

For Private Circulation Only

VOL. 20 No. 06 | November-December 2025

# GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical for spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement

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**REFLECT,  
REPENT,  
AND RETURN**

**“SEVEN  
THINGS ABOUT  
SELF-EXAMINATION”**

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# EDITORIAL

## REVIEW AND REFLECT

**P**raise be to God! Once again, we have come to the end of another year. It is time to look back and evaluate our past to prayerfully plan for the days ahead as the Lord graciously allows.

As children of God, in retrospection, we can say for sure, our God has done everything well in His sovereign will for His own glory. We need to humbly abide by the Lord's purposes, for He does not make any mistakes.

### Grace Alone

We should never imagine for a moment that we exist because of our own merit, health, wealth or any other reason. As Moses warned Israel, never think, 'my strength, my wisdom, my efforts,' etc. God, in His mercy and grace alone, allowed us to reach so far. The ultimate intention behind all these divine interventions is that we accomplish His purposes.

Certainly, constant unfocused introspection may not be a healthy habit, yet an occasional appraisal is helpful. We can assess our lives and analyse the lessons learnt, failures faced, and even the wasted times and opportunities. That will help us to consider the changes required and the steps to be followed to go forward more efficiently.

In fact, any moment can be a time of retrospection. Similarly, any time can be an occasion for a new beginning. A year-end is the best opportunity to look back and consider the days gone by.

**The Mandate** In fact, the Word of God repeatedly exhorts the saints to look back, examine life and amend their ways. Notice a few scripture passages:

- ▶ Isa. 51:1a "Look to the rock from which you were hewn"
- ▶ Lam. 3:40a "Let us test and examine our ways..."
- ▶ 1Cori. 11:28a "But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread..."
- ▶ 1Cori. 11:31 "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged."
- ▶ 2Cori. 13:5 "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith..."
- ▶ Gala. 6:4a "But let each one examine his own work..."

Such plenty of scripture passages exhort the Lord's people to reflect and assess their lives.

These not only help us to correct our ways but also make us grateful to the Lord's gracious dealings and provisions (Deut. 8:2ff; 9:7, 8; Psa. 103: 8). A humble and confident spirit in the Lord will be another added benefit of sincere reflections and review of our past, (Deut. 8:16, 17; Isa. 51:1, 2).

Let us explore this topic in detail and experience all the benefits of self-examination as the scripture teaches.

May the Lord's name be glorified.

NTK



# REFLECT, REPENT AND RETURN

~~Jer.~~ 3:40-41

**“Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;  
Let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven”, (Lamentations 3:39–41).**

**P**rophet Jeremiah’s admonition to the people of Judah is relevant for God’s people everywhere, of all time, particularly as we approach the end of another year.

He is weeping, seeing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Around 40 years ago, Jeremiah began to warn Judah about the impending judgment of God against their sins and rebellion. But they never paid any attention.

Now his prophecies have come to pass; the city is broken, the Temple desecrated, possessions looted, and people were taken into captivity. Witnessing this utter destruction broke the heart of Jeremiah, the ‘weeping prophet’ (Lam. 3:48, 49; Jer 9:1). Instead of rebuking or ridiculing the people now, he identifies with them in their pain and sorrow, lamenting.

## FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE

From chapter 1:1 to 3:18, he was focusing on himself and his troubles. But from 3:19 onwards, his tone is different. Instead of focusing on himself, Jeremiah began to look to God, who is his portion (v. 24), and



meditated upon His mercy, compassion, and faithfulness (vs. 22, 23). And the result is, he found hope in the Lord (vs. 21b, 24b, 26, 29).

That’s a wonderful truth; concentrating on ourselves and our troubles makes us desperate and helpless. Whereas focusing on the Lord and His attributes enlightens and encourages us. Even others too benefit from such positive viewpoints.

Notice some of the lessons that Jeremiah understood that transformed him from hopelessness to hopefulness:

- a. God does not afflict us willingly, v. 33. He finds no pleasure in our pain and sorrow.
- b. Even as He causes grief, He is still compassionate with us, v. 32 cf. 2Tim. 2:13.

Any divine chastening reflects His love and care towards us as a Father, (Pro. 3:11, 12; Psa. 89:31–33).

- c. God will not cast us forever, v. 31cf. Psa. 103:9. No suffering is for eternity.

It is in this context that Jeremiah is calling upon the people of Judah to reflect, repent, and return to the Lord amid the calamities they are facing.

### SEARCH OUT AND EXAMINE, v. 40

Judah is reaping the consequences of their own sin. It is not the time to complain but to introspect sincerely (v. 39). More than concentrating on their present sorrow, they need to look back and evaluate the kind of life they lived in the past.

This is exactly what any believer should do, not just at sufferings, but even as a regular spiritual exercise. Deliberately consider the past and evaluate in the light of God's Word.



### What to examine?

#### i. Our ways, Jer. 3:40

'Ways' refers to our way of life or lifestyle. The way we conduct our day-to-day life before God and man. Is it acceptable to God and honourable before men (cf. Phil 1:27; 1Pet 2:12)?

#### ii. Our heart, 1Cor. 11:28

Here, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to examine themselves before partaking of the Lord's table. Participating in the bread and cup should not be done in a ritualistic manner but sincerely pondering upon the preciousness of the Lord Jesus and His works for us.

Our hearts must be filled with love and appreciation for Him. So, we ought to examine our heart, which is the centre of our love and affections, to see if any indifference, irritation, or bitterness fills our heart as that can make us unworthy for the Lord's Supper (cf. Isa. 29:13).

#### iii. Our faith, 2Cor. 13:5

Faith may refer to the teachings that we follow as well as our trust in the Lord. There are 'doctrines of demons' as well as 'faith' that Christ does not endorse! (cf. 1Tim. 4:1; John 2:23, 24).

#### iv. Our works, Gal. 6:4

Works may refer to any service that we do in the name of the Lord. Paul elaborates it in 1Cor. 3:10 onwards. We need to check the foundation, the materials used, and even the motive behind any ministry. There should be no selfish agenda in the Lord's work.



## OUR INABILITY

However, the scripture teaches categorically that no man can examine himself or even others. Jeremiah himself wrote, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

We are well aware of the fact that no one knows the heart of another, but it’s also true that even we ourselves fail to know everything about our own hearts. For the heart is ‘deceitful above all things’. As the wise man says, all our ways are right in our own eyes, even while treading the way to death (Pro. 16:2, 25).



Remember the prayer of the Pharisee, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess” (Luke 18:11, 12). This is the way most men think and project themselves (cf. 1Cor 4:3–5).

That’s why, for a true self-examination, we ought to plead with the Lord as the psalmist did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting” (Psa. 139:23, 24). Pray as Elihu suggested to Job, “Teach me what I do not see” (Job 34:31).

## GOD’S PENETRATING EYES



The risen Lord Jesus reminded the church at Thyatira that He searches the minds and hearts of men, for His eyes are like a flame of fire (Rev. 2:18, 23). His words to the church of the Laodiceans are noteworthy, “you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and need nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev 3:17).

That’s exactly what happens when we intentionally allow the light of God to shine upon our lives. His penetrating rays will scan our innermost parts and reveal the hidden things to light.

## REPENT AND RETURN, V. 40B

Just as Christ further counsels the Laodiceans to come to Him to remove their poverty, nakedness and blindness, we ought to come to His feet (Rev. 3:18). That involves not just a realisation of our failed state, but a hatred towards evil and a genuine sorrow over the past failure as well. That’s why Jeremiah wrote, “And turn back to the LORD; Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven” (Lam. 3:40b, 41).

Any refusal to forsake the sinful ways and behaviour only proves our hypocrisy. Sincere self-examination is to get rid of anything that is against God’s will and confess to the Lord who “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1John 1:9).

**G&P**



# “TO CALL TO REMEMBRANCE”

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| I. How excellent is Thy Name !             | Psalm 8:1     |
| II. How great is Thy Goodness !            | Psalm 31:19   |
| III. How precious is Thy Loving kindness ! | Psalm 36:7    |
| IV. How dear are Thy Tabernacles !         | Psalm 84:1    |
| V. How sweet are Thy Words !               | Psalm 119:103 |
| VI. How precious are Thy Thoughts !        | Psalm 139:17  |

*Source: Unknown*

▶ REFLECTIONS

*Enoch Reuben Muniah, Johannesburg*

## CREATION AND ITS CREATOR

(Part 6)

### Stewardship and Responsibility

Adam was made the steward, the custodian, or trustee, of God's creation, to take care of God's property. God is the proprietor, the owner of all that He has created. Adam and Eve were to have control or dominion over God's creatures and to name them (Genesis 1:26)

Alas, since the dawn of the human race, man has deforested the earth, polluted the rivers and oceans and severely altered the weather patterns globally. The emission

of poisonous gases into the Earth's atmosphere has caused a depletion of the ozone layer. The ozone molecules are rapidly disintegrating. This has led to a greenhouse effect that has precipitated radical climatic changes on planet Earth.

Global warming has caused ice at both the North and South poles to thaw, resulting in a breakaway of huge glaciers. These glaciers are like mountains of slow-moving masses of ice, causing great devastation along their path.

It seems that the canopy of mist above the firmament (which I mentioned earlier) is now replaced with a canopy of life-threatening gases, resulting in chemical reactions that break down ozone molecules, thus reducing the ozone's capacity to absorb the harmful ultraviolet radiation.



The apostle Paul reminds us, “For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now”, (Rom 8:22). Floods, typhoons, tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and avalanches, to name a few, are groanings of creation.

God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden with explicit instruction to dress it and to keep it (Gen. 2:15). In other words, he was to be God's caretaker of the garden and over all God's earthly creation. There was a tree in the midst of the garden, the fruit of which he was forbidden to eat.



## Husbandry and Helpmeet

Genesis 2:18 introduces us to the woman named Eve, which means ‘life’ because she was the ‘mother of all living’ (Gen. 3:20). God thought it not expedient for a man to be alone. He made all the other creatures male and female.

So, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and He removed a rib with which Eve was made. Genesis 2:22 “The rib which the Lord God took from man, made He a wo-man”. So, there they were side by side, male and female. Adam was created, and Eve was made. It was first Man's rib, then Satan's fib, now Woman's lib!

The word *made* suggests that Eve was built, fashioned, shaped, sculptured, and cultivated to look different from Adam. The Lord God began work as He made some peculiar adjustments to Eve. He took away all the masculine facial features and placed them within her reproductive organs, one of which was the womb, hence womb-man.

Now, if you would excuse the play on words, Adam might have exclaimed, wow-man or perhaps woe-man but he called her wo-man because she was taken out of man. Adam said, ‘she is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man’ (Gen. 2:23).

It was God's divine design that a man and a woman come together for the express purpose of procreating. “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it”, (Gen. 1:28).



“Therefore, shall a man leave (not forsake) his father and mother and shall cleave unto His wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Gen 2:24). There is the leaving, the cleaving and then the weaving. This is the first mention of the institute of marriage and has been perpetuated ever since. This holy estate of marriage is a mystery spoken of in the New Testament concerning Christ and the Church.



A verse that is worthy of note is Genesis 2:7, “And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”. There are only two things mentioned in scripture that is God-breathed: man, and the Word of God.

I mentioned earlier that man was created out of the ‘dust’ of the earth and not the ‘dirt’ of the earth. The physical composition of man is a combination of varied chemicals and mineral properties of the earth that can be purchased from a Pharmacy (drug store).

For example, it is estimated that man is 26.3 kilograms of oxygen, 56.7 grams of salt, 47.3 litres of water, 1.36 kilograms of calcium, 10.9 kilograms of carbon, a bit of chlorine, phosphorus, fat, iron, sulphur

and glycerine. Can you create a man out of all these? Can you put life into him?

In the field of molecular biology, we learn that molecules are living organisms that make up the different cells in the body. The molecular construction of the human body is extremely complex.

The anatomy of the human body is a building up of different body parts. It is estimated that the body has about 50 trillion cells: ie. Blood cells, muscle cells, nerve cells and so on. But it is the molecular makeup that determines what type of cell it forms. The catalyst or bonding agent or glue (for want of a simpler word) is called ‘Laminin’, without which we will simply fall apart. It is a self-adhesive protein molecule that literally holds us together.

So, what I am saying is that we are a highly complex piece of God’s handiwork, meticulously strung together with the greatest of precision; a work of art, mercifully crafted even with the most intricate details of our existence and signed by God. His fingerprint is on us.



Job aptly reminds us that we were taken out of the earth and to the earth we shall return. The apostle Paul reminds us that we are earthen vessels of clay that will sooner or later dissolve and decay. We will in due course be stripped of this clothing of flesh (2 Cor. 5:4).

**G&P**

*(To be continued (DV))*

## ▶ ANECDOTE -1

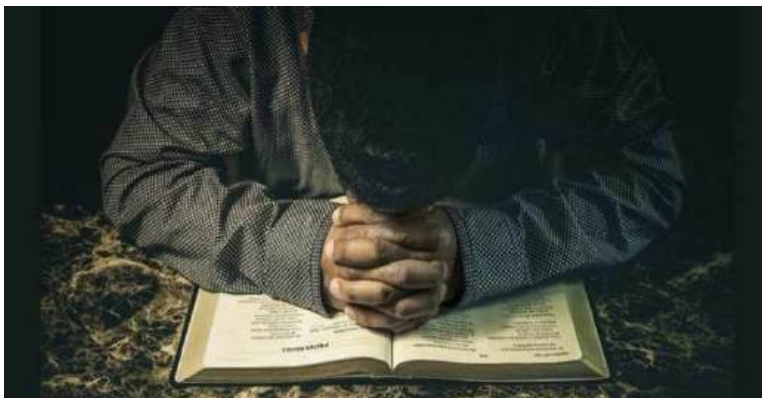
# UNMERITED FAVOR

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award.

But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award—yet receives such a gift anyway—that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.

*G.W. Knight*

## ▶ ANECDOTE -2



# Self EXAMINATION

Zeng Shen the Chinese philosopher and one of the disciples of Confucius used to ask himself three questions every day from his very young age.

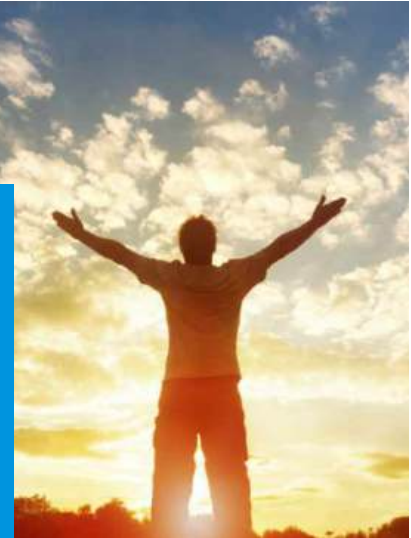
- 'Have I sinned in my thoughts and actions toward others?'
- 'Have I broken faith in any of my friendships?'
- 'Have I tried to teach anything to others I have not fully learned and understood myself?'

Not only he asked these questions but also cultivated a life accordingly. No wonder he became one of the most influential and respected four Sages of Confucianism.

*Source: Unknown*

# VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE

A Study: Part 6  
(Based on Joshua 1–8)



## Requirements to Reach the Victory Side, Josh. ch.3

We have considered three things in connection with a victorious Christian life:

- Importance of victorious living
- Steps to success
- Knowing the enemy

Now, in chapter 3, we see how the people of Israel cross over the River Jordan and enter Canaan. This entrance into the land of Canaan is an important event in their lives. They have been waiting for this for the last 40 years.

God delivered Israel from Egypt to bring them to this land. Because of their rebellion and disobedience, they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Now, a new generation of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, with a new attitude and commitment, reached the eastern side of Jordan to cross over to Canaan.

They can see Canaan on the other side, the land which God promised to their forefathers, for which they have been waiting for a long time. But they confront

a great obstacle to enter the Land, to possess it. Though they are sure of God's promise, they have to cross the river Jordan, which in this particular season is overflowing all its banks.

Nevertheless, here we see the people of Israel cross river Jordan wonderfully.

Notice the following verses: ?

- ♦ Jos. 3:1: Israel came near the eastern side of Jordan.
- ♦ Jos. 3:15: Overflowing river Jordan—barrier—sure they saw Canaan, but wondered how to?
- ♦ Jos. 3:4c: 'you have not passed this way before'—new way, no knowledge.
- ♦ Jos. 3:5c: 'Lord will do wonders'—that alone can take them there.
- ♦ Jos. 3:17c: 'all Israel crossed over'.

All of them crossed over. This mighty work of God in taking them to the other side in a miraculous way gives enough lessons on our victorious Christian living.



Even today, we see the victorious and peaceful life beyond. We know all about the blessings we have in Christ, yet we are not able to enter. We only contemplate it. Something hinders, like the river Jordan — maybe our own sin or some bad habit or weakness. We do not know the way to reach the victory side. And we hope for a mighty work of God.



From this story, we learn that we can reach the victory side – the Lord will open a new way and do wonders for us. But how, and what are the prerequisites to reach the other side, the higher level of spiritual life?

### Two crossings contrasted

There are certain requirements and conditions to be fulfilled before God will perform such a great thing. Notice that earlier, when Israel crossed the Red Sea, there were no such demands. It's good to carefully observe the difference between these crossings. Rich spiritual truths are found in these incidents.

Crossing at the Red Sea	Crossing at the River Jordan
Exodus from bondage	Entrance to the promised land
To escape from the Egyptians	To conquer the Canaanites
Presence of God at the back – enemy behind	God's presence at the front – enemy ahead
By Moses	By Joshua
To the barren desert	To a fertile land – milk and honey flows.
Bondage over – no more claim	Wandering over, but a continuous fight
Done for an unbelieving people, Ex.14.11	Done for a believing people
They simply had to stand still and see, Ex.14.13	They had to believe and prepare, Josh.3.3-5
By the power of God alone	God does as a result of faith and obedience
All except Joshua and Caleb failed later	All could possess the land
Dead to Egypt	Dead to wilderness
No fight needed	The fight needed to possess
Speaks of our position in Christ	Speaks of our possession in Christ
Judgment on sin	Judgment of self



From the above table, it's very clear that the crossing of the Red Sea is a picture of salvation, and the crossing of Jordan is a picture of victorious life, when the fruitless wandering wilderness life comes to an end and enters into a higher life.

Salvation is free, and it's the work of the Lord, hence no requirement from the people at Red Sea, Exo. 14:13. Only believe and see the salvation of the Lord. However, for growth and victory, we need to meet the conditions He has laid down in the Word. That is what is outlined in the procedure to cross the river in Josh. Ch.3. Around 10 steps are noteworthy. **G&P**

*(To be continued (DV))*

## STUDY-2

Nelson Thomas, Mumbai

# SEVEN THINGS ABOUT SELF-EXAMINATION

## 1. It is foolishness to judge the minds of others, Matthew 7:1.

For some, it is entertaining! Fallen man finds joy in finding fault with others. We may examine others from a distance, but what about our own lives? By judging all others except ourselves, we are actually deceiving ourselves. We lose the precious opportunity to correct and mend our own ways. With an arrogant and self-righteous attitude, one will begin to criticise and accuse others unnecessarily. This will hurt many hearts and break many relationships.

Ultimately, it will destroy their own life, for they will be counted as critics or even sadists, and many will stay away from them!

The Word of God categorically condemns such a judgmental attitude, John 7:24a; 1Cor. 4:5. Judging someone for their disposition, profession, or attire is utterly foolish. One's behavioural differences, occupational choices and dress style are the personal preferences of each one, and we have no right to scrutinise them.

## Impossible

Moreover, we can never understand the true state of the human heart to pass an accurate judgment. God alone knows the mind of man, Jer. 17:10. When our judgment is based on simply what we see and hear, we only come to a wrong conclusion, 1Samuel 16:7. Not only that, such a judgmental attitude is rebellion against God, who is the only true judge, for we are trying to take His place!

### 2. Our knowledge is limited and imperfect, 1 Corinthians 4:3b, 4.

That is why Apostle Paul writes, “I do not even judge myself”! Solomon says, “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit”, Pro. 16:2 (ESV). We are always right in our own eyes. Two possible mistakes:

#### a. Too much introspection

We may lament like Elijah, ‘it is enough’, 1Kings 19:4. Sometimes our heart condemns us – it may not be from God, 1Jn 3:20. The devil can also do it to discourage us. The result is depression and inferiority complex.



#### b. Too much self-confidence

Another possibility is a superiority complex as a result of thinking, ‘I am right in every aspect.’ Remember, even when we

feel everything is satisfactory, there may be many failures or even sins ignored.

## Why is it so?

Not only because of the limitation of our knowledge, but also due to the deceitfulness of our hearts. Jeremiah writes, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” Jeremiah 17:9. Our heart is very subtle and hard to understand. “Who can understand?” – No one can! So, our conclusion about others or even about ourselves cannot be true.

### 3. God knows exactly and responds accordingly, Jer. 17:10.

Scripture makes it very clear that it is God alone who knows every human heart fully and precisely. Notice the following verses:

- 1Chro. 28:9: - “the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.”
- Job 34:21: - "For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps.”
- Pro. 5:21: - “For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths.”
- Jer. 16:17: - “For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes.”
- Jer. 17:10: - “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”?

Rev. 2:23: - “And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and



heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.”

Not only does He know, but the Lord also carefully searches the innermost parts of our being and reacts accordingly.

#### **4. We can examine ourselves only with the help of God, 1Cori. 4:4.**

In the light of our inadequate knowledge and God’s perfect understanding of our deepest being, the only way to examine ourselves is with God’s own help. That’s why Paul said, “For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.” 1Cori 4:4. Job also said in the same manner, Job 9: 15, 20; 31: 6. We cannot depend upon our own assumptions or what others comment.

Since God alone can do it, let us allow the Lord to focus His all-seeing eyes to penetrate our innermost being and scan us. How does it happen practically?

We need to come to the Lord, searching the sacred pages of His Word, pouring out our hearts before Him. No wonder the Word of God has been compared to a reflecting mirror and a two-edged sword that can pierce the depths of our hearts to bring out the hidden things. Jam. 1:23; Heb. 4:12.

#### **5. Nothing shall remain hidden or secret forever, 1Cor. 4:5b.**

One day, every secret shall be revealed. The Lord Jesus also reminded His listeners, “nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known,” Matthew 10:26.

Not only does God know the entire secret exactly, but He will also make it known, sooner or later. It is impossible to keep something hidden forever.

Today, more than ever, we are aware that someone is watching our movements and activities, whether at home or outside. Then how much more is it known to God Almighty? And He will bring it out at the right time.

#### **Today itself!**

Do not think God will reveal only in future! He has the right to expose it at any time, maybe here on earth itself, to fulfil His purposes. Notice some incidents:



- Achan thought no one had seen, but God worked in such a wonderful way that he was caught and dealt with severely, Joshua 7.
- Sons of Eli, sinned secretly, but the Lord did reveal at the right time and punished them too, 1Sam. 2:22
- David too sinned secretly and schemed to cover up, but at the right time God brought it out, 1Sam. 11:2ff

There are many more such examples. God closely monitors the lives of His people and brings out the truth at the right time.

Remember, today the Lord reveals the sins and failures of God's people to make them repent, confess and find cleansing by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. In any case, the main point is that nothing shall remain secret forever. Sooner or later, we will have to face it; it shall be known. God will do it.

### **6. Sin can never go unpunished, 1Cori. 11:31,32.**

Some consider that once saved, they can live any way! They misunderstand the security of salvation and abuse the grace of God. No doubt the Lord Jesus said, *"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."* John 10: 28, 29. Paul adds, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

Security of salvation is a New Testament doctrine, but that is not a licence for sinful living. Read 1Corinthians 11:31, 32:- *"But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."*

Yes, no condemnation, for a born-again believer. However, the transgression of believers will have to be dealt with here itself before we die. Sins of unbelievers will be judged in future.

Remember, Christ died for our past, present and future sins, Col. 2:14. In the atoning sacrifice of Christ, any sin, sin of any time has a solution, but one has to come to Christ and confess.

God gives a believer time to judge himself and come to Christ with confession for cleansing, 1John. 1: 7, 10. If he fails to do so, the Lord will intervene.

With various degrees of chastisement, God our Father wants to lead the erring one to the cross, Heb 12: 4ff. It's not punishment but disciplinary actions by God, our loving Father, to prompt us to repent and return.

Our forgiveness and cleansing are always based on the blood of Jesus Christ, 1John. 1:7, 9. Repentance and confession are the basic requirements for that. We cannot simply hide, forget, and cover up our rebellion and disobedience. That is why it is essential to make sure there is nothing in our lives that is not acceptable to God.



### **7. It is self-deception to be ignorant of our real state, Gal 6:3.**

*"For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."*

We may think everything is alright when it is not true; how sad and terrible that would be. There are plenty of passages that describe the seriousness of this deception.

- ▶ Matthew 27:22, 23: Some thought Christ knew them because of their works, but He never knew them.
- ▶ Matthew 25:1–13: Five virgins thought they were ready with the oil, but they were not.
- ▶ Luke 16:19ff: The rich man thought he was on the right path, but he was not.

All these passages show that simply assuming to be right and never examining life in the light of God's Word is self-deception. It is high time we examine ourselves, with the help of God, to correct our lives and amend our ways.

Let us settle things before it is too late and live a true and clean Christian life in God's perfect will.

**G&P**

## ▶ MEDITATION

*Nelson Thomas, Mumbai*

# DIVINE GRACE: THE SAINT'S PRIVILEGE



***“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Rom 16:24***

**T**he study of Paul's prayers is very fascinating. Along with his preaching and writing, he also prayed for the saints constantly. He knew it was God who changes the hearts and minds of people.

One of the repeated prayers of Paul is for Christians to enjoy the grace of God always. ‘Grace be with you’ was part of his salutation and benediction in every letter. He knew the importance of divine grace in a believer's life. As we are approaching another New Year, it is appropriate to consider the abundant grace that we enjoyed in the past and prayerfully seek the same for the days to come.

## What's grace?

Like many other Biblical terms, over-familiarity often forbids us from grasping

the full meaning of grace. We know it as the ‘unmerited favour of God’. Yet to fully get hold of what grace exactly is, we need to know what grace does in a person's life.

## 1. Grace saves, Eph. 2:8

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Salvation from sin and its consequences has been the yearning of man since the fall. All his efforts to attain it through his own efforts were futile. In his wretched and hopeless state, the grace of God saves man through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Unless one comes face to face with his sinfulness and unworthiness, he will not value the grace of God. Notice what Apostle Paul says; he was the chief of



sinner, a blasphemer, persecutor and injurious, but the exceeding abundant grace of God in Christ saved him, Cf. 1Tim 1:13–15.

## **2. Grace teaches, Tit. 2:11-13**

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness...” Grace that saves also leads us in our day-to-day life. God, in His grace, continues to instruct a Christian how to live a godly life in this wicked world, looking forward to the coming of Christ.

## **3. Grace strengthens, 2Tim. 2:1; 2Pet. 3:18**

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Our spiritual strength and growth also depend on God’s grace. To fight spiritual battles and serve the Lord, a believer needs strength in his inner man. That also does not come from self-efforts or determination.



## **4. Grace sustains, 2Cori. 12:9**

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness,” Paul speaks of some kind of infirmities in his body. He pleaded with the Lord to remove this ‘thorn in the flesh’. But the Lord’s response to his prayer will always comfort and strengthen all who go through such weaknesses. His grace is enough to support and sustain us in all our infirmities.

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## **5. Grace equips, Colo. 4:6**

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt...” Grace supplies the right word and mood as we speak. The Lord spoke gracious words, Luke 4:22. So should be the terms that come out of us. Our expressions should not be harsh or corrupt, Eph. 4:29. Grace of God equips a Christian to speak edifying and encouraging words.

Not only in relation to communication, but in every area of spiritual life and service, the grace of God empowers and equips a Christian, 1Cori. 3:10; 2Cor. 8:1, etc.

So, the grace of God refers to all the blessings and benefits we get through Jesus Christ our Lord, freely and lavishly. It is this goodness of God that Paul wishes every believer to enjoy daily.

From the above mentioned gracious acts of God, we can notice the importance of grace in the everyday life of a believer. Apostle Paul knew it very well. In 1Cor. 15:10, he says, “But by the grace of God I am what I am...” He acknowledges that all that he is and what he has done is only by God’s grace. Oh, the grace, the wondrous grace that saves, empowers and upholds!

## Grace evident

Remember, grace is visible! God’s people can perceive the grace of God manifest in a fellow believer. Luke says about the early Christians, ‘great grace was upon them all’, Acts 4:33. It was obvious in their life and ministry. When Barnabas visited Antioch to see the newly formed assembly, he saw the grace of God, Acts 11:23. So, any born-again child of God can detect the grace of God flowing through the lives of God’s people. It is found in their words, activities and the entire way of life.

Is it true about our lives? Is grace manifest in our words and deeds? Do not forget, we can waste the grace of God and even ‘lose’ it, 1Cori. 15:10; 2Cor. 6:1; Heb. 12:15.

Absence of divine grace in a believer’s life is disastrous. All kinds of fleshly thoughts and activities spring up to destroy our practical life and testimony, Heb. 12: 15. That is why it is essential to abide in the Lord and experience His grace moment by moment.

## Grace available

Praise God, enough grace is available for a child of God. If only we draw near to the throne of grace constantly and confidently, we will find sufficient grace for all our needs. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest who can sympathise with us in all our weaknesses, is there to help us in every need, Heb. 4:15, 16. That means, absence of grace is our own failure, for we deliberately chose not to draw from this fountain of grace.

As we prayerfully enter into a New Year, let us consider the grace of God manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ and praise God for all His benefits. It was His grace and grace alone that has brought us so far and let us continue to stay close to the Lord and His grace for the coming days as well.

**G&P**



**“Humility begins with self-examination,  
and it continues with self-denial.”**

**Warren W. Wiersbe**

**“None of us should sit at the table of the  
Lord without careful self-examination and confession.”**

**F.B. Meyer**



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