

GOOD NEWS

about

GRACE

Part # 3: Sustaining Grace

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The concept of grace, it's giving and receiving is very misunderstood. Our lack of understanding is not rooted in the definition of grace, but in the ways that it impacts our lives.

What We've Learned

1. Saving Grace defined as . . .

- God's Gift to Me
- Receive by Faith
- Available to Everyone
- Comes Through Jesus Christ
- Extended Throughout Eternity

Salvation isn't given based on my **goodness**, it's based on God's **grace**.

2. Healing Grace can be defined as . . .

- Allowing God to change the way we think about Him.
- Allowing God to change our understanding of how He thinks about us.

God's commitment in providing healing through His grace involves the **renewing** of our **minds**.

Accepting the forgiveness God grants us when we accept His gift of salvation ushers in the **healing** we desire from our hidden **hurts**.

Salvation isn't based on my **performance**; it's based on God's **promise**.

Sustaining Grace

We cannot expect to live without heartache, pain and severe suffering at times. The Good News is Scripture is filled with promises and examples of God's Sustaining Grace for those who place their trust in Him.

As we study God's Word we are assured that we are not without His presence, comfort, and care.

God's desire for our lives is not to just reach the finish line, but to live **well**. His grace isn't just to save us and heal us, but to **sustain** us through the challenges of life.

Philippians 1:6 "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."

Sustaining grace is the power to keep on going when I feel like **giving up**.

Sustaining Grace is the power to do the right thing when you don't feel like doing the **right** thing.

1 Peter 5:12 "My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that the grace of God is with you no matter what happens."

Stumbling Blocks

God's sustaining grace helps us through 3 major stumbling blocks:

1. When I am **tempted**.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "The temptations that you have are the same ones that all people have. But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can stand. When you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape. Then you will be able to stand it."

Truths about temptation...

...there is no **unique** temptation – we **all** have common temptations with common **solutions**.

...tempting **thoughts** are not sin – dwelling on them to the point of **embracing** sinful behavior is.

...God does not tempt us – His grace however provides a way of escape from it.

God's sustaining grace helps us **stand** firm when we're tempted.

2. When I am **tired**.

Daily living is **tiring**; committing daily to do the right thing is **exhausting**.

Galatians 6:9 "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 *6 My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow. 7 The ones who do the planting or watering aren't important, but God is important because he is the one who makes the seed grow.*

2 Corinthians 1:21 "It is God who gives us the ability to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us and He has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts."

God's sustaining grace gives us the **power** to do what we **need** to do.

Philippians 2:13 “Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.”

3. When I am troubled.

Three kinds of trouble:

- Trouble that threatens to change my way.
- Trouble that threatens to weigh me down.
- Trouble that threatens to break my will.

Isaiah 41:10 “Don't be afraid, for I am with you.

Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you.

I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

How to receive God's Sustaining Grace

Call out to God.

James 4:7-10 “So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper. Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.”

Fill your mind with God's Word.

Psalms 119:25-32 ²⁵ I'm feeling terrible—I couldn't feel worse! Get me on my feet again. You promised, remember? ²⁶ When I told my story, you responded; train me well in your deep wisdom. ²⁷ Help me understand these things inside and out so I can ponder your miracle-wonders. ²⁸ My sad life's dilapidated, a falling-down barn; build me up again by your Word. ²⁹ Barricade the road that goes Nowhere; grace me with your clear revelation. ³⁰ I choose the true road to Somewhere, I post your road signs at every curve and corner. ³¹ I grasp and cling to whatever you tell me; God, don't let me down! ³² I'll run the course you lay out for me if you'll just show me how.”

Accept support from God's people.

Galatians 6:1-3 “Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.”

Hold on to God's promises.

Isaiah 40:29-31 “He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.

³¹ But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles.

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not faint.”

2 Corinthians 4:18 “So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.”

Turning Point . . .

God's sustaining grace does not make our difficulties **disappear**; it just **ensures** us that He will be **present** and see us through them.

Every one of you needs God's Sustaining Grace in some problem, some burden, or some unanswered question.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 “Because of the extravagance of those revelations, and so I wouldn't get a big head, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. Satan's angel did his best to get me down; what he in fact did was push me to my knees. No danger then of walking around high and mighty! At first I didn't think of it as a gift, and begged God to remove it. Three times I did that, and then he told me,

My grace is enough; it's all you need.

My strength comes into its own in your weakness.

Once I heard that, I was glad to let it happen. I quit focusing on the handicap and began appreciating the gift. It was a case of Christ's strength moving in on my weakness. Now I take limitations in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size—abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger I become.”

Paul was a very self-sufficient individual who learned several very important lessons.

1. **Challenges** in life are **teachers** of truths about God.
2. God **uses** challenges to **communicate** His plan.
3. God calls abuse, accidents, opposition and bad breaks **blessings**.