

SPIRITUAL GROWTH – Lesson #4 – Living under grace.

- “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” (Rom. 6:14) Now that we have been brought into a spiritual union with Christ, we must learn a new way of living – the way of grace.

- **“Under law”** means that law, a set of commandments or rules, governs one’s relationship with God. When “under law” a person focuses upon and lives to certain rules. He feels responsible to obey those rules in order to establish his righteousness before God. This general legal principle was the principle of the Old Testament Law. The law demands, but gives no enablement to obey (Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3). The law is not God’s way for man. God only gave the law to show man his sinfulness (Rom. 3:20). God’s OT law was holy, but when paired with man’s efforts to keep it and man’s fallen nature, it only produces failure (Rom. 7:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:56). The law puts fallen man under condemnation, causing him to seek a Savior. “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. 3:24-25).

- **“Under grace”** means that my relationship with God is governed by receiving and responding to grace, the working of God’s Spirit towards us. A person living “under grace” is living in union with Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. Our union with Christ in His death and resurrection is detailed in Rom. 6:3-13, and this spiritual union reflects the principle of grace. A person under grace is experiencing Christ as his life and his spiritual supply through the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20-21, 3:5; 5:4). Paul declares in Rom. 6:14 that sin has lost its place as our master because we are not under the principle of law, but under the principle of grace. The grace principle is now the principle by which we should live our Christian life, not the law principle. “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.” (Gal. 2:19). Rom. 7:1-6 illustrates that our relationship to the law is over and now we are joined solely to Christ.

- *The supply of grace.* The grace of God may be generally defined as the flow of God’s life to us by the Holy Spirit. Such grace strengthens us to serve (1 Cor. 15:10), supplies us to walk in holiness (2 Cor. 1:12), and enables to walk triumphantly in difficult and troubling circumstances (2 Cor. 12:9-10). In living by grace we must deeply depend upon God in faith for our Christian living, as the Bible originally illustrated by the “tree of life” in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9), and ultimately portrays in the New Jerusalem, where we will live by the tree of life for eternity (Gen. 22:2). This tree of life is simply Christ experienced as our life.

- *The throne of grace.* God invites us to come to His throne of grace in a prayerful and dependent spirit to find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:16). This verse tells us to “draw near with confidence to the throne of grace.” We can come to God with confidence and in faith: “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Our confidence comes from Jesus’ blood shed for us. Yet, we should also come to Him with a sincere heart and cleanse our conscience from any wrongdoing by confession and repentance. When we come in faith, God supplies us with His grace. We also get the supply of grace through the Word of God (Acts 20:32).

- *Keeping the commandments.* Because we are not under law some may think that this means we do not need to keep God’s commandments. As Christians, we should keep His New Testament commandments and be obedient to God (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 2:3-4). Whereas being under law means living to a set of external rules, living by grace is different. For the believer, the keeping of God’s commandments is never something apart from the working of God’s life in us. The written commandments of God in the Bible reflect the will of God, the character of God and the ways of God. The Bible is often the “language” which the Holy Spirit uses to speak to us. The word of God and the Spirit of God go hand in hand in the victorious Christian life. If we have a heart truly seeking Him, which includes seeking to obey Him, then the Lord has a way to speak to us from His word. In this “speaking” there will be verses from His word which will make an impression upon us, or that God brings to mind, and we will realize that God is requiring us to walk in obedience to those Scriptures by His power.