

# Growing in Grace #3 - Living Daily by the Grace of God

by Bob Hoekstra

---

*Living daily by the grace of God requires humility, faith, and abiding in Christ, which enables believers to bear fruit and accomplish God's work.*

**Duration:** 59:52

**Scripture:** Exodus 24:7, Matthew 26:41, Acts 14:27, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:13

**Topics:** "Abiding In Christ", "Living By Grace"

---

## Description

In this sermon on John 15:4-5, the preacher emphasizes the importance of abiding in Jesus and having a deep connection with Him. He uses the analogy of a vine and its branches to illustrate this concept. Without abiding in Jesus, we cannot bear fruit or do anything of significance. The preacher also highlights the role of faith and grace in a believer's life, emphasizing that good works and bearing fruit are a result of living by grace and trusting in God. The sermon concludes with a call to live daily by the grace of God and seek a deeper connection with Jesus.

---

## Transcript

Father, we come again with hunger and expectation, with joy and delight. We love being fed by you, Lord. We're hungry.

We want to feed on the Word of God, the bread of life. And we thank you, Lord, for the Holy Spirit. We're thirsty, and Lord Jesus, we come to you believing that you can meet that need, quench that thirst, and fill us with your Spirit as you teach us and enlighten us.

We ask you to give us understanding, to guide us into all the truth, and we're asking, Lord, for more than just comprehension, but for an apprehension, an appropriation, a believing, and walking in the very things that you speak to us about. And we ask all of this work and all of your will in our study now, in Jesus' name, amen. Study number three in our series of studies on growing in the grace of God is about living daily by the grace of God.

How do we live day by day by the grace of God? A good question to ask. The law demands do your best with your resources to live up to the high and holy standards of God. Tough way to build a relationship with

God.

Tough is a mild word. It's impossible to build a relationship that way. We saw already in the Word of God, it's not by law, but by grace that we meet the Lord and walk with the Lord.

But how do we live day by day by the grace of God? How do we do it? If it's not by our own resources, how is this to take place? If you've been studying with us, you recall that our second study ended right here at this very point. And we looked at two scripture that we'll just refresh our minds with, but not dwell on. It'll give us that mindset, that focus of thinking with God, that will be just what the Lord speaks into tonight.

James 4.6. One major issue in living day by day by the grace of God is the issue of humility. But he gives more grace, therefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The self-sufficient, the self-reliant, they're not looking for the grace of God, they do not walk in that flowing supply of the riches of the grace of God.

Because God resists the proud, he's opposed to the proud. He knows he must do a humbling work in the heart of the proud. Those who think they can handle it by their own best effort or resource.

God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Humility is vital in living day by day by the grace of God. Recognition of our need for the grace of God daily, admission before God of our need for his grace day by day, this is critical.

Because it's those who admit, recognize, face, agree with God, we need his grace. Those are the lives day by day God is ready to pour out his grace upon and in and through. Humility, it's vital to living day by day by the grace of God.

Along with that, faith, faith in the Lord. It's such an intimate partner of humility. We can read about it in Romans 5.2. Humility says, I need help.

Faith says, I can trust God for that help. Romans 5.2, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, all of us who know him, we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

The very spiritual ground, the very condition in which we stand before God is grace. By grace he brought us close to himself. In grace we stand before him.

How do we access that grace that's all around us? As we stand before the true and living God. How do we access it? How do we avail ourselves of it? How do we draw on it? We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. Faith is essential.

Trusting in the Lord and his provision, depending upon the Lord and his supply, faith. This is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, who he is, what he's done, who he has made us in himself, and what he offers to those who are in him. But to bring that relationship with the Lord down to very personal terms of day-by-day walk, by grace, humility and faith strike right at the heart of it.

Humbly saying, we need what you have, Lord. By faith in our Lord saying, we trust what you have can be our portion and what you offer is fully sufficient for our need. Now with that in mind, we'll look at living daily by the grace of God, desiring to walk in humble faith, walk in humility, trusting God.

And in that walk with God we can be those who are bearing fruit, walking in good works, and seeing a life of obedience developed. The grace of God is not just a ticket to some spiritual Hawaii. Sun, surf, palm trees, hammock, and tropical juices to drink.

Now God gives plenty of those kinds of blessings and praise his name for that. But the grace of God goes far, far beyond that. If we think that's what it's all about, it's a sad misunderstanding on our part.

The grace of God is about bearing fruit. The grace of God is about abounding in good works. The grace of God is tied into, even produces, a growing life of obedience.

First bearing fruit, Colossians chapter 1 verse 6. Bearing of fruit is absolutely directly tied into the grace of God. The grace of God is available to and is able to develop fruitful lives for you and me. Colossians 1 6, speaking of the gospel, which has come to you as it has also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit as it is also among you since the day you heard it and knew the grace of God in truth.

God's word brings forth fruit in our lives because it lets us know of the grace of God. And faith comes by hearing and we hear the word of God and it speaks of the grace of God. And faith is steward.

I can trust in that supply of God's grace. And we hear of the grace of God. And through the word we get to know it in truth.

We come to understand it and rely upon it. And that grace that we hear of in the word of His grace, the grace of God in reality, it brings forth fruit in our lives. Which has come to you as it has also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit.

What is? The word of the truth of the gospel, which at the end of verse 6 is about us hearing and knowing the grace of God in reality. Having fruit in our lives is directly linked to living by the grace of God. Romans 7 verse 4 concerning bearing fruit.

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 that we should bear fruit to God. You and I have now become dead to the law. How? Through the body of Christ.

His body hung upon that tree and He died there. Dead men aren't answerable to the law. When He died on that tree, we died with Him by faith.

And we died to the law with Him there in that death that we might be married to another, joined to another. We were joined in accountability directly to the law of God. Now through Christ's death, we've become dead to the law that we might be joined to another.

We were joined to one who said, be as holy as God. Oh, thank the Lord we died to that. I didn't do well under that.

How did you do? But we've been joined to another, one who is alive and holy, to Him who was raised from the dead, a new life, a resurrection life, and in that life and joined to that life, we can bear fruit to God. This verse reminds us it's not a matter of law. It's a matter of the Lord Jesus Christ and the grace that's found in Him.

Christ in His grace at work in our lives, as we are now joined to this resurrected Lord, bearing fruit is related to being joined to Christ. That initially came about through humility and faith. We humbled

ourselves and said, Lord, I'm a sinner.

I need you. Forgive me. I put my faith in you to be my Lord and Savior.

And we were joined to this risen Lord Jesus Christ. And now as we continue to walk in humble faith with the one to whom we've been joined, in that relationship with Him, humbly depending on Him, we can bear fruit to God. John 15 verses 4 and 5 explain this in one of the most profound and simple and beautiful and powerful ways in all of the Word of God.

How humility, faith, and all of that toward the Lord Jesus Christ and all of that about our relationship with Him means fruit can come forth in our lives, spiritual fruit. John 15 verses 4 and 5, Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine. You are the branches, Jesus says. He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit.

For without me, you can do nothing. Such a simple picture, but so eternally profound. We know how a grapevine and a branch relate together until that point where fruit comes out of the life of the branch.

It's such a beautiful picture. It's so simple. We can see it.

You can watch it happen. You can't see the mystery of it, but you can watch the effects of it. There's a grapevine.

Okay, that's distinct. The vine, full of the life. Oh, look at the branches in it.

If you take the branch away from that vine, it can do nothing. If you let it stay connected, abiding there where the life of the vine can flow through the branch, you know what's going to happen. From the life in that grapevine, there's going to be grapes produced in the life of the branch.

It's a fantastic picture. It makes this invisible spiritual mystery so clear. Jesus is the vine.

He's the life source. We are joined to Him. As we abide in Him, that life that is His flows through us, and the fruit that is like the life in the vine comes out through our lives.

Now, out of that relationship of abiding, depending, walking together, looking to Him for life, we can't produce those grapes. We can do things at times that look like we are. You know, we can go through religious motions.

Hey, I'm doing great with God. I read a hundred verses today. Did you believe them? Did they touch your heart? Hey, I'm doing fine.

I haven't missed a service in 12 years. Why do you go? Oh, got to get my attendance ribbon. What do you mean? Wax fruit.

One bite into that grape, you choke. That doesn't touch lives. That doesn't glorify God.

Just self-righteous religious activity. But there is a fruit that we can have growing out of our lives, and it only comes from the life that is in the vine. No other place.

We don't need it to come from any other place. We're branches in that vine. Again, humility is involved.

Jesus says humbling words to us. The branch cannot of itself bear fruit. Humbling words, but true.

Jesus says, without me, you can do nothing when it comes to bearing fruit. Humbling words, but true. Maybe you're like me.

Early on in the Christian faith, I read those words and they didn't thrill me. They kind of provoked my flesh. Well, maybe they can't.

Yeah, I've known branches like that, Lord. Yeah, but watch me. After all, you know I'm serious about the kingdom of God.

You know, through the years, the Lord can really change your mind on things like that. He convinced me many ways. He was right, I was wrong.

Now I read this and my heart leaps. Oh, Lord, thanks for the reminder. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.

Oh, thanks for the reminder. Learning that was hard. Thanks just for reminding me.

Without you, I can do nothing. Oh, that crucifies my flesh. Pound it, Lord.

Nail it. Let's mortify the deeds of my flesh. Without you, I can do nothing.

Lord, I love to hear it. Tell it to me again. It reminds me to walk humbly with my God.

Humility is involved. God gives grace to the humble. But faith also is involved.

Abide in me. That's our act of faith. That's our walk of faith.

That's our attitude of dependence. Humility says I can't. Faith says He can.

The life of the vine becomes our only hope. But we're abiding in Him. We're connected to Him.

We're looking to Him. We're hoping in Him. We're drawing life from Him.

We're expecting that everything we need to have a fruitful life is already in the life that's in that vine. And the little tendrils of our branch are just digging into that vine. Well, let me abide in there.

Just let me abide. Let me tap into that life. Let me count on that life.

The promise to that trusting heart is you'll bear much fruit. Much fruit. Not just a little half-ripened sour grape, but much fruit.

In other words, great measures of Christlikeness in word and deed and attitude that will grow in and through our life because it is Him sharing His life with us. Just like the grapevine shares its life with the grape branches. Bearing fruit, it's about the grace of God.

It's about relating to the Lord Jesus Christ in a way we don't deserve, in a way we couldn't cause to happen, in a way we couldn't sustain and maintain, but which He is ready, willing, and able to provide and make real. As we just walk humbly with Him, admitting our need, walk in faith toward Him, counting on Him, believing what He said, not doubting Him, taking Him at His word, we'll bear much fruit. Fruit-bearing is directly tied into living day by day by the grace of God.

But the same is true about good works, another reality in the kingdom of God that we too frequently disassociate from the grace of God. Good works. John 6 is a good place to start to think together with the Lord about that.

John 6, verses 28 and 29, Then they said to Him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? What a question. What activity, what work, what must we do that we might be involved in godly works, the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent. The question is, What can we do? The answer is, Who should you believe? The natural thoughts of man are always, What can I do? The heart of the kingdom is, Who are you going to believe? Oh, praise God, that leads to abundant doing.

One who says they have faith and yet there are no works, what? That's not faith in God or from God or of God, that's just human religious talk. Sure, real faith works, but to work the works of God is totally dependent on true faith. What can we do to really get into the good works? Really, what is the key? What is the secret? Is it how fast you run, how loud you talk, how great your memory, how strong your resolve? I mean, what can we do? This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.

What can we do? They asked, Jesus answered, Trust in and rely on the one the Father has sent into the world. Faith is also going to be at the heart of a life of good works, just like faith is at the heart of bearing fruit. Grace is behind both, a grace that flows through a humble trusting heart.

Living by grace does not produce a lazy, inactive, do-nothing life. Now, that doesn't mean that a life of faith might not have its inactive seasons. Ask Elijah about that.

Elijah, what did you do all day out there by the brook Cherith? I mean, besides looking for the ravens in your next meal, or counting the centimeters increasing on the bank as the creek dries up. What were you doing out there? He was a man of faith. He was there obeying and trusting God.

There are times like that, but before you know it, you might find yourself on top of Mount Carmel, calling down fire from heaven, exposing 400 false prophets. Pretty active business. Both were in faith though, but faith is at the heart of it.

But we can't find our brook Cherith, say I'm going to live the perfect life of faith, and we just drop out. You know, let the feeble in the faith go to church. I'm a mighty one, I just hang out by the brook Cherith, you know.

It's a trick. It's a distraction from the enemy. Though those days might be part of our walk, they don't define our walk.

They're not the whole thing. Faith is trusting God in the most quiet of times. It's trusting God in the most chaotic of times.

It's trusting God in the most inactive times. It's trusting God when you're going to you can't believe you can possibly go another step. This is the work of God that you believe in him, the one the Father sent.

Look how this began to work out in the book of Acts when the early church, those who came alive by faith in Jesus Christ, begin to live day by day in his body, connected to the head, branches in the vine. Let's see what happened in their lives. We're going to see some mighty good works.

Acts 4 33. And with great power, the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And great grace was upon them all.

The early church gave a powerful witness to the risen Lord Jesus. And it's tied in here to the fact that great grace was upon them. Great and powerful witness of the Lord Jesus will always be tied in to a great demonstration of great grace upon someone's life.

It is a good work proclaiming a witness of the resurrected Lord. And we should desire to be in that good work. But if we desire to be in that good work, let's desire great grace to be upon our lives.

Lord, I'd love to greatly proclaim you as my resurrected Lord. But humbly I say, I greatly need your help. But Lord, I see what you've promised, what you've done.

And I want to put faith in you to do a great work through me by your grace. That's how they lived in the early church. It comes forth in a wonderful way in Acts chapter 14.

I love these two verses. They are so intriguing. Early on as a Christian, early on as a pastor back in the late 60s, verses like this just came and went so fast.

For many years now, verses like this, I just have to stop and chew on. Look how easy it's just to read through this verse and then get on to something else. Acts 14.26, from there they sailed to Antioch.

That is from Italy. The missionary team came back to Antioch from the place they'd been sent out. Paul and his missionary team.

From there they sailed to Antioch. The early missionary teams returning to their home church, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Simple statement.

Hey, they're finished with their journey. They're coming back. They're going home to the home church.

And God's grace, praise God, what's next? Listen, chew on it a minute. They had gone out from Antioch sometime earlier, traveling throughout the Mediterranean world, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of God in places that had never heard it. Really venturing into dark enemy territory and establishing beachheads of light and truth and salvation.

Church planters, in the most radical sense of the word. And we're told here that when they left Antioch, their home church in Acts 13, 1 and 2, and I'll tell about how that happened when they were seeking the Lord in prayer. We're told here that from Antioch they had been commended to the grace of God.

Okay, they're in Antioch. The home church, they're ready to go. Who knows what's out there.

And the church commends them to the grace of God. The church entrusts them to the grace of God. The church turns them over to the grace of God.

For what? Now we read, for the work which they had completed. When we are commended to the grace of God, it will bring completed works in our life and walk. It wasn't just kind of something you put on a Christian greeting card.

Well, on this day of your 75th birthday, I would like to commend you to the grace of God. Well, that's a great thing on your 75th birthday to be commended to the grace of God. But it's much more than just kind

of a nice greeting card saying, it's the way the early church was extended, planted, and built up.

We would not be today walking with the Lord Jesus Christ if there had not been those like the saints at Antioch and those like Paul and Barnabas and Luke and others who went out, who were linked together in partnership to the grace of God for the work to be done. They went out, oh, what an adventure. What a step of faith.

Surely their hearts must have been humbled with the impossibility of it. But they were commended to the grace of God and some weeks or months later they'd come back and the work had been completed. Verse 27, Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they're going to gather the church at Antioch together and give them a missionary report.

They reported all that God had done with them and that He, God, had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. See what happens when the grace of God's at work? When the grace of God is at work, things happen. They went out, commended to God's grace.

They functioned out there with God's grace actively involved in their lives. Brothers, sisters, we need to set aside the understanding of the grace of God as just a benevolent attitude God has toward sinners such as we. Oh, thank God His grace includes that.

But His grace is far more than just a disposition of His very nature to be long-suffering and kind toward us. Thank God for that aspect of God's grace. But God's grace is far more than that.

It's the active, powerful, moving, working resources of God available for us, working on us, in us, and through us. That's how the early church was built. That's why we're here in Christ now.

And it's how we're to function day by day. Thank God for that aspect of God's grace. But God's grace is far more than that.

It's the active, powerful, moving, working resources of God. Available for us, working on us, in us, and through us. That's how the early church was built.

That's why we're here in Christ now. And it's how we're to function day by day. They were commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

Hey, Paul Barnabas, great job! What a work out there! Well, when they got back to the church to give the full report, here's how they talked about it. They reported not about all they had done. Oh, let us tell you how we planted churches everywhere we went.

No, when they got the church together, look what it says, verse 27. 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 is God graciously Himself working in and through our lives. They were the vessels through whom God was out there in the Mediterranean world. Shining light in the darkness.

Bringing liberty where there were chains. Forgiveness where there was guilt. And life where there was spiritual death.

That's the grace of God at work. Living by grace produces lives and ministries and testimonies like Paul and Barnabas and Luke and others down through the ages. Ephesians 2.10 gives a wonderful description

of this.

Ephesians 2.10, how the grace of God works on unto good works. Remember verses 8 and 9, saved by grace. Verse 10, for we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Verses 8 and 9, saved by grace through faith, not of works. However, we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Get the point? We're not saved by good works, but we are saved for good works.

And we are saved by grace, and it is the grace of God that lets us walk in these good works. We are His workmanship. The great work that's being done in our lives is first by God on us and in us.

That's what leads to our good works. We were created in Christ Jesus. We were brought out of Adam, and as we're brought in Christ, a new life was created.

We were brought out of death and guilt in Adam to life and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Created in Christ Jesus for this purpose, for good works. It is the plan of God, the will of God that your life and mine abound with good works.

But we're not under law, but under grace. It's not, here's the law, you better keep your good works level up or it's whap, bam. Or at least you're on report at church, you know.

No, it's we're created for good works, which God prepared beforehand. The works that you and I are to be involved in, God has already prepared them before we came to Him and before we walk in them. Is that the grace of God or what? We're saved by grace, not by works, but we're saved for good works, and God already has them ready for us if we'll just walk by faith.

If in humble dependence we'll just walk with the Lord in this life of grace, we will be walking in the good works which God prepared before us. See, He prepared them already, and you know what He says to us? Go walk in them. Take a walk with me and see what I have for you out there.

It's already waiting you. I'll equip you, I'll guide you, I'll strengthen you, I'll protect you, I'll instruct you, I'll teach you. Let's just go walk in them.

We don't have to imagine them, we don't have to create them ourselves. We don't have to form and shape them, just walk in them. What a gracious God we serve.

Life of good works, it's tied into the grace of God at work in us. 2 Corinthians 9.8 hits the bullseye on this subject as well. 2 Corinthians 9.8, 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 every good work.

Now what is God's grace tied into here? Abundance of good works. And notice, God is able. Walking by the grace of God, living it out day by day, hinges on the ability of God.

It's not so much as, I wonder if I'll get the knack of living daily by grace. And by knack we're thinking, you know, like riding a bike, in this case probably walking a high wire or something. Life of good works, I wonder if I'll ever get it right.

It hinges on His ability. And God is able. Why does God tell us things like that? A humble heart hears that and goes, oh, thank you Lord, because I know I'm not able.

So I can concentrate on your ability, praise God. And God is able to what? Make all grace abound toward you. Sometimes we're wondering about grace.

I wonder if I can pull enough of it out of the Lord to do what I've got to do. Oh, that's the wrong perspective. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you.

This word abound is one used for rolling waves crashing up on the seashore. Boy, is grace available or what? There we stand. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you.

Will we receive it? Will we believe it? Will we count on it? Will we depend on it? Will we humbly say, that's exactly what I need? Or are we running frantically up and down the beach, paying no attention to the waves of grace, building some mighty thing for God? God is able to make all grace, all kinds of grace, any measure of grace needed, abound toward you and me. That we, always having all sufficiency in all things, whatever is needed, may have an abundance for every good work. Though this truth is applied here to material resources and sacrificial giving and all, it's the heart of God, He's able in all things.

The kingdom of God, it's grace upon grace. This verse can be applied any direction you want to go in the kingdom of God. See, living daily by grace, we can expect a life of good works, because abounding grace is given for the purpose of abundant works.

If we say to God, oh Lord, I humbly cry out, I need your grace abounding in my life. I trust in you what you say, that you are able to make it abound in my life. You know what we should expect God is going to be doing? An abundance of good works with our life, because abounding grace is for abundant good works.

1 Corinthians 15.10, which John so appropriately reminded us of earlier, is Paul's testimony about how this worked in his life. You know, you look at the Apostle Paul, you go, oh, Mr. Israel, Mr. Effective, Mr. Godly, Mr. Church, all universe, New Jerusalem, I mean, this man is everything. You know, you think, oh, I wish I could just be a fraction that fruitful.

Well, a fraction that fruitful probably would be wonderful, but no reason to think in those meager terms. Listen to the testimony of Paul, how his life of abundant good works came. 1 Corinthians 15.10, 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 was an abundant laborer. He abounded in good works. It's astounding what this man did.

Evangelist, discipler, church planter, traveler. And when he couldn't do all those things, they locked him up, and he sat down and wrote the Bible. I mean, he just had an amazing life.

Man, how do you live like that? But by the grace of God, I am what I am. That abundant life of abounding good works was by the grace of God, meaning not just God's kind willingness to cut us some slack, but His ability to pour out His resources on into a life and make things happen. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain.

Our labors on our own will be in vain, but God's grace toward us will not be in vain. They weren't in Paul's life. Look at this now.

I labored more abundantly than they all. No one was more involved in good works in the early church than the Apostle Paul. He labored.

He worked more abundantly than they all. And then he throws out this testimony that kind of staggers your thinking. Yet, not I. No, wait a minute.

Did you or didn't you? Well, yes, I did, but I didn't. I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I. Well, then who? What? But the grace of God, which was with me. Paul's life was filled with good works, yet Paul was not the cause of it all.

He was not the energy, the drive behind it all. God's grace at work in his life was the dynamic force. Paul labored more abundantly.

Living by grace does not mean we will never breathe heavy or have a drop of perspiration ever. Jesus always lived in dependence upon the Father in humility and faith. He one day sweat drops of blood.

Doesn't mean that. Living daily by grace can at times mean astounding measures of labor. But Paul in another place, Colossians 129, lets us know that the labor, the intensive activity he was involved in was not a self-striving.

Some, when the going gets rough, as they say, they get going, but they get going out. Hey, this can't be of God. This is too tough.

Imagine Jesus saying that in the Garden of Gethsemane. We would have no salvation. It can get tough at times, but look at this.

Colossians 129, to this end I also labor. To what end? Verse 28, proclaiming Christ Jesus. To this end, getting out the message of Christ, warning and teaching every man about Christ.

To this end, I also labor. Paul labored. There's a work to be done.

It's amazing to me, the more I've appreciated the grace of God through the years, the more I've found I've been laboring. How so? Because I found a greater resource than I ever realized before. God's energy, not mine.

God's strength, not mine. God's supply, not mine. To this end, I also labor, striving.

Wow, striving. Agonizing. The word is the word from which we get the English word agonizing.

Sometimes the ministry, service, good works, there's an agony in it. An extensive, strenuous expending of ourselves. But notice what he says.

Striving according to His working. Ah, there's the difference. Striving according to His working.

This isn't fleshly striving. This is the grace of God at work. Striving according to His working, which works in me mightily.

This is the power of God at work in and through our lives. This is the grace of God at work, producing lives of good works. God does want us to walk in good works.

He wants our lives filled with good works, but only by the grace of God. How do we tap into that? Again, you want that in my life, Lord? Abounding good works? Let me come to you humbly, Lord. I don't think I can do it on my own.

The Lord is saying, right, we're together so far. And we come to Him saying, but Lord, I desire what you desire. I trust you.

I'm going to rely on you. I'm going to ask you in my life to make me what you want me, so that I can say someday, I am what I am by the grace of God. Oh yeah, I labored hard, heavy duty.

But it wasn't me. It was God's grace at work with me. And then our last issue for the evening, obedience.

Obedience, much to my personal amazement about 21 years ago, after I'd been a Christian nine years, about. Amazingly, it began to dawn on me by eyes and ears, opened up by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, that obedience is also a matter of the grace of God at work. Remember, you're not under law, but under grace.

And though the law demands obedience, it can't provide it. We want to walk obediently. It's critical that our life be in line with the will of God more and more.

But here, like every place else, our lives are not segmented, compartmentalized. This part's by grace. This part's by half grace, half law.

And this part's by law. A lot of us live that way. Obedience, oh, that's got to be totally law.

Maybe that's why we struggle so much and fall into disobedience. We're not under law, we're under grace. Obedience also is a matter of grace, not law.

Therefore, it's also related to humility and then faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in the One who once said, I always do those things that are pleasing to the Heavenly Father. That One who now lives in us, Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Always pleased the Father then, living in and through us. He can fully still please the Father now. Philippians chapter 2, an amazing insight into this issue of obedience.

Philippians 2, 12 through 13. We're told here to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Work out your own salvation.

This is not saying work for your own salvation. It's not of works. But we're saved unto good works, so this is about working out the saving grace of God in the life we live.

Work out your own salvation. God has brought this salvation to you. He's delivered it into your life.

The saving grace of God, the life of Christ is in you. Salvation is your possession. Now work it out.

God worked it in. Now see that it lives out. Work out your own salvation.

Hearing that we might think, oh right, I'll get on it. But just before you run off, notice how we're to do it. With fear and trembling.

Oh no, no. I do things with confidence and a certainty. I just, I carry myself.

You're headed for a great fall. Your proud nose is going to get busted. Work out your own salvation.

Right, Lord. Check in with you later. Watch this.

Hold it. Time out. We're told to work out our own salvation with an amazing attitude.

Fear and trembling? No, that's un-American. That must be heretical. With boasting and certainty, we do everything.

After all, I'm an American Christian. That's probably why in the American Church, the grace of God is so basically overlooked. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Fear is that word that has to do with awestruck and amazed at God. Trembling. That's uncertainty and humility.

A sense of inadequacy. That's the way we're to live out what God has brought in? Yes. You say, well, why with such a meek, weak attitude? The next verse explains it.

Because it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Now, His good pleasure, we're talking about obedience. His good pleasure, what pleases Him? What He likes? What He's told us to do? That when we walk in it, it delights His heart.

Well, it's God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Here again, we see humility and faith, because that's how you live day by day by grace. Humility, fear, and trembling.

We can't handle it, Lord. We need You. But faith, it is God who works in you.

We can count on that. We can rest in that. We can move out on that.

God works inside of us to develop an obedient life. See, before the law, it stands out there and says, obey me. We try, and it doesn't help us, and we fall short.

By grace, God's will is still the same. Holiness, godliness, Christlikeness. But He's in us, working with us, changing us.

What a difference. It is God who works in you. And look how extensively He works.

He works in us both to will and to do. So many of us have assumed that once the will is there, we'll just go do it. A picture in my mind came one day meditating on this verse, and it was like, between the willing and the doing, there is a huge spiritual black hole.

And jillions of Christians have disappeared into it. They had the will to do it. I want to please you, Lord.

What do you want? Right on. Kind of like Israel. Here comes the law, and all of Israel sings, all you have said, we will do.

And then the hundreds of years of history in the Old Testament documents their tragic failure. They were willing. Why couldn't they do it? This is what's needed.

God working in us both to will and to do. Jesus said the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. So pray so you don't fall into that temptation.

Pray, depend on me. Being willing is only half the story. How many projects, how many meetings, how many places have Christians said, hey, I'll be there, count on me.

Oh, I'm excited about that. I'm willing. I know I'll be there.

And of the 12 who said it, two showed up. Ten, into the black hole. But they were so willing.

Yeah, but that's not the whole story. God, I'm willing. Oh, keep working in me, Lord.

Oh, Lord, don't let me just run off on willpower. I am willing. Keep working in me, Lord.

I'm going about this thing with fear and trembling. Keep working in me until the doing is as full as the willing. That's the life that increasingly walks in the good pleasure of the Father.

Hebrews 13, 20 and 21 restates this in another way. Hebrews 13, 20 and 21, Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

There it is. Obedience related to grace, the grace relationship with Jesus Christ at work in a humble, trusting heart. Now may the God of peace do this.

Do what? Verse 21, Make you complete. Complete in what? Every good work. Under what end? To do His will.

Working in you. God working inside of our lives, in our mind, emotions, our will, our energy. Speaking truth that builds faith.

God working in us what is well-pleasing in His sight. An obedient life is tied into the relationship of grace with Jesus Christ that flows to humility and faith. 2 Thessalonians 2, 16 and 17 speaks of this.

2 Thessalonians 2, 16 and 17, Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation, and listen to this, good hope by grace. May He comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. What do you think would be written over your life if God Himself established your life in every good word and deed? Good word and work.

You'd say, there's a Christian life obeying God in what they say and what they do. Notice, may the Lord Jesus and the Father, may they comfort your heart and establish you. How? With that good hope by grace.

Do you have a good hope that your life is going to be more and more established in every good word and work? That in the things you say and the things you do, you're more and more going to be stabilized in an obedient walk? Do you have a good hope for that? Here's the good hope. Good hope by grace. You want a good, confident expectation that in word and deed, you can obey the Lord more and more? Pray this benediction over your own life and the life of those you minister to.

Lord God, would you yourself establish us. We're counting on good hope by grace. You'd stabilize us in every good word and work.

Good hope by grace establishes lives in obedience. In conclusion, in living daily by grace, God works in us, God works with us by His grace for fruit, good works, and obedience. A great benedictory response of humility and faith to God's grace for daily living is our last scripture for the evening, Ephesians 3, 20 and 21.

Now to Him who is able, able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power, the power of God, God's powerful grace that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Oh, may all this glory go to God because this is God at work.

Are you asking God for a life of fruit and works and obedience? Do you think about a strong spiritual life of fruit and works and obedience? Well, God is able to do far beyond what you ask or think. And He does it according to the power that works in us, the very power of God, His grace at work. And that's why He ends up getting the glory and not us.

Oh, we get the blessing. It can blow our minds how great His grace can be. But He gets the glory.

May it be so in our lives as we humbly trust Him to pour out His grace on us for lives that bear fruit, abound in good works, and increase in obedience. Let's pray together. Father, we marvel over Your plan.

We rejoice over Your resources. We are so blessed. We're so rich.

How good You are. How great You are. Lord, we call upon Your name.

We humble ourselves before You. We need You. And by faith we say, we trust You.

Do these things in and through us, Lord. Amaze us, do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond the things we've thought about tonight or are asking right now. And may You get all the glory as Your grace brings it to pass.

We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11445.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/growing-in-grace-3-living-daily-by-the-grace-of-god/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**