

## When Grace Becomes Real, It's Absolutely Amazing!

Ephesians 2:1–10 (especially 8–10)

A Supplement To **Encourage** Additional Study

### Some Relevant Statements About The Glory Of God's Grace

"God's call to be a light in this world is never a case of what you can or cannot accomplish. It's what His grace enables you to do." —**Jack Hibbs**

"God's grace is the #1 distinguishing characteristic of our Christian faith. We're saved by grace from the eternal penalty for sin when we place our personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace provides us with security in Christ! God's unmerited favor sanctifies us (sets us apart from the rest of society). It enables & empowers us to serve with the spiritual (grace) gifts we receive. Finally grace sustains & supports us as we face the challenges of living in a sinful world!" —**GAD**

"Grace is a gift of the humble to the humiliated. Grace acknowledges the ugliness of sin by choosing to see beyond it. Grace accepts a person as someone worthy of kindness despite whatever grime or hard-shell casing keeps him or her separated from the rest of the world."

—**Chuck Swindoll**

"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 Lutzer**

"It is His grace that conquers a multitude of flaws and in that grace, there is only favor. Favor is not achieved; favor is received." —**Jack Hibbs**

"God's grace is more than just pardon; it is a power that empowers believers to live according to God's will." —**David Jeremiah**

"God's grace is not just a passive blessing, but an active force that transforms individuals and encourages them to pursue their calling."

—**Howard Hendricks**

"Grace is simply the undeserved favor of God. You can't earn it, buy it, or work for it. You can only receive grace as a gift." —**Warren W. Wiersbe**

"Only those who see themselves as utterly destitute can fully appreciate the grace of God." —**Erwin Lutzer**

"There is more grace in God's heart than there is sin in your past."

—**Erwin Lutzer**

"God's amazing grace costs us nothing; this same grace cost Jesus everything. But grace is more than a pardon, it is power."

—**Warren W. Wiersbe**

—**Some Personal Thoughts to Introduce This Week's Devotional Study:**

—After last week's study focusing on the important influence that our trust in the Lord should have on our lives, this week we're studying Ephesians 2:1–10, another extremely foundational passage of scripture that teaches about **God's grace**.

The author of the famous hymn, *Amazing Grace*, is John Newton, who lived in the 1700's in England. However, for several years Newton lived in West Africa as both a slave trader, but also a slave himself. His biography tells that he was rescued by a ship captain who was asked by his father to find him. His own description of that time in his life states that he was "once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in West Africa."

In 1748, during his return voyage to England, Newton had a Christian conversion. He awoke to find the ship caught in a severe storm off the coast of Ireland and about to sink. In response, Newton began praying for God's mercy, & the storm began to die down. This experience marked the beginning of his conversion to Christianity. Oddly enough, temporarily Newton went back into the slave trade business until 1754. In 1788, after being an Anglican priest for 24 years, he became actively involved in the *Abolitionist movement* & he wrote an apology stating that he was too late in publicly standing up against slavery. His statement included these words, "It will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders." It seems obvious that God's grace had a significant impact on his life & he's not only known as the author of his famous hymn, but also for this powerful expression of humility, "I am not the man I ought to be, I am not the man I wish to be. I am not the man I hope to be. But by the grace of God, I am not the man I used to be."

This devotional study is designed to help each of us reflect on how we've been touched in a personal way by God's grace. So let's ask this initial question: **How often does the reality of God's grace hit home in our minds? Looking back at our study last week, "trusting the Lord with all my heart" means relying only on Him & His grace! Personal thoughts???**

—1— *Amazing grace, how sweet the sound; that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now I see!*

The first 3 verses of Ephesians 2 give a glaring description of our lost condition before trusting Christ. After reading these verses, we might say that before trusting the Lord we all have/had:

1. **a common past;** = by nature we are all children of wrath
2. **a common problem;** = we all struggle with cravings, lusts, & desires
3. **a corrupt prince;** = the evil adversary who encourages disobedience
4. **a common penalty.** = no one can earn God's approval!

We might also conclude that: —**the outcome of sin = death**  
—**the outgrowth of sin = disobedience**  
—**the origin of sin = devil**

—It's not an enjoyable or easy topic to address but why is it important for everyone to understand the influence/effect sin has on our lives?

—Some people are offended by any discussion or focus on God's wrath. But people need to recognize what's actually included in salvation from sin. What thoughts or concerns does this reality raise in your mind?

—We might suggest that we who are followers of the Lord should be **HUMBLED** by the **REALITY** of our **SIN**. Why is this a healthy reminder? At what point could focusing on our problem with sin become unhealthy? What steps can we take to maintain a proper balance/perspective?

—2— In Ephesians 2:4–6 we're given a powerful introduction to God's grace & provision! To follow the train of thought we used for the first question, we should be **HUMBLED** by the **REMINDER** of God's **GRACE**! In spite of mankind's problem with sin, God's **LOVE** stepped in with **GRACE**!

- the origin of God's love = His GOODNESS**
- the outgrowth of God's love = His GRACE**
- the objective of God's love = His GLORY**
- the outcome of God's grace & love = His GIFT of LIFE! (Eternal life)**

—How does Ephesians 2:4–6 point out that salvation is not a joint effort between God and men, but that it is all of God? Why is it essential for us to recognize this truth?

—When you describe your personal perspective or view of God, what's the first thing that comes to your mind?

—What do verses 4–6 influence your view of God? How do they make you look forward to our future in Glory?

—3— Now let's focus our attention on Ephesians 2:7–10.

We suggested that verses 4–6 lead to a sense of humility because of what they say about God's grace. These verses (7–10) place a massive exclamation point on how amazing grace really is. Earlier we pointed out that the objective of God's grace & love is God's glory; please carefully & closely observe what verse 7 says about God's purpose. *"In the ages to come, God wants to show (display) the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus!"* That's telling us that God will be glorified by using those who have been saved by His grace as a testimony for the world to see. We aren't given any precise details about how this will take place, but it seems that in a very special way, God wants to use the transformation of sinners to demonstrate the immense richness & wealth of His grace.

Then in verses 8–9 we read another powerful reminder that God deserves all the credit, all the glory, & all the praise for rescuing us from the tight grasp & condemnation of sin.

Finally in verse 10 Paul gave us the reason salvation is not by works. Rather than salvation being a masterpiece that we have produced, regenerated followers of Christ are a creative masterpiece that God has produced. *"Workmanship"* is from the Greek word *poieme*, where we get the word *"poem"* means a work of art, a masterpiece. As a master worker, God has created us in Christ Jesus. The word translated *"created"* here describes something that can only be God's activity and emphasizes something He alone can produce. Good works are never the root of our salvation but the fruit that God intends for us to bear. God has not saved us because of our works, but He has saved us to do good works. Good works are what God intended us to practice, with His Holy Spirit's help.

—Why should saving faith also include repentance & submission to Christ as Lord? What's the significance of recognizing Christ's Lordship?

—Based on what Ephesians 2:7–10 say, why is it important for us to realize that salvation is a work of God?

—If someone said to you, "I've accepted Christ as my Savior, but I haven't decided yet to make Him my Lord," how would you respond? How would you try to help this person understand the truth about salvation?

—How would you explain the value of good works to someone so they realize we're not saved by good works, but we're rescued from sin so we can do good works that will please God?