

GRACE ESTOPPEL



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With a heart for service, a mind for justice, and a spirit driven by faith, he is committed to making a lasting impact for the Kingdom. He is happily married to Apostle Kachi Anyanwu and their marriage is blessed with wonderful children.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The book “**Grace Estoppe**” will encourage readers to live in the reality of **grace**, understanding that God’s promises are based on His faithfulness, not on human perfection. It would challenge the reader to let go of legalism and embrace the freedom that comes from knowing that God’s grace is never revoked, even when we fail. It would end with the message that **grace estoppel** is the essence of the Gospel—that God’s love and promises remain, no matter what we do.

Grace Estoppel would offer a fresh perspective on grace, using legal concepts to make theological truths more accessible and compelling. It could appeal to both theologians and lay readers, particularly those interested in the relationship between law, grace, and human imperfection. By reinterpreting key biblical stories through the lens of grace and legal principles, this book could offer a new way of understanding how **God's grace overcomes all barriers**.

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I introduce "Grace Estoppel", the latest work by Moses A. Anyanwu. As a renowned author, teacher, and leader, Moses Anyanwu has consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of God's Word and a passion for spreading the Gospel.

In "Grace Estoppel", Moses Anyanwu explores the intersection of God's grace and human responsibility, shedding light on the biblical concept of Estoppel. With clarity and conviction, he argues that God's grace is not a license to sin, but a transformative power that empowers us to live righteously.

This book is a timely reminder that:

- God's grace is not a loophole for disobedience
- Faith without works is dead
- Our actions have consequences in the spiritual realm

Through compelling stories, biblical analysis, and practical illustrations, Moses Anyanwu demonstrates how grace Estoppel can:

- Free us from the cycle of sin and guilt
- Empower us to live victoriously
- Deepen our intimacy with God

I commend Moses Anyanwu for his scholarly work, spiritual insight, and passion for the Gospel. May "Grace Estoppel" inspire you to a deeper understanding of God's character and a more vibrant walk with Him.

Apostle Kachi Anyanwu

Mathematics Lecturer Uk.

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May God richly bless each of you for your contributions to this project.

Moses A. Anyanwu

DEDICATION

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Whose grace has transformed my life,
Whose mercy has sustained me,
And whose law guides me.

May this book honor Your name
And inspire readers to deepen their faith.

Also, to my loving family,

My wife, Apostle Kachi Anyanwu and children,
Your love and support mean the world to me.

CHAPTER 1

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION OF ESTOPPEL

Estoppel is a legal doctrine that prevents a party from acting in a way that contradicts their previous statements, conduct, or representations, especially when another party has relied upon those prior statements or actions to their detriment. The fundamental purpose of estoppel is to promote fairness and justice by ensuring that people cannot shift their positions or deny facts that have already been established, particularly when doing so would cause harm to others who relied on the initial actions. Understanding the legal foundation of estoppel is essential for determining how it can be invoked or challenged in various legal scenarios. Always consider jurisdictional specifics, as application and interpretation can vary significantly from one legal system to another.

Estoppel is deeply rooted in the principles of equity, a body of law that complements common law by focusing on fairness rather than strict legal rules. The doctrine has evolved over time to address various forms of inequitable conduct, and different types of estoppel have emerged to apply in specific legal contexts. Below are some of the foundational principles and key types of estoppel.

Types of Estoppel

➤ ***Promissory Estoppel***

Promissory Estoppel arises when one party makes a promise, even without a formal contract, and the other party reasonably relies on that promise to their detriment. The courts can enforce the promise to prevent injustice, even though there was no consideration (something of value exchanged) to form a contract.

Key elements of Promissory Estoppel:

Promise: One party makes a clear and definite promise.

Reliance: The other party relies on the promise in a significant way.

Detriment: The party who relied on the promise suffers a detriment or loss if the promise is not enforced.

Injustice: It would be unjust or inequitable to allow the promise to go back on their word.

Promissory estoppel is commonly used to enforce promises in scenarios where formal contracts are absent, especially in employment, contract law, and family law disputes.

Example: A landlord promises a tenant that they will reduce the rent temporarily during tough financial times. The tenant relies on that promise and makes adjustments based on the reduced rent. Later, the landlord cannot claim the full original rent amount for the period in question because the tenant acted in reliance on the reduced rent.

➤ ***Equitable Estoppel***

Equitable estoppel, also called estoppel by representation, arises when one party makes a false statement or representation (of fact or law) and another party reasonably relies on that representation. The party who made the representation is then "estopped" (prevented) from denying its truth, especially when denying it would result in harm to the party that relied on it.

Key elements of Equitable Estoppel:

Representation: One party makes a clear and unambiguous representation (this could be verbal or implied through conduct).

Reliance: The other party reasonably relies on that representation.

Detriment: The party relying on the representation suffers a detriment if the truth of the representation is denied.

Unconscionability: It would be unfair or unjust for the party making the representation to deny its truth after inducing reliance on it.

Equitable estoppel prevents parties from acting inconsistently with their prior statements or conduct, ensuring fairness in the legal system.

Example: A company represents to a customer that a certain product meets specific safety standards, leading the customer to purchase the product. If the product fails to meet those standards and the customer suffers harm, the

company would be estopped from denying the accuracy of their earlier representation.

➤ ***Estoppel by Conduct (or Estoppel in Pais)***

Estoppel by conduct occurs when one party's actions or behavior imply a certain fact or position, and the other party relies on those actions or behavior to their detriment. This form of estoppel prevents a party from contradicting their own conduct.

Key elements of Estoppel by Conduct:

Conduct: One party behaves in a way that implies a certain fact or position.

Reliance: The other party reasonably relies on that conduct.

Detriment: The party relying on the conduct suffers harm if the first party is allowed to contradict their conduct.

Unfairness: It would be unfair to allow the first party to act inconsistently with their previous conduct.

This type of estoppel can be used in a wide range of cases, including property disputes and contract enforcement.

Example: A property owner allows a neighbor to build a fence on what appears to be the property line without objection. If the owner later claims that the fence encroaches on their land, they may be estopped from asserting this claim, as their prior conduct indicated acceptance of the fence's location.

➤ ***Estoppel by Deed***

Estoppel by deed occurs when one party makes representations in a deed (a legal document, typically related to the transfer of property), and the other party relies on those representations. The party who made the representations is then estopped from denying them later.

Key elements of Estoppel by Deed:

Written Representation: A representation or statement made in a deed.

Reliance: The other party relies on that representation.

Subsequent Denial: The party who made the representation cannot deny it later, especially if the other party has relied on it.

Example: A person sells a piece of property to another, representing in the deed that they have full ownership. If it later turns out that they only owned part of the property, they may be estopped from claiming they didn't have full ownership at the time of the deed.

The Role of Equity in Estoppel

Estoppel is rooted in equity, which is a body of law developed to address the rigidity and limitations of common law. While common law emphasizes legal rules and technicalities, equity focuses on achieving fair outcomes based on moral principles such as honesty, fairness, and good faith.

The doctrine of estoppel embodies these equitable principles by ensuring that parties cannot take unfair advantage of technical legal arguments when doing so would lead to an unjust result. In cases of estoppel, courts will often focus on the ethical dimensions of the parties' behavior, rather than strict legal rights.

➤ Unconscionability and Estoppel

A key theme in estoppel cases is **unconscionability**—the idea that a party should not be allowed to act in a manner that is ethically or morally wrong. If a party's conduct or representation leads another party to take actions that would cause harm if reversed, it would be unconscionable to allow the first party to go back on their word.

In estoppel cases, unconscionability serves as the moral compass for courts, ensuring that fairness takes precedence over strict legal rights.

➤ **Estoppel and Contract Law**

Estoppel plays a critical role in contract law, particularly when formal agreements are absent or incomplete. It is often used as a way to enforce promises or representations that fall short of creating a formal contract, especially where one party has acted in reliance on a promise or representation.

In **promissory estoppel**, for example, a promise made in the absence of a formal contract can be enforced if the other party relied on it to their detriment. Similarly, equitable estoppel can be used to prevent a party from denying an informal agreement or concession, especially when the other party has relied on that agreement in good faith.

The legal foundation of estoppel rests on principles of fairness, reliance, and preventing unjust outcomes. Estoppel is designed to stop individuals from unfairly taking contradictory positions, especially when others have relied on their initial statements or conduct. Rooted in the principles of equity, estoppel seeks to balance legal rights with ethical obligations, ensuring that justice prevails in cases where strict adherence to legal rules might result in unfairness. Whether in contract law, property law, or other areas of dispute, estoppel serves as a vital tool for upholding fairness and preventing harmful reliance on inconsistent behavior or representations.

CHAPTER 2

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION OF GRACE ESTOPPEL

While "Grace Estoppel" is not an officially recognized legal doctrine, it can be understood as a theoretical extension of the broader legal principles of **estoppels** specifically centered around acts of grace, kindness, or leniency. In this sense, Grace Estoppel would prevent a party from benefiting from an act of grace (such as forgiveness or leniency) and later acting in a way that contradicts the benevolence extended to them.

Intersection of Estoppel and Grace:

Establishing Trust and Expectations: Just as grace sets a standard of trust and expectation in relationships, the legal principle of estoppel protects those who have acted based on those expectations.

Biblical Example of Grace:

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35): This parable illustrates the consequences of failing to extend grace to others after being shown grace oneself. The servant, forgiven a large debt, later refuses to forgive a smaller debt owed to him, demonstrating a failure to act consistently with the grace he received. This mirrors the principle of estoppel, where one party cannot act contrary to prior leniency or understanding without facing consequences.

Justice and Fairness:

James 2:13: "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." This verse highlights the importance of mercy (or grace) in relationships, echoing the principles underlying estoppel by encouraging fairness and preventing unjust outcomes.

Luke 6:36: "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." This teaching reinforces the call to act with grace and mercy in dealings with

others, aligning with the expectations that one's conduct should not contradict prior actions.

Concept of Grace in Law and Scripture

The idea of grace—offering kindness, forgiveness, or benevolence without expecting anything in return—is deeply rooted in both **equity law** and **Christian theology**. In law, grace can be seen as an act of goodwill, leniency, or forbearance that one party extends to another, usually without legal obligation. Grace Estoppel, therefore, is a concept that would prevent a party from going back on the benefits they received through such grace.

In Christian theology, grace is a central theme, particularly in the **New Testament**, where God's unmerited favor toward humanity is highlighted. This theological foundation offers moral and ethical support to the idea of Grace Estoppel, as it focuses on fairness, forgiveness, and holding people accountable to the grace they receive.

Biblical Foundation for Grace Estoppel

The Bible provides numerous examples and teachings that align with the principles of Grace Estoppel, where acts of grace, once given and accepted, cannot later be contradicted by the recipient. Several biblical passages illustrate the ethical and moral underpinnings of this concept, showing how both justice and grace are intertwined.

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35)

This parable offers a direct parallel to the concept of Grace Estoppel. In the story, a king forgives his servant a massive debt after the servant pleads for mercy. However, that same servant later refuses to forgive a small debt owed to him by another. When the king hears of this, he punishes the servant for failing to extend the same grace he was given.

Matthew 18:32-33: *"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'"*

This parable illustrates a fundamental principle of Grace Estoppel: once grace has been extended and accepted, the beneficiary is morally (and in some cases legally) estopped from acting in a way that contradicts that grace. In modern legal terms, the servant could be estopped from demanding repayment of the debt since he himself had been forgiven a much larger sum.

Forgiveness and Reciprocity (Luke 6:37)

The Bible emphasizes the importance of extending grace and forgiveness to others, particularly when one has already received such grace. Jesus teaches that the measure of grace or forgiveness we give is the measure we will receive.

Luke 6:37: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

In the legal context, this teaching supports the idea that those who have benefited from acts of grace should not later act inconsistently with that grace. If someone has been forgiven a debt, for example, they should not later pursue strict legal enforcement of a similar debt owed to them.

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

The principle of treating others as one would want to be treated—commonly known as the Golden Rule—provides another ethical basis for Grace Estoppel.

Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Grace Estoppel, at its core, is about fairness and reciprocity. If one has accepted leniency or benevolence from another, it would be unjust for them to act against that act of grace later on. The Golden Rule supports the notion that if one benefits from grace, they should not later contradict the expectations that arise from that grace.

Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

The parable of the Prodigal Son provides a further example of grace and the importance of not contradicting it. When the younger son squanders his inheritance and returns home in shame, his father welcomes him back with open

arms, showing him grace and forgiveness. The older son, however, protests, feeling that the grace shown to his brother is unfair.

Luke 15:31-32: *"‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’"*

Here, the father’s unwavering grace sets a moral precedent. The father's actions create an expectation of forgiveness and acceptance, which the younger son can rely on. Grace Estoppel could apply in such a context to prevent any reversal of the grace extended.

Application of Grace Estoppel in Law

Grace Estoppel could be seen as an extension of **promissory estoppel** and **equitable estoppel**, applying to situations where acts of grace or kindness are given, and the recipient is later estopped from acting in a way that undermines that generosity. These biblical principles inform the following elements of Grace Estoppel.

The Requirement of Grace

The doctrine of Grace Estoppel would apply where one party extends grace—whether it be in the form of leniency, forgiveness, or concessions. For example, a creditor who forgives part of a debtor's obligation would be extending grace. The beneficiary of this grace should be expected to honor the spirit of that act.

Reliance on Grace

For Estoppel to apply, the recipient of the grace must have relied on it in some way. This reliance creates a moral and legal expectation that the terms of the grace will not later be contradicted.

For example, if a tenant relies on a landlord's decision to temporarily reduce rent during a financial hardship, the landlord should be Estopped from later demanding the full amount during that same period, as the tenant had relied on the reduction in good faith.

Preventing Unconscionable Behavior

As with all forms of Estoppel, Grace Estoppel seeks to prevent **unconscionable behavior**. It would be unjust for someone to benefit from an act of grace and then contradict that grace in a way that harms the person who initially extended it.

Grace in Law and Scripture

The concept of Grace Estoppel merges legal and moral principles, emphasizing fairness and the prevention of inconsistent behavior. Biblically, grace is a recurring theme, whether in stories of forgiveness, reciprocity, or equitable treatment of others. When grace is extended, the recipient is morally and ethically bound to honor it.

In legal terms, Grace Estoppel would prevent parties from acting against acts of kindness or leniency they have benefited from. Rooted in both the doctrine of Estoppel and the teachings of scripture, Grace Estoppel serves as a bridge between equity in law and the moral expectations of behavior in society, ensuring fairness and justice for all parties involved.

The Grace of God Has Appeared

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:11-14).

Paul reminded Titus of the grace of God – what it does for us and also what it requires of us. Many like to think of grace in terms of what we *receive*, but not what we must *do*. Yet we must accept *all* that the Bible teaches about it. Let us examine this passage and see what it teaches about the grace of God.

Grace to all men

It is important to understand that grace has “*appeared*” (Titus 2:11). This implies a couple of things:

It was previously hidden – This does not mean that God never showed His grace prior to Christ’s coming. His choosing of the people of Israel and giving them the Promised Land were acts of His grace (Deuteronomy 6:10-12; 7:6-8). Many other Old Testament passages also speak of the concept of grace. But God’s grace was fully realized in Christ. John said that Jesus was “*full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14). In Him we have received “*grace upon grace*” and “*grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ*” (John 1:16-17).

It could not be found without God revealing it – We are “*helpless*” otherwise (Romans 5:6). Jeremiah said, “*I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps*” (Jeremiah 10:23).

When the grace of God appeared, it brought *salvation*. Paul wrote elsewhere, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith*” (Ephesians 2:8). We are saved by grace, but saved from what? We are saved from *sin*. A prophecy of Jesus before His birth stated, “*She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). “*The wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23) and everyone of accountable age has sinned and deserves this punishment (Romans 3:23). Therefore, it is impossible to be saved without God’s grace.

This grace has been extended to “*all men*” (Titus 2:11). Jesus died for *all*, not just for a few. “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). Peter explained God’s impartiality in this regard when he spoke to the household of Cornelius: “*I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him*” (Acts 10:34-35). God has not arbitrarily selected some to be saved and the rest to be lost – as the Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement teaches – He offers salvation to everyone.

The Grace of God Instructs Us

So many people think of grace as nothing more than the gift of salvation. That is certainly part of it. However, there are also *instructions* that are part of God's grace as well. This is why Paul described his message as "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24).

Why would *instruction* be part of God's grace? It is because salvation is *conditional*. Offering salvation, but not telling us how to obtain it, would not do us any good. So God revealed what we must do to be saved.

Conditional salvation for non-Christians – Grace is extended to all (Titus 2:11), but not all will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). There are certain things one must *do* to be saved – believe in Christ, repent of sins, confess his faith, and be baptized (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).

Conditional salvation for Christians – It is possible to "*receive the grace of God in vain*" (2 Corinthians 6:1), which means that one who becomes a Christian can later forfeit his salvation. Therefore, after becoming a Christian, one must be "*faithful until death*" in order to receive his reward (Revelation 2:10).

The message of God's grace instructs us to *deny* certain things. Paul mentioned two of them that encompass all that is condemned:

Ungodliness – This is to act in a way that is contrary to the character and nature of God. Paul said we sin when we "*fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

Worldly desires – This means to lust after those things that are contrary to God. John wrote, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world*" (1 John 2:16). James said that such lusts lead to sin which leads to death (James 1:15).

The message of grace also instructs us to live a certain way. Paul said we do these things "*in the present age*" (Titus 2:12), which means we are to do them *now*, not wait for sometime in the future. Notice how he said we are to live:

Sensibly – Other translations use the word *soberly*. This means we give thought to what we are doing. We are not to act aimlessly, but must intentionally follow the will of God.

Righteously – To live “*righteously*” is to live in harmony with the standard of righteousness revealed in God’s word (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16).

Godly – This means we conduct ourselves in a way that is in harmony with the character and nature of God.

The Grace of God Provides Hope

Paul said this is a “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13), which means it is a blessing from God (grace). We have no hope otherwise. When we are “*separate from Christ*” and “*without God,*” we have “*no hope*” (Ephesians 2:12).

This hope will be realized when the Lord returns. Peter said that we have “*a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” (1 Peter 1:3-5). Because of this, we “*eagerly wait*” for the return of Christ (Philippians 3:20).

While we are to live godly in this life (Titus 2:12), the reward is in the next. False teachers promise earthly rewards for serving the Lord (or for donating to their “ministry”), but Jesus did not. The Lord said, “*In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). Those who teach that “*godliness is a means of gain*” in this life are teaching “*a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Timothy 6:3-5). Through the grace of God we have a hope for a reward that is far greater than anything we could imagine in this life.

The Grace of God Is Seen in Jesus’ Sacrifice

Jesus “*gave Himself for us*” (Titus 2:14). His sacrifice on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of grace. Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13). Grace is extended because of God’s love. Paul said that “*because of His great love with which He loved us,*” we have

the opportunity to be saved “*by grace*” (Ephesians 2:4-5). This love is seen in two ways:

From the Father – “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). Because of His love, He was willing to send Jesus to die on the cross.

From Jesus – “*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative*” (John 10:17-18). Jesus did not just die on the cross, He willingly sacrificed His life for us.

Furthermore, consider the three things that Jesus’ sacrifice did:

Redeemed us from every lawless deed – This means we do not have to receive “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23).

Purified us – “*Through His blood*” we can have “*the forgiveness of our trespasses*” (Ephesians 1:7).

Made us His own possession – We now belong to Him. Paul told the brethren in Corinth, “*For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body*” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Since we are His people through His grace, we must now be “*zealous for good deeds*” (Titus 2:14). This means we cannot live any way we want to live. Instead, we must obey Him. After mentioning His great love that motivated Him to die for us, Jesus said, “*You are My friends if you do what I command you*” (John 15:14). Earlier in that same discourse, He said, “*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments*” (John 14:15). If we love Jesus, we must obey Jesus – not grudgingly, but willingly and zealously.

The grace of God makes it possible for *all* to be saved; but sadly, not all will be. If we want to take advantage of God’s grace, we must meet the conditions He has given. Once we do that, we must continue in faithful service to Him

CHAPTER 3

THE PROVISION OF GRACE

Take your Bibles and go to Ephesians chapter two. Grace provides everything that we have in Christ. That's why we call it "the provision of grace." It provides everything. There's nothing that you and I have that does not come from God's wonderful grace.

Now the word grace itself, which appears 178 times in the Bible—notice 131 in the New Testament. The Greek word, *charis*, is also the word, gift. Gift. We speak about the Eucharist. It comes from *charis* and the word *eu*, E-U, which means well or good. The good gift (meaning of Christ's death on our behalf) so we take the bread and the cup to remember it. They call it Eucharist or our communion.

Sometimes it's translated, give thanks. *Eucharisteo* from *charis* means to give well. And in this case, to give appreciation, adoration, worship, gratefulness to God. And so the word grace, is in the word thanks in the Bible. So actually we could extend this way out, *charizomai*, to give thanks, twenty-three times.

Let's read Ephesians 2:1-10. Now before we do, look back at chapter 1, verse 6 [Eph 2:1-6], "To the praise of the glory of His [what?] grace [verse 7] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace." There it is again. It's a theme throughout God's Word and especially the book of Ephesians. Now chapter 2, beginning at verse 1 down to verse 10,

Ephesians 2:1-10

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Now that's a great passage, just a wonderful, wonderful text on the grace of God. We are saved by grace, the Bible says.

When we begin to break this down, there's a lot of interesting things in the Bible. But turn to Romans, please for a moment. Romans and look at 11:6 [Rom 11:6]

and I want to show you how predestination and grace are blended together. Now the issue in Romans 9, 10 and 11 is God's relationship to the Jews. Verse 1 of chapter 11 [Rom 11:1] says, "Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!" Verse 2 Rom 11:2 says, "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." Now, you remember back in chapter 9 [Rom 9], which we looked at our last time together, that we found out that the sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, were in fact predestined to God's plan before they were ever born. Before they were born and had any chance to do any evil or good that God according to election, not works, but election would see to it that the elder would serve the younger. "Jacob have I loved. Esau have I hated" (Roman 9:13). That whole argument on God's predestination, sovereignty— is very strong.

But when you come to Romans 11:2, he's saying, "Now God hasn't cast away His people whom He foreknew"—foreknowledge a doctrine of predestination. But look down at verse five [Rom 11:5]. "Even so then, at the present time also, there's a remnant according to the election of [what?] grace." Here we learn that the great doctrines of election and predestination are caused, or made possible because God is a God of grace. Grace gives to us what we don't deserve. Grace is a gift bestowed regardless of whether you proved you earned it. That's what makes it grace.

But isn't it interesting that election, predestination, God choosing us, which always seems so cold and indifferent to people. Like God just did it and didn't care, but it is all done by grace. God giving us what we don't deserve and in that is a lot of love, isn't it?

Then look at Romans 11:6. "If by grace [which it was] then it's no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace." If it's grace, it's not works. But if it be of works, then it's no more grace. It almost sounds like double-talk, but it's very clear. It's either grace or it's works. People say, "Well, you need works to prove that you really are a recipient of grace." I believe that if you've received grace under the predestination and election and choice of God, you've received grace. And God is going to see to it that the product in your life is going to be works—works that are pleasing to Him.

You see, Ephesians 2:10 said, "We are *His* workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." God's going to give you a new heart, a new man, a new nature. And "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, all

things become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). So if you're truly born of God, truly elected, truly predestinated, truly chosen, then God's grace is going to see to it that you will produce what God wants in your life. That's grace.

In other words, God isn't going to leave it up to you to prove in the energy of the flesh that you somehow can be productive to His glory. He's already argued you're depraved and you can't be productive to His glory and that "all of your righteousness," says Isaiah 64:6, "is nothing but filthy rags" in His sight.

So how interesting that God, in creating us brand new, bringing us to Himself, quickening us by His Spirit, as Ephesians 2:1 says, all because of grace, now causes us to be productive. "Good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). So the reason I walk in good works, if in fact I do it, is not because of anything I came up with. It is not my brilliant determination and discipline that caused my life to do anything that would be pleasing to the Lord. It is in fact the Lord's work in me. So it's all of grace from beginning to end, so that I will never boast in myself but only in Him.

"He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord," the Bible says (Galatians 6:14). You have nothing to glory about. You say, "Listen I was very disciplined. I did not murder anybody last week." Is everybody listening? See Jesus says, "You hate in your heart you've already done it." We don't like that.

Now whether or not you are productive of good works, I don't know. But I know in His eyes, it's what He does in us. And it's His grace that provides it all, that makes it all possible. I can only live for the Lord because "Christ liveth in me...the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Do you understand it's the Lord living your life literally? He's living His life through you and it's all of the Lord. Whatever is good and profitable and a blessing is coming from the hand of the Lord. Grace has made it all possible. He chose you and planned all this and decided all this before you were ever born so that you and I would be to the praise of the glory of His grace. So when somebody leaks out a little glory, and we look at you and say, "Wow, he must be a Christian!" And the next day we see what you're like and say, "Well maybe not." Every day it's like we're up and down, kind of like an emotional roller coaster. One day we're reflecting the beauty of Christ and the next day we're looking carnal.

You see, if you ever do leak out glory, if you ever do dribble out a little bit of goodness, understand that it came from the gracious hand of God. God's doing that through you. How easy it is to take the credit for it. How easy it is to brag about it. "Boy, God really used me. I'll tell you." Really? I thought God blessed in spite of us, not because of us. For all I know a hundred other people had been witnessing like crazy and you just walked in and reaped what they'd already sown. Either way, it's all of the Lord. It's God's grace that makes it all possible.

When we break down the whole doctrine of God's grace, we realize works are not a part of it. That's why Romans 11:6—write that out in your margin somewhere, take note of it. Grace is not works. Works is not grace. Remind yourself of that verse, Romans 11:6.

Back to Ephesians 2, the first thing that we notice almost consistently throughout Paul's Epistles is that when he refers to either a greeting or a salutation that mentions the Lord, what word does he connect with our Lord? Grace. Isn't that interesting? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

So let's call that "The Person of Grace." It's used ten times as you see from your notes and often at the end of the epistle. John uses it also in Revelation 22:21, "the grace of our Lord." Let me show you that. Turn in your Bibles to John 1—The Person of Grace.

I like what one person told me one time. He said, "You don't understand grace until you understand Jesus." You know at the time I thought it was a simplistic remark. Everybody can come up with those trite little sayings. But the truth of that, I have come to know in my life. When you know the Lord, you know grace. Actually to try to understand the doctrine of grace apart from Jesus is an impossibility. You can't do it. He is all grace. He's what grace is all about.

That's why John 1:14-17 is so beautiful in this regard. It says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of [What?] full of grace and truth." John bore witness of him, and cried saying: "This was he of whom I spake; 'He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me'"—a statement to His pre-existence. From a physical point of view, John was six months older than Jesus. And watch this: "And out of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Now if you take that little verse, grace for grace, and you open up various commentators on that subject, you're going to see a lot of interpretation. What does He mean, grace for grace? Some take it to mean grace upon grace. That is, He keeps piling it on. And that's a great thing because He has daily loaded us with benefits. He is a gracious God. He blesses us all the time.

Another way to look at it is that when the grace that He gave you for any particular event, circumstance, work, or whatever...however He sustained you in whatever moment, that grace has behind it an inexhaustible supply. So you say, "Yeah, the Lord touched me with His grace in a wonderful way. He just gave me what I didn't really deserve." I just want you to know that He only touched you. He's got a gigantic, infinite, inexhaustible supply of grace behind it. There's more coming because of who He is.

Do you know our God wants to give you grace more than you want to receive it? Grace gives you what you don't deserve. He's constantly giving you what you don't deserve. And you don't even see it. And that grace upon grace, to me, carries the idea that God's inexhaustible supply is always there and whatever grace I just received isn't all there is.

Match that with Ephesians 2:7, "That in the ages to come, he will show you the exceeding wealth of his grace in his kindness to you in Christ." We haven't yet begun to see the riches of his grace. I saw it when I got saved and the longer I study it, the more it thrills my heart. But I haven't begun, neither have you, to see the riches of the grace of our Lord. He's going to keep showing it to you all the way through eternity. Imagine knowing a God like that!

Wouldn't it be a bummer to get to heaven and realize that everything you ever learned about God is all there is to know. There's nothing else, that's all there is—a dead end street. Wouldn't that be awful? But according to the Bible, we will never know all there is to know about Him. "His ways are past finding out" (Romans 11:33). But one thing He delights to do is show you His grace.

I love to look people in the eye, as I did a family that was torn apart yesterday. Miserable, messed up, terrible problems—girl rebelling. It was like hell on earth. I didn't want to hear any more hostility. And that young teenage girl, I walked over and I said, "You know something? It astounds me how little you know about God's love. That's all it took. She just broke down. I said, "I don't know what you're

fighting. I don't know what you're upset about. I don't know why you're so hostile. I just want you to know, God loves you. God is a God of grace. He wants to bless you. He wants to give you what you don't deserve. But He loves doing it so you'll turn around and praise Him. He loves to be praised. He loves to be thanked." By the way, so do you! Just don't take the credit, it belongs to God.

So I kind of put this package together, the scope of His grace. He's full of grace. Luke 2:40, even as He was growing up, says that "the grace of God was upon Him." Imagine just looking at a young man growing up and saying, "God's grace is on that boy."

Now here it says He's going to give grace in the stead of grace. That's why I said I think it's referring to His inexhaustible supply that in the place of what you receive, that you think that's all there is. Are you kidding? God is going to put more grace there than you've ever seen. I have seen God's grace in very difficult circumstances. He is a God of grace.

And the source of grace, He told us grace came by Jesus Christ. Flip over to 1 Corinthians 1 [1Cr 1:4-5] and look at verses four and five. I like this. "I thank my God always on your behalf." Why? Because you're just terrific, talented people that have the ability to do marvelous exploits for God. Is that what it says? No. It says, "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" Now look at this next statement, "...that in everything you are enriched by Him."

Now if your self-esteem is just swaggering a bit today. You don't feel like you're worth anything, and maybe some other people or circumstances made you believe that. You just go memorize this: "Enriched by Him in everything." You believe that?

There's an old song that I really like. Not very contemporary in melody, but it has a great message. And the chorus says,

His love has no limit. His grace has no measure.
His power has no boundaries known unto man.
But out of His riches He giveth and giveth again.

That's true isn't it? The name of the song is "He Giveth More Grace."

How I love to sing this song, anytime I remember the grace God have shown me:

Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord.
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt.
Yonder on Calvary's Mount outpoured there
Where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace.
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within.
Grace, grace, God's grace.
Grace that is greater than all of my sin.

That's good, isn't it? And who can forget John Newton.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see.

Isn't God's grace a wonderful thing? It is true, isn't it? We have a wonderful gospel. We're sorry for all the people that mess it up by the way they live, but we've got a wonderful gospel. We're sorry for how people twist this thing all the time and mess it up. But boy, if you just take it for what it is in the Bible, it is really wonderful! God saves by grace. He gives you what you don't deserve.

It's the Person of grace that helps us to understand grace. And all grace comes from Him and through Him.

Now what's the purpose of grace? I hope this will bless you. It sure has blessed me. "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and [what?] grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9). Wait a minute! I wasn't in existence, but it was given to me before the world began.

I said this one time and made people upset, but I believe it. I believe that God had you and everything about you in His mind before He ever created the world. That's kind of a neat thought, isn't it? Yeah, I didn't come around 'til the 20th century, but God had me in His mind before the world was ever created.

Titus 2:11-13. You know what really hit me when I went to Titus 2? That even in the struggle that you and I have to live a godly life...and let's be honest, it's a struggle. It's a hard thing. It's difficult. It's not easy to live for the Lord. And there's so much trouble out there. And you know it's not just out there. It's in your own heart. And it just really hit me that God's grace, which provides everything, also provides you and me the ability to live for the Lord.

Titus 2:11. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us..." Grace teaches us. What does grace that God gives you what you don't deserve, what does it teach you? "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." It hit me very strongly, because remember the family I was talking to you about?—the girl, how she broke down. That all they were doing is becoming more legalistic. As she rebels, they put down the clamps. She rebels more, they put down more clamps. Rebel more, more restrictions, rebel more, more restrictions. And I'm not against parental discipline, obviously. I'm just saying at some point, you've got to realize that if the convictions of your child are not their convictions and not yours, it's not going to do any good to keep putting these clamps down. It's not doing any good at all.

Paul said, "When the law came, I just coveted all the more." I learned that early. I told my son, my first son, when he was just a little guy, "Don't put your hand in the fire. You'll get burned." And I walked out of the kitchen. Something just told me to go back and take another look. I went back and looked in it. He was looking around to see if anybody was there and stuck his hand right in the fire! Of course, he wants sympathy. Now, you understand?

The law came. Don't put your hand in that fire! And the old sin nature starts saying, "I don't know...I'm going to find out for myself."

God is a wonderful God. He wants to bless you more than you want to receive it. But see, people don't understand that. And so when they read Titus 2, "They got legalism! Oh yeah, life of self-denial again. Big discipline trip." No, it says, "The grace of God will teach you."

In other words, the more you learn about God's grace, and His love, and His mercy, the greater will be your response to deny ungodliness and worldly lust. For me to tell you, "Stay away from the stuff. You're going to ruin your life." You're

going to sit there and say, “I don’t care what he says. I’m going to do what I want to do.” But when the Holy Spirit begins to work on you and God’s wonderful grace pours into your life and you begin to see that God wants to bless you more than you ever wanted to receive. All of a sudden His standards and His commandments, as John says, “are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). They’re not a heavy burden at all any more because they’re all designed to protect you and bless you. Isn’t that neat? That’s God’s grace even in the matter of separation from sin.

Now turn back to Ephesians again, chapter two [Eph 2]. Now when we read this little short paragraph of ten verses, many of you of course if you’ve known the Lord for very long, have already memorized verse eight. “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” It’s a wonderful verse.

There’s a problem however. There’s a disagreement among Christians about this verse and if you want to indicate it, then circle or write out in your notes—the word “that.” In verse eight, the word that is the key word, “For by grace are you saved through faith and THAT is not of yourself. It is the gift of God.” What do people normally say “that” is referring to? Anyone? Faith! So they say that faith is a gift of God. Now by the way, there is a spiritual gift of faith. But the faith to believe in Christ is not something He gives you. That’s your faith in Him.

You say, “Wait a minute. It says ‘it’s a gift of God not of works.’” Well, the problem is “that.” That is a demonstrative pronoun. A pronoun has to agree in gender and number with the word it modifies. It does not modify faith grammatically. What we have is a clause or short phrase to begin the verse that’s translated in English, “by grace are you saved.” We would say perhaps and try to unfold the Greek a little bit more – “having been saved by grace.” In other words, it’s salvation by grace. And that participial form agrees in gender and number with “that.” So the “that” is referring to salvation by grace. And that now makes sense because the word gift, of course, is rooted in the word grace as well.

Salvation by grace is the gift of God and not of yourself. Faith is confidence and trust in what the Bible says about this and you believe on the basis of it (the Bible). A lot of people think and they come from denominational and theological groups, who in fact, believe the opposite. And it’s always amazing to me, you know, if you just let the Bible talk to you. I don’t have to make up anything. It isn’t an interpretation; it’s a problem of grammar. I have no choice in the matter.

'That' refers to salvation by grace, not faith. Now, maybe you could continue to believe that God gives you the faith to believe. But what actually happens is people begin to trust their ability to believe something.

Let me put it to you another way. Faith does not save you. It never has. Jesus Christ saves you. And people get mixed up all the time. So the reason they are struggling in believing in the Lord is they think they have to have enough faith to believe it. Like somehow it's their ability to believe that makes it so. Oh no! Whether you believe it or not, it still is so. He still died on the cross for our sins. He still rose again from the dead. And if you're struggling with it, I want you to know that your struggle has nothing to do with whether it's true or not. It's not your ability to believe it.

Faith isn't whistling in the dark, or hoping something is so, when you're not sure it is. Turn over to Hebrews 11 just for a quick moment; verse one, "Faith is the substance [the foundation, the ground] of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Imagine if that was just your faith. You'd live in depression most of the time.

Verse three [Hebrews 11:3] says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by [what?] The word of God." Oh, here we have an explanation because it says, "the things that are seen were not made of things that do appear." So here we've got creation out of nothing. So how are you going to believe that? The only way you're going to believe it is by believing that when the Bible said that, the Bible is true. You say, "Well, I wasn't there." It doesn't make any difference. "Well I've never really seen how that operates in the physical universe." It doesn't make any difference. God's asking you to believe what the Book says.

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." You see, your faith is merely a channel. Or, as an African pastor friend of mine says, "The hand of the heart that simply reaches out and takes what God says and believes it." But your faith doesn't save you.

When you sit down in a chair, you are entrusting yourself to the thing you say you believe in, the chair, to hold you up. Most of us when offered a chair to sit down, we don't get under the chair to see if the legs will hold us up. We don't check it and you know, work it over and so forth. And some of them do fall and when

you're my size it's a question. Okay. But do you understand me? You don't check the chair. Why? You entrust yourself to the thing you say you believe in. What holds you up? Your faith? No, the chair! In the illustration, Jesus is the chair.

So please understand that when we talk about grace providing salvation and He says "by grace we are saved" is that which is a gift of God. All that causes you and me to be saved is all the product of God's grace. It has nothing to do with anything you ever did.

Okay, back to grace. Grace also is very much involved in our service and ministry for the Lord. There are several passages. But turn to 1 Peter 4. One of the interesting explanations of God's grace deals with spiritual gifts. Give me a word that would describe people who believe in spiritual gifts. Charismatic. You see all that is, is a takeoff on the word for grace—charisma, *charis*, charismatic, meaning a person who believes in God's grace. Well then all Christians are charismatic Christians. Amen? You see how we twist terms? All Christians truly are charismatic Christians, but we've created the term to mean something other than that.

Now it is interesting to me how fundamental it is to the issue of grace. You remember in Romans 12, where there's a short list of gifts, verses 3 to 8 [Rom 12:3-8]. It all begins with "the grace which was given to us." And here in 1 Peter 4 beginning in verse 10 [1Pe 4:10], it says, "As every man has received the gift." For those of you who are good Bible students, the word *the* is not in the Greek text. It's just every man has received *a* gift. It's not talking about any particular gift. "Even so minister [serve] the same [meaning that gift that God has given you] one to another as good stewards." God has given you something to manage. Good stewards of what? Of the manifold, sensational talents and abilities and educational opportunities that you in fact have demonstrated throughout your life that makes you such a gifted person. No, he didn't say that. What he said was, "it's the manifold grace of God."

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister," or serve...here he splits all the gifts into two categories. You either have a speaking gift or you have a doing or a serving gift. And if you have a serving gift, "do it with the ability God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11). So grace makes possible the whole ministry of spiritual gifts.

Now how does it demonstrate the manifold grace of God? Okay. When some of us talk about spiritual gifts, we catalogue it into terms that we think make sense to us. But the truth of the matter is that God said in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 that there are differences, not only in the number of gifts but the way the gifts are ministered and as to how effective in operating they will be. It's very interesting to me. We don't like differences. We like people to fit into a category that we designed.

I'm going to try to illustrate it the simple way I can. But the reason God caused all of this is so that the manifold, which is a word referring to a diamond, light going through a diamond, a spectrum, it shoots out in many directions. The point is that grace is so wonderful, so broad, so fantastic, is that you can see it in a multitude of ways through the ministry of gifts. "As each one has a gift, he's to minister as a good steward..." God gave you something to manage. He gave you a gift. You have at least one. We believe you can have several. Some of the people in the Bible did. God gave you at least one gift. God wants you to use it for His glory. But He wants also to show the many sides of His grace through your gift. Now how does He do that?

Let me illustrate. One of the gifts mentioned in Romans 12 [Rom 12:7] is called the gift of teaching. I am familiar with that one; so I'll illustrate with that one, the gift of teaching. Now there are differences in the number of gifts. Not everybody has the gift of teaching. Some have the gift of exhortation or showing mercy. There are not only differences in the kinds of gifts we have, but there are differences in the way it is used, 1 Corinthians 12:5. But it's the same Lord we serve. And this will demonstrate God's grace. God is so gracious that He allows you and me to use the exact same gift in different ways.

Now in the case of teaching, how could we illustrate that? Well, some people are very effective at teaching little children. And other people will use the gift to teach adults. Frequently I've noticed that people who teach adults think they have more of the gift of teaching than those who teach children. Well, all I say to those who think that is, "Why don't you go teach the little toddlers for a while and then let's hear from you." To me, it takes a lot more giftedness and skill to teach these little children than it does adults.

Let me tell you something. God's grace is seen in a more interesting way than that. Because the Bible says there're differences in the extent to which the gift is

used. And all of a sudden I begin to see something. Some people God has gifted to be comfortable teaching thousands of people at once. They're not enamored by it. They're not pressured by it. They can do it with ease and it doesn't seem to bother them at all. And I've also noticed that some people are very comfortable teaching one on one, or with two or three guys. And they don't feel comfortable, the larger the crowd the more nervous they get.

So, what is this showing? Well, it's showing that one guy is a lot more talented. No it's not. It's showing the manifold grace of God. See? It's God's grace that provides all these differences so that we will see that God isn't limited. He's not limited to anything. And it's very interesting.

Now, I have no problem teaching thousands of people. But this is the truth; I enjoy teaching small groups of people as well. It doesn't make any difference to me. And I know what it is to speak to large crowds. But I have just as much joy talking to a couple of people about the Word of God. So, I don't understand that. But I believe it manifests God's wonderful grace. God's grace has made that possible.

So we need to understand that grace is providing everything. How the gifts are used. What they are, all of it...it's all coming from God's grace.

Now at the bottom of verse nine, there's a third subject. Not only the person of grace and the purpose of it, but what are the provisions of it? I love this. 1 Peter 5:12, to me almost gives the theme of 1 Peter. Most everybody who has a book on 1 Peter says the theme is suffering. I'm not sure. When I taught 1 Peter, I chose a different theme. Which I think came out of that text. But look at verse twelve [1Pe 5:12]. As he's giving his final greetings, he said:

"By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you as I suppose I've written briefly exhorting and testifying that this [whatever he's been talking about.] is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

So you see behind all the talk about suffering and trial and the pressures they were under, because they were scattered abroad over the whole empire, he wrote to the Jews that were dispersed. But behind all of that was God's grace. You know it just opened up. All of a sudden, that one little phrase: "this (what I've been talking to you about) is the true grace of God." God's grace has been behind this all the way.

Just to emphasize that a tiny bit. Look at 1 Peter 5:10. After telling us the devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We're to resist him. And these afflictions are accomplished in your other brothers in the world. Verse 10 [1Pe 5:10] says, "But the God of all [what?] grace, who called you unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus after you have suffered a while will make you perfect, established, strengthen and settle you." So what's the real theme? The real theme is God's grace. That will even sustain you when you're being attacked and will cause it all to be turned into glory for the Lord and good for you. God's grace is really the theme.

What I want you to see from 1 Peter 5:12 is that our standing according to him, the position we have in Christ, is provided by grace. "The true grace of God wherein ye stand;" that whole concept in the New Testament, especially in the epistles of Paul is great, our standing in Christ.

Now our state is not often like our standing. Our practice is not like our position. But my position in Christ is totally secure. My position in Christ means that I am righteous, redeemed, sanctified, all of these wonderful things, already! My position in Christ means that I am seated in the heavenlies with Him, though I haven't gotten there yet physically. I have a position in the Lord that is absolutely secure.

If you want to study this, I'll tell you how it came to me years ago. Not by books other than the Bible, but just through the Bible. It started hitting me as I was reading the New Testament that Paul kept saying "in Christ, in Christ, in Christ Jesus." And that got to me. So I then took out a tablet and for about a year made it my practice to study all of the passages that tell me that I am in Christ. Boy, when I got done with that, I never felt so secure in all my life! When you study your true position and standing in Christ, you'll stop evaluating on the basis of performance. You'll realize this is all of the Lord. I am in Christ. All the righteousness I would ever need is in Him. I don't have any of my own. And that is a powerful thing. God's grace provides that, makes all of that possible. Everything you need is in Christ and guess what? You are in Him.

Number two is your strength. You know when Paul was talking to those elders from the church at Ephesus who met him on the island of Miletus, He said, "Now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His [what?] grace; which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are

sanctified” (Acts 20:32) That’s such a wonderful thing. God’s grace will build you up. It will strengthen you.

But perhaps the most powerful one of all is in 2 Corinthians 12. Have you ever noticed how often particular verses of the Bible at a particular time in your life will become very meaningful?

Twenty-three years ago when I had throat surgery, it was the most painful time I have ever experienced in all my life. They gave me a shot of morphine every 30 minutes and it never worked. I was screaming and yelling. The pain was so awful for six straight weeks! I thought I was insane. I wanted to kill myself. I really did. I knew better, but I just couldn’t stand the pain. It was awful. You know your throat is really sensitive. And they start digging around and cutting things out of there, you can only imagine. And it was during that time that God ministered to me with 2 Corinthians 12. And it was the only thing I clung onto and it meant everything to me.

Pick it up in verse seven [2Cr 12:7]. “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations...” Paul had a lot of epistles. “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.” Some people take that to mean depravity. I don’t think it makes any sense. Of course, all of us have that problem. Now something came to him. I think he’s talking physical here, a physical problem. But it was inflicted by Satan. Satan can inflict physical infirmities on a person, the Bible says so— “A messenger of Satan to buffet me.” To buffet me! Sometimes it helps to translate those a little differently. Beat me up. I don’t know about you, but “beat me up” hits me different than buffeted me. No. He beat me up!

Paul is really in a deep problem physically. But he said, “God did this lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice (three times).” But the point of it was that there were three specific occasions. I even thought of my occasion. Elders came in and anointed me with oil and prayed that I’d be healed. God didn’t want it that way. I have been healed, by the way, supernaturally by God. So I am a recipient of that, absolute miracle. That’s undeniable. I’m here to talk about it. I have been recipient of physical healing. I’m talking instantaneous disappearance of something that was physical. Shook me up so much I was scared for days! But I can at least say for thirty years now the Lord

had performed a miracle, a healing. But when it came to this throat surgery, cancerous condition of the throat, He said, "No."

Paul said, "I did it three times." Did he ask to be anointed? It's possible. I don't know. Because anybody knows that when you're in deep pain and suffering, you're praying all the time about it. But apparently there were three special occasions where perhaps group prayer was done and pouring out your heart to God. And God wouldn't do it. He wouldn't heal him.

2 Corinthians 12:9, but here's what God did say unto him. "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Look at the response. He says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Grace provides strength. Then I say, "Praise the Lord." How about you?

Now I've got a lot of physical difficulties. Do you? Some of you may be thrilled that you don't. Anyway, there are a lot of physical difficulties that a person has. And the question is why God leaves them with you. Not only does not heal, but why He leaves it with you 'til you go home to be with the Lord. But isn't it interesting that the grace of God is what is sufficient to provide for you all the strength you need even in that weakness. I think it's wonderful!

You see, what I learned about God's grace is that He sustains you, strengthens you, helps you to understand that power is not in the outer man. That's why He allows the enemy to beat you up a little bit.

But interesting, isn't it that 2 Peter 3:18 says, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Our very growth in the Lord is in the sphere of grace, providing us what we don't deserve. "We are not under law, but under [what?] grace" (Romans 6:14). Our freedom, not a freedom to sin and violate the law, but we are not controlled by the law as a method of salvation or a means of growth. And that was provided by God's grace. And grace was in Christ. Grace and truth came by Him.

Look at 2 Corinthians 8:9. Very interesting verse! I have this on a gigantic parchment in old English lettering in a gold antique frame, huge thing, right

behind my desk where I study in my office. Here's what the verse says: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich." Isn't that beautiful?

What's he talking about in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9? He's talking about giving. The Corinthians were wealthy had not given the gift they had promised to help the suffering saints in Jerusalem and Judea. But the Macedonian Christians, who were poor people, not only gave an offering; they gave more, totally beyond their ability to give. And he uses the example, the Macedonian Christians to rebuke the Corinthians believers who had all the wealth and said they would give and hadn't given it yet. To motivate them, he turns their eyes to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's why I like to call New Testament giving, "grace giving." That's what it is.

Hebrews 4:14-16 is one of the most wonderful verses in the Bible. And if you're hurting a little bit right now, may God encourage your heart with it.

***Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens,
Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.***

***For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our
infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.***

***Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of [what?] grace, that we may
obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

God invites us to come to Him. His very throne He sits on will one day be a throne of judgment. But now He calls it a throne of grace. That encourages me to pray. God wants to give to me what I don't deserve. Just come and ask Me, He says. It's a throne of grace. And there I will obtain mercy, because I don't deserve it. He'll hold back from me what I really deserve, allowing me to come into His presence because of Christ. And He will give me grace, more grace than ever, to help me in my time of need. Isn't God wonderful? He really is.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND GRACE ESTOPPEL

Grace Estoppel is a theoretical extension of legal estoppel that focuses on the moral and ethical duty to uphold the fairness of acts of grace. It can be thought of as preventing someone from going back on the benefits they received through an act of kindness, forgiveness, or leniency—whether in legal, personal, or moral contexts.

The principles behind Grace Estoppel mirror many biblical teachings about grace, fairness, and reciprocity. Here, we explore the key principles of Grace Estoppel and the corresponding biblical passages that support these ideas.

Grace as an Act of Benevolence

At the heart of Grace Estoppel is the notion that one party extends grace—benevolence, leniency, or forgiveness—without expecting anything in return. This grace creates an ethical obligation for the recipient to honor it. In the Bible, the concept of grace is deeply rooted in God's unconditional love for humanity.

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Here, grace is described as a gift given freely, not based on merit or works. Similarly, Grace Estoppel applies when a party offers a favor or concession that goes beyond legal or contractual obligations.

Reliance on the Act of Grace

Grace Estoppel also incorporates the idea that the recipient of grace relies on the act of grace to their benefit. In both legal and moral contexts, when someone relies on a benevolent act, they are trusting that the other party will not later revoke or contradict the grace that was extended.

In biblical teachings, reliance on God's grace is a central theme, illustrating how faith in grace leads to salvation.

Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Just as Christians place their faith in the grace of God, expecting that it will be honored, so too do individuals rely on the acts of grace extended to them in human relationships.

Preventing Inconsistency and Unconscionability

Grace Estoppel seeks to prevent **inconsistent or unconscionable behavior**. It ensures that someone who benefits from an act of grace cannot later act in a way that contradicts the spirit of that grace. In essence, it stops people from "taking advantage" of kindness and then ignoring or undermining it.

The Bible strongly emphasizes the importance of treating others fairly and justly, especially when we have received grace ourselves. For example, the parable of the Unmerciful Servant illustrates this principle:

Matthew 18:32-33: "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'"

In this parable, the servant is condemned because he acted inconsistently after receiving grace (the cancellation of his debt) by refusing to extend the same mercy to his fellow servant. Grace Estoppel prevents such contradictory actions, ensuring fairness by holding people to the consequences of the grace they have accepted.

Reciprocity: Treating Others with Grace

A key principle behind Grace Estoppel is that one should **extend grace to others** in the same way it has been extended to them. If one party has accepted leniency or forgiveness, they should act graciously and fairly in return, instead of exploiting the situation.

The Bible's teachings on reciprocity and grace are clear, particularly in the teachings of Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out a model for how grace should lead to reciprocal actions:

Matthew 7:12: *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

This passage reinforces the ethical duty of reciprocity, which mirrors the principle of Grace Estoppel. Those who receive grace are ethically bound to extend similar kindness and fairness to others.

Fairness and Justice in Grace

The principle of **fairness** is central to Grace Estoppel. It asserts that once grace is extended and relied upon, it would be unjust for the recipient to later deny its existence or try to reverse its benefits. In both law and scripture, fairness and justice are highly valued, and one should not exploit acts of grace for selfish gains.

The Bible constantly reinforces the importance of fairness and justice, especially in the treatment of others:

Micah 6:8: *"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

This passage highlights the moral obligation to act justly and with mercy—principles that align with the essence of Grace Estoppel. Once grace is offered and accepted, justice requires that it be honored and not exploited.

Obligation to Forgive and Honor Grace

In the Christian tradition, forgiveness is a powerful form of grace. Once forgiveness is extended, it creates an ethical obligation on the part of the forgiven party to respect that grace. Grace Estoppel, in this context, would prevent someone from later undermining the act of forgiveness they received.

Jesus speaks to the importance of forgiveness in his teachings:

Luke 6:37: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

Here, forgiveness is tied to reciprocity. Grace Estoppel would prevent a person from being forgiven and then later contradicting or denying the grace they received by, for example, condemning others or failing to forgive similar wrongs.

Grace as a Gift Not to Be Exploited

Finally, Grace Estoppel can be seen as protecting the **sacredness of grace as a gift**. In the Bible, grace is often described as something precious and undeserved, and it should not be taken lightly or abused. Once someone has received grace, they are bound to respect it and should not act in a way that contradicts the generosity they have benefited from.

2 Corinthians 9:8: “And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

Grace is given freely, but it is not without expectations. Those who receive it are called to “abound in every good work”—to honor the grace through their actions. In a legal context, Grace Estoppel holds people accountable to the ethical obligations created by acts of grace, preventing them from acting in a way that dishonors the grace they have received.

The Principles of Grace Estoppel and Scripture

Grace Estoppel, though a theoretical concept, aligns closely with biblical teachings on grace, justice, and reciprocity. The principles behind Grace Estoppel reflect the moral and ethical duties emphasized in scripture, where grace is seen as a gift that should not be exploited or taken for granted. Once grace is extended, whether in the form of leniency, forgiveness, or kindness, the recipient is bound to honor that grace and act consistently with it.

The Bible offers numerous lessons that support these principles, from the importance of forgiveness and fairness to the moral duty of reciprocity. In both legal and biblical frameworks, Grace Estoppel serves to prevent unfairness and inconsistency, ensuring that acts of grace are respected and upheld in all interactions.

God and Abraham

In the biblical narrative, God and Abraham have a complex relationship. God made several promises (or covenants) to Abraham, including making him the father of many nations (Genesis 17:4) and blessing him. The most challenging moment in their relationship is the *Binding of Isaac* (Genesis 22), where God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac but intervenes at the last moment, sparing Isaac's life. This test is often viewed as a demonstration of Abraham's faith and God's grace.

Possible Connection

If you are drawing a parallel between grace, estoppel, and God's interaction with Abraham, you could be exploring how God's promises (grace) are unchanging and how Abraham might not have been able to claim any different treatment (estoppel) based on his actions. However, God's grace intervenes in a way that estoppel in legal terms doesn't—He provides unmerited favor, allowing Abraham's faith to stand without ultimate sacrifice. In this sense, God's grace could be seen as overriding the strict application of "estoppel," if we consider Abraham's possible internal doubts or actions.

Grace Estoppel in the God-Abraham Relationship

In the relationship between **God and Abraham**, the concept of **grace estoppel** might symbolize the tension between Abraham's human weaknesses (which could have triggered estoppel) and God's overwhelming grace. In each situation where Abraham's actions might have invalidated God's promises in human terms, **God's grace** prevents those actions from stopping the fulfillment of the covenant.

In essence, God's **grace** nullifies any estoppel, ensuring that His promises to Abraham are fulfilled regardless of human mistakes. This emphasizes the idea that divine grace is both powerful and unconditional, not subject to the limitations of human legal or moral frameworks

When we think of **grace estoppel** in relation to **God's actions toward Abraham**, it seems like you're pointing to the tension between God's **grace** (His unmerited favor and kindness) and any perceived limitations or conditions that could have "estopped" God from blessing Abraham due to Abraham's actions or decisions. In this context, we can explore how God's grace continually overrides any potential barriers or failings that might otherwise have prevented the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham.

Grace in God's Covenant with Abraham

God made several covenants and promises to Abraham, including:

- The promise to make Abraham a great nation (Genesis 12:2-3).
- The promise of land (Genesis 15:18).
- The promise of a son through Sarah, despite their old age (Genesis 17:16-19).

Each of these promises is an act of grace—God chooses Abraham and offers these blessings, not because of any merit on Abraham's part but because of God's plan and favor. Grace here is unconditional and expansive.

Estoppel and Abraham's Shortcomings

If we apply the concept of **estoppel**, Abraham's actions might have created conditions that could have "stopped" or prevented the continuation of God's

blessings. Here are key moments where Abraham's behavior could have invoked estoppel in human terms:

Abraham's Doubt: In Genesis 17, when God tells Abraham that Sarah will bear a son, Abraham laughs and expresses doubt because of their old age. This doubt could be seen as a lack of faith in God's promise, which could have "estopped" God from continuing to bless him.

Hagar and Ishmael: When Sarah doubts she can bear a child, she suggests that Abraham have a child with Hagar, her servant. Abraham goes along with this plan, resulting in the birth of Ishmael. In human terms, this action might be seen as a diversion from God's original promise. If estoppel were applied here, Abraham's attempt to fulfill the promise on his own terms could have negated or hindered the continuation of God's promise to provide a child through Sarah.

Lying about Sarah: On two occasions (in Egypt in Genesis 12, and with Abimelech in Genesis 20), Abraham lies about Sarah being his wife, saying she is his sister to protect himself. In both cases, this lack of faith in God's protection could have theoretically disqualified Abraham from receiving the continued favor of God.

In these examples, if **estoppel** were strictly applied, God could have said, "You doubted or acted against my promise; therefore, I am no longer bound to fulfill it."

God's Grace Overrides Estoppel

Despite these actions, God continually demonstrates that His **grace** overcomes any potential estoppel. Rather than punishing Abraham or retracting His promises, God remains faithful to His covenant:

The Birth of Isaac: Even though Abraham and Sarah doubted and took matters into their own hands with Hagar, God still fulfills His original promise by giving them Isaac through Sarah. This shows that God's grace is not contingent on Abraham's perfect behavior but rather on God's sovereign plan.

Protection and Prosperity: Despite Abraham's deceptions about Sarah, God still protects Abraham and Sarah and ensures their well-being, even when Abraham's actions could have led to disaster.

The Test of Isaac: In Genesis 22, when God tests Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham's willingness to obey shows his ultimate trust in God. However, God's grace is again evident when He provides a ram as a substitute for Isaac. This is another example of how God's grace intervenes at crucial moments, preventing the destruction of His promises.

Grace as the Defining Character of God's Relationship with Abraham

In legal terms, **estoppel** would bind someone to the consequences of their previous actions or words. In Abraham's case, his doubts, fears, and missteps could have legally (or morally) "estopped" God from fulfilling His promises. Yet, **God's grace** continually overrides this. God is not bound by the limitations of human failings or inconsistencies.

This dynamic reveals a powerful truth: God's grace supersedes human failures. His promises are not revoked because of momentary lapses in faith or poor decisions. In the relationship between God and Abraham, **grace** operates beyond the constraints of human logic, ensuring that the divine plan unfolds despite human frailty.

Grace in the Covenant's Fulfillment

God's covenant with Abraham is ultimately fulfilled in ways that reflect His grace and faithfulness:

The Birth of Isaac: In Genesis 21, despite Abraham and Sarah's old age, God fulfills His promise by giving them Isaac. This child is the first tangible fulfillment of God's promise to make Abraham the father of many nations, showing that God's grace is not dependent on human capability but on His divine will.

The Test of Abraham's Faith (Genesis 22): One of the most dramatic moments in Abraham's life is when God tests him by asking him to sacrifice Isaac.

Abraham's willingness to obey demonstrates his deep faith, but at the last moment, God graciously intervenes, providing a ram as a substitute sacrifice. This event reinforces the idea that God's grace will always provide and that His promises are certain, even when human understanding is limited.

Additionally, this event can be seen as a prefiguration of the ultimate act of grace in Christian theology: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom God's promise to bless all nations is fulfilled.

Grace Extended to Future Generations

The grace shown to Abraham extends beyond his own life to his descendants, fulfilling God's promise that through him, all nations would be blessed:

Isaac, Jacob, and the Israelites: The promises made to Abraham are reiterated to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4) and his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15), showing that God's grace is multi-generational. Even though the Israelites, Abraham's descendants, often fail to uphold their end of the covenant, God continues to extend grace and ultimately fulfills His promises by giving them the Promised Land.

Jesus Christ as the Fulfillment of the Promise: Christians believe that the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham—to bless all nations—comes through Jesus Christ, a descendant of Abraham. The New Testament makes this connection explicit in Galatians 3:14, where Paul writes, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus." This demonstrates the full realization of God's grace through the covenant with Abraham, as it extends beyond the Jewish people to all humanity.

The Theological Implication of God's Grace in the Covenant

The story of God's covenant with Abraham highlights the idea that God's plans and promises are not thwarted by human failure. His grace is unconditional, reflecting His character as loving, faithful, and just. For Christians, this covenant is a powerful example of how God works through imperfect people to bring about His redemptive purposes. Abraham's story shows that grace, not human merit, is the foundation of God's relationship with humanity.

The Centrality of Grace in the Covenant

God's covenant with Abraham is one of the clearest biblical examples of divine grace. God's promises to Abraham are not based on Abraham's righteousness but on God's sovereign plan and kindness. Even when Abraham falters in faith, God continues to show grace by reaffirming His covenant and ultimately fulfilling it through the birth of Isaac and the establishment of a great nation. This grace reaches its culmination in the Christian belief that through Abraham's descendants, all nations are blessed by the coming of Jesus Christ.

God's relationship with Abraham, therefore, serves as a timeless reminder of the power of divine grace—grace that is freely given, unmerited, and ultimately transformative.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF GRACE ESTOPPEL AND THE LIFE OF PAUL

The **historical development of Grace Estoppel** can be understood by looking at how principles of **equity, justice, and grace** have evolved in both legal theory and biblical teaching. Grace Estoppel, though not a formal legal doctrine, is rooted in the broader concepts of **equitable estoppel** and **promissory estoppel**, where fairness prevents one party from acting inconsistently with a previous act of grace or leniency that they benefited from. This chapter delves into the historical evolution of these concepts, drawing parallels with the **life of Paul**, one of the most prominent figures in Christian history, whose transformation from persecutor to apostle embodies the principles of grace and redemption.

Origins in Equity Law

The foundation of estoppel is built on **equity law**, which originated in the English legal system as a means to provide justice when the strict application of common law was too rigid or produced unfair outcomes. Estoppel prevents a party from asserting something contrary to what has previously been implied by their actions, representations, or promises, especially when another party has relied on them.

As legal doctrines evolved, different types of estoppel emerged, such as **promissory estoppel** (preventing someone from reneging on a promise that was relied upon) and **equitable estoppel** (preventing a party from denying a fact that another party has relied on).

The Concept of Grace in Legal and Moral Theory

The idea of **grace**—the unearned or undeserved favor extended to someone—has long played a role in both moral and legal contexts. Acts of grace often occur in the absence of legal obligation, such as a creditor forgiving part of a debt or someone choosing not to enforce strict legal rights. Grace Estoppel would prevent the beneficiary of such an act from later contradicting the leniency or generosity they have received.

In the development of modern legal systems, particularly in **equity courts**, judges frequently applied principles of fairness, ensuring that people who received acts of grace were not allowed to later act in bad faith by taking advantage of those same acts.

Influence of Biblical Teachings

Many legal scholars argue that **Christian values**, including concepts of grace and mercy, influenced the development of Western legal traditions, particularly in the area of equity law. The Bible's emphasis on forgiveness, fairness, and justice provides a moral backdrop to the legal principle that one should not exploit the grace they have received.

This is particularly evident in biblical teachings such as:

Matthew 18:21-35: *The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant teaches that those who receive forgiveness or mercy should act consistently with that grace. The servant, having been forgiven a large debt, should have shown the same mercy to his fellow servant, but his failure to do so resulted in his punishment.*

This story reinforces the idea that someone who receives grace (in this case, forgiveness of a debt) is ethically bound to act in accordance with that grace, which forms the essence of **Grace Estoppel**.

The Life of Paul: A Story of Grace and Transformation

The **Apostle Paul**, originally known as Saul of Tarsus, is one of the most significant figures in Christian history, and his life is a powerful testimony to the transformative power of grace. Paul's personal experience of receiving divine grace and his teachings on grace provide a profound illustration of the principles behind Grace Estoppel.

Saul's Early Life: A Persecutor of Christians

Before his conversion, Saul was a zealous Pharisee who actively persecuted early Christians. He believed that by doing so, he was defending the Jewish faith. Saul was present at the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and took part in efforts to arrest and punish followers of Jesus.

Acts 8:3: *"But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison."*

Saul's early life represented the antithesis of grace—he was driven by legalism and punishment rather than forgiveness or mercy.

Paul's Conversion: A Dramatic Act of Grace

Paul's conversion is one of the most dramatic stories in the Bible. On his way to Damascus to continue persecuting Christians, Saul encountered the risen Christ. In this moment, Saul's life was transformed by the **grace of God**, and he became

Paul, a fervent apostle of Jesus Christ. This event marks a clear moment of grace in Paul's life.

Acts 9:3-6: "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'"

This divine act of grace is a turning point. Paul, who had been an enemy of Christians, was forgiven and transformed, illustrating how grace can lead to redemption and a complete change in behavior.

Paul's Teachings on Grace

After his conversion, Paul became one of the most vocal proponents of the doctrine of grace. He preached that salvation is not earned by works but is a gift of grace through faith. This teaching is central to his epistles in the New Testament and provides the theological foundation for understanding how grace should transform human behavior.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Paul's emphasis on grace extended to how Christians should treat one another. He taught that just as they had received grace, they must also extend it to others. This concept aligns with the legal principle behind **Grace Estoppel**—once grace is received, it creates an ethical obligation to act consistently with that grace.

Paul's Life: A Living Example of Grace Estoppel

Paul's life after his conversion is a living testament to the principles of Grace Estoppel. Having received grace from God, Paul spent the rest of his life dedicated to spreading the message of grace to others. He did not return to his previous life of persecuting Christians but instead became one of the most influential apostles of the early church.

In legal terms, Paul would be "estopped" from returning to his former ways because of the profound grace he had received. His life is a model of how receiving grace creates a moral obligation to live consistently with that grace.

Philippians 3:12-14: *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

Paul's commitment to his new life and mission, after receiving grace, exemplifies the principle that grace should not be taken lightly or reversed.

The Grace of God Was Upon Jesus Christ

If you want two great, perfect role models on who had properly walked with the grace of God upon their lives, and who had successfully accomplished all of their earthly missions that God wanted them to accomplish as a result of that divine grace, look no further than the apostle Paul and Jesus Christ Himself.

These first two verses will be on Jesus. These two verses specifically tell us that the grace of God was **"upon"** Jesus and that He was **"full"** of this grace. In other words, the power and favor of God was upon Jesus while He was walking down here on our earth in the flesh. Jesus performed all of His supernatural miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit operating through Him. He did not perform these miracles by His own divine power.

Just as Jesus had His Father's divine grace upon Him to help Him carry out His earthly ministry, so too can we have the same type of divine grace of God upon us and our lives in order to help us carry out and complete all of our divine assignments for Him.

"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." (Luke 2:40)

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Now if God the Father was willing to have His grace rest upon His Son Jesus so that He could successfully carry out all of His earthly mission, will God the Father do the same thing for each born-again believer?

I believe He will, and the next article will prove that to you – as it will show you that the apostle Paul ended up becoming one of the greatest, if not the greatest of all the New Testament apostles as a direct result of the divine grace that was given to him by God the Father.

The Grace of God Was Upon the Apostle Paul

If God is no respecter of persons and He was willing to release and impart His divine grace upon the apostle Paul so that Paul could successfully carry out all of his divine assignments for Him – then I believe that God will do the exact same thing for each born-again believer who will fully surrender their lives over to Him.

If you really want to see how far God can actually take you in this life to become everything that He is calling you to become in Him – study these next 5 verses very, very carefully, as they are giving you a major, powerful, spiritual secret.

If the apostle Paul can have the grace and power of God flowing and operating through him, then so can you if you are willing to work in cooperation and in union with the Lord.

Here are 6 major power verses showing you what God can do through an anointed believer, and how far He can really take you in this supernatural realm if you are willing to yield to it and work with Him on it.

“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.” (1 Corinthians 15:10)

“... of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ...” (Ephesians 3:7-8)

“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, **because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a**

minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God ..."
(Romans 15:15-16)

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and **called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles ...**" (Galatians 1:15)

"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, **not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God**, and more abundantly toward you." (2 Corinthians 1:12)

"And He said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

The first verse perfectly sets the stage as to what had happened between God and Paul. Paul makes one of the most classic statements ever made on the power of God's grace operating through a believer when he says that it is **"by the grace of God I am what I am."**

Paul grasped a very powerful, spiritual secret and truth when he came to the full realization and the full conclusion that all of the successes in his life were as a **direct result** of the grace of God that was upon him and his life. It was by the divine power of God flowing and operating through him that caused him to probably become the greatest of all of the New Testament apostles.

Paul continues to hammer home this point in the additional verses listed above. Notice in the second verse he says that he first became a minister of the gospel as a result of the **"gift of the grace of God"** that was given to him. In the third verse he once more makes the direct statement that he became a minister of Jesus Christ **"because of the grace"** that was given to him.

In the second last verse he sums it all up very nicely when he says that it was not with **"fleshly wisdom"** that he was able to walk and work with the Lord so

successfully – it was **“by the grace of God”** that was upon him that he was able to walk and work so successfully for the Lord.

Paul knew that he did not have the natural abilities within his own mental and emotional makeup to be taking on these kinds of extraordinarily, heavy, divine assignments from the Lord. I gave you a list of all of the troubles and hardships that he had to personally face and endure as God launched him off to preach the gospel and write the epistles he ended up writing.

This man knew, and had grasped very early on, that the only way he was going to make it through all of these trying ordeals was to completely rely on God and His supernatural power to see him through all of it.

And just as Paul needed to completely rely on God and His divine power and grace to fully accomplish all of his divine assignments for the Lord, so too must we learn to do the exact same thing.

Paul is without question, one of the greatest role-models and heroes of the faith from our Bible.

The reason he was able to become so successful in his own personal walk with the Lord is that he found out very early on the spiritual secrets that he was going to need with the Lord – and the first and most powerful secret and truth he found was learning how to walk in the grace of God for his life.

As a result of all of the trials and tribulations he had to personally go through to make it to his own finish line in the Lord – he once again makes a very intense and powerful statement. The last verse above has to do with the thorn in his flesh that the Lord would not take away from him.

Once he realized that God was not going to take this thorn out of him in order to keep him humble with what had been given to him – he ends this incredible verse by stating that he would rather boast all day long in all of his infirmities, persecutions, and distresses – because he came to the revelation that when he would become weak by going through all of these adversities, then he would actually become stronger as a result of relying on God’s power and grace to actually see him through all of it.

God Himself tells Paul right at the beginning of this verse that His grace is going to be more than sufficient for him to weather this particular adversity.

And if God's grace was going to be more than sufficient for him to weather this particular adversity, then that same grace would be more than enough to get him through the rest of the storm clouds that he would have to eventually face later on.

The lesson to be learned from all of this is that no matter how rough and hard your life may get from time to time – realize that God's grace and power resting upon you and flowing through you will be more than enough for you to be able to take on the storm clouds of this life and eventually make it through these storm clouds in one piece and gain eventual victory – just like He did with the apostle Paul. If God is no respecter of persons, then what He did for Paul He will do for you if you will just fully trust Him to do it for you!

Do Not Abuse the Grace of God

With the first definition of grace having to do with the unmerited favor and mercy of God toward us, and that this is the grace that we are actually saved by with our Lord – what will happen next with some Christians is that they will then try to start to take advantage of this grace. In other words, they will start to try and abuse it.

Once you realize that all of your past, present, and future sins will be fully forgiven under the blood that Jesus has already shed for you, it becomes very easy to want to get lazy and then be tempted to want to push the envelope with God the Father to see exactly what you can get away with and how far you can push certain things with Him.

The apostle Paul was way ahead of this possibility with the statement that he makes in these next two verses.

Here is the very solemn warning that Paul is giving us if we think we can go back to our old sinning ways again after we have been saved.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Romans 6:1-2)

“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” (Romans 6:14-15)

Notice in the first verse Paul is telling us that though we have been saved by God’s grace – this does not mean we can go back to our sinning ways again. Paul is flat out telling us that we cannot use the grace of God that we have just been saved with as an excuse and a license to keep on sinning.

He tells us that we have now **“died to sin”** and thus should no longer live and wallow in it. God’s grace is not an open invitation to keep on sinning.

This second verse then tells us that God’s grace has now set us free from sin and the power it use to have over us. This verse is specifically telling us that **“sin shall not have dominion over you”** and that we cannot go back to sinning again just because we have now been saved by God’s grace.

When Paul tells us that sin shall no longer have **“dominion”** over us, what he is trying to tell us is that God’s grace and power can now help us overcome the desire to want to sin, and if by chance we do fall into a heavier sin area, then God’s grace and power can help pull us out of it and help set us free from its death grip.

No matter what kind of heavy sin area you may have fallen into – whether it be to a highly addictive drug, alcohol, or some type of criminal or aberrant behavior – God’s supernatural power can deliver you and set you completely free from the sin if you are willing to take God’s hand and work with Him during the deliverance process.

There is absolutely nothing that the power and grace of God cannot set you completely free from if you are willing to work with Him on it.

The laws of God give us the knowledge of what is sinful and what is not. However, the laws and commandments of God do not have the ability to save us from our sins, nor do the laws of God give us the power and ability to actually overcome any of our sins.

It is only the grace of God that will save us and set us free from our sins – and it is only the grace of God that will give us the power and the ability to be able to stay

out of sin after we have been saved since we now have the Holy Spirit and His power living and operating on the inside of us.

As a result, no Christian will have any excuse on their day of judgment with the Lord if they have refused to pull out of some of these heavier sin areas before they die and cross over. God's grace is available to every single believer. Jesus has already broken off the power that sin has over our lives at the cross. We all now have the power of the Holy Spirit Himself to take on any heavy sin area that we may have fallen into.

Stay Humble With the Grace That God Will Give You

Once you enter into a full surrender with the Lord and are really walking with His divine grace and power operating in your life, one of the things that you will really have to watch out for is the temptation to fall into the pride trap. It will become very easy to have all of this kind of divine power start to go to your head and puff you up.

For those of you who are already walking with the anointing of God in your own personal lives, and for those of you who would really like to enter into this supernatural realm with the Lord – I would highly recommend that you read our article “Pride Will Come Before the Fall” in the Sanctification Section of our site.

I simply cannot stress enough the importance that each and every Christian stay humble in their own personal walks with the Lord. Nothing will destroy your personal relationship with God, the anointing that God can flow through you, and the ministry that God wants to give you than letting all of this divine power go straight to your head.

The spirit of pride literally took out one-third of the entire angelic host from the heaven where God and Jesus dwell in – and it can also personally destroy you and your entire walk with the Lord if you let it get worked too far up into your mind and heart. In the article we have on this deadly sin and enemy, we give you all of the main verses from Scripture that deal with this topic.

As you will see in this next verse I will now give you, God says that He will give grace to the **“humble,”** but that He will **“resist”** those who are **“proud.”**

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

I believe this verse is telling us that God will withhold His grace from anyone who has become too proud in his mind and in his heart. God will not allow His power and grace to be abused, to be tampered with, or to be used for one’s own glory or one’s own selfish purposes.

Stay humble and accountable in your personal walk with the Lord – and He will then continue to give you His grace and power so that you can then reach the finish line that He has set up for you to reach, and accomplish everything that He wants you to accomplish for Him in this life.

Do Not Receive the Grace of God in Vain

In addition to making sure that you do not let the spirit of pride get a foothold into your mind and in your thinking in reference to the grace that God can give you – these next two verses will now give us another major revelation that we really have to watch out for. These next two verses are telling us that we should not **“receive the grace of God in vain.”**

According to some of the different Bible Dictionaries, the word **“vain”** is defined as:

Useless, conceited, empty, to-no-end, nothingness, unreliability, worthless, idle, hollow, fruitless, futile, unprofitable

Once you really start to enter into a full-surrendered, power walk with the Lord where His divine power and grace is flowing through you mightily to accomplish everything that He is wanting you to accomplish for Him in this life, one of the other traps that you really have to watch out for is to make sure that you do not ever start to take His grace for granted or end up letting it be received in vain.

Here are the two verses giving us this piece of revelation from the Lord:

- **“We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” (2 Corinthians 6:1)**

- **“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.” (1 Corinthians 15:10)**

Notice Paul says in this second verse that the grace that God gave him ended up not being in vain. In other words, Paul used and worked with the grace that God was giving him, and as a result, he accomplished all of his divine assignments for the Lord and became one of the greatest apostles in all of the New Testament!

Notice Paul says that he **“labored more abundantly than they all.”** This key phrase is telling us that Paul was using and working with the grace that God was giving him as compared to some of the other Christians who were probably doing nothing or very little with the grace that God was wanting to give to them.

If God is going to give you His grace and power, then He is going to want you to do something with it.

Too many Christians are sitting in the dugout refusing to get into the real game of life with the Lord.

God can give you the baseball bat – which represents His gifts, grace, and power – but you have to be willing to step out of the dugout and get up to the plate and use the power of that bat to hit the ball.

If you do not, then all of God’s gifts, grace, and power that He was wanting to give to you in the first place will all end up being wasted, and you will end up receiving His grace in vain since you did absolutely nothing with the grace that He had initially given to you – just like Paul is perfectly describing in these two Scripture verses.

Paul was very quick to see that some of God’s people were receiving the grace of God in vain because they were not fully utilizing it like what he was doing.

How much of God’s grace is being wasted and ends up being received in vain because so many Christians are not willing to enter into God’s perfect will and plan for their lives?

How many gifted, born-again vessels are just sitting in the dugouts and doing absolutely nothing with the grace and power that God already has residing in them through the Holy Spirit?

As Christians, we have to realize that God has a perfect plan and destiny for each person that will fully surrender to it. And in that perfect plan and destiny is all of God's grace and power that you will ever need to fully accomplish all of your divine assignments for Him. God's grace is all there for the taking for those who are smart enough to grab a hold of it and are willing to work with Him on it.

As a Christian, if you do not find out what your true divine purpose and destiny is going to be with the Lord – then all the grace, power, and gifting that God already has set up for you to operate in will have all been received in vain.

As the above definitions are telling you – you will end up becoming fruitless, empty, unprofitable, and hollow in the eyes of the Lord if you fail to fulfill the divine destiny and purpose that He has already set up for you to enter into before you were even born into your mother's womb.

Grace Estoppel and the Legacy of Paul

The development of **Grace Estoppel** reflects both legal principles of fairness and biblical teachings on grace. In law, estoppel prevents someone from contradicting an act of grace they have benefited from. Biblically, Paul's life illustrates this principle, as his transformation from persecutor to apostle embodies the power of grace to bring about change and the ethical obligation to live in accordance with that grace.

Paul's teachings and life story serve as a powerful reminder that grace, once received, carries with it a responsibility to act justly and consistently. This is the essence of **Grace Estoppel**—that those who benefit from grace are morally and ethically bound to honor it.

CHAPTER 6

GRACE ESTOPPEL IN MODERN JURISPRUDENCE AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

Grace Estoppel, though not a formally established legal doctrine, represents the idea that when one party benefits from an act of grace—such as leniency, forgiveness, or benevolence—it creates an ethical and legal obligation to uphold that grace. This concept parallels the teachings and life of **Jesus Christ**, whose ministry was centered on acts of grace, forgiveness, and justice. The following chapter explores how the principles of Grace Estoppel are applied in modern jurisprudence, drawing connections to the life and teachings of Jesus, with relevant biblical citations.

In contemporary legal systems, the principles behind Grace Estoppel are often reflected in doctrines like **promissory estoppel** and **equitable estoppel**. These doctrines ensure fairness by preventing individuals from acting inconsistently with acts of kindness, promises, or leniency they have benefited from.

Promissory Estoppel

Promissory estoppel prevents a party from going back on a promise, even if no formal contract exists, when another party has relied on that promise to their detriment. In this context, a promise or act of grace creates a binding expectation that it will be honored.

For example, a creditor might promise a debtor an extension on a loan repayment as an act of grace. If the debtor relies on that promise and takes actions based on the extension, the creditor cannot later enforce the original deadline without violating the principles of fairness.

Legal Principle: Promissory estoppel holds a party accountable to their act of grace, ensuring that the beneficiary of that act can rely on it in good faith. Courts enforce this to prevent injustice when reliance on grace or a promise has occurred.

Equitable Estoppel

Equitable estoppel arises when one party, by their conduct or representations, leads another to believe certain facts or conditions exist. When someone extends grace or acts leniently, the benefiting party is precluded from acting in a way that contradicts that act. Modern courts apply this principle to prevent a party from denying facts or representations if doing so would cause harm to the party who relied on them.

For example, a landlord may allow a tenant to make late rent payments during difficult times. The landlord may later be estopped from evicting the tenant for previous late payments, especially if the tenant relied on the landlord's leniency.

Legal Principle: In equitable estoppel, the focus is on preventing one party from contradicting their previous actions or representations, particularly when those actions were rooted in grace or leniency.

The Role of Unconscionability in Grace Estoppel

Modern legal systems often invoke the concept of **unconscionability**—where an action is so unfair or unjust that it shocks the conscience of the court. Grace Estoppel fits within this framework by preventing individuals from benefiting from acts of grace or leniency and later acting in ways that are unconscionable, such as exploiting the grace they received for personal gain.

Legal Principle: Courts prevent unconscionable conduct by applying estoppel principles to ensure that grace, once extended and relied upon, is not revoked or contradicted to the detriment of others.

The Life of Jesus: The Embodiment of Grace

The life and teachings of **Jesus Christ** serve as the ultimate model for understanding the principles behind Grace Estoppel. Jesus' ministry was characterized by acts of grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love. These acts of grace established moral obligations for those who received them, echoing the idea that beneficiaries of grace are bound to uphold its spirit.

Jesus' Teachings on Forgiveness and Grace

Jesus consistently taught that those who receive grace and forgiveness should extend the same to others. This teaching is central to the ethical foundations of Grace Estoppel, where the recipient of grace is morally obligated to act in accordance with that grace.

Matthew 6:14-15: ***“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”***

Here, Jesus emphasizes the reciprocal nature of grace and forgiveness: those who receive grace are expected to forgive others. Grace Estoppel embodies this principle by ensuring that those who benefit from leniency or kindness cannot later contradict or deny the grace they have received.

The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)

One of the most powerful examples of Jesus extending grace is found in the story of the woman caught in adultery. The religious leaders brought her to Jesus, expecting Him to condemn her based on the law. However, Jesus responded with grace, saying:

John 8:7: “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

After the accusers left, Jesus showed further grace by telling the woman that He did not condemn her and encouraged her to live a life of repentance:

John 8:11: “Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.”

This act of grace represents a key principle of Grace Estoppel: the woman, having received grace, is expected to live a changed life. She is not condemned but is bound by the grace she has received to act consistently with it. Similarly, in law, once a party benefits from an act of grace, they are estopped from acting in ways that undermine or contradict that grace.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

The **Parable of the Prodigal Son** illustrates the transformative power of grace and the obligations it creates. In this story, a father shows unconditional grace by welcoming his wayward son back home after the son had squandered his inheritance.

Luke 15:22-24: “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

The father’s act of grace transforms the son’s life and reinstates him into the family. In legal terms, Grace Estoppel would prevent the son from later denying his father’s kindness or acting in ways that contradict the grace he received. This story illustrates how receiving grace places moral and ethical obligations on the recipient.

Jesus' Sacrificial Grace on the Cross

The ultimate act of grace in the life of Jesus is His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus willingly gave His life to offer humanity grace and forgiveness. This act established an unbreakable moral obligation for believers to live lives reflective of the grace they have received.

Romans 5:8: *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

This verse highlights that grace is extended not because of the recipient's worthiness but because of love. Those who receive this grace are called to live in a way that honors it, much like the principles of Grace Estoppel in law, where the recipient of grace cannot later undermine or contradict it.

Grace Estoppel and the Teachings of Jesus

The principles behind **Grace Estoppel** find deep resonance in both modern legal jurisprudence and the life and teachings of **Jesus Christ**. In law, Grace Estoppel seeks to prevent beneficiaries of grace from contradicting the kindness, forgiveness, or leniency they have received, ensuring fairness and justice. This aligns with the biblical teachings of Jesus, who emphasized the transformative power of grace and the moral obligations it creates for those who receive it.

In the life of Jesus, we see grace offered freely and generously, yet always with an expectation of transformation and accountability. His teachings on forgiveness, the example of the woman caught in adultery, the prodigal son, and His ultimate sacrifice on the cross all illustrate that grace is not to be taken lightly or exploited. Instead, grace binds the recipient to live in a way that reflects the generosity they have experienced.

In both law and scripture, **grace** is a gift that comes with the responsibility to act consistently with its spirit. Grace Estoppel, as it applies in modern jurisprudence, ensures that this ethical principle is upheld, preventing individuals from acting unjustly after receiving acts of grace or leniency. Similarly, in the teachings of Jesus, those who receive divine grace are called to live lives that honor and reflect the profound gift they have been given.

CHAPTER 7

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON GRACE AND JUSTICE FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The concepts of **grace** and **justice** are central to the Bible, appearing in both the **Old Testament** and the **New Testament**. While the Old Testament emphasizes the importance of law, justice, and covenant obligations, the New Testament focuses more on the principles of grace, forgiveness, and redemption through Christ. Despite these different emphases, both testaments reveal a consistent portrayal of God's character as both just and gracious. This chapter compares the perspectives on grace and justice found in the Old and New Testaments, drawing on key biblical citations to illustrate these concepts.

Grace in the Old Testament

The Old Testament, while often associated with law and justice, also contains powerful examples of **grace**—God’s unmerited favor toward humanity. God’s covenant with Israel is often marked by acts of grace, where He forgives, restores, and offers blessings despite the people’s sins and failures.

God’s Grace in the Covenant with Israel

One of the clearest examples of grace in the Old Testament is God’s covenant relationship with Israel. Despite Israel’s repeated disobedience and idolatry, God continually offers grace by maintaining His covenant and providing opportunities for repentance and restoration.

Exodus 34:6-7: “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.”

This passage reveals the dual nature of God’s character: He is both gracious and just. God’s grace is evident in His willingness to forgive, but His justice requires accountability for sin. This balance between grace and justice forms the foundation of the Old Testament understanding of God’s relationship with His people.

The Grace Shown to Noah and Abraham

Another example of grace in the Old Testament is found in the stories of **Noah** and **Abraham**. God chooses Noah to save humanity from destruction, not because of Noah’s perfection, but as an act of grace.

Genesis 6:8: “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

Similarly, God’s covenant with Abraham is an act of unmerited grace. God promises Abraham that he will be the father of a great nation, despite the fact that Abraham and his wife Sarah were too old to naturally have children.

Genesis 12:2-3: “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

These stories emphasize that God’s blessings and promises are acts of grace, given freely to individuals and nations despite their limitations or failures.

God’s Justice in the Law

While grace is present in the Old Testament, it is often framed within the context of **justice**. The **Mosaic Law** provides a clear standard for justice, with blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2: “If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.”

At the same time, disobedience brings curses, illustrating the **justice** of God in dealing with His people according to their actions.

Deuteronomy 28:15: “However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you.”

This aspect of the Old Testament emphasizes the conditional nature of blessings based on obedience to the law, showing a balance between grace and justice.

Grace in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the concept of **grace** is magnified through the person and work of **Jesus Christ**, who brings a new understanding of how grace and justice interact. Grace becomes central to the message of salvation, as Jesus offers forgiveness and redemption to all who believe, regardless of their prior sins.

Grace through Jesus Christ

The New Testament presents **Jesus Christ** as the ultimate manifestation of God's grace. Through Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection, humanity is offered forgiveness and eternal life, not because of their merit, but through God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

This passage highlights the radical nature of grace in the New Testament: salvation is not earned by obeying the law or performing good deeds but is a free gift given by God through faith in Christ.

Grace in Jesus' Teachings

Jesus' teachings often focus on the theme of grace, particularly in the context of forgiveness and mercy. In the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**, Jesus tells the story of a father who welcomes his wayward son back with open arms, despite the son's rebellion and wastefulness. This parable illustrates the **undeserved grace** of God, who forgives those who return to Him in repentance.

Luke 15:20: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

This parable emphasizes that God's grace is not based on human merit but on His unconditional love and willingness to forgive.

Jesus Fulfills Justice through Grace

While the Old Testament emphasizes justice through the law, Jesus fulfills the requirements of justice through His death on the cross. The New Testament teaches that Jesus' sacrifice satisfies the demands of God's justice, allowing humanity to receive grace instead of punishment.

Romans 3:23-24: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

In this sense, **grace and justice** are perfectly balanced in the New Testament. God's justice is fulfilled in Christ, while His grace is extended to humanity through the forgiveness of sins.

The Call to Extend Grace to Others

In addition to receiving grace, believers are called to **extend grace** to others. This mirrors the Old Testament's teachings on fairness and justice but adds a deeper emphasis on forgiveness and mercy.

Colossians 3:13: *"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*

This call to grace reflects the New Testament's focus on living out the grace that has been received through Christ.

Comparison of Grace and Justice in the Testaments

Conditional Grace vs. Unconditional Grace

In the **Old Testament**, grace is often conditional, tied to the covenant relationship between God and Israel. Blessings come through obedience, while disobedience brings punishment. The **Mosaic Law** establishes a framework where grace is offered but requires adherence to the law to maintain it.

In contrast, the **New Testament** emphasizes **unconditional grace**. Through Jesus, grace is offered freely to all who believe, regardless of their adherence to the law. This shift underscores the transformative nature of Christ's work, where grace is no longer tied to human actions but is a gift of faith.

The Role of Justice

In the Old Testament, **justice** is often seen as the enforcement of God's law. Justice demands that sin be punished, and blessings are contingent upon obedience. In the New Testament, justice is fulfilled in a different way—through the sacrifice of Christ, who takes on the punishment for sin, thus satisfying the demands of justice.

Isaiah 53:5: “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

This prophetic passage from the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament, where Christ’s suffering brings both **justice** (punishment for sin) and **grace** (forgiveness and healing for sinners).

The Unity of Grace and Justice

While the Old Testament and New Testament offer different emphases on **grace** and **justice**, they are ultimately unified in their portrayal of God’s character. The **Old Testament** lays the groundwork for understanding justice through the law and shows examples of God’s grace despite human sinfulness. The **New Testament** reveals the culmination of God’s grace in the person of Jesus Christ, who fulfills the demands of justice and extends grace to all who believe.

Both testaments show that grace and justice are not mutually exclusive but are part of the same divine plan. Grace is not a denial of justice, but rather, justice is satisfied so that grace can be freely given. The biblical narrative reveals a God who is both just and gracious, offering salvation through His righteousness and love.

Practical Application of Grace and Justice for Christians and Christianity Today

The biblical principles of **grace** and **justice** are foundational to Christian belief and practice, influencing how Christians live their daily lives, interact with others, and engage with the world. The teachings of both the **Old** and **New Testaments** offer clear guidelines for how believers can apply these principles in their personal, communal, and societal contexts. In today's world, **Christianity** is called to embody these timeless values through practical actions that reflect God's character, as revealed through Scripture.

This chapter explores how Christians can live out the principles of **grace** and **justice** in various aspects of life and how the church can model these principles to address contemporary issues.

Living Out Grace in Personal Relationships

One of the most direct applications of grace for Christians today is in their personal relationships. Jesus taught that those who have received grace should also extend it to others. This is central to Christian ethics, emphasizing **forgiveness, mercy, and compassion** in human interactions.

Forgiving Others

Christians are called to practice forgiveness, mirroring the grace they have received from God. Forgiving others is not just an emotional act but a decision to let go of resentment, anger, or the desire for revenge.

Matthew 6:14-15: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Forgiveness can be challenging, but it reflects the heart of the Gospel message: just as God has forgiven us, we are to forgive others. In practical terms, this means letting go of grudges and seeking reconciliation where possible.

Showing Compassion and Kindness

Grace extends beyond forgiveness—it also encompasses showing **kindness and compassion** to others, especially those in need. Christians are called to act with love and generosity, helping the poor, the marginalized, and the vulnerable.

Colossians 3:12-13: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Practical acts of grace include volunteering to help those in need, providing financial assistance, or simply being present for someone who is struggling. These actions demonstrate the love of God in tangible ways.

Applying Justice in Daily Life

While grace emphasizes forgiveness and compassion, Christians are also called to seek and promote **justice** in their daily lives. This includes living with integrity, treating others fairly, and standing up against injustice wherever it is found.

Acting Justly in Personal Conduct

Justice begins with how Christians conduct themselves in their personal and professional lives. This means being honest, fair, and upright in all dealings, whether in business, family, or community life.

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Christians are called to model justice in their interactions by ensuring they do not exploit others, lie, or take advantage of situations for selfish gain. This involves being mindful of how their actions affect others and striving to live according to God's standards of righteousness.

Standing Up for the Oppressed

Justice also means **advocating for those who are oppressed** or mistreated. Christians are called to speak out against injustice, whether it be systemic racism, economic inequality, or any form of discrimination or abuse.

Proverbs 31:8-9: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

In today's world, this may involve participating in social justice movements, supporting policies that promote equality, or working within communities to address local injustices. The Christian commitment to justice should reflect God's heart for the poor and marginalized.

Grace and Justice in the Church Community

Within the church, the balance of **grace and justice** is vital for maintaining a healthy, thriving Christian community. The church should be a place where grace is freely given, but also where justice, accountability, and discipline are upheld.

Extending Grace Within the Church

Churches should be spaces where forgiveness and reconciliation are prioritized. Conflicts inevitably arise within any community, but Christians are called to work toward healing and unity through the grace of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32: *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

This means creating an environment where people feel safe to confess their faults, knowing that they will receive grace rather than condemnation. Church leaders and members alike should model the grace of Jesus by offering forgiveness, support, and encouragement to those who struggle.

Practicing Justice and Accountability in the Church

While grace is essential, so is **justice and accountability** within the church. When serious wrongs occur—such as unethical behavior, abuse, or financial misconduct—the church must act justly by addressing these issues and holding people accountable.

1 Timothy 5:20: *“But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning.”*

Churches should ensure that justice is done within their communities, both for the sake of the victims and for the integrity of the church itself. Justice in this context involves truth-telling, discipline, and working toward restoration.

Grace and Justice in Society

Christians are not only called to practice grace and justice in their personal lives and church communities but also to extend these principles to broader society.

This involves engaging in social, political, and cultural contexts in ways that reflect the values of the Kingdom of God.

Advocacy for Social Justice

Christians have a long history of advocating for **social justice**, from movements to end slavery to modern-day campaigns for human rights. Following in this tradition, Christians today are called to address issues such as poverty, inequality, climate justice, and human trafficking.

Isaiah 1:17: *“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”*

In practical terms, this might involve supporting organizations that work to alleviate poverty, volunteering in underserved communities, or using one’s influence to speak out on behalf of the marginalized.

Promoting Reconciliation and Peace

In a world often divided by conflict, violence, and hostility, Christians are called to be **peacemakers**, promoting reconciliation and healing between individuals, communities, and nations.

Matthew 5:9: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”*

This may involve participating in peace-building efforts, fostering dialogue between conflicting groups, or simply being a voice for peace in a world where tensions often run high. Christians are called to lead by example in how they approach conflict, always seeking reconciliation and the restoration of relationships.

The Role of the Church in Promoting Grace and Justice

The **church** has a unique role in society as a beacon of both grace and justice. In a world that often swings between harsh judgment and permissiveness, the church

can offer a balanced approach that embodies both the forgiveness of grace and the accountability of justice.

Teaching and Discipleship

The church must actively teach and disciple its members in the principles of grace and justice, helping them understand how to live these out in their personal lives, workplaces, and communities. This includes biblical teaching, mentorship programs, and practical examples of how to engage with issues of grace and justice.

Titus 2:11-12: *“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”*

Discipleship should emphasize that grace is not a license to sin but a call to live lives that reflect God’s holiness and justice.

Addressing Systemic Injustice

In addition to personal discipleship, the church is called to confront **systemic injustices** in society. This may involve speaking out against unjust laws, advocating for reforms, and standing with those who are oppressed.

Amos 5:24: *“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”*

The church’s voice is needed in conversations about racial justice, economic inequality, and other societal issues where justice is lacking. By addressing these issues, the church can be a prophetic voice that calls society to live up to the values of fairness, equity, and compassion.

Grace and Justice in Christian Life Today

For Christians and Christianity today, the principles of **grace** and **justice** are not merely theological ideas—they are practical guidelines for living in a way that reflects God’s character. Through personal relationships, community involvement, and societal engagement, Christians are called to extend grace to others, seek justice for the oppressed, and live with integrity and compassion.

In a world filled with brokenness and conflict, the church and individual Christians can be powerful witnesses to the transformative power of God's grace and justice. *"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" Romans 8:19*

CHAPTER 8

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF GRACE ESTOPPEL FOR CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Grace Estoppel, although a theoretical concept in legal terms, mirrors many of the ethical and moral principles found in Christian teachings. It represents the idea that once someone benefits from an act of grace—such as forgiveness, leniency, or goodwill—they are ethically bound to honor that grace and should not later act in a way that contradicts it. This concept is highly relevant to Christian life, as it resonates with biblical teachings on **grace, forgiveness, and justice**.

For Christians, the practical application of Grace Estoppel involves living in a way that reflects the grace they have received from God and extending that same grace to others. Below are some practical ways Christians and the church can

apply the principles of Grace Estoppel in their personal lives, communities, and the broader society, along with relevant Bible citations.

Living in Response to God's Grace

The core of Grace Estoppel for Christians is recognizing that, having received **God's grace**, they are called to live in a manner that reflects and honors that grace. Christians are "estopped" from living selfishly, unjustly, or ungraciously, because they are recipients of God's unmerited favor.

Extending Forgiveness to Others

Just as Christians have received forgiveness through the grace of Jesus, they are called to forgive others. **Grace Estoppel** prevents Christians from holding grudges or seeking revenge, as they themselves have been forgiven.

Matthew 6:14-15: ***"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."***

Practical application: In family disputes, friendships, and workplace conflicts, Christians should choose to forgive rather than seek retaliation or hold on to resentment, thereby living in accordance with the grace they have received.

Offering Grace in Everyday Interactions

Grace Estoppel means Christians should continually extend kindness, patience, and mercy to others, just as God has done for them. They are prevented from responding harshly or judgmentally after having experienced God's grace in their lives.

Colossians 3:12-13: ***"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."***

Practical application: In moments of frustration or anger, whether in traffic, at work, or with family, Christians are called to choose patience and kindness, demonstrating the same grace they have been given.

Grace Estoppel in Christian Community

Within the church, Grace Estoppel emphasizes the importance of unity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Church communities are bound by the grace of Christ, and members are called to live in ways that foster peace and mutual support.

Building a Culture of Forgiveness

A Christian community that understands Grace Estoppel fosters a culture where people are quick to forgive and slow to judge. Once members have received grace from one another, they are "Estopped" from holding on to bitterness or division.

Ephesians 4:32: ***"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."***

Practical application: Churches should implement regular opportunities for reconciliation, such as confession, conflict resolution workshops, and communal prayers for forgiveness, encouraging members to live out forgiveness as a response to the grace they've received.

Encouraging Repentance and Restoration

Grace does not mean a lack of accountability. Grace Estoppel requires that after forgiveness and restoration are offered, the recipient is expected to live in a way that reflects that grace. This principle aligns with the biblical concept of **repentance**—turning away from sin and living in a manner consistent with the grace received.

John 8:11: ***"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."***

Practical application: When dealing with moral failings or sin within the church, the focus should be on restoring individuals through grace, while also encouraging them to live in repentance and transformation.

Grace Estoppel in Society

Grace Estoppel can also extend to how Christians engage with society. Having received God's grace, Christians are "estopped" from acting in ways that contribute to injustice, oppression, or selfishness. They are called to be **agents of grace** in the world, promoting justice and mercy.

Advocating for Social Justice and Mercy

Christians are called to act with mercy and to seek justice for the oppressed and marginalized. Grace Estoppel prevents them from ignoring societal injustices after having experienced God's grace and mercy in their own lives.

Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Practical application: Christians can be involved in **advocacy, volunteering, or supporting charitable causes** that aim to alleviate poverty, fight racial injustice, and promote equal rights. They should use their resources to extend the grace they have received to those in need.

Promoting Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Divisive Times

In a world often filled with division, anger, and hostility, Christians, having received grace, should promote forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. Grace Estoppel means they cannot contribute to cycles of division or hatred, but must instead work for peace.

Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Practical application: Christians can lead by example in promoting civil dialogue, mediating conflicts, and encouraging reconciliation in divisive societal issues, whether through community initiatives or in personal conversations.

Grace Estoppel in Christian Leadership

For Christian leaders, the principle of Grace Estoppel requires them to model grace in their leadership while maintaining accountability. Leaders who have received grace in their own spiritual lives are called to extend that grace to their congregation while upholding standards of justice and righteousness.

Extending Grace in Leadership

Leaders are called to lead with grace, knowing they have been forgiven and restored by God. They are "estopped" from harsh or judgmental leadership, instead fostering an environment of love, patience, and understanding.

Titus 3:2: ***"To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone."***

Practical application: Church leaders should create spaces for open dialogue, be willing to forgive, and help others grow spiritually through grace-filled guidance rather than legalistic or authoritarian approaches.

Holding the Community Accountable with Grace

While grace is essential, leaders must also uphold **justice** within the church. Grace Estoppel does not mean avoiding accountability, but rather using accountability as a way to promote transformation and restoration.

Galatians 6:1: ***"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."***

Practical application: Leaders should establish systems of church discipline that are rooted in grace, ensuring that those who fall are restored with love and gentleness, while also holding them accountable to live in ways that reflect the grace they have received.

Grace Estoppel as a Model for Christian Living

For Christians and the church, the concept of **Grace Estoppel** provides a powerful framework for understanding the relationship between grace and responsibility.

Having received **God's unmerited grace**, Christians are called to live in a way that reflects that grace in every aspect of their lives—whether in personal relationships, church communities, or broader society.

Grace Estoppel reminds Christians that grace is not an excuse for continued selfishness or sin, Romans 6:1-2 NCV ***“So do you think we should continue sinning so that God will give us even more grace? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*** but rather Grace Estoppel is an invitation to live a transformed lives that honor the gift we have received. By extending forgiveness, promoting justice, and leading with compassion, Christians can embody the principles of Grace Estoppel in their daily lives, showing the world the power of God's grace in action.

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