in regard to their salvation. God's grace works in our lives, making us what we are:

*But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and **his grace** toward me **has not been in vain**. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but **the grace of God that is with me**.* (1Co.15:10 NRSV)

Justification is part of grace, but it is not the whole truth. We need to grasp the whole truth about grace:

*This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere **by changing lives, just as it changed your lives** from the day you first heard and **understood the truth about God's wonderful grace**.* (Co.1:6 NLT)

The prophets of the old covenant knew that their experience did not hold the fullness of all that God had promised. They waited with eager anticipation for all that they only partially understood:

*As to this salvation, the prophets **who prophesied of the grace that would come** to you made careful searches.* (1Pe.1:10 NASB)

Before Christ came, the promises were beyond the grasp of the people of Israel. For the promises came by grace, and grace came through Christ:

*For the law was given through Moses, but **grace and truth came through Christ**.* (Jn.1:17 NKJV; Ro.1:5)

The Old Testament prophets did not experience grace but rather spoke of the promised grace. Yet God speaks of the fullness of grace that was poured out after Christ's death:

***From the fullness of his grace** we have all received one blessing after another.* (Jn.1:16 NIV)

The old covenant was of Law, which came through Moses. The new covenant was one of grace, which came through Christ. Grace did not exist in its present form prior to Christ's birth into the world:

*But to **each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it**.* (Eph.4:7 TNIV)

Many will argue the fact that the word grace was found in the Old Testament as well. This is true as God's grace was required to sustain a physical line of people from whom the Christ would come. If God had not worked in those Israelites who were faithful to Him, none of Israel would have survived:

*And as Isaiah predicted, "**If the Lord of hosts had not left survivors to us**, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah."* (Ro.9:29 NRSV)

In the old covenant, God's grace always ensured that a remnant would be left faithful. This grace was a sustaining grace which enabled them to survive in the favor of God:

God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars; I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." But what is the divine reply to him? **"I have kept for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."** **So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.** But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

(Ro.11:2-6 NRSV)

The first covenant was by Law; the second covenant was by grace. The difference between Law and grace is this: the Law says, "Do this, and you shall live"; while grace says, "You have received life; now walk therein." To try to live by Law after we receive Christ violates grace:

For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace. But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.

(Ga.5:4-5 NLT)

Law is opposed to grace, as the Law requires effort from man to live up to a certain standard. Grace, on the other hand, enables man to live up to God's standard. Law is man trying to appease God, while grace is God enabling man to please Him:

I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.

(Ga.2:21 NKJV)

We do not live by Law but by grace, but we must understand God's grace. A significant change took place between the old covenant and the new; through Christ, grace came into the world to eternally change the lives of men.

GOD'S WORK, MAN'S RESPONSE

The new covenant is not just for the Jews but, rather, for all the nations. However, not everyone is saved; for the covenant is only for all whom the Lord our God will call:

Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are afar off- for all whom the Lord our God will call.

(Ac.2:38-39 NIV)

We do not merely receive the character of God but the purpose of God. For, the Spirit burdens us with the concerns of God and creates in us the will to live for God's purpose:

For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

(Php.2:13 TNIV)

God has a specific plan for your life because you were saved for His purpose:

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

(Eph.1:11 NIV)

God has a plan and specific purpose for every Christian's life. Paul also was saved for God's plan, and He equipped Paul to complete it:

I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

(Eph.3:7-8 NASB)

Paul was set apart with the laying on of hands to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. His ministry was successful because of God's grace:

Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun. The believers there had entrusted them to the grace of God to do the work they had now completed.

(Ac.14:26 NLT)

Paul became an apostle by the grace that God had given him. You too have been given gifts by God's grace to fulfill His purpose for your life:

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.

(Ro.12:6 NRSV)

For this purpose, God's grace equips us individually for a specific purpose, which no other person can fulfill:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

(1Pe.4:10 NIV)

God's grace takes various forms to meet various needs. These gifts are not the natural talents with which a person may be born. Rather, each Christian receives specific spiritual gifts from God:

All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

(1Co.12:11 NRSV)

Once we are born again, the Spirit determines what gifts we receive:

*But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly **that what he has done has been done through God.***

(Jn.3:21 NIV)

God's grace not only justifies us; it also sanctifies us through God's Spirit of grace. Therefore, we need to continue in the grace of God to be sanctified; otherwise, we have received God's grace in vain.

GOD'S EQUIPPING GRACE

God does not give us a little grace every once in a while; God offers us the fullness of His grace. Stephen is a testimony to this fact:

*Stephen, **full of grace** and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*

(Ac.6:8 NRSV)

Just as with Stephen, God gives us abundant grace. God's grace is proactive; it empowers and affects the total person:

***God is able to make all grace abound to you**, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

(2Co.9:8 NIV)

Did you notice the “all’s” in the previous verse? We have been given abundant grace because God has a work for us to do. Grace is not a Christian smorgasbord in which we choose the types of grace we want. God's grace is all or nothing:

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

(Ro.8:28-30 NKJV)

Since God's primary purpose for the Church is to bring transformation into others lives, to stop at our own personal transformation without sharing this truth is to resist God's will. We are called according to His purpose. One of the great fallacies of the Christian life taught in North America is that God saved us so that we could enjoy life and go to heaven. However, God saved us for His purpose:

*God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, **but according to His own purpose and grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.*

(2Ti.1:9 NASB)

Before we accepted Christ, some of us denied the existence of God, while others believed in Him but rejected His commands. Both groups of people were controlled by sin:

All of us also lived** among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were** by nature objects of wrath. **But because of his great love for us, God**, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--**it is by grace you have been saved.

(Eph.2:3-5 NIV)

Because man lived in rebellion against God, God had to initiate the relationship with mankind. People had no interest in Him—only an act of grace could start this relationship:

*No one can come to Me **unless the Father who sent Me draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day.*

(Jn.6:44 NASB; Jn.6:65)

Like a light on a summer night that attracts insects, God has to draw people to Himself; otherwise, no one would ever have come to Him:

***You were dead because of your sins** and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then **God made you alive with Christ**, for he forgave all our sins.*

(Co.2:13 NLT)

When Adam sinned, we died spiritually, apathetically deadened to the things of God. God had to make us alive by His Spirit so that we could not only accept Him but also grasp salvation:

*The **person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God** but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because **they are discerned only through the Spirit.***

(1Co.2:14 TNIV)

To gain spiritual sensitivity or insight, man needs to die to his former way of life and be born again. Just as physical conception and birth are determined by the parents, God determines our spiritual birth:

***He chose to give birth to us** by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.*

(Ja.1:18 NLT)

Grace is all about God choosing man—not man choosing God:

***You did not choose Me, but I chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.*

(Jn.15:16 NKJV)

God denies man a part in salvation, saying that He chose us before we existed—before the creation of all things:

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the good pleasure of His will.** (Eph.1:4 NKJV)

God's grace was not given to us because we merited it, but it was given to us before the beginning of time:

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. **He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time**—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

(2Ti.1:9-10 NLT)

Paul makes it unmistakably clear that he did nothing to deserve God's favor or to influence God to call him by His grace:

But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles. (Ga.1:15-16 NRSV)

We cannot earn the right to be chosen by God; otherwise, it would be considered a work. Like Paul, God chose us before our birth:

Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Ro.9:10-13 TNIV)

If God's decision to choose us is based on the effort of man, then it is not grace:

So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. (Ro.11:5-6 NIV)

Over and over, the Bible establishes our inability to come to Christ and God's power to intervene in our lives and choose some of us by His grace:

Brothers and sisters, think of **what you were when you were called**. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But **God chose** the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; **God chose** the weak things of the world to shame the strong. **God chose** the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. **It is because of him that**

weakness and humility is the key to releasing God's grace, which helps us overcome:

*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things as we are**, yet without sin. Therefore **let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace**, so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help in time of need.*** (He.4:15-16 NASB)

In today's society, humility is often seen as weakness; however, with Christianity, it is our humility that offers us true strength:

*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**" Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, **that he may lift you up in due time.*** (1Pe.5:5-6 NIV)

God's grace enables us to live holy lives and transforms our lives. Grace keeps us from falling. We stand firm by God protecting and enabling us:

*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*** (1Co.10:12-13 NKJV)

Once humbled, we need to ask God to do what we cannot do for ourselves. God did not merely justify us before the beginning of time; He also had a comprehensive plan, that through the Spirit we would be made holy:

*We are always thankful **that God chose you** to be among the first to experience salvation—a **salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy** and through your belief in the truth.* (2Th.2:13 NLT)

We are saved through the work of the Spirit; His work makes us holy. God's Spirit does the work of transforming our lives:

*To God's elect... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, **through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedience** to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.* (1Pe.1:1-2 TNIV)

As we continue to live in the truth, we begin to realize how much salvation is God's work and how little of salvation is dependent on man's work:

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, **who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality** and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (Jude 4 NIV)

Grace is not mercy. The grace to be saved is but a small sampling of all that God's grace wants to accomplish in the lives of His people:

They long for you and pray for you because of **the surpassing grace of God that he has given you.** (2Co.9:14 NRSV)

Grace enables man to live to God's holy standard because grace frees us from our slavery to sin and continues to change our actions:

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? **Shall we sin** because we are not under law but under grace? **May it never be!** (Ro.6:14-15 NASB)

Mercy is reactive, forgiving us for the sins we have committed. Grace is proactive. Not only does it change our very nature, but it also empowers us to say "no" to sin. Grace enables us to live for God:

For **the grace of God** that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say **"No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,** (Ti.2:11-12 NIV)

Grace empowers us to change. If we are not saying "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, then we do not have the grace of God that saves:

Now this is our boast: our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, **in the holiness and sincerity that are from God.** We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but **according to God's grace.** (2Co.1:12 TNIV)

While living under Law, admitting defeat is a sign of utter hopelessness. However, under grace, our admission of weakness releases God's grace by causing us to seek His promised freedom:

He said to me, "**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.**" So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **...whenever I am weak, then I am strong.** (2Co.12:9-10 NRSV)

When we cry out to God from our weakness, we begin to rely on Him for His strength to help us. Since we admitted that we were helpless, God receives all the glory when we receive victory over a sin. Our

you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (1Co.1:26-31 TNIV)

Grace is all about God extending His favor on undeserving man:

Giving thanks to the Father, **who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** (Col.1:12-14 NRSV)

God qualified, rescued, and brought us to Himself; God made us open to the Gospel in order to receive Christ as Lord:

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, **was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond** to the things spoken by Paul. (Ac.16:14 NASB)

Like Lydia, God is the One Who opened our hearts to respond to the Gospel. Therefore, grace is about God doing for man what man could not do for himself: reach out to God for mercy.

GRACE THAT SAVES

I made the decision to follow Christ when I was 17 on a flight to army boot camp. You too accepted Christ at some point in your life, but grace is not based on that decision. In order to understand grace, we must understand choice. What is free choice? Romans 7 speaks about Paul's life before Christ, and he denies free choice:

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, **in my sinful nature. I want to** do what is right, **but I can't. I want to** do what is good, **but I don't. I don't want to** do what is wrong, **but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.** (Ro.7:18-20 NLT)

Paul was a Jew under the Law before he received Christ—unable to do what he wanted; he only did the evil he did not want to do. Before Christ, we made choices; but we were controlled by sin, predisposed to evil by our sinful nature. This is another type of choice: manipulated choice. We can make a choice that is manipulated by outside forces. Consider why companies are willing to pay millions of dollars for one 30 second commercial at the Super Bowl. They know, and science has proven it, that through subliminal advertising at an event like the Super Bowl, they can get people to change their choice of deodorant, food, car, and so on. Through advertising, we are manipulated to do things

we did not intend to do before watching the advertisement. The Bible teaches us that Satan, like the advertising companies, knows how to manipulate our choices:

The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2Co.4:4 NASB)

Therefore, people do not believe because Satan has manipulated their choices.

For Christians, another kind of choice is empowered choice. What does it mean to be empowered? We make choices, but God, through the indwelling of His Spirit, influences our choices by grace:

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you to will and to act** according to his good purpose.* (Php.2:12-13 NIV)

Paul is saying “continue to choose” but “it is God who works in you, strengthening you to make the right choice.” Grace works by God working within our will. Christ is the One Who lives in us and gives us the strength and will to change. The Scriptures clearly teach that we received Christ because of God’s grace working in us. Our faith, the means through which we received Christ, is from Jesus:

*We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion **who initiates** and perfects **our faith**.* (He.12:2 NLT)

Jesus is the author of our faith. Faith does not originate from ourselves—faith is a gift from God by grace:

*For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that **not of yourselves; it is the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For **we are His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* (Eph.2:8-10 NKJV)

We are God’s workmanship. He not only calls us, but He gives us the faith to believe in Him. The Bible is unmistakably clear that God is the author of our faith:

*The **grace of our Lord overflowed** for me **with the faith and love** that are in Christ Jesus.* (1Ti.1:14 NRSV)

Faith is not an intellectual exercise but a gift from God by His grace:

*When he arrived, he was a great help to those **who by grace had believed**.* (Ac.18:27 NASB)

Salvation really has little to do with man; it is all about God:

*It **does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort**, but on God's mercy.* (Ro.9:16 NIV; Php.1:6)

Grace, by definition, denies man any credit for coming to Christ:

***For it has been granted to you** on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,* (Php.1:29 TNIV)

God does not force us against our will but works in us, making all the other options seem unpalatable, illogical, and unacceptable. Once again, God is the One Who works in us and, by His grace, brings us to accept Him:

*When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed**.* (Ac.13:48 NASB)

Therefore, before we think that our ability to believe caused us to rise above the rest of the world, understand that our faith was really another working of God’s grace that authored within us the faith to be saved.

MERCY FORGIVES; GRACE EMPOWERS

One of the greatest problems facing the church is that many people accept God’s grace to be saved but never realize the fullness of His grace. Their lives become stagnant. We need to continue in grace:

*When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who **spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God**.* (Ac.13:43 NRSV)

If we relegate grace to the realm of mercy, accepting only the forgiveness of sin but rejecting its power to transform lives, we will have received God’s grace in vain:

*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, **so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God**. As God's fellow workers **we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain**.* (2Co.5:21-6:1 NIV)

Many people teach that grace is no more than mercy, offering only forgiveness. They tell us that what we do does not matter, as long as we ask God for forgiveness. To offer forgiveness for sin without the requirement to discontinue sinning, makes grace a license to sin: