

GOD

We Can Abound in God's Grace

We have a loving and merciful God who made it available for us to be saved and to become members of His family. He did this because of His great grace, His unmerited divine favor, even though we didn't deserve it. We see this in Ephesians, Chapter 2:

Ephesians

- 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (*made us alive*) together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
2:6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* (*in the heavens*) in Christ Jesus:
2:7 That in the ages to come (*in all ages*) he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith (*the faith of Jesus Christ*); and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.
2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

In these verses we see the great emphasis placed on the fact that we were saved by God's grace. According to E. W. Bullinger's *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, grace, from the Greek word *charis*, can be understood as "a kind, affectionate pleasing nature and inclining disposition... friendly willingness, favor". When used in the context of the grace of God, the word denotes "God's grace and favor manifested towards mankind or to any individual, which, as a free act is no more hindered by sin than it is conditional upon works". One thing to note is that our "sin nature" or past sins don't keep God from giving His grace. Also, God's grace is not conditional on our works. As verse 9 states: "Not of works, lest any man should boast." It's not our works, but God's. Verse 10 says that we are His workmanship.

We were saved by grace, not by works. Romans 3:24 tells us that we were "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The accomplishments of Jesus Christ made it available for us to become saved, justified in the sight of God. Look at Romans, Chapter 5, beginning in verse 1:

Romans

- 5:1 Therefore, being justified by faith (*believing*), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
5:2 By whom (*through whose accomplishments*) also we have access by faith ("*by faith*" is *not in the texts*) into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

When we confessed Jesus as Lord and believed in our hearts that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9), we were saved, justified by our believing. The accomplishments of Jesus Christ gave us access to God's grace, and we now stand as His children, with the hope of Christ's Return. This is all because of God's grace.

Look at Romans 15:13:

15:13 Now the God of hope ("*God of*" is not in the text: read "*Now the hope*") fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (*through the power of holy spirit*).

Because of God's grace we have the hope of Christ's Return and can be filled with joy and peace as we believe. Let's return to Chapter 5:

5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

The words "free gift" are from the Greek word *charisma*, an act of God's grace. God by His grace gave us the gift of holy spirit, giving us spiritual life.

5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

Note the usages of the word "abound" in verse 20. We see this word used in relation to negatives and a positive. The word "abound" used with both "the offence" and "sin" is from the Greek word *pleonazō*, which means "to become more" or "to make more", indicating growth or increase. However, the word "abound" that goes with "grace", God's unmerited divine favor, is from a form of the Greek word *perisseuō* which means "to be over and above; more than enough". For us, it's definitely a much stronger word for abound! And, in this verse, the three words "much more abound" are actually from the Greek word *hyperperisseuō*. That prefix "*hyper*" can be understood as "super". So even though "sin" simply abounded by increasing, God's grace super-abounded! God provides us with a super-abundant supply of His grace.

Because Romans, Chapters 6 and 7 are a parenthesis, a Figure of Speech expanding on the truths of Chapter 5, we could read directly from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, verse 1. Because of the great super-abundant grace of God, we have the great truths expressed in Chapter 8: no condemnation (8:1); all things work together for good (8:28); if God be for us, who *can be* against us? (8:31); we are more than conquerors (super-conquerors) (8:37); nothing can separate us from the love of God (8:39). We truly do benefit from God's superabundant grace!

Because God's grace super-abounds toward us, He can promise what we read in Ephesians 3:20: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The words "exceeding abundantly" are from

the Greek words *huper ek perissōs*, so we see “super” with a form of the word for abound that means “over and above; more than enough”.

Let’s take a closer look and consider how we can abound in God’s grace as we do His will and reach out to others.

Psalms

84:11 For the Lord God *is* a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

The word “grace” here is from the Hebrew word *chen*, meaning “grace” or “favor”. The Lord, Jehovah, God in His personal relation to us, is the source of grace. Because of this grace, this unmerited divine favor, God will not withhold, or keep back, any good thing from “them that walk uprightly”, those who endeavor to live according to God’s Word. Proverbs 28:20 tells us “A faithful man shall abound with blessings...” Look at the next verse:

84:12 O Lord of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.

When we trust in God we are blessed. In fact, when we trusted in God as we believed Romans 10:9 and got born again, God, by His grace “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (in the heavenlies) in Christ”, as it says in Ephesians 1:3.

We are blessed. We have God’s super-abundant grace. God will not withhold any good thing from us.

II Corinthians

9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

This great verse emphasizes the magnitude of God’s grace toward us, and the benefits we can have as we abound in that grace. Notice that it begins by saying that God is able: it has nothing to do with our ability. The word “abound” here is again that word *perisseuō*, meaning “over and above; more than enough”. As God’s super-abundant grace abounds toward us, we can “always have all sufficiency in all things”. God is our sufficiency and our supply (Philippians 4:19): He makes all that we need available by His grace. We can then “abound to every good work”.

Since we’re in II Corinthians, let’s look at Chapter 8, verse 7:

8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and *in* your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

God’s grace is a major theme of the Book of Ephesians, driving home the point that it is by God’s unmerited divine favor, not by our works, that we have what we have as members of God’s family.

With the exception of Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 2, where “grace” is part of Paul’s standard salutation seen in all of his writings, the first of the many usages of the word grace in Ephesians is in Chapter 1, verse 6. Let’s take a look at this significant first usage and the next few verses that follow:

Ephesians

- 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness (remission) of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
1:8 Wherein (*in God’s grace*) he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

In verse 6 we see that God did something for us “to the praise of the glory of his grace”. “Praise” is from a Greek word better translated as “commendation”. Something that is worth commending is something that is worthy of attention, or worthy of special praise. In this case, it is “the glory of his (God’s) grace”. The words “glory of his grace” are actually a Figure of Speech in which the word “glory” is used to emphasize the fact that God’s grace is glorious. We could read this “To the commendation of his GLORIOUS grace”.

What did God do for us that makes His glorious grace so commendable? Verse 6 continues: “wherein (in God’s grace) he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

The word “accepted” in this verse is from the Greek word *charitoō*, which literally means “to make one an object of favor”. This word is actually the verb form of *charis*, our word for “grace”, so we could render it “to make one an object of grace”. God has made us objects, receivers, of His great grace. This word *charitoō* is used in only one other place in the Bible:

Luke

- 1:28 And the angel (*Gabriel*) came in unto her (*Mary*) and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

The words “highly favoured” are from *charitoō*, translated “accepted” in Ephesians 1:6. So, because of God’s great grace, He has made us “highly favored”, “accepted”. When we became born again, we became children of God. We were accepted into the Family of God and could become members of His household. God was able to make this available because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. Verse 6 says that God made us “accepted in the beloved”, and we know from verses like Matthew 17:5 (“This is my beloved Son...”) that “the beloved” refers to Jesus Christ. Because of what Jesus Christ accomplished, God could, by His commendable, glorious grace, make us accepted so we could become members of His family.

In one of his earliest works, his *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, the Biblical scholar E. W. Bullinger indicated that the word “accepted” in Ephesians 1:6 might be understood as “lovely” or “acceptable”, suggesting that this verse could be read as either “...he hath made us lovely in the beloved” or “he hath made us acceptable in the beloved”. However, thirty years later, in his book *How to Enjoy the Bible*, in his chapter

“The Importance of Accuracy in the Study of the Words of Scripture”, Bullinger corrected himself and clarified the important difference between our being “accepted” (the Greek word *charitoō* in Ephesians 1:6) and our being “acceptable”, which is from a different Greek word, *euarestōs*, used elsewhere in the New Testament. He wrote:

“We must accurately note the distinction between the two words. The former (*the word “accepted” in Ephesians 1:6*) is *charitoō*, to make one an object of favor. This refers to the standing which God has given us, in Christ, in the heavenlies. The latter (*the word translated “acceptable,” found elsewhere*) is *euarestōs*, well-pleasing. This refers to our state, and our daily walk and life on earth... It is one thing for us to be accepted in Christ, and it is another thing for our walk to be well-pleasing (*acceptable*) to God. The former is the gift of God’s grace: the latter is the fruit of that grace. It is most important that we should be accurate in noting this distinction... We do not labor to be accepted, but having been “accepted in the beloved” we make it our aim for our walk to be acceptable.”

So, God, by His abundant grace toward us, chose to make us accepted so we could stand as members of His family. Now that we are accepted, it’s up to us to choose to make ourselves acceptable by the quality of our walk. We can, by our walking in fellowship with Him and with others in the household, walk so that we are acceptable as well as accepted.

What does it then mean to abound in God’s grace? What do we do? We already saw in II Corinthians 9:8 that because God’s grace abounds toward us so that God is our sufficiency, we can abound “to every good work”. Look at I Corinthians 15:57 and 58, at the close of the section on our hope of Christ’s Return.

I Corinthians

15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Because of God’s grace and our hope of Christ’s Return, we can stand firm on God’s Word and we can abound in “the work of the Lord”; abounding to every good work. Included in these “good works” that we can abound in is the truth that we can do the works of Jesus Christ and greater (John 14:12).

Let’s look at I Thessalonians 4:1:

I Thessalonians

4:1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

We know from God’s Word how we should walk, doing “the work of the Lord”, and we can abound as we do so.

We can stand strong in God’s grace as we share the truths of His Word to others:

II Timothy

2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Finally, as we abound in God's grace, we can share that grace with other members of the household. We see the model for this sharing of grace in Acts Chapter 2, verses 42 through 46, which tell us how the members of the Body of Christ functioned together in the days following the Day of Pentecost. We'll just read verse 47, which sums up the great results as these believers abounded in God's grace:

Acts

2:47 Praising God, and having favor (*literally*, "sharing grace") with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

Because of God's grace which super-abounds toward us, we became accepted into His household and have the hope of the Return of Jesus Christ. As we abound in God's grace, we can abound to every good work, doing the works of Jesus Christ and greater as we share grace with other believers in the household.

- Dr. Rick Batt