

Living In The Balance Of Grace And Faith

Andrew Wommack

At our *Gospel Truth Seminars*, I always take time before meetings to talk with friends and partners. **One of the most common questions I'm asked is "What do I need to do to receive the blessings of God?"** It is usually followed by this explanation: "I have been praying, reading my Bible, going to church, and paying my tithes, yet I don't seem to be able to get my prayers answered."

In that question and explanation lies the root of the problem: They have fallen into the trap of linking God's response to their performance. They have not properly understood the balance of grace and faith and their relationship to each other.

By definition, the word *grace* means unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor.

Therefore, **the good news is, grace has**

nothing to do with you. Grace existed before you ever came to be. Another way of saying it is, **grace is God's part.** *Faith* is defined as being a positive response to what God has already provided by grace. In other words, **faith is your positive response to God's grace, or faith only appropriates what God has already provided for you.** Therefore, **faith is your part.**

Grace and faith work together, and they must be in balance.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Sometimes we read a passage from Scripture that is so familiar, we don't stop to think about what it is really saying. In this verse, a profound truth is being declared. It says we are saved by grace through faith, not one or the other. Think of it this way—**grace is what God does; faith is what we do.** It takes both working together to receive salvation.



Salvation is not dependent on grace alone. If it were, everyone would be saved and going to heaven, for God's grace is the same toward everyone (Titus 2:11). He has already given the gift of salvation to everyone through Jesus. It is by faith that a person receives what was done 2,000 years ago.

Most of us believe that in order to be saved, we need to ask God to forgive us of our sins, but that isn't what the Bible teaches. In 1 John 2:2, it states that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. Jesus didn't just die for those He knew would accept Him; He died for every sinner who has ever lived on this earth. And He died before you or I ever committed a single sin.

Here is a radical truth that would get me kicked out of most churches: **Sin is not an issue with God!** The Lord isn't waiting for us to ask Him to forgive us of our sins. The sins of the entire world—past, present, and future—have already been forgiven. Even a man like Adolf Hitler had grace extended to him! Jesus loved Hitler and paid for his sins just as He did for yours and mine. God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11).

God has already done His part; it is now up to you to receive the truth by faith and make it a reality in your life. Amen!

John the Baptist said in John 1:29,

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

In John 16:8-9, Jesus said,

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me.”

The church often misinterprets this scripture and preaches that the Holy Spirit is here to convict you of all your sins. That is not what the Holy Spirit is here to do. He is here to convict you of the single sin of not receiving Jesus as your Savior. The only conviction is that of believing in Jesus Christ.

People do not go to hell for committing adultery, stealing, or even murder. Those, like all sins, have already been paid for. This is what the Bible says in John 16:8-9—**the only sin that is going to send people to hell is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. So, stop magnifying sin in your life!**

The message that much of the church is preaching causes us to become conscious of sin instead of conscious of righteousness (Rom. 3:19-22). It also causes us to link our performance to all the other blessings of God.

God's grace has provided not only for salvation but also for every need of your life. That provision is not based on whether you are reading the Bible enough, praying enough, going to church, or even paying your tithes. Before you ever had a financial need, God created the provision. Before you were sick, God, through grace, provided your healing (1 Pet. 2:24). Before you ever became discouraged, God blessed you with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). God anticipated every need you could ever have and has met those needs through Jesus before you existed. That's grace.



Jesus hasn't saved, healed, delivered, or prospered a single person in the last 2,000 years. What God provided by grace 2,000 years ago now becomes a reality when mixed with faith. Faith appropriates what God has already provided. Faith doesn't move God; He isn't the one who is stuck. Faith doesn't make God do anything. Grace and faith work together, and **our part**

is to receive what God has already done. Grace must be balanced with faith.

Many Christians believe that God moves sovereignly as He wills, when He wills. That is because religion teaches that God controls everything and that nothing can happen without His permission. However, it's not true—everything isn't up to God. I have a teaching called *The Believer's Authority* that explains this in more detail.

For instance, when my father died, I was told God needed him in heaven more than I needed him here. Even at twelve years old, I knew better than that. Why would God need my dad in heaven? God didn't kill my dad. That is not what the Word of God teaches. The Scripture makes it very clear that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (Heb. 2:14 and 1 John 3:8). Satan is the one who goes about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

God is being misrepresented. **If He was guilty of all the things we blame Him for, there isn't a civilized nation on the face of this earth that wouldn't convict Him of crimes**

against humanity. I think the idea that God either causes or allows evil so that we will somehow grow spiritually is the worst heresy in the body of Christ. It renders people passive and takes away their hope.

If you really believe that God controls everything, what's the use of doing anything? After all, it's all up to God, right? If you believe that God is trying to teach you something through sickness or poverty, why see a doctor or look for a good job? Why not suffer as much as you can and really learn the lesson? I mean, how dumb can you be and still breathe?

Brothers and sisters, that is terrible doctrine. The Bible says that in the last days, people will call evil good and good evil (Is. 5:20). Denominations today are teaching that when you get sick or experience financial problems, God is causing it so He can teach you something or humble you. That is an example of calling evil good.

God is not responsible for killing babies, for rape, violence, poverty, or sickness. Satan is the author of evil, and the Bible clearly states that we are to resist the Enemy (James 4:7). *Resist* means to actively fight against something. If we aren't fighting against sickness, for example, then we are submitting to it. To casually say to Satan "Please leave us alone" is not resisting the devil. We need to get angry at the devil, and we won't get angry if we believe that God is the one causing or allowing the problem.

God's will doesn't automatically come to pass. Jesus said that not everybody will be saved (Matt. 7:13), yet Scripture says it is the will of God that none should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). God has provided salvation, healing, financial provision, and everything else we need, but if we don't respond in faith to what has been provided by grace, we won't receive.

God's will is for everyone to be healed. Acts 10:38 says that Jesus went about doing good and healing *all* that were oppressed by the devil, and it calls what He did "good." And 1 Peter 2:24 tells us that we *were* healed by His stripes, yet most of us still do not receive His healing into our lives.

It is not the truth that sets you free; it's the truth you *know* that will set you free (John 8:32). And the truth is that you need to put your faith in what God has already done, not in what you do. God, by His grace, has already provided healing, prosperity, forgiveness for sin, and much more. However, it must be appropriated by faith.

God has done His part by giving His Son, Jesus. His grace has provided everything through the sacrifice of Jesus. **This is nearly too good to be true because there is absolutely nothing we can do to earn it and nothing we can do to lose it.** Our part is simple: We respond to His grace by faith and appropriate what has already been accomplished.

As simple as this sounds, most Christians don't understand this concept. Make sure that is not you. This is foundational to your relationship with God and the reason you may not be seeing your prayers answered. To help, I have just released my book *Living in the Balance of Grace & Faith* in paperback. Previously it was only available in hardback. It is also available in CD and DVD.

Don't confuse this with my very first book, which I wrote in 1987, entitled *Grace and Faith*. This was a short version of what has now evolved into a more complete teaching, *Living in the Balance of Grace & Faith*. I believe this message is at the heart of the Gospel, and it's the heart of the message God has given me to help transform the world.

Many emphasize grace and others emphasize faith. But too few emphasize balancing grace and faith. It's like sodium and chloride: Taken individually, both are poisons and can kill you. When mixed together, they become salt, which you must have to live. Grace without your positive response of faith won't save you, and faith that isn't a response to God's grace will bring you into condemnation. But put your faith in what God has already done for you, and you have the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

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