

# Seeing Grace Properly in Three Main Areas

## Preface

- Grace is something that we grow in how deeply we grasp it
- Grace is also something we as humans are prone to struggle with grasping
- A good way to measure how well you grasp it is to evaluate how clearly grace affects your view of these 3 areas
- Likewise a good way to pursue grasping grace deeper is to pursue seeing it clearly in these 3 areas

## Defining Grace

- There are two main ways the word Grace is used in the New Testament
  - God's undeserved kindness (Romans 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:8)
  - God's supernatural empowerment (Acts 18:27; Hebrews 13:9; 2 Corinthians 12:9)
    - At several times in the Bible, the word grace is used not only to refer to something good that we don't deserve but specifically in regards to God's enabling and empowering us to do what we could not do without His power (which we do not deserve) such as coming to Christ and overcoming struggles with sin
- Biblically speaking, grace is both of those as one thing

## 1. How Do We Become Righteous?

- The proper view of grace:
  - We become righteous before God solely through having faith in Jesus Christ
    - Romans 4:3-5; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-9
- Improper views of grace:
  - We become righteous by doing works
    - This is not biblical (Romans 3:28)
  - We become righteous by a combination of faith and works
    - This is not biblical (Galatians 2:16; Romans 11:6)
    - This is deadly heresy (Galatians 1:6, 3:10, 5:2-4)

## 2. How Do We Grow in Christlikeness?

- The proper view of grace:
  - The main way we grow in Christlikeness is through supernally empowered effort
    - Colossians 1:28-29; Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:7; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:3-8
- What applying this looks like
  - Expecting to not be able to grow with supernatural empowerment
    - Relying on God practically
      - Through the Scriptures
      - Through His Spirit
      - Through the Church
      - Through Prayer
  - Expecting to have to put effort it
    - Making efforts practically
      - Making plans and setting goals
      - Strategizing
      - Doing research
  - Doing both together

- Improper views of grace:
  - We grow in Christlikeness by mere human effort
    - This is not biblical (John 15:4; Galatians 5:16; Matthew 26:41)
  - We grow in Christlikeness by grace without effort
    - This is not biblical
      - Like we saw clearly in 2 Peter 1, God requires us to make an effort to try to grow, and the clear logical implication is that said effort makes a difference in whether or not we grow
    - How it plays out in practice
      - Thinking you just need God to give you breakthrough, but not making serious effort to grow or overcome
      - Thinking if you just read your Bible more and pray more, that alone will automatically fix your character issues
  - We grow in Christlikeness through fate-like grace
    - Fate-like grace is a view that says that practically speaking you shouldn't really focus on putting effort in, because the grace itself will automatically cause you to put the effort in
    - This view ends up seeing grace as some fate-like force that will unconditionally cause growth, no matter what, and practically speaking this view just minimizes the fact that you have to put effort in to growing
    - This is not biblical (1 Peter 4:10)
    - Grace isn't some fate-like force that's just magically going to solve your character problems. The Scriptures tell us clearly that we have to put effort into our growth, and we can't just ignore that.

### 3. How Does God Feel Towards Us?

- The proper view of grace:
  - His love for us is completely unconditional
    - John 13:1; Romans 5:8-9
  - His delight in us is both conditional and unconditional
    - 1 John 3:22; Proverbs 3:12
- Improper views of grace:
  - His love for us is affected by what we do
    - This is not biblical (Romans 8:31-39)
  - His delight in us is totally determined by how we live
    - This is not biblical (Jeremiah 31:20)
  - His delight in us isn't affected by how we live
    - This is not biblical (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

### Conclusion

- Grace is something we often struggle to see properly
- These three areas are a good place to start
  - If you manage to see grace clearly in these three areas, you're doing pretty well
  - Most struggles to see grace properly come down to one of these three areas