



**Turning Belief  
into  
PRACTICE**

-Mini Series-  
**Life is for Displaying  
The Gospel**

**Titus 2:11-15 God's Grace Teaches Us about This Life**

*The following commentary is designed to cause us to learn through unpacking truths from each verse of this book...*

*"11 FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,"*

➤ **Jesus is the hero who appears to rescue any sinner from eminent danger.**

The word "for" undeniably links this passage to the previous passage. In 2:1-10 Paul told Titus to teach both doctrine and its implications to all kinds of people who would teach all kinds of people no matter their age or social class. God's grace is not limited to certain classes of people but is open to all kinds of people. God uses a variety of people to make Himself look as magnificent as He is.

Some suppose that here Paul meant worldwide evangelism had already taken place (i.e. everyone had heard the gospel). Yet that point is difficult to support here. Instead the point is about to whom **God's grace has appeared** (Grk. epiphaino) meaning to become visible or clearly known (Mal 4:2; Lk 1:79; Acts 27:20; 2Cor 4:3-6; Titus 3:4). One writer said, "Grace penetrates our moral and spiritual darkness" (Hendriksen, 370).

The context of Titus 2 makes it clear the emphasis was not on every human but every kind of human (old, young) or every kind of human social class (master, servant). Paul used the phrase **all men** to describe the target audience of **God's grace**. **All** is the Greek word "pas" meaning of every type. **Men** is the Greek word "anthropos" meaning a human being without distinction.

Certainly many folks can imagine all sorts of excuses not to share the gospel with people due to age, gender, class, culture, ethnicity, dirtiness, moral uprightness, etc. Yet Paul's point here really seems to smack that in the face. We should freely proclaim the gospel of grace to all kinds of people because Jesus has done the work making it freely available to all kinds of men.

It is the free **grace of God** that brings salvation. **Grace** (Grk. charis) means undeserved favor extended on the basis of mercy not merit. In other words, nothing can be done to earn it. No particular kind of person deserves it therefore every kind of person should hear about it and be given serious consideration to become a recipient. It simply makes no biblical sense whatsoever for us to freely receive the gospel and then be selective about to whom we offer the gospel.

It's important we consider Paul's use of the word **appear** in this verse and 2:13. In 2:11 Paul referred to a past appearing and in 2:13 he referred to a future one. Paul was painting a mind picture of a hero who broke and would break into a helpless situation and rescue people. These appearances were tied to the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the hero who has appeared and will one day appear again both times as the rescuer of helpless men and women. This clearly speaks to the way we must receive grace. It breaks through our dark lostness and rescues us. In this way grace is clearly not some cold transaction but rather it is deeply personal and so intimate that it becomes the deepest, most meaningful moment of our lives.

*"12 TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SELF CONTROLLED, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD,"*

➤ **Undeserved grace teaches us to say no and yes for the right reasons in this present world.**

Grace does not stop at an intimate, personal rescue. Rather, grace has many purposes besides rescuing us from eternal torment. While it is free to us, it cost a holy God much in order for Him to rightfully forgive our sins and still remain just and perfect (Ro 3:20-30). It's for this reason Paul now calls our attention to a significant implication of the gospel...change.

Paul said **grace teaches us to deny** (Grk. arneomai) or "say no to" or "strongly reject" **ungodliness** and **worldly lusts**. This seems odd when you think about free grace. It's hard to distinguish the fine line between that free, unearned grace apart from works and the transforming nature of that free grace that makes us productive, fruitful lovers of others on God's behalf. Yet while both stand on their own, both are necessarily tied to each other. One produces the other and we must be careful we don't get them confused or setup the wrong one first.

Probably one of the most interesting facets of God's grace is how it begins to reverse our hardness of heart. While salvation does not produce instantaneous change, it does begin an eternal transformation process. Before grace, human hearts are hard, sinful and ungrateful for all God has done in creating us and supplying for us (Ro 1:18-32). Because of grace, God has softened our hearts and made them once again receptive to His truth and His work (Ezek 36:26). We can now begin to see not only God's truth about who He is but we can also start to understand who we are, the way God sees us. Little by little our eyes are opened by grace to see how desperately selfish our situation is and how much we need God. This realization becomes so significant at some point that it causes such others-oriented gratitude in us so we would never want to return to our prior self-centered person.

All of this describes in part how **grace "teaches"** (Grk. paideuo). "**Teaches**" implies not sudden, abrupt correction but rather step by step guidance like would be necessary with a small child. It can imply such ideas as training, chastening, counseling, comforting, encouraging, admonishing, guiding, convicting, rewarding, restraining, etc (Acts 7:22; 22:3; 1Ti 1:20; 2Ti 2:25; Lk 23:16, 22; 1Co 11:32; 2Cor 6:9; Heb 12:6-11; Rev 3:19). This, of course, would indicate God's grace is active, aggressive, corrective and long term.

While God's grace is absolutely free it is by no means cheap! Far too often we do not realize this implication of grace. Instead we view it as a gift that has little impact or bearing on everyday life. Instead, grace is constantly teaching us to reject all of the daily external and internal sinful tendencies that face us. This is what Paul meant by **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts**. It's far more than externally complying with a few rules but rather it so compels our hearts that it roots out even the internal lusts, appetites, desires and cravings behind our behaviors. It changes who we are from the inside out which is a huge part of the meaning of godliness (1Ti 3:14-16).

Grace not only teaches us to say no, but also yes! Yes to **self-control**. Yes to **uprightness or justice toward others**. Yes to **godliness or enduring devotion**. There are many positive directions toward which grace sends us. We become much like Moses at the burning bush (Exo 3) or Isaiah before God's throne (Isa 6). Both of these men encountered what they understood to be a God so holy and perfect that they could not help but see how far short they fell. Although it takes time for us to grasp this, our view of self should be diminishing the more clearly we begin to know or see God. Instead of becoming prouder of self, we should be more like Paul who at the end

of His Christian life finally saw himself as a wretched man saved by a grace He didn't deserve (Ro 7:24; See also Phil 3:1-16).

When should we live self-controlled, rightly and godly? This question is the dividing line between many Christian denominations. It is often taken to one extreme or the other and is rarely understood completely. Paul said the time for changed living is **in this present world** (1Cor 1:20; 2Cor 4:4; 1Ti 6:17; 2Ti 4:10). The true test of sincere faith is not whether or not we say yes to godliness in some future heavenly world but whether we say no to this world and yes to godliness in the midst of its current, depraved state. Unfortunately, too many people who realize grace is unearned believe grace is also unproductive. For this reason their change is either minimal or non-existent.

Can we end this section without at least commenting on the fact that there are no easy answers when it comes to saying "no" and "yes" in this world? There are just no neat, concise lists of do's and don'ts to follow in life. Many have learned the folly of drawing hard, fast lines because sin is deceptive and unpredictable. Even what seems good at the time and is being used for good can all too quickly be redirected for evil.

Our biggest problem is not merely saying no, but rather saying no to self. Add to this the difficulty others have in saying no to self along with our need to deeply love and serve each other and the whole issue can appear next to impossible. It's not just about what's best for you but more importantly for all concerned. This means that you're not the only factor in the decision. We must be decentralized in our decision making and let God and others become central.

Denying the ways of the old nature and living in manners consistent with the new nature take much saturation in the word, prayer and significant thought (Ro 12:1-2). While some things may seem obvious, we will often have to test and approve what is good, acceptable and perfect. While many may desire to control our thoughts and actions, perhaps even out of genuine concern, nobody can truly answer these questions on our behalf. Only the Holy Spirit can guide us in these tough decisions through Scripture whether read by us or explained to us.

There are things to which we must say "no", not that they are going to send us to Hell or earn us God's favor but because they are no longer consistent with or helpful to who we are. We at some point begin to realize that certain activities simply won't encourage the persons we desire to become in Christ. Care should be exercised that we don't

become so prudish or disconnected that we act as if created things have their own moral value, cause us to sin or can't be used redemptively. Yet we should realize the weakness of the flesh and that very plainly, some pursuits lead only to the old ways of death (Ro 6:21-23). We should constantly be thinking through how all things can be redemptively turned to point to God's glory whether they seem good or bad.

*"13 LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST; 14 WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY TO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. 15 THESE THINGS SPEAK, AND EXHORT, AND REBUKE WITH ALL AUTHORITY. LET NO MAN DESPISE YOU."*

➤ **The hope of Christ's return helps us stay the course.**

Notice the **blessed hope** and **glorious appearing** are the same event pointing to the same person, Jesus. **Jesus is the blessed hope** and **Jesus is the glory of the great God** (Eph 1:17; Col 2:2; Phil 4:19; 1Ti 3:16; Heb 1:3). Our hope cannot be separated from Christ because Christ is hope and is the hope of all believers. While the appearing of Christ implies many things (Ro 8:24; Gal 5:5; Col 1:5, 27; 1Th 4:13-18), it is first and foremost the **appearing of Jesus**.

It is also hard to overlook the fact that Jesus is not only the **Savior** or deliverer of men from their sins but He is also the **Great God**. He is attributed with the same **redemptive** and **purifying** work as God, the Father, in the Old Testament (2Sam 7:23; Ps 130:8; Hos 13:14; Ezek 37:23). Jesus is not just some piece of God's plan, He is God. He is the Author and Finisher of everything including creation and faith (Heb 12:2). While it is difficult to comprehend how Jesus can be both Savior and God it is nonetheless totally true and massively significant. These facts mean that all who Jesus is and all Jesus represents is completely certain (Titus 1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6).

Paul was very clear about the means of redemption and the purposes of it. On the one hand Christ freely and completely **gave Himself** for us for the purposes of **redeeming us from all iniquity** and **purifying us** (1Ti 2:6). Jesus completely paid our debt of sin relieving God of His rightful necessity of further punishing us. There is no longer any condemnation to those in Christ because of the work done

in His life and death (Ro 8:1, 31-39). We can do nothing to earn or keep this unconditional, divine favor. Christ is our acceptance with God.

On the other hand, **Christ redeemed us for Himself** which was exactly what was said of God redeeming people in the Old Testament (Exodus 19:5; Deut 7:6; Ezek 36:25-29, 33; 37:23). God is never bitter toward us because He has done everything to make us His very own. Logically then, God's goal in salvation is to turn us into a **distinct people who are zealous** not for the ways that continue to lead us toward death but **to do the good works** associated with reflecting God's glory specifically toward neighbor.

Let's not miss this... We "keep or fulfill the law" only to the extent that we "love neighbor as self (Gal 5:14) not by piously following codes to make God happy with us. Paul said those who now belong to Christ by no merit of their own will be eager to do what is truly good for others. So our zeal is not just for the works themselves or the laws behind them but rather because of our desire for the image God these laws and good works reflect and put on display. As difficult as these truths may be to link together they should be constantly affirmed together (Gal 1:4; 2:20; 2Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26; Heb 9:14).

If we are clear in our proclamation of the pure gospel there may be times we are accused of promoting a license to sin and other times we may be accused of legalism. None the less, the truths of this passage must be **spoken, taught** and even used as **authoritative reproof** regardless if people **despise** us for them or not. We should be careful to realize that our authority comes from the Bible, not self. It is also essential that we are only rigid about that authority with those who clearly understand and vehemently reject. Ordinarily we will kindly and gracefully speak truth and teach in the manner described in Titus 3:1-8.

It's interesting to note **despise** means to think around or disregard (1Ti 4:12). Titus was not to be over-concerned with those who would disregard his authority. And just like the context of Titus 2 shows, these truths are for everyone including the aged, the young, the elite masters and the menial servants.

*Answers to the following are in the commentary above or a verse will be listed to help find the answer. They should cause you to think about the text we studied. (Note intentional repetition from last wk)*  
Other Related Scripture upon which to Read & Meditate  
See Scriptures throughout this lesson.

### Personal Study Questions

- Why is it important we see that God's grace cannot be earned and is freely available to everyone? Which kinds of people do you restrict from the gospel whether intentionally or unintentionally?
- Why do we need to see grace as more than just a rescue? How does this help us refine the idea of being righteous with respect to others?
- Who are you trying to control because you care about them? How might you be able to point them from trust in you to trust in Christ?
- Why is important that we see Jesus as both God and Savior?

### Group Discussion Questions

- Try to briefly explain the difference between undeserved grace and good works. Then attempt to explain how they fit together.
- Explain what grace teaches and specifically what lesson is missed when we believe in a cheap grace. How does our renewed vision of God also aid this process?
- Talk about the difference between following rules and learning God's laws in relation to loving others properly. Discuss how necessary it is for Christians to not just memorize rules but to learn to think hard with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Family Discussion Ideas – *Keep simple (about 15mins/day). This is intended for parents to read to your family. Simply read verses & explanations; only elaborate if you have knowledge in that area.*

**Monday:** Discuss as a family how God's laws are designed to help us know God's character better and to point us to properly love others. Give examples of times where you've wrongly used God's laws to point others to self.

**Tuesday:** Discuss the fact life is anything but black and white. Mention that God's Word does not contain every answer for every situation and that right living isn't some neat, little box. Talk about the need to saturate our minds with the Word, the importance of frequent prayer, the encouragement of other believers and the critical need to think through, test and approve what is right and wrong as we go through life.

**Wednesday:** Draw a picture of what comes to mind when you think of Jesus appearing to rescue man from sin. Spend time praying for your pastors, deacons and church family specifically.

**Thursday:** Talk about how Jesus came to rescue us and also to purify us. Discuss the fact that our lives have been eternally and forever

purchased by Jesus; we belong to Him. Explain that Jesus is patiently changing who we are so that we no longer desire the old ways that lead only to death. List some ways you believe Jesus has changed you and also the other family members.

**Friday:** Read a Bible story to your children, or have them read a story to you if they are old enough.

**Saturday & Sunday:** Before you come to corporate worship, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their teachers, serve the other children in their class, to be good listeners and examples during service, talk about Jesus with any kids who are not yet Christians, and be looking for ways to pray for the other children throughout the coming week (Adults should review their own ministry too!). After service, please discuss with your children what they learned and how their ministry went.

### Keeping the gospel central to this text:

- How does this text display how the gospel is changing us?
- In what areas does this text show your need to trust Christ more?
- What have you learned this week to specifically STOP & START doing regarding marriage, parenting, church, job, community involvement, etc?
- What specifically do you need to START doing in your life regarding your marriage, parenting, church, job, community involvement, etc?
- What help do you need (and from whom) to implement these changes? Begin praying for who might help you.
- List ways you could enlist other believers to help aid your change.
- Pray and repent to God about your specific sins, thanking God for the good things, His patience and asking Him for His help.
- Pray through 2Corinthians 7:9-11 taking note of how your repentance should look in real life, asking God for strength to focus and change.

*What's your mission? The Mission of Landmark is Christ's mission... "To reach all nations and generations with the gospel and lead them on Christ's mission for God's glory." (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1Co 10:31; Rev 5:9)*

*Note: As with any teaching, if you have any questions or concerns about this lesson, please direct them to the speaker in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. He has likely studied this topic more recently than anyone else and can help you study it more thoroughly. (Bibliography will be available at the end of the series)*