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Faith alone in Christ alone

Greetings to you from all of us here at Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We continue to give thanks to our heavenly Father for His faithfulness toward us and His marvelous provisions of grace. Every day we witness how He provides for the ministry with which He has entrusted us. Truly, we have done nothing to earn or deserve being used by the Almighty God. We recognize that whatever He is doing for and through us is a matter of His matchless grace. The success that we have witnessed so far is because of Him alone!

Only a careless believer could become inflated or roll his shoulders back, assuming his own hard work explained success in a ministry, in a business, or in life overall. Any believer who has embraced this thinking has swum in the pool of arrogance and dried himself with the towel of blindness toward the Word of God. He is totally unaware of what God does to those who presumptuously grasp His glory! He has forgotten how God dealt with king Herod Agrippa I (grandson of Herod the Great) when he assumed God's glory. Regarding Herod's assumption of the glory belonging to God, Luke wrote: "And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. [His appearance was so impressive and his message so powerful that] the people kept crying out, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' and immediately an angel of the Lord struck him [why?] because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died'" (Acts 12:21-23).

God cannot and does not share His glory with anyone. "I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 42:8). Here at Grace Evangelistic Ministries, we have truly discovered by means of Bible doctrine and God's provisions that we have no reason at all to grasp God's glory. He is, after all, the One who called us and opens doors for us to serve Him. He is the One who provides us with health, financial needs, and all the necessary logistics for us to fulfill His plan. Where is there room for us to glorify ourselves? Instead we join King David in declaring: "[Yours], O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in heavens and the earth; [Yours] is the dominion . . . Both riches and honor come from You . . . in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great [or to cause one to succeed]" (I Chronicles 29:11-12).

Therefore, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we implore you not to fall into the temptation of

grasping God's glory. We should constantly remind ourselves that whatever achievement comes to us is a matter of who and what God is. You may say, "But Reverend Onwubiko, I have worked long and hard to get to my position." Sure, you have; but if you had lain in a hospital all those years with an incurable disease, you would never have achieved your position. The truth of the matter is that all our successes are the by-products of His immeasurable grace!

The letters that we receive continue to encourage and overwhelm us. Our joy multiplies because we have learned that many are turning to our Lord Jesus Christ through "faith alone in Christ alone." Also, we note that some believers are beginning to respond to the challenge to grow in grace by making learning and application of Bible doctrine the highest priority in their lives. God's work in this ministry is truly yielding dividends to His glory. As we receive these letters, we do not hesitate to channel the praise to our great God, who does all the work. To Him alone, we stand in salute!

We want to thank all our partners in the Lord Jesus Christ, including local churches, who have allowed God to use them in supporting us financially so that we may fulfill His divine command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations [without discrimination] . . . teaching them [i.e., new converts] to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19a, 20a). Also we remain most grateful to those believers who have not ceased to mention us before the heavenly throne. The results of those prayers are astronomically beyond calculation! Indeed, we witness the impact of your supplications both at home and abroad as God opens more doors for ministry. We can repeat with Paul, the greatest apostle, "I thank my God every time I remember you [our partners]. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it unto completion until the day of the Lord. And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:3-6, 4:19).

As a missionary organization embracing sound Bible doctrine, we can assure you that our objectives remain in tact. We seek always to ensure that our method of operation remains strictly grace-oriented. Our first goal is to evangelize unbelievers with a clear and accurate gospel message. As part of our follow-up, we assist those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ with their spiritual growth by providing them with sound Bible doctrine through literature and audiotapes. Also, we seek to identify men who are interested in exercising communication gifts that God the Holy Spirit has given. We help these attend a seminary emphasizing sound Bible doctrine where they can prepare to accurately divide the Word of God, and thereby feed others. We strongly believe that God uses prepared pastors to augment the growth of positive believers, thereby bringing glory and honor to Him.

Grace Evangelistic Ministries does not solicit funds. We believe that financial support by believers is solely a matter between an individual and the Lord. We believe that God has called us to do His work and that He will also provide so long as we stay under His direction. We ask that you continue remembering us in your prayers as we seek to do His will and to glorify Him to the maximum. It is in Him alone we have rooted and anchored our hope.

Dear heavenly Father,

We pause to pray for every partner, church, and affiliate of Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We thank You that You continue to sustain them daily out of Your mercy, meeting their needs as they arise. We ask that you would make clear to each of us, the critical importance of Your Word, with the result that each will make consistent perception and application of Your Word, the highest priority in life.

Father, we thank You for using this ministry to make the work of our Lord Jesus Christ and Your doctrine known to the world. We ask for your guidance in identifying opportunities to make known the Gospel. We pray for those who are already advancing in Your plan, and humbly thank You for protecting them from the evil one as they fulfill Your plan for their lives.

Also, we pray for the United States of America. We know from the doctrine in our souls that this great

nation is on the brink of maximum divine discipline, a punishment that will result in loss of her special status as a client nation to God. We recall Your message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel when it was a client nation centuries ago:

My nation is destroyed from lack of knowledge of doctrine. Because you have rejected the principle of knowing doctrine, therefore I will reject you from being a priest to Me. (Hosea 4:6a)

We realize that we are in a period of great danger; therefore, it is our desire that there may be a great biblical revival in this country. We pray that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ might recognize their failure and become aware that accurate Bible doctrine is the only solution. In turn, we pray that this would result in many opportunities to present the true gospel message of “faith alone and in Christ alone” to unbelievers--young boys and girls, men and women—who could then choose to turn to You for everlasting life.

Our merciful Father, God of righteousness and justice, we know that we are bringing destruction on ourselves by failure to fulfill our spiritual lives. We recognize our culpability and realize that if we were destroyed as a nation today, You would be totally justified. Heavenly Father, we have failed in every sense of the word. However, we thank you that in Your mercy, You have been patient with this nation. Father, we do not ask for what we deserve—total annihilation, but for what we do not deserve—Your grace. All of these we ask in Christ’s Name. Amen.

[The] Eternal God is [our] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Forever under the shadow of His wings,
Moses C. Onwubiko, President
Grace Evangelistic Ministries

You shall know the
truth, and the truth
shall set you free.
JOHN 8:32

Doctrine of Grace

By Reverend Moses C. Onwubiko
(Continued from volume 15-Lesson 1)

DEFINITION OF GRACE

In the previous study we learned that the Lexical Dictionary to the New Testament defined grace as “a favor done without expectation of return; absolute freeness of the lovingkindness of God to men, finding its only motive in the bounty and the free heartedness of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor.” We singled-out the phrase, “a favor done without expectation of return,” and saw that what is at issue is the integrity of the one doing the favor. Thus, if the one providing the favor has an ulterior motive, such as an expectation of receiving something in return, it is not grace at all. Also, we examined the integrity of God as the author of grace; and of course, we learned that His integrity is flawless! In other words, it is blasphemous to assume that God embraces an ulterior motive. Such a view reduces God’s divine essence into something base. In fact, many who make such an assumption seek to humanize God. Doctrinally speaking, if we are going to understand God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible, we must lay aside all misconceptions about God. First, we must understand that God is not a man. Moses declared: “God is not a man” (Numbers 23:19a). Second, we must understand that God neither thinks, nor functions as humans do. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways [of doing things] My ways . . . for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways [of doing things] higher than your ways and My thoughts [are higher] than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8,9).

When, in His grace, God does something for a helpless person, that one ought very clearly to know that God expects nothing in return. Whether the recipients of His grace show gratitude to Him by responding to His plan or not, it does not change His love which remains constant, neither increasing nor diminishing. Likewise, God's happiness is an absolute. He welcomes our gratitude, but He cannot be manipulated by it. Our lack of gratitude cannot upset Him. Nothing will alter what He accomplishes for us by means of His unfailing grace. Keep in mind that whatever God does for us, He considers it a gift; and His gifts are always irrevocable (Romans 11:29). "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of a man, that He should change His mind [after He has done an act of grace]" (Numbers 23:19).

Let us illustrate this point by examining one of the miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ: "As He [Jesus Christ] was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met Him. They stood at a distance [because they were helpless and unclean] and called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus, Master have pity [or mercy] on us!' When He saw them, He said, 'Go show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were cleansed. [Note the act of grace--unmerited favor]. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him for he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?'" (Luke 17:12-18). There is no account that leprosy recurred in the other nine, nor should there be! If it had, then what Christ performed was not a gracious act of mercy. Notice that the recipient's attitude has no bearing on grace. If it did, grace would no longer be grace.

It is disheartening to see so many Bible scholars and theologians promoting false doctrines such as "Lordship salvation" and other brands of works-salvation. Their failure to distinguish between grace and works, and between spiritual birth and growth has distorted the grace of God in the minds of millions of believers and unbelievers. Who would deny a birth certificate to a newborn simply because of his lack of physical development? In fact, the application for a certificate of birth is made soon after delivery. And if the youngster failed to grow, no one would think to revoke the birth certificate. Similarly, our spiritual growth, or lack of it, does not alter the status of our citizenship in heaven. Does this mean that we should not endeavor to grow spiritually? Far from it! I thank God because by His matchless grace I am making spiritual progress on a daily basis. My appreciation for the grace of God has not changed my thinking about trying to glorify God; rather, it has given me a sense of relief, knowing that my salvation, spiritual growth, and resultant glorification of God is a matter of His grace alone.

You may say, "Well, the purpose of God in saving those who place their faith alone in Christ alone is so that they may worship Him." That is true, but do you know that no one can worship, serve, or glorify God apart from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit? Even the filling of the Spirit, given to us when we are in fellowship, is grace. "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). It is God's will that we glorify Him, but that choice is a matter on an entirely different level from our so great salvation. Clearly, the grace of God continues after salvation. He is the One who provides all the necessary assets for us to worship and serve Him. Because of our imperfection, God completely excludes our efforts, both before and after salvation. His divine operation must remain perfect. The great difficulty for us is that we are easily drawn into thinking that God cannot do without us, that our efforts and contributions can sway the Supreme Court of Heaven. This erroneous thinking leads many in their self-absorption to produce lengthy lists of what they have done for God. Some regard themselves as so important that a church or Christian organization could not survive without them. This kind of arrogance reinforces spiritual deficiency and malnutrition with the sad result that these seldom come to understand grace.

In this doctrinal exposition, we will look at some believers of the past who understood the grace of God—those who understood that their efforts were nothing apart from His grace. For example, one of Job's accusers, who had no concept of suffering for blessing, posed these pivotal questions: "Can a man be profitable to God? Can even a wise man benefit Him?" (Job 22:2) Eliphaz assumed the answers to both questions were "Yes," and that Job had failed. Nothing could have been further from the truth. God

exonerates Job saying, “Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine” (Job 41:11). King David understood the issue clearly: “What is man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?” (Psalm 8:4). Any believer who holds that “God cannot do without me,” simply cannot orient himself to grace. Therefore, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are full of self-importance, or feel that God needs your help, you have the opportunity to change your mental attitude before it is too late. Now, let us examine the next phrase in our definition of grace.

“...ABSOLUTE FREENESS OF THE LOVING KINDNESS OF GOD TO MEN”

In the English Bible the Old Testament word translated “lovingkindness” is the Hebrew noun *chesed*. When used of God in the Old Testament, it denotes His kindness and mercy toward mankind. The Lexical Dictionary to the Old Testament defines lovingkindness as “the attitude of love which contains mercy.” Other definitions include: “Love, benevolence, kindness, good will, favor, mercy, and unfailing love.” In the Septuagint (third century B.C.), the Jewish translators of the Old Testament Hebrew text, rendered *chesed* as the Greek *eleos*, often translated “mercy” or “compassion.” The concept of grace is always in view. Before developing these definitions, we need to note that lovingkindness originates with God as his integrity. Without integrity, having or showing lovingkindness to another is impossible. When our integrity fails, so will our lovingkindness; but God’s integrity can never fail. Within this framework, let us examine some corollary definitions.

THE UNFAILING LOVE OF GOD:

Grace is part of the unfailing love of God. One Greek word in the New Testament summarizes God and His unfailing love. That word is *agape*, the highest love of all. Not only does *agape* belong to God, it is His very being: “God is love” (I John 4:8b). Let us examine more closely the Greek word *agape*, a love that does not and cannot fail.

When used of God, *agape* is His integrity, and His integrity is His love. Today, *agape* is difficult to define because it is bandied about in misleading ways. The Holy Spirit used Paul’s genius to give us a summary of *agape* in one short, magnificent chapter. About two-thirds of the way through his dissertation, Paul makes it very clear that “love never fails” (I Corinthians 13:8). Consider these principles regarding God:

1. God is perfect and eternal. He has always existed.
2. God is immutable. His immutability applies to all of His other attributes. In other words, none of His attributes are subject to change. Nothing in this world or in heaven can alter God’s essence. “For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed” (Malachi 3:6). The sons of Jacob (i.e., the Jews) failed the Lord in many ways, but because of God’s immutability they never suffered complete destruction. God never failed them. Humanly speaking, their failures were so colossal that they warranted God’s total annihilation. But, fortunately for Israel, divine viewpoint always supersedes human points of view. God’s immutability ensures that He always keeps His promises. God promised Abraham and his descendants a vast land described in Deuteronomy: “Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab...there the Lord showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan...all the land of Judah as far as the Western sea...and the Lord said to him, ‘this is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants [forever]’” (Deuteronomy 34:1-4; Genesis 13:14,15). This unconditional promise still stands. It will be fulfilled during the millennial reign of Christ when He will gather all the Jews from the four corners of the earth. Satan, still trying to be like the Most High, has another plan. He thinks that he can bring about a millennium on his own, but also regards God’s promises to Israel as His vulnerability. If he could remove the Jewish race, the promises could not be kept. So as ruler of the earth, Satan promotes anti-Semitism whenever possible, with a view to proclaiming victory in the great angelic conflict. The thought is blasphemous, but if Satan succeeded, God’s integrity would have to fail. Racial Jews will survive until the Millennium despite Satan’s efforts. The holocaust of the World War II era resulted in

the deaths of millions of Jews. Nonetheless, the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history saw to it that other millions survived. The deaths speak to the ruthlessness of Satan; the survivors speak to the immutability of God. Satan will not retreat from his objective; but neither the entire demonic force, nor the failures of the Jews, nor any other factor can alter God's immutability.

3. God's love is perfect and eternal. Thanks to emotion, human love often waxes and wanes with circumstances. Sometimes it swings like a pendulum—between love and hate. Because of His immutability, God's love cannot increase or diminish; He never operates on emotion, nor has He ever sinned in terms of hatred. Whether a believer fails or succeeds in his spiritual life, God's love remains the same, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, it is eternal! Isn't it a comfort to know that no matter how huge the failure in our eyes, God never fails us? Conversely, no matter how great our success, God does not love us more; we simply bask under the wings of His eternal love. Yes, God blesses and punishes, but He does both in love. We can be sure of the fairness of the Supreme Court of Heaven because “. . . whom the Lord loves [all believers] He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives” (Hebrews 12:6-7). Therefore, we have nothing to recommend the practice of sin, and everything to appreciate the beauty of God's grace toward every believer. God said, “. . . I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you [to Myself] with an unfailing love” (Jeremiah 31:3). The word translated everlasting in this passage is the Hebrew noun *owlam*. It means, “without end,” “life time,” and “always.” Simply put, God always loves us, no matter what. “Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed [or your failures be like a mountain], yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken” (Isaiah 54:10). “. . . lovingkindness stands firm forever” (Psalm 89:2).

Now, let us consider the source of the “absolute freeness of the [unfailing love] of God.” We have already learned that we can exclude man and any of his efforts from consideration (Job 22:2). Also, we know that God's love exists with or without an object and it cannot fail (I Corinthians 13:8). God's is free to express His unfailing love to us because of His grace. The ‘freeness’ springs from grace as a component of love. If love cannot fail, neither can any of love's components. Grace cannot fail. God's derives His pleasure from His own integrity, rather than mankind's response. No one can do God a favor. For this reason we must understand that the works of mankind are **TOTALLY SEPARATED** from grace. The apostle Paul understood this great principle. Through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, he sought always to separate grace from any kind of works, good or bad. “And if [and it is the case] by grace, then it [salvation] is no longer by works [of any kind]; if it [salvation] were [by works], grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:6). Grace and works are mutually exclusive; in other words un-mixable! They can never share the same space at the same time. Those who caught on to this teaching in Paul's day laid the groundwork for one of the most magnificent periods of human history, the age of the Antonine Caesars. Today, his teaching about grace persists on the pages of his epistles, preserved by the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, it seems that very few, including theologians, Bible scholars, pastors, and evangelists seem to understand the distinction in more than a superficial way. While particularly sad, this should not be shocking, because it helps to explain the doctrine of “the remnant.” Throughout Scripture, we have only a few examples of those who really understood God's Word, followed His plan with precision, and thereby had an invisible impact on history. Today, you have an equal opportunity with all other believers to master grace principles, rejecting legalism in all its forms. Your success and the success of our nation depend upon your doing just that.

Now we have covered two phrases of our definition, grace is “a favor done without expectation of return” and grace is the “absolute freeness of the lovingkindness [or unfailing love] of God to men.” Let us move on to the next phrase:

FINDING ITS ONLY MOTIVE IN THE BOUNTY AND FREE HEARTEDNESS OF THE GIVER

Failure to understand that God is not a man, or that He does not bless us based on the meritorious works that we do, has caused many believers to reject accurate knowledge about God and His plan. These have

great difficulty believing that God derives His pleasure solely from what He does for man, and never from what man does for Him. This concept represents a major hurdle in spiritual advance. Believers, by the millions, operate under the erroneous concept that God will bless them because of what they are doing for God. That is one of the reasons why so many are attracted to so-called “Christian activism.” They think they can help God by making the devil’s world a better place. Or worse, they want to encourage change in the devil’s world because God is moving a bit too slow for their tastes. Consider abortion. Ignorant or self-absorbed believers get involved in activism by functioning in one of two columns: pro-life on one side, or pro-choice on the other. We know of cases where some of these believers are so fervent in their points of view that they have rationalized breaking laws. God has warned, “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those, which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves” (Romans 13:1-2). Yet, many of these legalistic believers conclude that if the law is immoral, they are justified in helping a moral God by violating nearly any law of their land. We hear reports of burnings and bombings of clinics, destroying the property of others in the name of serving God. Such behavior violates the sanctity of property--God’s law. We hear reports of murder, taking a life in order to save lives in the name of serving God. Such behavior violates the sanctity of human life--God’s law. We hear reports of ministers, apparently ignorant of the Word of God, telling their congregations that “the more you get involved in [activism], the more the Lord will bless you.” Such behavior is not only misleading but also blasphemous. In fact the opposite is true; God will punish. These believers have forgotten that they are the “salt of the earth,” having equal privilege and equal opportunity to advance in their spiritual lives, fulfilling God’s mandates. Arrogance makes activism more attractive than advance, thus they are seduced by their own fallacious thinking. God’s justice punishes everyone who operates under human power or who values his own actions above God’s Word. If laws are immoral, believers who have failed in their spiritual lives have only themselves to blame. The entire nation is punished for their failure.

Consider the case of Uzzah. “So David assembled all the Israelites...to bring the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim. They moved the ark of God from Abinadab’s house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it. When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, BECAUSE THE OXEN STUMBLED. The Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he [Uzzah] died before God.” (I Chronicles 13: 5-7,9). Uzzah died trying to help God. He thought it more important to do something about the ark than to keep God’s commandment. The emotion of the moment won out over the rational Word of God, but it cost him his life. God instructed Israel that on penalty of death, no one should touch the holy things of the tabernacle, including the ark (Numbers 4:15). Many believers today are like Uzzah. They value their actions, or their emotions, over the Word of God. Doing so, they violate God’s mandates, and set themselves up for maximum divine discipline from the Supreme Court of Heaven.

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must be careful about how we serve God. We must value His Word over anything that we can do. The alternative is a head-on-collision with God’s justice and the resultant punishment. Activism is not a part of the plan of God at any time in history. This includes the church age in which we live. “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

God’s grace to man “finds its only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of the Giver [God].” God does not bless you because you give. If He did that, His grace policy toward man would become invalid—grace is not for sale. Nor does God do something for us because we did one thing or another for Him. However, when a believer utilizes God’s grace provision--namely, Bible doctrine and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit--to advance in His plan and develop capacity; then God increases that individual’s blessing. It is true that God blesses or increases the seeds of a generous giver (II Corinthians 9:6-12). However, no believer is a generous giver apart from gratitude in his soul. And no believer can develop gratitude in his soul apart from the consistent intake and application of Bible doctrine. Harboring an ulterior motive—God will bless me—is not giving at all.

God does things for us solely on the basis of His integrity. Consider salvation, one of God's many provisions. The Bible clearly states, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We know that the righteousness of God is completely intolerant of sin. Because of his spiritual death, man is separated from God. If God is intolerant of sin in man, what does the Bible mean by: "For God so loved the world [spiritually dead ones]" (John 3:16a)? Can we say that God loves sin? Absolutely not! This verse illustrates the principle that God is immutable, and so is His love. His love does not change whether the object of His love is moral or immoral. That makes no difference.

Imagine a little orphaned girl, four years of age. She is homeless, lying by the side of the road, half-covered with snow, on a sub-freezing day. Her heart rate has slowed significantly because of the cold; within thirty minutes she is going to die. Suddenly, she catches your eye; you stop, pick her up, and rush her to a hospital.

What is the first thing that came into your mind in the moment you saw her? Did you want to know her origin? Did you want to know whether her parents were respectable? Did you consider whether she would grow up to become a decent citizen? Not likely, your primary interest was her rescue. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children [rescuing the orphan girl in our illustration], how much more shall your heavenly Father...?" (Luke 11:13). In other words, if sinful man can do honorable things for his fellow man, isn't reasonable to conclude that a gracious God would far-exceed man's best efforts? Your rescue demonstrated a genuine love for this helpless orphan.

Upon learning that she is orphaned; you decide to go step further. You prepare a room for her in your home, and while waiting for her discharge from the hospital, purchase clothing and other things in anticipation of her arrival. I want to pause here and ask you a question: While you were doing all these things were you thinking about how this helpless child might help you? Likely, your only motive is from your bounty and free-heartedness. You are thinking about her well-being. If she lived with you until adulthood, and then moved way without so much as a care to ever visit or say thank you, would her attitude change what happened on the first day that you saw her? Of course not. You may be saddened that she has grown up to be ungrateful; but her actions--or lack of them--cannot change what has been accomplished. If you, as a human being could be the rescuer in this illustration, think about your Creator—God, full of mercy, unfailing love, possessing matchless grace.

The most important thing to remember from this illustration is, that one derives pleasure by showing mercy to a helpless individual. An attitude or act of grace does not expect anything in return; therefore our definition of grace: "A favor done without EXPECTATION OF RETURN; absolute freeness of the [unfailing love] of God finding its only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of the Giver, unearned and unmerited favor." This brings us to the last phrase.

UNEARNED AND UNMERITED FAVOR

This last phrase of our definition of grace takes us to the heart of our subject. It stresses that the recipient of grace is without any form of merit. Therefore, the one receiving the favor has nothing to boast about. As the helpless orphan girl in our illustration, the recipient of grace realizes that his help has come in time of his need, when he cannot help himself in any sense of the word.

Imagine two young criminals accused of multiple murders and rapes. What began as a residential burglary, became a heinous crime when the family returned home to the burglars' surprise. What followed was a ghastly episode in which only the youngest child escaped death. Her parents and sisters had been terribly abused and then shot one-by-one at close range.

Soon thereafter, the criminals turned themselves in to the FBI and confessed to the crime. To ensure that they had the right men, the surviving girl was asked make a positive identification, which she did without reservation. The criminals were judged, convicted, and sentenced to die by lethal injection.

Early on the day of their execution, the warden received a letter from the governor pardoning both men. The execution was canceled because of the governor's act of mercy. Both were released after having served fifteen years in prison.

Clearly, these criminals received "...unearned, unmerited favor." Similarly, King David, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, committed a heinous crime. What began as a case of adultery, escalated into a murder. The truth unfolds: "Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. And David sent messengers...when she came to him, he lay with her...and the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, 'I am pregnant'" (II Samuel 11:2,4-5). When David became aware of Bathsheba's pregnancy, he tried to cover up his involvement. He thought he could bring Bathsheba's husband home on furlough, hoping that it would then appear as though he was the father of her child. Talk about hypocrisy, David was caught in the net. When Bathsheba's husband came back, he refused to go to his house. "And Uriah said to David, 'the ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelter, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field [in the war zone]. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing'" (II Samuel 11:11). As an officer in David's army, Uriah understood his primary responsibility was to the war. After David exhausted all avenues, including trying to get Uriah drunk so that he would go to his home, he devised a plan to have him murdered on the field of battle. After her husband's calculated death, David took Bathsheba as his wife.

You will recall that this same David was one of the greatest believers of the Old Testament—"a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22). Also, recall that our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity was a direct descendant of David and Bathsheba. Many times believers are shocked when a fellow-believer commits a heinous sin. Some even argue that someone who commits one or another sin was never saved. You may be sure that a believer can duplicate every kind of sin that an unbeliever commits. Of course the believer has to go through restraints from the Holy Spirit. And when he ignores the restraints, he is guaranteed to make a bigger fool of himself than an unbeliever.

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David: "Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household.... Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said to David, 'The Lord has also taken away your sin; you shall not die'" (II Samuel 12:11, 13). Are you tempted to ask, "How could a believer commit immoral acts, such as adultery and murder?" If so, pay very close attention to the exposition of this pivotal doctrine. You will find that God provides no quarter for self-righteousness among believers. All of us fail in one way or another. Keep in mind that we are not dealing with particular sins; rather, we are endeavoring to draw some principles from David's immoral acts. According to Jewish law, what David did was subject to capital punishment: "...If [anyone] struck [one] down with an iron object [e.g., a spear], so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death" (Numbers 35:16). In fact, David was indicted from the Supreme Court of Heaven as a murderer: "Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You [David] have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon" (II Samuel 12:9). According to the indictment, what King David earned, deserved, and merited was death. Instead, by admitting his sins to the Father, he received grace—a favor, which he never earned or merited—and as a result, his death sentence was commuted: "...You shall not die" (II Samuel 12:13c). Therefore, from the definition of grace: "A favor done without expectation of return; absolute freeness of the lovingkindness [or unflinching love] of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor" some principles have emerged:

1. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are self-sufficient and content in themselves. In fact, there has never been a time when they were not self-sufficient.
2. The Godhead (Trinity) existed in eternity past when there was no creation of any kind, neither a universe, nor angels, nor human beings.
3. The happiness and joy of each member of the Godhead is self-sustaining. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have never been unhappy; no creature has ever changed this happiness. King David

declared, “Thou [God] will make known to me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures forever” (Psalm 16:11). During the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of His heart’s desires for believers was for them to share His [perfect] joy: “These things [Bible doctrine] I have spoken to you, that My joy [which is Bible doctrine] may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11). What is this joy? “Thy [God’s] words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy...” (Jeremiah 15:16). The Word of God is joy; and it has always existed. Believers share this phenomenal joy through daily perception and application of Bible doctrine. This joy, which belongs to God, provides spiritual-backbone for any believer who taps into it: “For the joy of the Lord is my strength” (Nehemiah 8:10b). Further, the Holy Spirit produces His joy in a believer’s soul whenever He controls it (Galatians 5:22).

4. Because of His immutability, God’s happiness does not increase or decrease. Misunderstanding this principle is the primary reason why believers ignorantly do many unbiblical things in the name of God. They humanize God in their thinking. These believers think that if they get involved in Christian activism, that they will make God happier and/or He will bless them. Nothing could be further from the truth.

5. Therefore, we are not capable of increasing or decreasing His perfect happiness. It is the quintessence of human arrogance to think that our good deeds have enough power to influence God’s happiness or joy. Such an assumption is not only an insult to God who says, “that he does not change” (Malachi 3:6), but also blasphemy.

6. Believers remain imperfect after their salvation. The sin nature, with which we were born, remains in our bodies after salvation as the source of human good and temptations to sin. When we grow careless about our spiritual lives, we choose to succumb to these temptations and commit personal sins. As imperfect creatures, God views our good deeds, apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit, as inadequate!

7. Therefore, when God saved us by His grace, He recognized that we would remain imperfect, helpless to keep ourselves pure, and thus He maintains His grace policy towards us—the totally undeserving ones.

May I remind you that the purpose of this doctrinal exposition is to open believers’ eyes to the grace of God, so that they may understand and appreciate the grace of God towards them, and thus serve Him with awe and reverence. To those who have personally trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, may “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power [God’s] that works within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen” (II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 3:20).

To be continued in Volume 17-3....

News Update

(Another open door in Africa)

Darlington E. Elekwa, Africa Chapter president for Grace Evangelistic Ministries, has been recently appointed by the Nigerian government to represent the country in Gambia, (a nation located on the West Coast of Africa) for two years. While in Gambia, the Lord is already using him to set up a branch of GEM in that part of the world.

Here is an abstract of Darlington’s letter to us:

It is nice to hear that the Board meeting went very well. I feel greatly excited about what the Lord is doing on my Continent—Africa. I consider myself greatly privileged to be part of God’s move.

I have been able to organize a program for evangelistic meetings here in Gambia this year. Please, as

soon as you give the program your blessing, let me know in good time, so that the most convenient date shall be fixed. This will also permit the organizing Committee to start work in good time. Already, a lawyer whom we contacted to draft a constitution, has completed his work. I hope to offset his bill at the end of this month. The constitution will help us to incorporate Grace Evangelistic Ministries here in Gambia. The incorporation will enable us conduct our programs without being disturbed by the Government.

All the doctrinal materials, which I took along with me to the Gambia, are totally exhausted. There are also Colonel R. B. Thieme's enthusiasts here in Gambia.

Missionary Trip To Africa

Zimbabwe

Reverend Onwubiko has responded to the invitation from Zimbabwe. He will hold meetings there from 21 August through 5 September.

Few days ago, we called the groups in Africa to see how they were doing. All was well, except they are finding it difficult to meet the demand for doctrinal materials. For instance, the group in Cameroon had an immediate need for 13,000 blank tapes. They said that the demand for Bible doctrine on tapes has quadrupled.

We believe that God, who started this good work both in Africa and other areas, will continue to meet the needs of the positive believers.

God Will Provide

Genesis 22:8

"God will provide" is the attitude of Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We do not beg for money. We believe that if this ministry is honoring to God, He will provide EVERYTHING necessary for its continuation. "God will provide" was Abraham's reassurance to his confused son, Isaac ([Genesis 22:8](#)). When God gives an assignment to us as His servants, He is under obligation to provide for the job. When God does not provide, it could mean one of three things. One, God may not want the job accomplished at that particular time. Two, it could mean that those who are to carry out the mission are not prepared to do so yet. Lastly, it could be a sign that God does not want to have any part of the ministry. Therefore, it is absolutely foolish and arrogant for us as believers to try to devise a way to accomplish a task in the name of God when He has already rejected it. For example, when we use gimmicks to manipulate people to contribute money, we are not glorifying God. It is blasphemy on our part to think that God does not know how to provide for the work which He has assigned. Take a moment and think about the following question: When we work to accomplish a job which God has rejected, who will be glorified in the end? God? Or me?

Gratitude for Answered Prayers

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

Please join us in thanking our God for answers to the following prayers:

1. For helping us meet our financial obligations for the month of May and June 2000.
2. For using us as instruments in opening a new doctrinal church in the Eastern part of Nigeria.
3. For making it possible for us to bring the good news to the people of Zimbabwe.
4. For the stability and freedom that we enjoy here in America.
5. For His children whom He used to meet the needs of the ministry in May and June 2000.

Letters to Grace Evangelistic Ministries

We would like to share some of the letters that have been sent us. As you read these letters, please join us in giving thanks to our gracious God who does all the work.

Our purpose in sharing these letters with you is to show you that your partnership in financial and prayer support for this ministry is indeed producing dividends for the glory of the Almighty God—our loving Father.

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Greetings in His holy name.

I am writing to inform you that we have formed a branch of Grace Evangelistic Ministries here in Zimbabwe. We called the church Grace Bible Church of Matabeleland.

The church is growing fast, and we are going to hold a full-house gathering in the few months. The Lord has shone His light and our way forward is bright with success.

I am writing to request your assistance with audiotapes, Bibles, pamphlets and any other form of stationary and materials that may assist the church.

Please extend my profound greetings and regards to all the Grace Evangelistic Ministries' associates.

Yours in His service,

Pastor, Metabeleland, Zimbabwe

Dear Rev. Onwubiko,

Greetings to you in the holy name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I would like to let you know that the people of Metabeleland here in Zimbabwe are responding to the Grace Evangelistic Ministries doctrinal truth, which, you introduced me to. I have given out all the books you sent me. The people are truly happy.

Would you please visit us early February 2001; however, we desired for you to visit us in August 2000 if that is possible. The entire people of Zimbabwe are hungry for the truth.

Thank you,

Pastor J., Zimbabwe

Note: We currently have over one hundred positive believers from Zimbabwe on our mailing list, even before we have visited them!

Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko,

I salute you in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am so happy and excited that we are connected via e-mail. It is really a grace provision. I am writing to seek your permission in opening a branch of your ministry in my locality. I have already made some converts since I received fresh light on Bible doctrine from you; and these new believers are keen in our

fellowshipping together. My parlor [living room] will be used temporarily as a meeting place until by God's grace we can find money to rent a non-residential place for it. I need as many materials as are useful in building up new converts in the faith.

I have visited the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) theological college (Grace Evangelistic Ministries recommended seminary) as per our discussion last time you were in Owerri (Imo State). By God's grace, I will start training in the Seminary in August when the new academic year begins. The program will run for 3 years and I will need an estimated amount of twenty thousand (N20, 000.00) naira excluding incidental expenses per academic year. In fact, the actual cost will be determined when the program has begun.

I am anxiously waiting to receive the books from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries.

*Love from,
Pastor, Imo State Nigeria*

Note: This letter came from a young man who is currently a College professor, but has identified his spiritual gift as a pastor-teacher. He attended all the 1999 meetings that Rev. Onwubiko held in Owerri, Imo State Nigeria. Grace Evangelistic Ministries wants to assist him with further preparation in seminary beginning August 2000.

Dear Grace Evangelistic Ministries,

Accept my greetings in the name of our savior Jesus Christ.

I was touched by the messages and doctrines presented by Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko in Belo Old Market, Cameroon where I was one of the students. I discovered that many are lost, not because they are not interested in the Word of God, but because they lack those who will teach them sound Bible doctrine like what I have assimilated from Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko.

I am hereby requesting that you send me your publications as I have indicated in the publication order. In addition, please send me Volume 1-12 of "Grace News Today." I would also like to be place on your mailing list.

I pray that the Almighty should give you the means to meet up with this Grace Evangelistic Ministries to the unsaved.

We wish to have you send Moses to us next year as the Lord wills.

*Yours in Christ,
Belo, Cameroon*

REV. MOSES C. ONWUBIKO'S **Evangelistic Meeting Schedule**

January 27 – March 15, 2000: US

March 16 – April 24, 2000: Nigeria (Owerri and Olu, Imo State. Bukuru and Jos in Plateau State)

April 25 – July 27: US

July 28 – August 18: US

August 19 – September 6: Zimbabwe

September 7 – November 19: US

November 20 – December 18: Nigeria

December 19 – December 31: US

Bible Doctrine for Thought

“I have a very beautiful gold pen which has been handed down in my family for several generations. I cherish it very much. But you know the little gadget that takes in the ink is worn out. I never carry that pen around to use for the simple reason that it just won’t hold ink. Even though it is a beautiful pen on the outside, it is useless because it is not filled with ink.

Whatever you may be on the exterior, [when] God the Holy Spirit does not control your soul, you are as useless as my gold pen.”

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ do you constantly monitor your spiritual life? Do you endeavor to confess your sin to God whenever you fail? “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” is a command, not an option. God wants to glorify Himself through you. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you allow Him an access in your soul so that God the Holy Spirit will accomplish the will of the Father in your life? You may want to think about this crucial issue.

Here is the Truth

“Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your own standard of measure it will be measured to you in return” (Luke 6:38).

Does God bless us because we give to Him? Let us go to the Scripture for the answer. The Apostle Paul wrote: “Who has given a gift [to God] that he might be repaid?” (Romans 11:35) And God said to Job, “Who has given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine” (Job 41:11). “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:8). If Luke 6:38 suggests that believers should give money to God’s work so that He will benefit them in return, then there is an impassable conflict with passages in both the Old and New Testaments, such as those quoted above.

Nonetheless, how many ministers have accumulated great wealth by using Luke 6:38 before the offering is taken or on their television programs? Most sadly, many of these know the truth. They know that God does not bless believers because they give. Yet, for any number of reasons—among them the fear of going broke—they misapply this verse, keeping their charges in the dark about the truth. Should teaching the truth hurt a ministry financially? We believe that if a ministry is honoring to God and His Word, He will provide for its continuation. If not, it is a clear indication that God is finished with that ministry.

We should constantly remind ourselves that gimmicks and clichés, whether inventions of our own thinking, or the suggestions of false teachers, cannot glorify God. The notion that “the more you give, the more God will bless you” has no basis in truth, period.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, ‘HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER.’ Now He, who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your

contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! (II Corinthians 9:8-15)

How do we explain this passage, and exactly what does “Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down...they will pour into your lap” (Luke 6:38) mean? What is “it” and who are “they” in that verse? We will explore the answers to these questions in our next issue.

Would You Join Us in Prayer?

GRACE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES' PRAYER GROUP

The importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized!

The God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, gave us a perfect example to follow. His life and earthly ministry was encapsulated in a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer occupied a place of singular importance in His own life and teaching. In time of decision and crisis He gave Himself to prayer. Thus our Lord prayed when He was baptized (Luke 3:21,22); when He chose the twelve disciples: “It was at this time that He [Jesus Christ] went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God [the Father]” (Luke 6:12,13); when He was transfigured (Luke 9:29); when He was engaging in sustained and exhausting service: “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place (*for privacy*), and was praying there.” (Mark 1:35-39); when He called forth Lazarus from the grave (John 11:41); when He was burdened for Simon Peter (Luke 22:31-32); when He faced betrayal, execution, and divine abandonment, and thus the Scripture recorded: “And He withdraw from them [i.e., His disciples] about a stone’s throw, and he knelt down and began to pray... And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Luke 22:41,44). He prayed when He thought of His disciples and their future ministry (John 17) and before His physical death (Luke 23:46). Therefore, if you are a believer who finds it difficult to spend a time with our heavenly Father, sin no more. “Far be it from that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23).

If Jesus Christ, a perfect God and a perfect Man spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13), we the mortal believers should spend all year in Prayer!

In light of the importance of prayer, would join us as we pray:

1. That God would continue to open door for our ministry.
 2. That God would continue to sustain the groups and newly formed churches in Cameroon, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.
 3. That believers, everywhere especially in America may have a renewed interest in learning and applying sound Bible doctrine.
 4. That God would continue to meet the spiritual and material needs of our partners.
 5. That God would continue to sustain Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr., and his staff.
 6. That God would bring stability in Zimbabwe, where we have been invited to conduct a Crusade in August 2000.
 7. That God would help GEM meet their monthly budget.
-

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, He had you on His mind. There was never a sin committed that was not poured out on Jesus Christ on the cross ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). He endured all afflictions so that He might pave a way for you to have life more abundantly through Him. Regardless of how sinful you have been in the past or are now, you can be forgiven and your slate wiped clean by God. How? By telling God right now that you are believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. The moment you put your entire trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will automatically become a regenerate person before God forever. The Bible says, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Will you believe in Him today? Or will you reject Him? The decision is totally up to you.

Financial Policy

Grace Evangelistic Ministries does not solicit funding. We believe that God in His grace will continue to meet our financial needs as they arise.

We do not charge for books or audio tapes. No money is requested. Anyone desiring to receive our books, tapes or other spiritual materials can receive them at absolutely no cost.

When gratitude for the Word of God and understanding of the need to reach the unsaved souls with the simple grace gospel and sound Bible teaching motivate you to contribute, you have the privilege of giving and sharing in the dissemination of the Word of God. This is a grace ministry.

Our Grace Ministry Has No Limits

Therefore, if you would like to be on our mailing list to receive this bi-monthly issue, "Grace News Today", or other materials of spiritual value, please write to the following address:

Grace Evangelistic Ministries

P. O. Box 17246

Nashville, TN 37217-7246

or

call us at **(615) 365-0015**

or

you may visit our web site

on the Internet at:

<http://www.gracemissions.org/>

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