

# Growing in the Grace of God #24 - Various Aspects of New Covenant Grace Part 2

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living by faith and depending on God's grace to bear fruit and walk in good works.*

**Duration:** 54:18

**Topics:** "New Covenant"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the concept of being created in Christ Jesus and the importance of good works. He explains that although we are not saved by good works, we are recreated in Christ Jesus to walk in the good works that God has prepared for us. The preacher also discusses the idea of the 'much more grace of God' and how it can have a substantial impact on our lives. He concludes by highlighting the responsibility we have as stewards of the manifold grace of God, using it for His will and glory.

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## Transcript

Study number 12 of 12, various aspects of New Covenant grace. We looked at New Covenant truth in the Old Testament, now we're looking at bearing fruit and how that relates to the grace of the New Covenant. And New Covenant grace is definitely available to develop fruitful lives.

We saw that before break in John 15, abiding in the vine. Because of that life in the vine, bearing much fruit, because the fruit comes from the life that's in that vine. The life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at Romans 7, this is an interesting one. Real powerful terminology God gave concerning fruit bearing here in Romans 7, 4. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead. To what end? That we should bear fruit to God.

How many Christians are trying to bear fruit by relating to the law? Oh, it says do this, it says don't do that. I've got to try harder to do this and try harder not to do that. And their intentions are often good.

They want to please God, they want to be fruitful in His sight. But that's not at all what this verse is talking about, it's quite the opposite. Bearing fruit unto God involves being dead to the law through Christ.

We died with Christ to that law under which we were condemned. Why? That we might be joined, new creature, new person in Christ, joined to Christ. A new resurrected life.

That we should bear fruit to God. It isn't by relating to the do's and don'ts, that's back to human resource. It's not the sufficiency of man trying to measure up.

If you could on your best live a life that the law commands, you'd be a very fruitful Christian. The fruit of the Spirit is fruit of holiness and godliness and Christ-likeness. The commands of the law are holy, just and pure.

Nothing wrong with them. It's just that we can't live up to them. Maybe another verse that goes very well with that one is Galatians 2.19. For I am through the law, died to the law, that I might live to God.

There's where the fruit comes from. Romans 7.4 really makes it clear. It's not fruit by trying.

It's fruit by trusting. And that doesn't mean that trusting doesn't lead to steps of faith that look like trying. But God knows the difference totally.

And increasingly, He can give us the discernment when we're striving in the flesh and literally moving forward by faith. To us, these things have a subtlety to them. Well, how do you know the difference? Or where do you draw the line? Well, God knows the difference and God does all the line drawing.

And on one side is flesh and it's useless. On the other side is Spirit and it's everything. And it's a life of learning to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh.

And again, sometimes it's kind of a resting. I was talking to a brother today. And he said, how are you doing? I said, you know, I'm really doing well.

Praise the Lord, so blessed. I'm kind of overwhelmed and stretched. I said, I can't even.

It just seems like every day is more of a step of faith for strength and even wisdom and priority. And he said, you know, it must be nice having a lot to do. I said, well, tell me.

He says, I don't have anything to do. I have nothing to do. Boy, Lord, thank you for that.

And I quickly agreed. I said, you know, brother, you're right. I am totally blessed, totally blessed.

And I said, furthermore, I can remember when I had nothing to do. It's not that we don't do a lot. It's where does the dynamic of it all come from, you know? Where does it come from? And there are times when it takes more faith to do nothing than to do everything.

And there are some times when it takes more faith to do everything than to do nothing. I mean, it's a total free thing before God, a relative adjustable issue. I mean, there are times when don't touch that, don't get into it, just hold back and see what God does.

There are other times everything in you is screaming. You want to wait, hold back, draw back, pull back, pull the covers up, disappear. And by faith you must not, and you know it.

It would be rebellion, it would be doubting God. It would not be trusting His will and His purpose. It would not be believing He's sufficient.

And, you know, you just step out in there totally dependent on the reality of God. So it's not the do or don't do or do a lot or do a little or get it halfway in between, you know, just do moderately or whatever. You know, it's much deeper than that.

We need a whole new life source. We need to be joined. See that? We need to be joined to one who was raised from the dead.

Why? Because fruit bearing only comes from a resurrection life source. We've got to be joined to one who was raised because that's the only place resurrection life is. That's what gives us spiritual vitality in a dead world in which we'd be dead if it weren't for the Lord Jesus.

We'd just be one more dead religious human being. We've got to be joined to one raised from the dead. So we became dead to the law through His death that we might be joined to this risen one.

Why? That we might bear fruit for God. The more we meditate on, believe, and say, Lord, I want to walk in that. The less dead works we'll have in our lives or wax fruit.

And the more through a joining, trusting, depending on Him, we'll bear fruit to God. Not religious activity and image and stance to impress people. We'll bear fruit, literally, end of verse 4, to God.

He will be blessed and honored by the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives. Philippians 1.11. Toward the end of this brief but powerful prayer here in Philippians 1, I commend these prayers to you. Philippians 1, Colossians 1, Ephesians 1, and Ephesians 3. If your heart hasn't been grabbed by those prayers, I commend them to you.

Years ago, the Lord grabbed my heart by these prayers. Through the years, I have literally prayed them verbatim, but with all my heart at times. Right back to God.

Philippians 1, Colossians 1, Ephesians 1, and Ephesians 3. Yes. I picked that up from someone here. I like that.

Both. I definitely pray them for my own life. Because I know in that answer, God will be glorified and lives will be touched.

But I absolutely pray them for my wife, our children, our ministry, the church families we're in and closely related to, and every family touched by all of those. I just keep moving it out. All the time, all those four prayers.

How can you pray better than Spirit-led prayers by men who walked with God in fullness of the Spirit? They're fantastic. And they catch up the whole scope of the reality of the kingdom of heaven in these prayers. I mean, they're so concise, but they're so big.

It's like praying these, you're covering more than the waterfront. Covering the globe, the universe. It's great.

Philippians 1, 11, end of one such prayer. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. This is a prayer concerning a life filled with righteous fruit.

We're talking about a fruitful life here. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness. Righteous fruit.

But from whence does that fruit of righteousness come? The fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ. They source in Him. They're produced in our lives because He is in our lives through our relationship with Him.

A life filled with righteous fruit comes from properly relating by grace and faith to the one who supplies the righteous fruit. We trust in Jesus by His grace He produces in our lives. We can be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

But those fruits of righteousness are only by Christ Jesus. Religious regimen doesn't automatically produce them. Church activity doesn't automatically produce them.

Dedicated, zealous self-effort doesn't produce them. Nonetheless, we can be filled with the fruits of righteousness. Which are by Christ Jesus.

No wonder it's to the glory and praise of God as that prayer ends. If He's the one doing it, He's the one that's going to get the glory for it. The credit, the praise.

Fruit, we might say, has to do with character. Works have more to do with activity. Both are to be involved in the life of the Christian together, not separate.

Colossians 1.10, Colossians 1.10, ties those two phrases together. This is kind of a good verse to bridge into the next section called Good Works. Colossians 1.10, in that prayer, which I like especially our baby Matt, who's pastoring Calvary Chapel Vespre, his vision for the church ministry there was Colossians 1.9-12, the prayer.

That God would produce a ministry there that matches this prayer answered. That blessed me so much because he didn't know that years ago I had prayed the same thing about Calvary Chapel Irvine and living in Christ's ministries. Which makes me like this prayer all the more.

It's like, oh yes, Lord, pass it on. Look at verse 10. That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work.

We want lives that are fruitful. And our lives can be, as God works in a praying heart like this, can be fruitful in every good work. Both effective, it perhaps means, but it could also infer Christ-likeness.

Christ-like in every good work. Effectively like Christ in every good work. Beautiful way to tie the two together.

Fruitful in every good work. Let's think for a little while about good works. Now here's a big issue.

We've touched on it all kinds of ways, but let's hit it head on. This issue of good works. The grace of God available in the New Covenant is available to develop lives filled with good works.

Too many Christians, when you start talking about the grace of God, and that it is unlike a striving, frantic, fleshly, straining religious experience, they think that they get apprehensive sometimes that it's going to produce a lazy, inactive, do-nothing life. That's a total misunderstanding of the grace of God. Total misunderstanding.

God's grace is available in this New Covenant for a life of good works. It's the flesh that wants to be lazy and do nothing. Not the spirit.

Show me a lazy, never available to take action when God wants a Christian, and I don't care if they have every word out of their mouth, grace this and grace that. I would say they are changing the grace of God into something else. You can't measure the life of grace by activity or inactivity, but if anyone thinks the grace of God produces an inactive, lazy, do-nothing Christian life, they're not plugged in to that grace of God in Christ in day-by-day living.

They might know His salvation and forgiving, saving grace, but certainly not for day-by-day living. Because just like we're to be fruitful, we're to be in abundant good works. But they're both linked to grace in the Scriptures, both of them.

Ephesians 2.10 makes such statements clear. For we are His workmanship, we Christians are the workmanship of God, His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus, made new by being placed in Christ, but look to what end? For good works. Sure, verse 9 above, the saving grace, forgiving grace of God is not of works, but it's for good works.

Not saved by good works, but recreated in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. We're God's workmanship, His creative work of art, His pottery project, His poem, His artwork. Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand.

We don't have to drum up our Christian good works, just be willing to walk in the ones God has prepared beforehand for us. That's kind of exciting. I had no idea, even just a few years ago, that I would be teaching as much as I teach, as many places across the country, overseas.

I had no comprehension, very far back, that this was a part of the good works God had for me. But to the extent that I had been following the Lord by faith, depending on His grace, letting Him lead and work, lead me and work in and on and through me, I just found myself walking in the good works that He prepared before, and He knew where He was going to head me. And same in your life.

My testimony is your testimony. He's prepared them. He recreated us.

He's working on us, making us His well-shaped vessel. And we got there by His grace. And now He just wants us to walk in what He's already prepared.

I mean, it's like grace upon grace. It isn't what we drum up. It's what He does on us, in us, shapes us, and then with us, as we walk through the good works He has for us.

They're just lying right there ahead of us, each step of the day, along the way. You want a life of good works? We were saved by the grace of God for good works. He's working on us, in us, with us, and leading us into the good works.

He's already prepared. He just says, walk in them. Just go ahead, just walk in them.

Walk in the Spirit. Walk by faith. Live by my grace.

You'll end up right in the middle of the works I have for you. You won't have to scheme them up or drum them up. We're just walking in them.

How many times have we challenged God's people to get out there and do something for God? Well, no. Trying to redeem that somehow. I mean, we'll end up doing things with God.

In fact, we did a study here on Wednesday night called, Working With God. We'll never work for God unless we're learning to work with God. I mean, He's the builder.

We are the instrument. He's the craftsman. We're His workmanship.

We wouldn't want to cooperate. We want to, you know, yield and yes, and all that. But He's the one at work with us.

That book that used to be one of the texts in your file. Oh, yeah, yeah. Working With God is a text in your book that went along really well.

Thanks, Mark. Yes. In January and this class as well.

Thank you for reminding us. Andrew Murray does have a great book called Working With God. That might have been the old title.

I think the new one might be How to Work. In fact, it might even be How to Work for God or something like that. But the whole book is the same book and the whole book is about working with God.

It's a tremendous book. Yeah, thanks for that. And it fits well with this Ephesians 2.10. But also look at John 6. Good works in the grace of God.

Grace of God at work on us, in us and through us will develop a life of good works. John 6, 28 and 29. This is classic.

Then they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent. Lord, we're your children. We want to bless you.

Work for you. Do great things. Lord, just tell us.

What do we need to do to work the works of God, to really get into those mighty works of God? Jesus says, Believe in the one the Father sent. Believing in, trusting in, counting on Jesus is the answer to what do we do that we might work the works of God. This is kind of the flip side of James.

James basically says, Faith without works is dead. He says, You show me your faith without works. I'll show you mine with works.

And he says, If you think that faith without works will save you. He basically says, You think that kind of faith will save you? That's not real faith. Real faith in a God, who is the God that He is, eventuates in a life of good works.

Faith works. We don't work for our faith, but faith does work. It produces works.

Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the longer they walk, the more they believe, the more their faith and dimensions grow in trust, their life develops into a life of good works. What can we do to work the works of God? Believe in the Son of God whom the Father sent. Put your faith in Him for salvation.

Put your faith in Him for growing up and maturing. Put your faith in Him for developing a life and a walk. You'll be involved in the works of God.

Good testimony of exactly how that worked is the very next verse, 1 Corinthians 15.10. 1 Corinthians 15.10. Talking about good works and grace and faith. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Paul said, By the grace of God, I am what I am. What was he when he wrote these words? Well, he was the most faithful, fruitful, abundantly laboring leader in the New Testament church. And he said it was by the grace of God.

That God's grace toward him, operating upon him, in him, was not in vain. It was effective. Yes, his testimony is, I labored more abundantly than they all.

We're talking a life of abounding good works. Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, gives this testimony. I labored, I worked more abundantly than they all.

No one in the early church was more involved in good works than the Apostle Paul. He labored more abundantly than all of them. Notice this, yet not I. Yet not I. Then what was it all about? The grace of God which was with him.

Paul had a life filled with good works. This one verse testifies to it. His whole life story in the New Testament cries out that truth.

And yet he said, Yet not I. Yet not I. Paul was not the dynamic cause behind his abounding good works. Yet not I. By the way, here we are back again to humility and faith. Humility, it's not me.

Okay, yeah, granted, I worked harder than anyone in the church. But it wasn't me. That blows the natural mind.

That is nothing but religious double talk to the natural man. To us, it's exciting. It's exciting.

It's getting behind the scenes. It's going past a hard working man to what is the dynamic cause behind it. Yet not I. Then what is happening there? The grace of God which was with me.

Working with God. Available to God. Being used by God.

This is one of those powerful verses that makes it clear that the grace of God is more than his willingness to forgive us. This has nothing to do with forgiveness. This has nothing to do with justification, this verse.

This verse is all about maturing and abounding in good works. And Paul said the dynamic behind it was God's grace at work with me. God's grace working in him was the heavenly dynamic.

And that's the faith part. He was trusting in the Lord. To be there.

To be active in his life by his grace. And so God was. Paul, we're close to it.

Just throw in your outline here. 2 Corinthians 9.8. 2 Corinthians 9.8. We've touched on this before, but it fits again great here. We looked for a different reason before.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you. That you always having all sufficiency in all things may have an abundance for what? Every cruise ever offered in the world? The greatest silk hammock? Trimmed in felt? For the one lifelong eternal surf ride? I mean, what is all this grace for? Three camel

garage. Three camel garage, yeah.

Really? For every good work. You know what abounding grace is for? One thing it's for. Abundant good work.

See that? Verse 8. God's able to make all grace abound toward you. Abounding grace. Which leads to us having all sufficiency.

God's sufficiency in everything that we're in. Leading to this end. An abundance for every good work.

Abounding grace for abundant good works. That's how it works in the kingdom of heaven. Trying to, you know, never be active.

So I can kind of prove I live by grace. Is another religious fantasy. God knows when we need to be active and when we need to be inactive.

And there's a time for each. We don't prove grace innately automatically by either. Grace is related to humility and faith.

Not visible action or inaction. But nonetheless. God's grace received and lived in will include Abounding good works.

I was thinking how 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17. Doesn't it? Yeah. Grace through the scriptures equips us for every good work.

Yeah, beautiful. 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17. Yeah, great correlation, Jonathan.

Really excellent. Right on. Acts 14.26. Acts 14.26. Oh, I love this.

From there they sailed to Antioch. Paul's missionary team returning to the home church Antioch. Where they had been commended to the grace of God.

That's when they left on the missionary journey. Commended to the grace of God for the work. Which they had completed.

What a powerful little picture of grace. God's grace at work in missions outreach. God's grace accomplishes the work He wants to complete.

See, they left Antioch. And as they left, the church commended them to the grace of God. The church entrusted them under the caring and providing activity of God's grace upon and in and through their lives.

For the work, now that they're back, they can say, which they had completed. When our lives are commended to the grace of God, entrusted into the work of the grace of God, we end up completing the works God sends us out to accomplish. I mean, it gives such expectation.

Such a sense of confidence in God. That when we're commended unto His grace for any work, that grace will complete the work that we were sent to do. It gives such a sense of expectation.

Certainty. Now here's an interesting thing. Let's add verse 27 and watch what happens.

Now when they had come and gathered the church together, there at Antioch, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. See, the grace of God at work on us, completing the work, is actually this taking place. It's a work God does with us, using us.

See, verse 26 says, The church commended them to the grace of God. They went out, they came back, and by the grace of God the work was completed. And then they said, Paul, team, tell us.

What went on out there? And they reported all that God had done with them. That's what the grace of God is. That's good too.

That's a valid translation, and I think it stresses another aspect of it. In fact, that even brings home a more personal aspect of it. You can do a lot with a hammer, but I can't do much through a hammer.

But God can do things not only with us, take us, use us, but right through us. It's a work God does with us, using us. See, verse 26 says, The church commended them to the grace of God.

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Yeah, I like that. That's good. That humbles me a little bit, because that's not my favorite translation.

I'm glad you shared that. I'm sure I needed to hear that. Because that's good.

That's really good. Yeah, the nearly inspired version. We mustn't get off on that.

Yeah, that's right. Then we'll hear from Jonathan, you know. We'll have the battle of the translations.

Yeah, amen. In Revelation, the letter to the church at Ephesus. Yeah, that's another good cross-reference.

Thanks. One more here. Acts 4.33. About good works.

Acts 4.33. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. What's the explanation of that? And great grace was upon them all. Powerful witness of the resurrected Lord comes from great measures of God's grace at work upon and in our lives.

Great power. Great grace. Great power from great grace.

Great power in the witness. There's some great grace of God at work. Someone might say, I thought that comes from the Holy Spirit.

Well, verse 31. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. See, same thing said in different terms.

One of those great passages that ties the Spirit's work and the grace of God together. Oh, that man's okay. Amen.

Wish I'd have said that. It's fun having someone who took notes from before. Well, that's what I should have said, right? Thanks, Mark.

Yeah. That's great. Okay, one more section.

And this is a powerful little cut of Scripture. Call it the much more grace of God. Graham, I remember the night in your house in Australia.

It's the first time I ever taught, what, an hour or whatever it was, on that one verse. I'd wanted to do that for years. And when a bunch of us were over there, Brad and about 15 others and the cry and all, we were just packing your place that night.

Living room, dining room, hall. You couldn't even walk in there. And I remember, this is what we studied.

The much more grace of God. How substantial is the supply of God's grace? How substantial can be the impact of God's grace? I think that's what this much more grace of God speaks about. And that phrase, much more grace of God, comes right out of Romans 5, 17.

And we only have about five minutes tonight to look at it. But that'll be sufficient for tonight. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more, those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

The abundance of grace that is available in Christ is much more than is needed to overcome and to reverse the sin and the death that was ours in Adam. The start of this verse, the sin and death that were ours in Adam, leaving us with death reigning over us. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one.

That's where we all started out. Death reigning over us. Why was it so tough before we came to Christ? Death reigned over us.

Why do lives get so decimated, bound, broken, busted, empty? Death is reigning over them. Spiritual deadness. A dictator tyrant, really, Satan himself.

The prince of darkness. Who came only to rob, kill, and destroy. He's ruling over lives.

Why is the world in such a pitiful, pitiful mess? Sometimes I watch the national news with my wife. I tell you, more and more it's like a joint groaning session. Oh Lord! How blind can we be? How pitiful can we be? Well, here's the answer.

Death is reigning over humanity. Everyone born once in Adam, death is reigning over them. And death can get pretty ugly.

The news is R-rated at times. We keep the flipper real close. During the news even.

No, we don't need to see that, thank you. Death gets ugly. Selfish.

Greedy. Brutal. Vicious.

Boy, it takes a lot to turn that around. What is sufficient? The much more grace of God. If by the one man's offense, death reigned through the one, much more.

Not just barely enough to turn it around. But much more. Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

Two things are mentioned here that let people move in the direction of learning to reign in life through Christ instead of having death reign over them in Adam. The two things are the gift of righteousness and the abundance of grace. One of these every Christian has.

The other, too few Christians pay any attention to. What's the one every Christian has? The gift of righteousness. How do we know every Christian has that? Because if they don't have that, they're not a Christian.

It's just that simple. It's not some great insight we have into every person. If they don't have it, they're not a Christian.

Righteousness, born again, a child of God, standing in his family, only comes by the gift of God. Salvation, a gift. Every Christian has it.

Why then isn't every Christian reigning in life? Because too many ignore this other aspect of spiritual victory and day-by-day living. Much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life. The reason there are too many defeated Christians too much of the time is all they have is the gift of righteousness.

They have a standing into God's family. They're not drawing on any of the resources of the people of God found in Christ alone by his grace. So they're struggling, they're striving, their resource is the flesh.

And the enemy rips them off, lies to them, knocks them around, almost like he did before they were saved. Why? Because they're not receiving abundance of grace. They have the grace that forgives and the grace that gives new life.

They're not drawing on the grace that strengthens, transforms, sets free, brings fruit, produces good works. They're just forgiven and struggling their hardest. Or kind of cynical like, oh man, who can make this work anyway? Just thank God I'm headed for heaven, you know.

And maybe they are, God knows. There is victory, we can reign in Christ more and more. How? By receiving abundance of grace.

Living day by day in humility, trusting in the sufficient resources of Christ. The abundance of grace available in Christ is much more than is needed to overcome. The death and the deadness and the sin and bondage and brokenness that was ours in Adam.

The much more grace of God. It's not just barely enough. It's much more than is needed.

And if we access that by faith in a humble walk with God, we'll see that bondage and that lack of wholeness that was ours in Adam, we'll see that increasingly disappearing in practical effect. We'll be walking in growth and righteousness and godliness and maturing and fruitfulness and abounding good works. We'll actually be more and more like Christ year by year.

The much more grace of God. What a fantastic heart of the matter issue. Romans 5.20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound, to flush sin out in the open, make it obvious what it was, provoke it even so we'd know it was there, but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

Tell me, can sin abound? Oof. Man, how about how it abounded in you? You probably don't want us to get that personal. Okay, how about how it abounded in me? Whew, out of sight.

This was a word used in the first century for waves rolling up on the shore. Man, I piled up a 90 foot tidal wave of sin. Heaven didn't go, oh my goodness, we never thought it'd get this bad.

Well, at least we could offer salvation to most. No way, where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. For over my 90 foot tidal wave of sin, comes rolling this 300 foot wave of grace.

Washing it away, beginning to replace, reclaim, renew, rebuild, restore. Oh, the much more grace of God. It's what every Christian must learn to walk in, or there will be no victory, no significant growth, not much fruit, and certainly not abounding good works.

In conclusion, just maybe four or five minutes. In conclusion, not only to this study, but to the entire course, 1 Peter 4.10, 1 Peter 4.10, As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Oh, what a tremendous statement.

We are stewards of the manifold grace of God. Stewards are those accountable to use the resources of the Master for the benefit of the Master and the fulfillment of the will and plan of the Master. And we are stewards of what? Not just time, not just money, but of the manifold grace of God.

God says, here's my manifold grace. Use it for my will, to my glory. There it is.

Plunge in. Take all you need. Just be a steward with it.

Not for self-indulgence, not for the three-camel garage necessarily. Now, I'm not saying if you've got a three-camel garage that you're walking according to the flesh, but one does not equal the other. That's always the confusion, you know.

We are stewards of the manifold grace of God. The manifold grace of God. The grace of God that has so many, many, many, many facets and aspects and dimensions.

It's like an infinite diamond with all these facets, many faceted aspects of the grace of God. You can step over here and look at it. Oh, how it shines and brilliant.

Wow! But just move a little here. Whoa! And just keep looking, you know. We're stewards of all of that.

It's been granted to us to use those resources of God's grace for the Master's benefit and for the Master's will to fulfill His plan, not ours. 2 Corinthians 9.14 2 Corinthians 9.14 And by their prayer for you who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Talking about Christians praying for one another and having a longing, a yearning, some translations read.

Who yearn for you. Why? Because of the exceeding grace of God in you. When we allow the grace of God to work in our lives, upon our lives, through our lives in exceedingly great and growing ways that fit the manifold grace of God, you know what happens? Lives are touched by our lives which have been touched by the grace of God.

People begin to yearn for us, long for us, pray for us, yearn after, want to be with us, want to hear from us. They want to be touched by God's grace through us just like we've been touched by God's grace in and upon us. Well, I have friends that come to mind, pastors I've known or know or been with or would love to

be with again.

And there are certain spots along the trail, I'm thinking right now of a home in Kiev, thinking of a pastor in St. Petersburg, Russia, thinking of a family in Dallas, Texas. I just yearn after these people. I long for them.

I just can't get enough of them. I'm excited when I know I'm going to be with them. And it's because of the exceeding grace of God in them.

If we will let the grace of God work upon us and in us and fill us and empower us and bring fruit and good works, make us more like Christ, set us free, make us whole, there'll be others praying with us and for us and yearning after us. What a way to develop ministry. Just let God have such a work on us that others just anticipate time with us.

And that time becomes an opportunity to kind of pour out some grace upon them. Let the grace that impacted us touch their life. Fantastic way to walk and serve.

May we be those who because of the exceeding grace of God in us, others long for us. They yearn for us. Yeah, come on.

Yeah, come by. And then last, Hebrews 4.16. Hebrews 4.16. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace. To what end? That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

I guess you could say above all the universe, in the center of the universe, over the universe, all creation, there's a mighty throne of grace, a sovereign Lord of grace seated upon it ruling. We, because of Christ Jesus, our great high priest, can come boldly to that throne of grace. Not bowing down enough to be accepted by the mighty monarch, though we probably will love the fall on our face there.

But just boldly coming. Humbly, yes, but with confidence in Him. And there at that throne of grace, obtain mercy.

Not get what we deserve. And find grace to help in time of need. See, again, we're talking beyond forgiveness and salvation.

Grace to help in time of need. Do you ever get in a spot where you're in a time of need? Or maybe, how long has it been since you were out of that spot? That spot can stretch mighty wide sometimes, over many years. Well, whether it's a brief overwhelming moment, or a sense of ongoing impossibility, we can find grace to help in time of need.

Live by that much more grace of God. Trust in our sovereign King sitting on that throne of grace. Wow, the much more grace of God.

God wants us growing in the grace of God. Again, grace is for growing. And grace is for serving.

That's what we call the class at times, growing and serving in the new covenant grace of God. Grace isn't just for being cleansed, and that in no way diminishes the cleansing grace. It's just that's not all there is to it.

It's for growing and for serving. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank You so much.

We're overwhelmed by Your grace. We love You for Your grace. We honor and magnify You for Your grace.

We confess our absolute need for Your grace, not just for forgiveness of sins, as glorious as that is, but now for righteousness and maturing and liberty and freedom and wholeness and fruit and service, for power and victory. Lord, we have no other hope but Your grace. We need no other hope but Your grace.

Your grace is much more than we've ever yet found, and it's much more than we will ever need. And we glorify You for it and just ask You to pour out Your grace upon us. May we abound in the grace of God, all for Your glory and the touching of lives.

And Lord, we ask You to bring to the church of Jesus Christ near and far a glorious revolution of grace, a revival of grace, a reforming, a reformation. Lord, as surely as the saints of old cried out, justification by grace. May we be those who will stand up in that same spirit and say, yes, and sanctification by Your grace.

We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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