

How Can I Thank Thee? Let Me Count the Ways... Grace!

We look at the life of Paul for lessons on grace, and through this examination, we find five things that we can be thankful to God for:

1. Self-acceptance: My weaknesses can be His strength

1 Corinthians 15:10 says, ***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*** Paul acknowledges here that though he has put in effort, it is only through God's grace that he is able to accomplish work for His kingdom. If we rely only on our own strength to accomplish things, success can only be temporary. When our work is built on our power on this Earth, it "dies" when we die; but, if we're part of the work that He is trying to accomplish, then it will last forever. God only speaks on the eternal realm.

2. God's grace translates to us: My genetics does not determine my character

1 Corinthians 8:9 says, ***For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich.*** The riches of Christ in the Scriptures does not refer to material possessions, but rather the wealth of His character. Jesus was rich in long suffering, love and goodness, among other things. In the same way, who we are does not determine our character; instead, who we are *in Christ*—our "new" genetics—is what does. Through Him, we inherit wealth in our character.

3. Self-forgiveness: Nothing I am is a surprise to God

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1:12-14, ***I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.*** While Paul has not forgotten of his past life as Saul, he also hasn't forgotten that he has been forgiven and has therefore no reason to dwell on his past. One of the reasons believers suffer from esteem problems is that they just can't get past their past. Our sins are never okay, but they're all forgivable. However, just because nothing we've done comes as a surprise to God doesn't mean that our sin is rationalized.

4. Grace is eternal in its effect: I can never remove myself from His grace

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 says, ***Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.*** Even though grace is eternal in its effect, it cuts both ways—if it is abused, then there's accountability. Everything we do on this side of glory can follow us into eternity, so whatever we do has to be for the glory of God.

5. Grace is eternal in its concept: No matter what situation I am in, His grace is ever before me

Ephesians 2:6-7 says, ***And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable richness of His***





concept. God's riches in eternity are incomparable to anything that can be found here on Earth. Because of that, we must remember that no matter what we go through here, we have that to look forward to.

There is a danger concerning the grace of God: the wrong attitude toward sin. Most of us sin when we're having a tough time, and we think that that justifies our actions. Jude 1:4 says, ***For certain men whose condemnation was written about so 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.*** We may not realize it, but we sin against God when we mistreat His grace. We sometimes give a pass to sin because we know that we will be forgiven anyway. Remember that although we are forgiven, we are not excused. Another pitfall of having the wrong attitude toward sin is self-righteousness, or a tendency to think ourselves better than others because of the magnitude of our sin compared to theirs.

APPLICATION:

Patently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

Proverbs 3:34, John 1:16-17, Acts 4:33, Acts 6:8, Romans 4:16, Romans 6:14-15, Romans 12:6, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:1, Galatians 1:15, Galatians 5:4, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 4:29, Ephesians 4:7, Philippians 1:7, Colossians 4:6, 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:1, Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 12:15, James 4:6, 1 Peter 1:13, 1 Peter 5:10, 2 Peter 3:18

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal: When you think about Thanksgiving this week, what will your main thoughts be? 2. When you think about God's grace, what does it look like? 3. What does growing in grace look like?
	<p>Family: Thanksgiving traditions. Start a new thanksgiving tradition in your family. Psalm 95:2-3 <i>Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.</i> Make a list of what your are thankful for individually and as a family. And with each item on your list, how are you using this blessing to give God glory.</p>
	<p>Discipleship: This is the time to be thankful and appreciate you dgroup members and your disciplers.</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.