

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 55 – Grace and Truth Came By Jesus Christ

By Sharon K. Griffiee

John 1:16-17 (KJV) - *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.*

As we identified in the last Spiritual Growth Lesson, “anytime we try to follow Jesus, not by grace through faith, but through the Old Testament Law, we have taken our eyes off of Jesus and our personal relationship with Him. The reason we can’t seem to *get it right* is for the simple reason that we are living our lives separate from Christ, and are trying to earn salvation on our own good works.”

No matter how much effort we put into our own works (going through the rituals of Bible study, prayer, and church attendance), sooner or later we find out that no one can bring salvation to themselves. Since our *own* works are not chalking up credits with God, we cannot conceivably boast about how good we are.

I Corinthians 1:31 (NIV) - *Therefore, as it is written: Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.*

It is the Lord Jesus who rightfully gets the credit for our salvation. He gets all the glory, because the salvation of man is God’s workmanship!

Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Believers are God’s workmanship! Therefore, any good works to be done are to be done *through* Christ. And any boasting can only be in the Lord and what He is working through them to accomplish *His* purposes. Believers, walking in

the good works created by Christ, are mindful that salvation does not have its source in man.

Ephesians 2:8 (NIV) - *And this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Because the source of salvation is God’s grace, it must be appropriated through faith. It is not automatic. It is *our faith* in what God has already provided for us in the plan of salvation that releases His grace into our lives. How does this truth affect us on a daily basis? What does this mean to us personally? It means brothers and sisters that we do not need to have arrived to a state of perfection to enter into a relationship with Jesus. This is good news! When our faith says **yes** to God’s call to come - holding nothing back, what happens next and from that point forward is through God’s grace (the unmerited favor of God). As we step out in faith, trusting our future with God, we will walk in newness of life.

I Corinthians 1:26-31 (NIV) - *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

This counsel from the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians shoots down the notion that we must be flawless in our behavior before we can begin our walk with God. On the contrary, because of

God’s grace (unmerited favor and divine assistance) sin is not something we should fear, but conquer! Living under God’s grace we have all the help we need to live a different life from the old life under sin. But we need to settle it, once and for all, that our earnest desire, our top priority is to be delivered from the bondage of sin. This involves our whole life, not just part of it. As followers of Christ (God’s workmanship) we must be ready at all times to acknowledge any failure which God’s light may expose to us. When God’s grace exposes sin, we should confess it and let Him clean it out.

I John 1:9 (KJV) - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

As we live each day under grace, our aspiration is to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. It should not enter our mind to use God’s grace as an excuse to sin, as some questioned Paul about.

Romans 6:15-18 (NIV) - *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

God desires our total allegiance. Sin matters to Jesus. Keep in mind, Jesus came to justify the sinner *by grace, through faith*, not to justify (condone) sin. To show us how serious a matter it is to continue in sin, Jesus gave a graphic example to get our attention.

Matthew 18:8-9 (NIV) - *If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye*

causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Of course Jesus didn’t literally mean we should cut off body parts to get rid of sin. But Jesus does want us to go deeper in our understanding, and do what is necessary to get rid of sin in our life, because its wage is death.

Romans 6:20-23 (KJV) - *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Questions for Personal or Group Study

(Please do not mail to CA for grading):

1. When we try to follow Jesus through the Old Testament Law, rather than by grace through faith, what does this say about our relationship with Jesus?
2. Why do people put so much effort into their own works? What are they hoping to earn by them?
3. What is the real source of salvation and how is it appropriated? **Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:16**
4. What should be our response to the truth that *we are God’s workmanship*? **Ephesians 2:10**
5. In answer to God’s call to come, what must we do, that will in turn cause us to make the bold statement; *we will walk in newness of life*?
6. What should our attitude be when God’s Grace exposes sin in our life? **I John 1:9, I Peter 2:9b**
7. What graphic example did Jesus give to motivate us to get rid of sin in our life? **Matthew 18:8-9**