

THE GRACE PAPERS

From *A Memoir of Grace* by Chuck Smith

While studying William Newell's commentary on Romans I came across an excursus on grace. Now, understand that I had grown up in a works-and-reward model of the Christian life. I struggled under the impression that God's love for me was conditional. If I believed God was generous with His blessings, I was also convinced that a person had to be good enough to earn those blessings. For my part, I seldom felt worthy enough to reach the standard set before me in the holiness tradition that preceded Pentecostalism. Therefore, I did not have high expectations that I would ever deserve God's blessing on my life and work.

Newell's development of the nature of God's grace radically changed my thinking. Up until that moment, nothing I had ever learned went so quickly and deeply into the marrow of my being. If God's blessing seemed absent from my life, it was not because I failed to give enough time to my daily devotions, to go door-to-door with the gospel on a weekly basis, or to bring enough sincerity into my worship. Any lack of blessing was—plain and simple—a consequence of not believing it was in God's heart to bless me apart from any merit I could muster.

Newell repeatedly stressed the fact that grace has no cause or reason for the person who receives it. I realized grace was God's blessing when I did not deserve it—to rejoice in His favor at all times, and to be absolutely certain that grace would guide and support me in the future. I cannot say why, but my heart fully embraced the reality of God's grace and ever since I first read these words I have believed that God would give me a blessing every day. To this day, He has not disappointed me.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT GRACE

I

The Nature of Grace

1. Grace is God acting freely, according to His own nature as Love; with no promises or obligations to fulfil; and acting of course, righteously—in view of the cross.
2. Grace, therefore, is *uncaused* in the recipient: its cause lies wholly in the *GIVER*, in *GOD*.
3. Grace, also is *sovereign*. Not having debts to pay, or fulfilled conditions on man's part to wait for, it can act toward whom, and how, it pleases. It can, and does, often, place the worst deservers in the highest favors.
4. Grace cannot act where there is either *desert* or *ability*: Grace does not *help*—it is *absolute*, it *does all*.
5. There being *no cause* in the creature why Grace should be shown, the creature must be brought off from *trying to give cause* to God for His Grace.
6. The discovery by the creature that he is truly the object of Divine grace, works the *utmost humility*: for the receiver of grace is brought to know his own absolute unworthiness, and his complete inability to attain worthiness: yet he finds himself blessed,—*on another principle, outside*

of himself!

7. Therefore, *flesh has no place in the plan of Grace*. This is *the great reason why Grace is hated* by the proud natural mind of man. But for this very reason, the true believer rejoices! For he knows that "in him, that is, in his flesh, is no good thing"; and yet he finds God glad to bless him, just as he is!

II

The Place of Man under Grace

1. He has been accepted *in Christ*, who is his standing!
2. He is not "on probation."
3. As to his life past, *it does not exist before God*: he *died at the Cross*, and *Christ is his life*.
4. *Grace, once bestowed, is not withdrawn*: for God knew all the human exigencies beforehand: His action was independent of them, not dependent upon them.
5. The failure of devotion does not cause the withdrawal of bestowed grace (as it would under law). For example: the man in [I Cor. 5:1-5](#); and also those in [11:30-32](#), who did not "judge" themselves, and so were "judged by the Lord,—that they might *not* be condemned with the world"!

III

The Proper Attitude of Man under Grace

1. To *believe*, and to consent to be *loved while unworthy*, is the great secret.
2. To refuse to make "resolutions" and "vows"; for that is to trust in the flesh.
3. To expect to be blessed, though realizing more and more lack of worth.
4. To testify of God's goodness, at all times.
5. To be certain of God's future favor; yet to be ever more tender in conscience toward Him.
6. To rely on God's chastening hand as a mark of His kindness.
7. A man under grace, if like Paul, has no burdens regarding himself; but many about others.

IV

Things Which Gracious Souls Discover

1. To "hope to be better" is to fail to see yourself *in Christ only*.
2. To be *disappointed* with yourself, is to have *believed* in yourself.
3. To be *discouraged* is *unbelief*,—as to God's purpose and plan of blessing for you.
4. To be *proud*, is to be *blind*! For we have no standing before God, in *ourselves*.
5. The lack of Divine blessing, therefore, comes from *unbelief*, and not from *failure of devotion*.
6. Real *devotion* to God arises, not from *man's will* to show it; but from the discovery that blessing *has been received* from God while we were yet *unworthy and undevoted*.
7. To preach devotion first, and blessing second, is to reverse God's order, and preach *law, not grace*. The Law made man's blessing depend on devotion; *Grace confers undeserved, unconditional blessing*: our devotion may follow, but does not always do so,—in proper measure.

HUDSON TAYLOR'S SPIRITUAL SECRET

I felt the ingratitude, the danger, the sin of not living nearer to God. I prayed, agonized, fasted, strove, made resolutions, read the Word more diligently, sought more time for solitude and meditation—but all was without effect. Every day, almost every hour, the consciousness of sin oppressed me. I knew that if I could only abide in Christ all would be well, but I *could not*. I began the day with prayer, determined not to take my eye from Him for a moment; but instead of growing stronger, I seemed to be getting weaker and to have less power against sin. I hated myself; I hated my sin; and yet I gained no strength against it. The more I pursued and strove after holiness, the more it eluded my grasp.

All the time I felt assured that there was in Christ all I needed, but the practical question was how to get it *out*. He was rich, but I was poor; He strong, but I weak. I knew full well that there was in the root, the stem, abundant fatness; but how to get it into my puny little branch was the question. As gradually the light was dawning on me, I saw that faith was the only prerequisite. *But I had not this faith*. I strove for it, but it would not come; tried to exercise it, but in vain. Seeing more and more the wondrous supply of grace laid up in Jesus, the fullness of our precious Saviour—my helplessness and guilt seemed to increase. Sins committed appeared but as trifles compared with the sin of unbelief. Unbelief was, I felt, *the damning sin of the world*—yet I indulged in it. I prayed for faith, but it came not. What was I to do?

When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of *our oneness with Jesus* as I had never known it before. McCarthy, who had been much exercised by the same sense of failure, but saw the light before I did, wrote: "But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One."

As I read I saw it all! "If we believe not, He abideth faithful." I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, "I will never leave you." "Ah, *there is rest!*" I thought. "I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has *He* not promised to abide with me—never to leave me, never to fail me?"

But this was not even half of all He showed me. As I thought of the Vine and the branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured direct into my soul! How great seemed my mistake in having wished to get the sap, the fullness *out* of Him. I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The vine now I see, is not the root merely, but all—root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit: and Jesus is not only that: He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed. Oh, the joy of seeing this truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ.

ANDREW MURRAY

1. The secret of the life of holiness comes to those who seek it not, but only seek Jesus. Let all learn to trust in Jesus and to rejoice in Him, even though their experience be not what they would wish. He will make us holy. But whether we have entered the blessed life of faith in

Jesus as our sanctification, or are still longing for it from afar, we all need one thing—the simple believing and obedient acceptance of each word that our God has spoken.

2. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." It is as if God said: *Holiness is my blessedness and my glory; without this you cannot see Me or enjoy Me. There is nothing higher to be conceived; I invite you to share with Me in it; I invite you to likeness with Myself: "By ye holy, for I am holy."*
3. Holiness is not something we do or attain; it is the communication of the divine life, the inbreathing of the divine nature; the power of the divine presence resting on us. The holy one calls us unto Himself, that He may make us holy in possessing Himself. It is because the call to holiness comes from the God of infinite power and love that we may have the confidence: we can be holy.
4. The nature of light is the same, whether in the sun or in a candle; the nature of holiness remains unchanged whether it be God or man in whom it dwells. The more carefully we listen to God's voice and let it sink into our hearts, the more will all human standards fall away, and only the words be heard, "Holy, as I am holy."
5. We are holy in Christ Jesus. Would we but believe, how God's light would shine and fill us with joy and love. Let us fear our own thoughts and crucify our own wisdom. Let us give ourselves up to receive, in the power of the life of God Himself, working in us by the Holy Spirit, that which is deeper and truer than human thought: Christ Himself as our holiness.

THE SECRET OF SANCTIFICATION.

By A.B. Simpson.

Paul has left us in no doubt about the principles that lay behind his experience of sanctification. The first of these is the great fundamental principle of death and resurrection. He finds the germ of his experience in that which is the centre of all Christianity, the Cross of Jesus Christ, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death". "Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6 v3-4 &11).

Sanctification is not the improvement of the old nature, nor a surgical operation removing a part of it. It is the absolute and entire death of self, of the natural man, with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not only the death of his badness, but the death of his natural goodness. It is not only the putting aside of his weakness, but the putting off of his natural strength, and then his emerging from the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ with a life so new and so divine that it is the same as if he had been born out of heaven.

Sanctification is not the improvement of self but the displacement of self and its replacement with the new supernatural divine life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The old nature is set aside, nothing good is expected from him for he is "dead" and his "life is hid with Christ in God".

The next principle in Paul's experience and doctrine of sanctification is the Christ life. And now we come to the very kernel of the subject in this beautiful text, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2 v20).

Paul's understanding of sanctification is entirely supernatural and personal. It is not with him a thing, but a Person. It is not something he has attained, but it is some One whom he has met. It is not an experience through which he has come, but a living and almighty Friend with whom he has become forever united. It is not that Paul has become a better man, but Paul has received into his inmost being the Son of Man, the One Man, the Divine Man, the only Man who ever pleased God or ever can please Him again.

Paul has seen the Lord Jesus Christ as his living Head and as his living Substitute. He has taken Him into his entire being to live within, to be what he cannot be, to do what he cannot do, and to be made to him "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption". Henceforth his glad triumphant shout is, "Christ lives in me". "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4 v13).

This is the sublime teaching of the Master Himself, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing". This is the secret "which has been hidden from ages and from generations, . . . Christ in you, the hope of glory".

This is the truth which makes nothing of us and yet everything of us, that forever lays our glorying in the dust and yet forever lifts us above the old natural perfection, above self-sufficiency, even to the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

And so Paul learned the secret of sanctification "by faith", and well he taught it to his disciples. In the first description of this blessed experience in the sixth chapter of Romans, he uses a little word which is the keynote of this whole subject. It is plain and practical and absolutely unerring, it is the little word **count**. This is the step by which Paul entered into sanctification and this is the decisive step that each of us must take in order to follow Him.

**"Count yourselves to be dead to sin,
but alive to God in Christ Jesus."**

You do not have to grow yourself into it, you do not have to pray yourself into it, you do not have to work yourself into it. It is all there for you, you simply accept it, believe it, count upon it, and go forward. As a sinner takes Jesus as his Saviour, at a definite moment in his life, and from that moment counts past sins all forever gone and Christ's promises forever true, so in sanctification we come to the moment where, by our full surrender and decision, we yield up our own life, our own strength and all that belongs to self and sin. We count not something dead but ourselves dead. Then we take Christ, the Risen One, to be our life, we reckon that He is our life and count on Him for everything. We expect nothing from ourselves but everything from Him. We ask Him to deal with every failure on our part and every assault of the adversary and our one testimony is "**Christ lives in me**".

FREEDOM WITHOUT EFFORT by C.G.T.

To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

There is no work involved in our receiving the Lord Jesus for life, and there should certainly be no self-effort involved in the manifestation of His life in and through us. The principle is the same, from re-birth to maturity.

'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57). That is grace. That is the test of the real or the counterfeit. Just remember this: any victory over the power of any sin whatsoever that you have to get by working for it is

counterfeit. Any victory that you have to get by trying for it is false. If you have to work for your freedom, it is not the real thing, it is not that which the Father offers you in His Son.

The effortless life is not the will-less life. We use our will to believe, or receive, but not to exert effort in trying to accomplish what only the Father has done. Our hope for freedom from the power of sin is not 'Christ plus my efforts,' but 'Christ plus my receiving.' To receive victory from Him is to believe His Word that solely by grace He is, this moment, freeing us from the dominion of sin. And to believe on Him in this way is to recognize that He is doing for us what we can never do for ourselves.

The Father has left us as much dependent on the Lord Jesus' work for our deliverance as for our forgiveness. It is wholly because we died with Him on the Cross, but unto sin and unto the whole legal principle, that sin's power for those in Him is broken.

FAITH IS A PERSON by Steve McVey

Many people see faith as a sort of currency we spend with God to get what we want or need from Him. The more of it you have, the bigger things you can buy. Many have blamed themselves for not having enough faith when things didn't turn out the way they had prayed and hoped they would. In one church, I was told that the pastor's wife had recently died because she didn't have enough faith to be healed. Others blame their lack of faith for unfulfilled desires about finances, relationships, career advances, family struggles, and countless other things.

To these people, faith is something to be spent for gain, and if you don't have it, you lose.

To take such a viewpoint seriously leads the logical mind to ask, "How, then, am I supposed to have more faith?" To be told "Just have faith" sounds reasonable to the one saying it, but to the person hearing those words, it feels easier said than done. How are we supposed to wholeheartedly believe for something that we simply aren't sure is going to happen in our lives?

The challenge to have more faith about a specific outcome is often nothing more than a religious promotion for positive thinking.

It becomes a matter of faith in faith. It is a subtle but effective use of misdirection. Nothing is wrong with positive thinking, but don't mistake it for faith.

People experience authentic faith when their focus is on the Faithful One. Faith is not wishful thinking enhanced by the steroids of positive expectations. Faith is confidence in the One who does all things well. Faith is the plain recognition of the presence of the One who determines and directs every outcome of every situation we will face in life. Faith is certainty based on the Person who is in charge of our circumstances regardless of the predicament we may be facing. In fact, our faith finds its very existence in that Person.

Faith doesn't originate from us. The question is not whether your belief is big enough or strong enough or pure enough to receive the outcome you want. Faith is about Jesus! He doesn't hope for a certain outcome. He knows. You'll be much better off leaning into His faith than trying to crank out your own.

We depend on His faith because only His faith is perfect and never fails.

Our trust is in Him because He is more than sufficient for every need we have and every obstacle we face in life. The faith you have isn't based on your ability to conjure up enough positive vibes to get the job done. It's not about us at all. "In Him we live and move and exist," Luke wrote in Acts 17:28. That environment of perfect faith is a good place to live.

It is the faith of Christ that is ours. It is vicarious faith. He believes on our behalf, so all we need to do is trust Him. We don't need to pray for faith. In Him we already have it. What we can muster up on our own isn't enough to move a grain of sand. If you doubt me on that, just try it.

It isn't your job to manufacture faith.

He (Faith) lives inside you and is more than able to rise to the occasion when faith is required, which is at every moment of life. Just as Jesus is your righteousness, peace, strength, and joy, so is He your faith. The union you share with Him is your only source for faith.

The revelation of this truth will free you from trying to believe in your own strength. It will cause you to know that it isn't your faith that matters. In fact, there is no such thing as "my faith" because my faith is His faith, and His faith is based on His Father's faithfulness. The vicarious faith of Jesus Christ is your faith. What a relief!