

# How to Live by Grace

*Jerry Bridges*

## I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Matthew 19:28-30:16. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- B. We often come to salvation by grace, but then try to live the Christian life by our merit.
- C. Because of this, we think that God's blessing is based on how well we have performed in recent days. We tend to be legalists at heart.

## II. The Bible teaches that every blessing that comes from God comes on the basis of Christ's merit, not ours. (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3)

- A. We are organically united to Jesus Christ in a spiritual sense and a result of that union, we have been given everything we will ever need to live the Christian life. (John 15)
- B. It is through Christ that we receive blessings from God. Nothing we can do will make God love us anymore or any less.
- C. Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense.
- D. Salvation is the greatest blessing that we could ever receive. (Romans 8:32)

## III. Jesus responds to Peter's merit based thinking in two ways.

- A. God's grace is many times greater than what we have earned. (Matthew 19:29)
- B. God's grace will not be conditioned by our merit. (Matthew 19:30)

## IV. God is a gracious God.

- A. We look at this parable and feel that the landowner was unfair to the workers who came at the beginning of the day.
- B. The landowner, who represents God, was a generous man. (Deuteronomy 24:15)
  - 1. The landowner paid them based on their need, not on what they had earned.
  - 2. God works on the basis of grace and He will meet our needs. God calls us to serve Him not because He needs us, but because we need Him. (Matthew 6:33; 1 Peter 5:10; Hebrews 4:16; Isaiah 30:18; Jeremiah 29:10; Psalm 145:8; John 1:16)
- C. God's grace is sovereign. God has a right to dispense His blessings as He sovereignly determines. (Matthew 19:30, 20:15-16)
  - 1. We tend to compare our blessings to others and be envious.

2. God created us and gives us our blessings based on His grace and He has the right to treat us differently. He was fair to the first hour workers and successively more generous with each group of laborers. (1 Corinthians 4:7; Romans 9:21)
3. We can never obligate God to bless us by our obedience. (Luke 17:10; Acts 17:25, 28; Romans 11:35; Job 41:11; 1 Chronicles 29:14)
4. God's grace is always more than we deserve. (Matthew 20:15)
5. Grace and works are mutually exclusive. (Romans 11:6)

V. If God's grace is solely based on Christ's merit, what does the Bible have to say about personal responsibility and reward?

- A. In order to avoid abusing God's grace, we must learn to separate responsibility from reward. He is worthy of obedience even if He never blesses us. God often does reward obedience, but He does not have to. (Genesis 22:18)
- B. In order to avoid abusing God's grace, we must separate the means of God's blessing from the cause of God's blessings. We are encouraged to study the Bible and pray because God has chosen to bless us through those activities, but those activities do not cause God's blessing. (Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 3)

**Application questions:**

1. How does the knowledge that God's grace is available only through Christ's merit change your attitude toward Him?

---



---

2. Why is it important to understand the difference between the means of God's blessing and the cause of His blessing?

---



---

3. If God has a right to dispense blessings as He chooses, how does that impact your attitude toward the people around you?

---



---