

Ten Commandments of Grace

Grace has been called God's Riches at Christ's Expense. It has been said of grace that if peace (shalom) was the characteristic or keyword of the Old Testament for the Hebrews, then grace has become the Christian's word in the New Testament. Grace is a very, very important concept for Christians and the depth of meaning to be gleaned from the Greek word 'charis', translated as 'grace', and the importance of grace in Christianity, should never be underestimated.

Holman's Bible Dictionary gives the following definition as the central meaning of grace for Christians – 'Grace is the undeserved acceptance and love received from another, especially the characteristic attitude of God in providing salvation for sinners through Jesus Christ.' The meaning of 'charis' is even broader than this, as you will see as you consider the 10 commandments of grace below which I have derived from 10 verses.

1. Sing with grace in your heart (Colossians 3:16)

The word 'charis' includes joy and thanksgiving, so we follow this instruction when we sing to God with joy and thanksgiving in our hearts.

2. Accept that God's grace is sufficient for you (2 Corinthians 12:9)

This is instructing us to be content with God's provision in our lives. Don't think that God's gifts to us, such as the Holy Spirit, the Word, forgiveness, and the promise of eternal life, amongst many other things, are not enough to sustain us – they are!

3. Let your speech always be with grace (Colossians 4:5-6)

This command is not so easy to understand in terms of the central meaning of grace as defined above, but 'charis' is very broad.

As salt makes our food more acceptable or attractive to eat, how we say things should make what we say more acceptable or attractive. The Apostle Paul also writes in Ephesians 4:29 'Let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers.'

4. Do not receive God's grace in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1)

We obey this command by continuing in the faith until death. Also, if our lives are not bringing God's blessing to others, are we really using the grace God has shown for any good purpose?

5. Grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18)

By showing undeserved kindness more and more to people who have perhaps wronged us or with people who don't deserve our love, or whom at least we think don't deserve our love, we are growing in grace.

6. Let your heart be established with grace (Hebrews 13:9)

We need to be strong and built up in the central aspects of Christianity, such as grace, and not with foods or every wind of doctrine which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

7. Thou shalt not frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21)

In context some of the Galatians were frustrating God's grace, or setting it aside, because false teachers had caused them to think that they needed to earn God's grace, when in fact God had already given it to them. We too might frustrate God's grace if we try to earn what He gives us freely.

8. Be strong in God's grace (2 Timothy 2:1)

We must not only grow in grace, it must be one of our strengths. For it to be one of our strengths we will obviously then need to give grace priority in our lives.

9. Be a good steward of God's grace (1 Peter 4:10)

The grace we have been given by God, just as the talent given to each servant in the parable, should not be buried in our lives, but rather should be used wisely for the maximum benefit of others and the kingdom of God.

10. Receive God's grace (Galatians 3:14)

We obey this command by believing in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, by repenting of our sins and then by accepting God's forgiveness or pardon.

God is truly gracious toward us and His grace is truly amazing.

****Suggested Group Bible Study***

The scriptures in brackets above can be used to present a very challenging and edifying Bible study. Just go through each text one by one firstly asking if the group can identify the command relating to grace in the verse and then secondly by asking them to explain the meaning of the command. (two one hour sessions may be needed to complete this study adequately)