

# A Grace for All Seasons

## Taking Grace to the Next Level

Isn't it only logical (and, therefore, right) that if there is a God, and One who gives grace, that He should and would give it to those in greatest need? **Answer:** Yes this is logical – No, it is not right. There are conditions God has set for Grace – those in the greatest need, if they fail to meet these conditions, receive it not, while others, in far less need (maybe in no need by most people's account), may receive grace again, again and again – grace overflowing, almost to the point of excess! I, for one, do not feel guilty in receiving grace greater than others, in obviously greater need, and I am not jealous of those receiving grace *before* me (although I will look closely at what they are doing to see if I am missing something I should have).

The paradox of grace is that it makes us stronger than before we receive it, but to be beneficial it must show us, more clearly, the reality of our weakness; Grace, without this awareness and thankfulness to the Grace-Giver, will do more damage than good! EVERY day we are moving closer to or further away from Grace – you can be sure the devil seeks to use Grace to our destruction – “Look at me. Boy, am I lucky (smart, strong . . .)! I've got everything! What do I need? . . .”

That is why, similar to the old adage about giving a man a fish – teaching him to fish . . ., the greatest Grace is not the one-time gift of Grace, but the Grace of seeing our need AND having faith in the ONE who can give us the Grace to meet our needs. In this vein, Peter tells us:

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To him be glory both now and forever!  
Amen. 2Pe 3:17 - 18

Yes, Grace will make us more \_\_\_\_\_ (powerful, wealthy . . . you name it), but for a purpose and by specific means:

I can do everything **through him** who gives me strength. Phil 4:13

“ . . . whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done **through God**.” Jn 3:21

## Finding the Chicken AND the Egg!

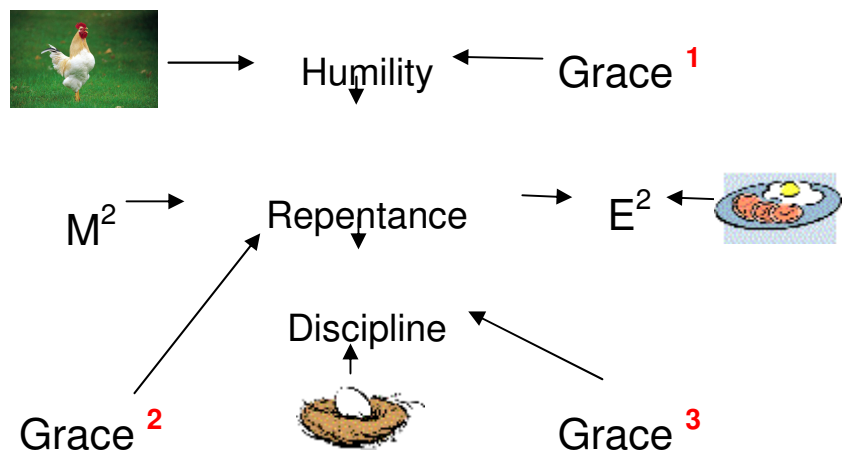
We are where we are, we are a product, of our past – that said, however, our future is not dictated by our past – if we start the *process* of repentance. The foundation of repentance? Humility – acknowledging something needs to change, the “flip side” and starting point for repentance.

God give grace to the humble. Proverbs, James & 1 Peter

Grace – God doing for us what we can't otherwise do for ourselves – and His normal way? Like a parent (only perfect) God's *for us* is typically *through us*, not in place of us or *to us*, but through us by teaching and leading us in appropriate disciplines. Too many people think of grace as only God's material provisions – but what should we expect of Grace and God when we have about everything we need materially? In spite of thinking otherwise, 90% of Americans already have too

much stuff – the last thing God will do is pile more on. But spiritually, that is another issue altogether!

Let's save the thousands of words with a couple of pictures (Easy! Easy! It is not as hard as it looks!) to see better how, why, when and for whom Grace works:



**Grace<sup>1</sup> – The “chicken” is the God-given humility that inevitably leads to the God-promised and given grace . . .**

**Grace<sup>2</sup> – of repentance.** Repentance comes when excuses and comparisons with others no longer satisfy us. And repentance is seldom the end of a process, but the beginning – a process, often, of 2 steps forward one back, but always in the upward direction - toward E<sup>2</sup>; it is **an awakening to the reality (that most everyone else already sees about us and knows) that something should change! After this struggle, and reaching out to God for help, comes . . .**

**Grace<sup>3</sup> – a developing discipline moving a person from the Morass of Mediocrity (M<sup>2</sup>) toward an Equilibrium of Excellence (E<sup>2</sup>).** Discipline – the ONLY “reseter” of equilibrium.

Three graces from the chicken to the egg! **All** of grace, through us, to become more like Him! Some concrete examples of REAL Grace – Grace (when you have all you need materially) MUCH better than a bigger home, new car, another job . . . Grace to put old ways and sins behind» and BECOME something and someone (like The Christ):

- Stealing » Giving
- Lying » Telling the Truth
- Adultery » Loving Spouse
- Neglecting Children » Loving, Teaching and Training Them
- Anger » Peace
- Depression » Joy
- Undisciplined » Self-Control
- Cursing (Myself & Others) » Blessing

Let's Grow Up and In Grace and Take Grace (by Grace) to the Next Level!