

Grace - Not a slick formula!

Form many church members the doctrine of God's grace in Christ has become a slick formula to evade Christian responsibility. This type of mentality is not new. The fact that God's salvation is not by works, but 'grace', ie, a 'gift', can easily be distorted. Christians think that if salvation is a gift and not the result of my works, then I can indulge my own whims and not take seriously the matter of obedience to God's commands. The New Testament writers make clear that such a stance is totally contrary to Christ's purpose.

The Apostle Paul writes, "The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligious and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world." (Titus 2:11-12). In simple terms the reception of God's grace through faith will lead to

1. Godliness of life. This will mean taking seriously the imitation of God's character. We must 'mirror' the image of God's holiness in our lives. Grace will also mean that we will be in earnest concerning the doing of

2. Good Works. While we are not saved by our 'good works', we are saved **for good works**. The purpose of the New Covenant is that God's law may be 'written on our hearts' ie., to do it! (see Jeremiah 31:31f)

Finally, God's grace truly received, will lead to the realization that Christians are to be a

3. Gathering people. The New Testament in many passages speaks of the church as a 'body'; the implication is clearly to bring home to each believer that each member is dependent upon other members. Christ's 'body' cannot function, as He intended, unless each believer is committed to the other members of the church and its meetings. Do we need to search our hearts and seek for the signs of God's grace within?

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