

# What Will You Do With Grace? Grace - 3

by Anton Bosch

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*We can receive, set aside, fall from, or fall short of God's grace, but by humbly and dependently casting ourselves upon it, we can fully receive and cherish it.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 10:12, 2 Corinthians 6:1, Galatians 2:21, Galatians 5:4, Ephesians 2:5, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 12:15, Hebrews 12:28

**Topics:** "Gods Grace", "Christian Living"

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## Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes that while God's grace is limitless and unending, it requires acceptance and reception from the recipient to be effective. He warns against living in sin or returning to legalism under the assumption that grace will cover all actions. Bosch highlights the danger of receiving grace in vain, setting aside His grace, falling from grace, and falling short of God's grace, as outlined in various Bible verses.

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## Transcript

It is amazing how many things become part of our thinking without any biblical basis. One such idea is that grace is unconditional and that God extends His grace without reservations. This is simply not true.

Yes, God's grace can never fail, is limitless, and He extends His grace to all. But in order for that grace to become effective, the recipient must accept and receive the grace that is extended to him. Even once we have received grace, we can frustrate and fall short of that grace. Unfortunately, many Christians continue in sin and some even return to the law in the mistaken assumption that God will continue to extend His grace to them no matter what they do.

In 2Corinthians 6:1, Paul says: "We then... also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain". Clearly, Paul is warning that some may receive the grace of God but it will not help or benefit them. We speak of a lifeguard trying to save someone in vain. Yes, the lifeguard did all he could but it was not good enough - other factors rendered his efforts useless. Thus Paul warns that we may receive the grace of God but because of factors outside of grace, grace is unable to accomplish its purpose.

In the case of the Corinthians, the thing that rendered God's grace ineffectual was their carnal lifestyle. Worldliness, fleshly lusts, materialism and unbelief all militate against the grace of God. The Corinthians assumed that because they had received grace, they could live as they chose and that grace would cover it all. But, Paul warns that even once one has received grace, it may be in vain. I do not believe that God's grace can ever fail and that there is any sin that His grace cannot cover. But, we can become so

self-confident that we feel we can stand on our own feet and we no longer need to flee to that throne of grace for mercy and grace. And once we remove ourselves from under the grace of God, how can His grace then cover us? This is why Paul warns these same people "... let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Corinthians 10:12).

Not only can we receive the grace of God in vain, but we can also set aside His grace. To the Galatians he writes: "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Galatians 2:21). Just as we can receive grace in vain through reckless living, we can set grace aside by keeping the Law. Those who return to law confess by their actions that they do not need God's grace and that they think they can save themselves by keeping rules. It does not matter if the rules are those of the Old Testament Law or if they are the laws of the church, or rules we make for ourselves. The moment there is any attempt to achieve our own righteousness through doing certain things, we set His grace aside.

Some people try to hedge their bets by relying on grace and law. This is what the Galatians were doing. They did not return entirely to the Law, but wanted grace plus Law. Many modern Christians do the same. Yes, they still want God's grace, but feel they have to supplement grace with their own good deeds. But, the teaching is clear: grace and Law are mutually exclusive. If you stand under the law, you have rejected grace and if you want grace, you must stop all attempts to justify yourself and cast yourself totally on His grace.

To these same Galatians, who thought that the Law was a necessary addition to grace, Paul says: "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." (Galatians 5:4). Yes, it is possible to fall from grace! We use this term in a secular sense of someone who has messed up and been rejected by their supporters. But Paul's use of the term is far more serious than someone just getting into a bit of trouble. If one has fallen from grace then how will they be saved? We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5,8) and without grace we cannot be saved.

In the natural, when someone falls from something, it means he was standing on that thing and fell from it. (Invariably with dire consequences.) Thus we speak of a worker who fell from the roof of the building. He was standing on the roof but he fell. If someone falls from grace, it simply means they were standing on grace, but they are no longer on grace and also they are no longer standing.

So we can receive grace in vain, we can set aside His grace and we can fall from His grace. But there is a fourth thing we can do. We can fall short of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15). The writer uses the same Greek word for "fall short" in Hebrews 4:1: "...since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it". Here he is referring to the Israelites who came to the border of the Promised Land, but did not enter in. Yes, they were right there, but they fell short. They did not make it and perished in the wilderness. In the same way it is possible to not fully take hold of God's grace.

The context of Hebrews 12:15 tells us the things that may lead to us falling short of God's grace. These are: a lack of spiritual vitality (Hebrews 12:12), not pursuing peace or holiness (v14), a root of bitterness (v15), and selling one's birthright like Esau (v16). The warning to the Hebrews is clear that the consequences of falling short of grace are severe and that we need to look carefully that we do not fall short of it. The very existence of this warning means that it is possible to fall short and that we need to be careful of this very real danger.

The fifth thing we can do with grace is to receive it, cherish it and hang onto it. Grace is not a toy we play with. It is a lifeline we cling to with all our might. Let us not receive His grace in vain but let us "have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Let us not set aside His grace but cling to it. Let us not fall from His grace but stand on it. And let us not come short of His grace, but fully embrace it.

God's grace is strong, unfailing and able to cover all our sin. May we in humility and dependence cast ourselves fully upon His grace. He alone can be trusted and relied on to save to the uttermost.

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