



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries  
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## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GRACE

What does grace teach? What is the actual practice and application of grace?

1. How *great* our need is! How great do you personally sense that need? How intense is it for you, each and every moment of the spiritual battle?
2. Grace teaches *dependence*. Is our reliance and dependence on God's Power (HS) and God's Provision (Bible doctrine) absolute? How much reliance is there on self-- what self desires, what self can achieve, what self can accomplish?
3. Grace teaches us about sinfulness. Who's the greatest sinner you know? If the answer is *anyone* but you, then you don't understand grace. If you cannot look at yourself objectively in the light of the Word of God and in the light of grace; you will *never* understand the attitude of humility expressed by the tax-gatherer in Luke 18:13.
  - A. Let's look at the passage-- Luke 18:9-14. It says, "**And He [Jesus] also told this parable to certain ones who trusted [had confidence] in themselves that they were righteous** [the self-righteous arrogance of religion; the inevitable result of ritual without reality], **and viewed others** [*loipos*- the rest, i.e., *all* those who weren't Pharisees, who didn't belong to their exclusive sect] **with contempt** [*exoutheneo*- despise utterly, treat with contempt and scorn:]" There are two principles we can learn from this scenario.
    - 1) Self-righteous arrogance leads to contempt and scorn of everyone that doesn't fit your lofty ideal.
    - 2) The fastest way to move from humility to arrogance, from grace orientation to self-righteousness is to trust in yourself-- *your* strength, *your* knowledge, *your* power.
  - B. Vv. 10-12, "**Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee** [*Pharisaios*- the separated ones; a name *originally* given them by their adversaries, they were indeed separatists-- *legalists* to an extreme; they called themselves *Chaber*- a Hebrew term used in the Mishna and in ancient Rabbinical writings for one *who strictly observes the law*] **stood and was praying thus to himself** [it is no wonder, because in his mind he really was as good as God; he was convinced God held *his* lofty standard], **'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people** [he say's 'thank you' but there was no thanksgiving here; the statement about not being like other people was a bold-faced lie, he was *exactly* like other people-- spiritually dead and totally depraved]; **swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get** [notice throughout his entire prayer that the Pharisee has no praise for God, only praise for *self*, in the place of praise was self-

exaltation; he makes no request of God because he is *totally* unaware of any *need*; he *gets* nothing because he *asks* for nothing!].’

**What to learn from this Pharisaic prayer:** Some Church Age believers find the Royal Priesthood boring, lifeless, unsatisfying and unfulfilling.

They get *nothing* out of prayer, giving or the study of the Word. And you know why? Because they *ask* for nothing. They see absolutely no need for anything that God has to give in grace, consequently, they get exactly what they ask for. Some Christians never benefit from Bible class, no matter how on target, how intense or how practical. They don’t go away full because they don’t come in hungry.

- 1) Jesus’ mother Mary, as she praised the Lord God of Israel, said in Luke 1:53, **“He has filled the hungry** [from the root verb *peinao*- metaphorically: crave ardently, *seek with eager desire*; Jesus uses it in Jn. 6:35 of the hunger for spiritual food] **with good things; and sent away the rich** [here represents the arrogant, the proud] **empty-handed.”**
  - 2) John 6:35, **“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”**
- C. In v. 13 He said, **“But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’”**
- 1) The **“tax-gatherer”** was a tax-collector for the Romans. Considered traitors by their fellow Jews, they were despised by almost everyone, especially the Pharisees, who classed them as ‘sinners’ ranking right alongside harlots and Gentiles.
  - 2) His prayer of **“be merciful to me”** comes from *hilaskomai* in the passive voice, which means- *be propitiated, gracious and merciful*. It reminds us of the fact that grace gives us what we do not deserve, that grace is extended to those with absolutely *no* merit; while mercy withholds from us judgment we rightfully deserve, mercy is extended, *in spite* of human merit.
- Principle:** The *only* people who can lay hold of grace are those who recognize their need for mercy.
- 3) The tax-collector-- hated, rejected, an outcast in his own nation-- stood in the temple and uttered seven words, seven words that form one of the most profound prayers in the entire Bible-- **“God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”** He had no grand illusions about himself, no egotistically inflated ideas about being good enough for God. He saw how *awesome* his need was, and he knew that *nothing* but God’s mercy could sustain him.
- D. In v. 14 Jesus said, **“I tell you, this man [tax-gatherer] went down to his house justified rather than the other [self-righteous Pharisee]; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.”**

In v. 14 Jesus said that the tax-gatherer left the temple **“justified.”** **“Justified”** is from *dikaioo*, a legal term meaning- vindicate, acquit; *declare legally righteous*. This tells us that in the recognition of his need for mercy and grace the tax-gatherer had believed in

the Messiah of Israel-- Jehovah Elohim. For there is no other way to stand justified, vindicated, legally righteous before God unless we have received His absolute righteousness-- the imputed righteousness which belongs to us through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

In Galatians 2:16, Paul said, **“nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through *faith in Christ Jesus*, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”**

**Conclusion:** One man went up to the temple in humility, and for his faith received eternal life; the other entered with an attitude of arrogance and for his self righteousness received nothing. Jesus gives us the reason why in the closing phrase of v. 14, **“for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who *humbles himself* shall be exalted.”**

4. Grace teaches compassion and mercy. When you see those in life who are hurting and who have no hope, ask yourself the question-- Do I remember what the inner pain, inner grief, and inner sorrow is really like? Superiority complex or compassion-- the choice is ours.
5. Grace teaches child-likeness. *Not* innocence, but *incompetence*. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:15, that **“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”**

Children recognize that they're children, they are able to leave the burdens to their parents because *they* know these things are not their responsibility. They're able to relax in the care of their parents. The child knows that he could not provide for himself, that he could not buy the necessities of life, that he can't cook and prepare his own meals, he *knows* he doesn't deserve all this, he just accepts it.

6. Grace is God *in action*, His love is the motivator of grace.

The Apostle Paul, in 2:4-7 of his letter to the Ephesians, told them, **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (*by grace* you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly {places}, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come [Tribulation, Millennium and Eternity] He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”**

7. Mercy and grace are vitally united, inextricably linked in the Word of God. Mercy naturally precedes grace.

**Principle:** Mercy must remove the condemnation we rightfully deserve before grace can bestow the blessing that we cannot earn and *never* deserve.