

Growing in the Grace of God #05 - the New Covenant of Grace

by Bob Hoekstra

The new covenant of grace is a covenant of grace, not law, and is able to give us an inheritance and build us up in Christ.

Duration: 55:52

Scripture: Matthew 5:48, Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:24, Acts 20:32, Hebrews 7:18-19

Topics: "New Covenant", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the contrast between the old covenant of law and the new covenant of grace. He encourages listeners to study the previous week's sermon on the old covenant of law to fully grasp the significance of this study. The message of the law is to be perfect and holy like God, but it is unable to make anyone perfect. The speaker highlights the need for the grace of God, which is able to build up believers and give them an inheritance among the sanctified.

Transcript

By way of introduction now to this great theme of the new covenant of grace, this study strikes right at the heart of this entire course. There really is no study more critically to the center of the issue in this course than this study tonight. Now along with that, let me encourage you.

If for any reason you were not able to be here and study last week as we looked at the old covenant of law and some of you had responsibilities and opportunities in ministry elsewhere, pastor's wives retreat and other things, I exhort you, I encourage you to pick up the audio tape at least on last week's study because they go, last week and this week, go just, I mean more than the proverbial hand in glove, they go hand in hand. And just a quick summary by way of introduction to set our thinking in the framework of the word of God on this astounding contrast between law and grace. Both of them of God, but each doing different things.

One very limited, though very effective in what it was sent to do, the law. One very unlimited in all that it is sent to do, so much more that it's sent to do. Our last study was on the old covenant of law.

We looked at four things. One, we looked at its message. So many who get under the law or want to live under the law don't really hear what the message of the law is saying.

Remember we studied the word and saw that the message of the law of God was, be like God. Be holy. How holy? As holy as God.

Jesus said in Matthew 5, be perfect. How perfect? He added, as your father in heaven is perfect. The standard of the law is unyielding.

It is out of sight. It calls for perfection. Then we looked at the inability of the law of God.

Its message is, be perfect. Its inability is that it cannot make anyone perfect in any way. And Hebrews 7, 18 and 19 made that very clear.

The law makes nothing perfect. It demands perfection. It's a pretty tough taskmaster that demands perfection, but does not provide the resources to grow in the direction of the demand.

But just because the law has inability, that is it can't do everything, it can only do what God sent it to do, doesn't mean it's useless. And we looked at the ability of the law of God. The ability of the law is to describe sin, let us know what sin is, to convict us of sin, to hold us accountable before God for sin, and thereby to tutor us to Christ, to show us our desperate need for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest work of the law of God is to show us our desperate need for the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we looked at the fulfillment of the law. The fulfillment of the law.

How it is, how its demands can be increasingly met in our daily lives. And we saw that the fulfillment of our law, the law in our lives, God's law in our lives, has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of his spirit. Jesus said, I did not come to destroy the law, but I came to fulfill it.

And we saw that he fulfills the penalty of it, the pattern of it, then he unleashes the power that is needed to walk in the law as he lives in us day by day. What we're talking about in the fulfillment of the law is we're talking about God's grace at work in our lives. And that's why the study last week is such a very valuable, perfect, critical preparation for tonight's study.

Because the message of the law, its inability, its ability, its fulfillment, all point toward our absolute, desperate, total need of the covenant of grace. The law does a mighty work, and the greatest work of the law is to reveal our desperate need for the grace of God. In forgiveness and in new life.

So with that in mind, let's press into the headings. The first being grace, not law. Grace, not law.

We'll start in Jeremiah 31, 31 and 32, where we've been before. The Old Testament promises of the new covenant to Israel. Jeremiah 31, 31.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. And notice this key phrase, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Here the Lord promises a new covenant.

Jeremiah 31, 31, a new covenant. Then verse 32 tells us it's a covenant not according to the covenant that God first made with the fathers, the leaders of Israel. What kind of covenant did God make with Israel

when he led them out of Egypt? What covenant did he make at Mount Sinai? His covenant with Israel was covenant of law.

Ten commandments. Mount Sinai. So this covenant, the new covenant, is not according to the covenant that he made with the fathers of Israel, the leaders of Israel.

The new covenant is not a covenant of law. It's a covenant of grace. The old covenant given to Israel is the covenant of law.

The new covenant of grace is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. So clearly that's shown in John chapter 1, the gospel of John chapter 1. John chapter 1, verse 14. The heading we're under now is grace, not law.

And the word, one of the titles of Jesus Christ, the word who is also God as well as being with God, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. God the Son became flesh, became a man and lived with us and when he was beheld, when the disciples followed him and looked upon him, they saw glory.

What kind of glory? The glory as of the uniquely, the only begotten of the Father. The only one born of the Father like he was born. We are begotten of the Father but not uniquely like Jesus.

We didn't have any life before physical birth. He did. We were not born of a virgin.

He was. We did not receive worship and adoration and honor before we were born. He did.

He's the only begotten, the uniquely begotten. And he's the only Son who is God. We can grow in godliness but we'll never be God or little gods of any kind.

He's the only begotten, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. And here's what characterized that glory. In Jesus, full of grace and truth.

Full of grace and truth. His life was filled with the grace of God and the truth of God. Verse 17, for the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

There's the contrast again and we now live in Christ and serve Christ and walk with Christ and these verses fit greatly under this heading grace not law is the covenant we live under. The law was given through Moses and we needed the law to hold man accountable, to show sin for what it was and to humble hearts of their desperate need of a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. But there's more to the story.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Then verse 16, and of his fullness we have all received and grace upon grace. You and I who are in the Lord Jesus Christ, who drank of the cup which he said this cup is the new covenant, the covenant of grace, the cup of grace, in my blood which is shed for you, we have received of his fullness, all of us, the fullness of God dwelling in the Son, his fullness available to us in Jesus Christ and what characterizes that? Grace upon grace, grace upon grace.

This is really our testimony, grace upon grace and you could just keep adding upon grace, upon grace, upon grace. My dear friend from Dallas, Texas, the first assistant pastor the Lord gave me when I ministered back in Dallas in the 60s and 70s, gave his testimony one night there in the church and this was the verse he gave his testimony from and he actually said of God's grace, I have received grace upon grace, upon grace, upon grace. I don't know how many times he said that but we got the point, you know.

The grace of God was his testimony, that's a great testimony that gets right to the center of God's work in us. Grace upon grace, God saved us by his grace and then he builds on that grace. We're going to look at that issue tonight.

How many times has God worked by his grace in your life? And remember God's grace is not just his willingness to cleanse and forgive, though he sure worked in my life a lot of times that way, maybe yours too. But also his grace that transforms and builds and strengthens, we'll look at that later tonight as well. Acts chapter 20, a wonderful early church statement of the grace of God.

In Acts 20, the Apostle Paul is ministering to the leaders of the church from Ephesus as they're down at the seacoast there by Miletus on Paul's last trip through and he poured out his heart before them on many issues. This is a powerful section of the word of God, the second half of the chapter, Acts 20, but just a couple of verses for our purposes tonight. Verse 24, none of these things move me, that is the Holy Spirit testifying that everywhere he was going chains and tribulations await you in Jerusalem, but none of these things move me, Paul said, nor do I count my life dear to myself.

Well, that's a great testimony. When things are tough and threats are great and the going is rough, it takes the grace of God to be able to say none of these things move me. None of these things change my course and it sure helps to be able to add, nor do I count my life dear to myself.

That was our great problem before we came to Christ. We counted our life so dear to ourselves, we were totally about the business of saving our life, all the while losing the whole thing. Now we've become willing to lose it for the sake of the gospel and the Lord Jesus and now we're finding a life.

It's wonderful to not count our life dear to ourselves but just let our old flesh life be taken to the cross and the new life in Christ be the one that God takes care of, not us. Great testimony. So that I may finish my race with joy and the ministry which I receive from the Lord Jesus, and here was the ministry, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

The gospel is the basic initial presentation of the new covenant. The new covenant is a covenant of grace. The gospel is the good news of the grace of God.

I took a couple of quotes from Pastor Chuck's wonderful book, Why Grace Changes Everything, one of our textbooks. On page 204 he wrote, Jesus was sent into this world to complete the redemption of humanity. He came to establish a new covenant whereby man could relate to God in intimacy and enter into the fullness of God's promised blessing.

That's the new covenant we're studying. On page 39 he had written, in order for us to have life, God had to establish a new covenant based on better promises than works righteousness. Then he adds, that new covenant is the gospel of grace.

That's exactly what we're studying tonight and well put. The gospel, it's the good news of the grace of God. The good news of the grace of God found in Jesus Christ.

Verse 32, so now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. As Paul was leaving the leaders of the church from Ephesus, he commended them to God and to the word of God's grace. That's a great thing to learn to do, to commend people to God and his grace, to hand them over to, to entrust them to God and his grace.

Good thing to do with our lives too. That's what Paul did here. Then he added, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Two things here that the grace of God is described as able to do. There are other things, but two great things here. Able to build you up, able to give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified, that is those who are set apart out of the world and now in Christ set apart for God, for his use and glory and purposes.

Of these two things, every Christian is familiar with one of them, or they couldn't be a Christian. Of the two matters, most Christians I've found, quite to my amazement early on, some years ago, are unfamiliar with the second aspect of the grace of God mentioned here. The aspect of God's grace and its ability to deliver, every Christian knows that it's able to give us an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

That's speaking of heaven is our home. We're headed for glory. That's our inheritance.

We'll live forever with the Lord God Almighty in heaven above. That's our inheritance. On this earth, it looks like some people have, you know, significant inheritance and others don't.

It really kind of pales into insignificance eventually because all outside of Christ have no inheritance from God, just judgment from their sins. But everyone in Christ, everyone has a share in this great inheritance. And we do have a royal inheritance awaiting us.

And the more we consider that and count on that and just wait upon the Lord until that day and live out here however He wants our situations to be, the more peace and joy and expectation we have. We all have a great inheritance, you know, and if we do have 60, 70, 80, 90 years of difficulty, lack, challenge, and other things, I think we're going to be astounded how quickly it pales into insignificance. And it won't take an equivalent of 10,000 years in heaven to sort it out.

10 seconds will probably do, you know. Oh yes, it was worth it all. Every Christian knows that God's grace is the only thing that's able to give them an eternal inheritance, heaven above, forgiveness, new life.

There's no way to be a Christian without knowing that God's grace is able to do this because there's no other way to enter into that inheritance, to get in the family, share in the family inheritance than by the grace of God. There's no other way. So every Christian, true Christian, knows something of that aspect of the ability of the grace of God.

But again, that's not what this class is mainly about. This class is mainly about the other ability of the grace of God to provide and deliver, and that is the word of his grace which is able to build you up, able to build you up. The word of God, which is the word of his grace, the word of God which proclaims the grace of God, tells us about his grace which is able to build us up, to edify us, to mature us, to grow us up, to prepare us and equip us for service and fruitfulness, and to let us grow up more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does that take place? It's by the word of his grace which is able to build us up. So many Christians finally realizing that the only way they could be a Christian was by the grace of God and get that heavenly inheritance, they do not realize that that same grace of God is there now for the rest of the trek from here to there. It's not God saved you by his grace.

Now, you know, the rest is up to you. Boy, what a discouraging hope that would be. The scriptures say whoever believes in the Lord will not be disappointed.

The converse is whoever believes in himself will be disappointed. What a great ability of God's grace this is, able to build you up. Years ago I asked the Lord, Lord, I think I've been missing something really important about your grace.

I think I've only seen it concerning justification. I sense it must be in the word that it applies to sanctification too. Lord, show me.

And this is one of the places he showed me. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up. That's pretty straightforward.

Which is able to build you up. And there may be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that we should share that verse with. They have the inheritance and praise God it's by his grace.

But they aren't getting built up because they're just striving and laboring, they're still living under the law. They think growth depends on their works measured by God's righteousness, the law. And we already saw last time the law of God is unable to do that work.

It can point out the need for that work. The standard always stays there, the righteousness of God in Christ. But it can't make us grow.

But the word of his grace is able to build us up. Another word about grace, not law. And that's the verse in Romans chapter 6 that just basically says that.

Remember this? Romans 6, 14. Let me ask you before we read this verse. What is your hope that sin will not dominate your life? You say, well, the reason I know is because I'm really serious about the law of God.

I mean, I'm not kidding around about the law. And those people who kid around with it, boy, sin just dominates their lives. But I'm serious.

I mean, I cross all my t's and dot my i's and jots and tittles, you know. Well, listen to this. Let God blow your theology.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under law, but under grace. Oh, my goodness. Chew on that one.

You know, the natural mind of man would think if we're going to keep people off from under the domination of sin, we just got to clamp hard on them concerning the law. And that's their hope. They'll see how serious it is, and they'll get serious about it.

Now, there is absolutely a critical place, as we've already seen last week, for the strong proclamation of the law of God. Because it has many things it's intended to do. However, the law cannot keep us out from under the domination of sin.

Sin shall not have dominion over you. The reason? Because you're not under law, but under grace. We can live free from sin's domination of our lives by the grace of God at work in our lives, letting us walk more and more a path that doesn't transgress the law, but rather demonstrates Christian growth,

Christ-likeness developing in our lives.

So our life looks more like Christ, which is the only life that ever measured up perfectly to the law. We can grow in that life as the grace of God works on us and in us, transforming us, building us up. There is a way to get out from under the domination of sin.

Some don't really want out from under the domination of sin, the dominion of sin. They want to make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. Well, we saw last week the proclaiming of the law deals with that rebellion, drives that person to accountability before God and to their knees in humble repentance and a plea for the grace of God not only to cleanse and forgive, but to renew and transform.

But again, our lives in Christ, the new covenant of grace, it's a matter of grace, not law. Galatians 2.21, Paul said, I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain. Is that a powerful statement? Paul was careful not to set aside the grace of God.

And he obviously was speaking about the Judaizers, who were the legalists of the day, and all of your Christian growth and fruit and progress depending on your keeping of the law, the circumcision, the Sabbath, and other things, and how well you did before the standard of the law. Paul said, I do not set aside the grace of God. Righteousness doesn't come through the law.

Righteousness is just demanded by the law. It's a good thing to keep that in focus. The law says, be holy.

That's a demand for righteousness. It's just that the law doesn't provide the resource to become what it demands that we be. See, if righteousness comes through the law, there was no reason for Christ to die.

We just needed a little more time, a little better effort, and a little more opportunity to live up to the law. Righteousness does not come through the law. Christ did not die in vain.

The only way righteousness could come to us was through Christ's death, paying our debt of unrighteousness, and then being raised victoriously over sin and death, that we could be raised with Him to newness of life, which is a work of the grace of God on our behalf. Thinking righteousness comes through the law either initially or experientially in Christian growth is a setting aside of the grace of God because God's grace is the basic dynamic for righteousness, be it initially or progressively developing in our lives. In that very vein, let's think for a moment about God's justifying grace, our next heading.

God's justifying grace. Romans 3, 24. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ paid a redemption price to buy us back from the bond slave market of sin and bondage in which the enemy held us. The price Christ paid satisfying the justice of God. And now we are those freely justified by His grace.

Surely no one among us does not see that justification is by the grace of God. Justification is God the holy judge making a judicial statement and pronouncement, not guilty. Now we know how guilty we are on our own, don't we? I mean, what word could possibly describe how God the holy righteous judge could look on you or me and say, not guilty.

Is this my case we're hearing? Yes, not guilty. Why? Because of that great redemption price paid by Jesus Christ and the shedding of His blood to wash away our sins. We're justified freely by His grace.

We couldn't purchase this. We couldn't deserve it. We couldn't earn it.

We couldn't produce it. Justified freely by His grace. Romans 5 verses 1 and 2. Therefore, having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

We're justified by faith, that is trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, what He did for us. Through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ we have access by faith into what? Into this grace in which we stand. Grace.

We were cleansed by the gracious work of God through the blood of Jesus Christ as we trusted in Him. Notice through this course how often faith and grace go together. Paul's warning against works of the law.

Working to earn or merit or demonstrate or produce your own righteousness before the law. That's one thing Paul is warned about often. Works, righteousness and law.

Pastor Chuck mentioned that in the quote we read in his book. What is the other side of the story of works, righteousness? Working before the law to see if you're righteous enough. Faith in what God provides by His grace.

Faith and grace go together like that. Works of righteousness and the law, they go together like that. And one produces condemnation, works righteousness.

The other produces righteousness in us and for us because it's by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace. Faith is not a work.

Sometimes people say, well, you say people have to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved and that you're to live by faith. See? That's a work. Well, you might say it is, but God says it isn't.

I'll take the Lord's word on that one. In fact, the verse just came to mind. I think it's in Romans 4. Yeah, Romans 4, 16.

Let me write it down too. Therefore it is of faith. In fact, the verse just came to mind.

I think it's in Romans 4. Yeah, Romans 4, 16. Let me write it down too. Therefore it is of faith.

That is that the men of old were justified. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace. According to grace.

See, faith is according to grace. It accords with, it fits with grace. Grace is God's provision of all that we need through His Son, His person and work.

And faith is in accord with that. We depend on the Lord, trust in the Lord. We'll talk a lot about that tonight.

How faith and grace go together. But some say, oh, see, you're making a work there for salvation. Oh, no.

God says faith is not a work. Why? Because faith is depending on the work of another. It's as far as you can get from a work.

It's depending on someone else's work. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore salvation is of faith that it might be according to grace.

Great truth. Let's save Ephesians 1, 7 there next in the outline. Let's save it later.

It appears later on in our notes tonight. Now let's go from God's justifying grace to God's sanctifying grace. Justification starting out with God.

Being declared innocent by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Now sanctification and grace. Sanctification, growth in godliness, growth in righteousness.

Not being declared righteous, but growing in righteousness. Titus chapter 2, God's sanctifying grace. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

The grace of God has appeared and that grace brings salvation to all who will receive it. Also that grace teaches us. Part of the work of the grace of God is it teaches us.

It instructs us. It informs us. One of the most difficult mental molds or framework to break in the renewing of the mind, Romans 12, 2 is thinking about what the grace of God is.

So many of us for so long have thought about the grace of God only in terms of forgiveness and cleansing. That we start thinking about and talking about the grace of God in other ways. It doesn't compute.

The screen all of a sudden, ding, and it appears this is not in the data bank. Part of what the grace of God does is teach us. Teach us and that is for the sanctifying work of God.

Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age. Is that talking about justification or sanctification? Sanctification. You can't be justified by trying to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Only the justified ones can begin to learn how to live that way in a progressively sanctified life. These are verses that shift from justification to sanctification. The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

That's primarily referring to justification but also that grace of God teaches us that denying ungodliness, we should live godly in this present age. The grace of God training us. Another New Testament word for training is actually the word disciple.

This is a synonymous term here. The grace of God is at work greatly in the discipling ministry of our lives. That we should live godly, live in a sanctified progressively sanctified life.

God's grace trains and disciplines us and disciplines us and reshapes us unto a path of godliness. It's the work of the grace of God that does that. 2 Timothy 2 verse 1 You therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Now again, is this a justification verse or a sanctification verse? It has to be a sanctification verse. Paul writing to a pastor and his spiritual son Timothy pastor of the church at Ephesus telling him how to live now. He's already justified.

But you don't get justified by being strong in the grace of God you get justified by taking a sip of the grace of God. That's just the first drink of the cup of salvation. Confessing sin, admitting our need for forgiveness calling upon the Lord Jesus in repentance saying, Lord save me by your grace.

And that drink brings justification. But after taking that sip of the cup of salvation, the Lord wants us to learn to drink deeply of it. One sip is enough for cleansing of sin.

But the Lord said, as often as you do this do it in remembrance of me. And one of the things we do is we drink that cup of the new covenant. That cup of salvation.

I'm not saying in that that it's a mechanical thing, you know, that we just need to have communion every day, you know, and bottoms up and it's all here. This is the whole thing. No, that's just dead ritualism.

I mean, there are people who do that everywhere. And they know nothing of the grace of God. In fact, even when they drink it, they're commemorating the reenactment of a sacrifice that they didn't think was sufficient once and for all.

I mean, it's one of the worst forms of dead religion and religious works. To re-work the death of the Lord Jesus Christ when Hebrews says he died once for all. That whole ritual has nothing to do with the grace of God.

It's just it's taking works mentality in the most critical and disastrous place. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

As often as you do it, as often as you drink it, do it in remembrance of me. Take that cup, remembering who it speaks of, who he was and what he did. It's like taking by faith another deep drink of the grace of God.

And it's just something we're to gather and do before him, but it's just a little picture of how we live, drinking of that cup of salvation. Again, the Christian life is designed to be as simple as eating and drinking. This bread, my body broken for you.

This cup the new covenant in my blood which was shed for you. When the Lord left us that one worship remembrance that we're all to be doing, it was just a glorious statement of the simplicity and the glory of the new covenant of grace. Let's see now, can you eat this bread? Can you drink this cup? I think you can walk with me.

This is all about my grace. Feed on me that bread says. And not only for forgiveness as a substitutionary sacrificial lamb, but also as the bread of life.

But I better slow down here, that's for three weeks from now. We're going to have a tremendous time. I love the study of that aspect of the grace of God.

All right. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This is the arena of sanctification and we're to be strong in that grace.

Strong in it. We're not to be weak in the grace of God. We're not to be weak about the grace of God.

We're to get strong and mighty in the grace of God. God's grace is there for spiritual strength. The world teaches us to be macho Christians.

God teaches us to be strong in His grace. God wants to work mightily in our lives. It's not by Mr. New Jerusalem.

How we can show our mighty religious muscles. We're to be strong in His grace. Strong in His grace.

In His supply. We'll talk more about that as we go along tonight. Being strong in the grace of the Lord goes greatly with Hebrews 13.9. That's why I put it there on the same line.

Hebrews 13.9 Hebrews 13.9. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods, that is ceremonial foods, which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We don't want to get caught up in various strange teachings, things that are not in accord with the word of God, therefore the grace of God.

Why? Because it's good that the heart be established by grace. It's good that the inner man, the spiritual life inside be established by grace. Be made stable.

Be grounded by the grace of God. Now again, are we talking here justification or sanctification? Straightforward, isn't it? The heart. He's writing to Christians and saying you need your hearts established by grace.

Your life stabilized within by the grace of God. We're talking sanctification. And it's tied directly into the work of the grace of God within.

Not justification here, but sanctification. It is good to have the inner spiritual life, the real you, the new person in Christ established by grace. See, the grace of God is not something to make us casual toward sin, casual toward God, just kind of wishy-washy, you know, you're so spineless you must be a grace Christian or something like that.

No, that's a total misunderstanding of the grace of God. It's good for the heart to be established by grace. God's grace is there to stabilize our life.

The fickle, here today, gone tomorrow, running hot and cold Christian life, it relates to that works righteousness striving because it has to draw on the resources of the flesh and the flesh is so fickle. It wants to try to take a shot at it today but not tomorrow. Whether it's fickle or not or whether it wants to go for it or not, it can't do it.

It's inadequate. It can't establish the heart. The heart, the inner, it's out of the heart that the issues of life flow.

We're talking about the spirit of man where the Holy Spirit dwells, where new life is imparted by God from above. That deepest fountain of our being where everything is to flow from that is us, that is to be established by grace. Stabilized by learning what the grace of God is and what it isn't.

How it is to work in our lives and why. And then learning to draw on it, appropriate it, access it. That's what stabilizes the person inside.

When there is tremendous inconsistency, instability in our Christian life, it's a sign we need a work of God's grace inside. That the heart needs to be established by grace. And sometimes people get inconsistent in different ways and they think, you know, the secret is consistency.

No, the secret is finding what produces consistency. It's like people saying, the key is fruit! And they go off and manufacture religious fruit. No, no, no, the key is finding out what produces fruit.

We want consistent lives. We don't want to run hot and cold. Trusting today and doubting tomorrow.

Faithful today, unfaithful tomorrow. Laboring today but oh, yeah, I used to do that. Maybe I'll do it next year.

How are we going to get there? It is good for the heart to be established by grace. The grace of God is available to bring spiritual stability to our lives from the inside. See, the law is always working from the outside.

Remember that? And so the law here would say, be stable, be consistent. No, no, no, no, that's not what I mean. You're not doing it.

Be stable, be consistent. And you come up with the question, how? It is good that the heart be established by grace. The grace of God strengthens, establishes, grounds the inner life with the Lord.

2 Peter 3.18 This is one of the theme verses for this course, the other being 2 Corinthians 3, verses 4-6. 2 Peter 3.18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are to grow in grace.

We are to develop in grace. Now obviously, this is a sanctification verse, right? I think they're all quite clear, but this one maybe is the clearest of all. It doesn't say, but be birthed in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

Though that would be true too. That's how we're birthed. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In a few weeks, the whole study that night will be about the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, getting to know the Lord. But tonight, grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We're to grow, to develop in grace.

It's all about the sanctification process, and that process involves the grace of God. Now folks wonder in studying verses like this, or even considering these issues, does this mean that the Christian does nothing in his growing and serving in the grace of God? That is not at all what it means, though the natural mind could run in that direction. Oh, it's all of grace? Yes.

Of His fullness we've all received, and grace upon grace. It is grace from start to finish. The natural mind goes then, oh, well then, let's see how I get in the right mode for that.

I just kind of zone out, or zombie into some grace tranche, you know? Okay God, do it to me, you know? Well, that's just naturalistic kind of thinking. That's not at all where God leads grace in the word of God. And to end up with that kind of thinking is overlooking a whole lot of scriptures.

We get fully engaged in, we get totally involved in the Christian life of the grace of God at work in us. We do become those more and more who love the Lord our God with all of our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. But that's a process of growing in the grace of God.

But God says, okay, here's my grace. Now, show me your loving me, more today than yesterday, with all your heart. I'll give you a little more grace.

Wait a minute, that's not working. Something's out of sync. No, see this grace? It's there so you might learn to love me with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

We get totally involved. But in ways defined by the New Covenant, in ways defined by the grace of God, not in misunderstood ways like man's natural wisdom would produce. Again, in Pastor Chuck's book, *Why Grace Changes Everything*, on page 160, Pastor Chuck wrote, I have found that I must rely daily upon the strength and power of Jesus Christ to live the life He wants me to live.

Well, there it is. Simple statement of the grace of God at work in our lives. I have found that I must rely daily upon the strength and power of Jesus Christ to live the life He wants me to live.

We do live the life more and more that He wants us to live. But it develops in us by the grace of God at work on us, with us, around us, in us, through us. I have found it takes a radical renewing of the mind to begin to grow in the grace of God.

If you're like me, and I'm sure you're more like me than you ever wanted to be probably, I had so much bad thinking about the grace of God, when God began to break through upon me concerning His grace, it just demanded major renewing of the mind, learning to think with God instead of human thoughts about the grace of God. The fact that it's all of grace does not in any way mean things that people think. Oh, you just want to annihilate the law of God.

Not at all. Oh, then you just want to sit back in a rocking chair and God carry you all the way to heaven, or zap you or something. Wrong again.

That's all just naturalistic thinking coming to conclusions that make sense. As high as the heavens are above the earth, God says, so are my thoughts above your thoughts. I'd love to learn to think with God about the grace of God.

It kind of blows your mind, but I just like the picture of me sitting there before the word smoke coming out of my ears. Wow! I didn't know you could think like this. This is a whole new way to think.

Come let us reason together, says the Lord. It's tremendous to think with God about the grace of God. Do you know the implications of this are so enormous? Not only will we not become what the Lord wants us to become except by the grace of God, but there are many, many, many casualties along the way that we need to love, pray for, and reach out to and rescue who have been buried by modern day legalism.

A dear sister told me not long ago how her husband in a good Bible teaching spirit filled church no dead letter of the law and no charismania just the word by the Spirit generally characterizing the church how this lady's husband had come to the Lord after years of praying and then he got into the church a little bit and kind of got in the orientation class or whatever on what it is to be a Christian and after he took the classes, how many there were, came home and told his wife, dropped the textbook down on the table and said I'm done. That's it. There's no way I can do all that.

What's going on in something like that? A lack of appreciation, a lack of exposition, a lack of proclamation of the grace of God that changes people's lives Do you know there's probably an army of people just like that, discouraged, condemned frustrated, can't live up to the law of Moses can't even live up to modern evangelical law so much reading, so much witness, so much meeting, so much this, so much that they can't even live up to man-made religious law let alone the law of Moses I've come across them virtually everywhere I've gone across the country and overseas and if we think there's legalism in the American church take a visit overseas. It is multiplied worse over there. It's like we export the weakest things we have instead of the greatest things The grace of God, we're to grow in it, but grow in the grace of our Lord

and Savior Jesus Christ God's grace is an arena to be growing in and it is for the growing up of the children of God

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11340.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/growing-in-the-grace-of-god-05-the-new-covenant-of-grace/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net