

# God's Saving Grace

[Before reading this lesson we felt it would be helpful to explain several terms that are used in the lesson. Those terms are the words "zoe" and "psuche" and are from the original Greek writings. And while this introduction may seem a bit lengthy, we urge each of you to read it first for its value in laying the ground work for so many of the teachings of the New Testament as well as the writings on this site.]

## Zoe Life

The Greek word "zoe" is used to express the form of "life" that Jesus gives to His followers. "I have come that they may have life {"zoe"}." (John 10:10) This heavenly form of life needs to begin within our soul today. We gain access to this life by being raised spiritually with the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit into the heavenly realms with Christ. "But God...because of His great love...made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4-6)

While words tend to have various meanings and uses, we intend to keep our discussion as simple as possible. Spiros Zodhiates in his Greek *Word Study* defines "zoe" as follows: "life; referring to the principle of life in the spirit and soul. Distinguished from bios, physical life...of which zoe is the nobler word, expressing all of the highest and best which Christ is and which He gives to the saints. The highest blessedness of the creature."

We sometimes miss the deeper meaning of our Lord's teachings when we are limited to our English versions of the Bible. For example, there are various types of love that can be expressed in the Greek by using different words. We tend to lose the original meaning by grouping them all together using one term.

Similarly, there are different Greek words representing different forms of life. In contrast to the "zoe" life that comes from above, the original New Testament Greek uses the word "psuche" to express the lower form of life that comes from the flesh. For example, Jesus said, "My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life {"psuche"}." (John 10:17) If we do not look at the Greek in this case, we cannot fully understand what Jesus chose to lay down in order to please His Father.

Most people think that Jesus was referring to laying down His “bios,” the Greek word representing physical life, at the cross in dying for our sins. However, He specifically speaks in this case of laying down His “psuche.” While this word also has several different variations in meaning, sometimes translated soul, we will be using it when referring to the lower form of life that is developed through the works of the flesh.

The Greek word “sarx” is translated flesh. The Bible reveals how fallen man uses the “sarx” to develop a “psuche” form of life. This “psuche” life is what separates people from the eternal “zoe” life that God intended for man to possess. The “psuche” life comes from the world and its things. Because this lower form of life is dependent upon temporal circumstances for its support, it is very unstable. It is that up and down life that the people of this world, including many in the church, just naturally experience. This is what Jesus chose to lay down in order to share with His Father in the eternal “zoe” life.

If we will follow Jesus by laying down the old “psuche” life that originates in the flesh, we too can enter into His eternal “zoe” life. This should help us to better understand what Jesus expects when He instructs us to follow Him. Here is where we find one of those “ifs” that has separated many of God’s called-out people from His life of promise.

If anyone desires to come after Me {into the heavenly realms to share in the eternal “zoe” life}, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his {“psuche”} life will lose it, but whoever loses his {“psuche”} life will find it {the eternal “zoe” life}. (Matt. 16:24-25)

Those who seek to develop their own “psuche” through the flesh are living in the lower form of life that man developed after Adam lost the eternal life. The Scriptures clearly distinguish between these two different forms of life. In this age of fulfillment {the New Testament age}, we are to follow Jesus by laying down the lower form of life that man develops through his own fleshly activities so we may live by the Spirit and share with God in His eternal life.

For if you live according to the flesh {the “sarx”} you will die {you will experience a dying spiritual life}; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body {the self-originated form of life},

you will live {you will receive the eternal life}. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom. 8:13-14)

The Scriptures are constantly contrasting these two different ways of walking. We will either walk by the flesh according to our own desires or we will permit the Spirit to lead us as He pleases. The first way leads to an ever dying form of life. Yes, it can be built up and provide some pleasure for a season, but it is constantly dying. That is why people are always looking for something else or something new to do. They are constantly searching for a means to support their spiritual life.

Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph. 2:3)

For when we were in the flesh {living by the lower order of life}, the sinful passions...were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered {from the lower order of life}...that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit... (Rom. 7:5-6)

For the law of the Spirit of {"zoe"} life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled {fully met} in us who *do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*. For those who *live according to the flesh* {the lower and carnal form of life} set their minds on the things of the flesh {temporal things}, but those who *live according to the Spirit*, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death {resulting in an ever-dying form of spiritual life}, but to be spiritually minded is {"zoe"} life and peace. Because the carnal mind {which naturally seeks to develop the "psuche" life through the flesh} is enmity against God... So then, those who are in the flesh {those who direct their steps in order to please their own fleshly desires} cannot please God. (Rom. 8:3-8)

Many think they can be forgiven for their sins and someday go to heaven to share with Christ in His eternal "zoe" life even while they continue to live by the flesh. But God's Word clearly reveals how they are sadly mistaken. Those who live by the flesh already have a dying spiritual life, and they know it from experience. God does not leave anyone deceived.

In contrast, those who consistently walk by the Spirit experience an ever-flowing supply of Christ's Living Water welling up into *everlasting life*. "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting {"zoe"} life." (John 4:14)

The Greek word for *eternal* is "aionios." It has the meaning of "constant, abiding and everlasting." In other words, the "aionios zoe" life that Jesus gives to His true followers is constant and abiding. It is not like the up and down "psuche" life that remains dependent upon what is taking place in the world around us. Those who experience a dying spiritual life whenever their outward circumstances are in disarray can know they are still relying on what they can work up through their own fleshly efforts. They are still finding their spiritual life from the temporal realm.

Jesus came to reveal how God originally intended for man to walk. He did not waste His time trying to find life from the world. He received His spiritual sustenance from above as He permitted His Father to live through Him. He said, "My food {the means for receiving spiritual sustenance from heaven} is to do the will of Him who sent Me..." (John 4:34) And then He instructed us to follow Him along the same course. We can only expect to be raised up into His heavenly spiritual life "if" we have truly died to the lower order of "psuche" life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {dying to the "psuche" life that is developed through the "sarx"}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection {sharing with Him in His eternal "zoe" life}. (Rom. 6:5)

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal {"zoe"} life..." (John 10:27-28) Jesus is not referring to a hypothetical theory. Many claim to have "eternal life," and they make this claim without ever choosing to follow Jesus in His way of life. But it becomes obvious they have been deceived by the devil as they daily reveal how they have never lost their constantly dying "psuche" life.

A life devoted to the interests and enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, will result in the loss of God's eternal life and everything else. While this self-originated form of life can support the soul for a season, when the soul is cut off from the temporal pleasures of this world it

will find itself empty and void. In contrast to the eternal “zoe” life, which is constant and abiding, the “psuche” life does not abide forever.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. {Notice the absence of placing the things of the world into good and bad categories.} If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father {His life} is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust {desires} of the flesh, the lust {desires} of the eyes, and the pride of life {the source of the “psuche” life}—is not of the Father {this form of life does not have its source in Him} but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides {lives in the eternal “zoe” life} forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Many people seem to think they can live by their own desires and for their own purposes as long as they do not commit gross sin. But God’s definition of living by the desires of the flesh entails everything that turns man to the temporal {natural, of this world} realm in search of fulfillment. It is not possible to serve God and serve self at the same time. “No one can serve two masters.” (Matt. 6:24) We cannot simultaneously walk by our own will according to our selfish desires and pursuits, no matter how innocent they may appear, and also walk by the Spirit of God.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. For you died {to the old self-originated form of life}, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Brethren, join in following my example, *and note those who so walk*, as you have us for a pattern. For many {in the church} walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ {they are unwilling to follow Jesus in His way of the cross}: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly...who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship {our place of life} is in heaven... (Phil. 3:17-20, Emphasis added)

God planned to have a universe where everything had its source in Him. His purpose was to display His nature of love in everything He created. Man was to be His means for displaying this divine love in its highest form. But man separated himself from God’s life of holy love—the “zoe” life—when he chose to

have an independent “psuche” life of his own. We now have a world filled with self-centered and self-seeking people spreading their carnal darkness wherever they go. “This wisdom {that seeks to live for self} does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic {of the devil}. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” (Jam. 3:15)

There is a blessed simplicity in the true Christian walk. It is not a complex list of things that we must do in order to be “right.” The way of the Pharisees has never made anyone “right” in their heart. While God insists that we fulfill the righteous requirements found in His laws, those who attempt to produce their own righteousness will never truly sense that their inner nature is right.

We must receive the “gift of righteousness” that enables us to “reign in {“zoe”} life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Rom 5:17) He is the One who has a life of “true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24) It is by putting on His life and living through His Spirit that we can have the inner witness of being partakers with Him in His divine nature.

The one thing we must do is choose whether we are going to be led by our own desires or by the Spirit. If we will simply live by Christ’s Spirit, He will lead us into all truth and reveal His eternal “zoe” life within us.

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3)

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh {do not live by the “psuche” life}, to fulfill its lusts. (Rom. 13:14)*

I say then: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. (Gal. 5:16, 18)

It is by dying to the complex strugglings of the flesh, which includes trying to make ourselves righteous under law {by human effort}, and learning to receive life from Christ in the heavenly realms *by faith*, as a branch receives life from the vine, that we can begin naturally producing the divine fruit of His Spirit. Our highest glory will be found in living as mere vessels that the Spirit uses to express the Son’s life of righteousness in our daily walk. We are to be vessels of

His Kingdom-life of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

**\*[End of Introduction]**

And now:  
**God’s Saving Grace**

Jude found it necessary to write concerning Christ’s true salvation by urging his readers to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3) He spoke of men who had slipped into the church and had “turned the grace of our God” into a license to live by their own desires. He therefore stressed the importance of building Christians up in the “most holy faith.” (Jude 20)

Our purpose in writing this study is to reveal a little more clearly what God is able to accomplish through His grace when we yield to His purposes in dependent faith. Those who will truly surrender to the leading of His Spirit can depend on Him to establish their hearts in holy love through a work of His grace. By building you up in this “most holy faith”, you too will be prepared to look for “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life {that you may share in His “aionios zoe”}.” (Jude 20-21 NIV)

There is a special act of God’s “mercy” that reveals the eternal life of holy love within the heart. The Lord comes to the soul with an “abundance of grace” and “the gift of righteousness.” (Rom. 5:17) This “much more” of salvation is referred to as “establishing grace.”

But may *the God of all grace*, who called us to His eternal glory {to reveal His life of holy love through us} *by Christ Jesus*, after you have suffered a while, *perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.* (1 Pet. 5:10)

The Word of God instructs Christians to be “diligent” to enter into the life of “promise.” Believers are told to “pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God.*” (Heb. 12:14-15) Our covenant God has established conditions that must be met before He will fulfill His promise. We can therefore expect to “fall short of the grace of God” when we do not yield to His ways and diligently seek out, through faith, this life of promise.

Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life {"zoe"}, and there are few who find it. (Matt. 7:14)

Let us therefore *be diligent* to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. (Heb. 4:11)

Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises... And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (Heb. 6:12, 15)

God's work of delivering the Jewish people from Egypt in order to take them into the life of promise reveals some basic principles about salvation. (1 Cor. 10: 1-11) We can find three different groups in the example provided. All of them were delivered from their initial bondage by a work of God's grace. But most of these called-out people did not receive the establishing grace that would have settled them in the life of promise.

The first group consisted of a large number of people who were destroyed for continuing to live by their own desires. (Jude 5) "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that {they}...all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." (1 Cor. 10:1-5) The Spirit of Christ was there to help them. But they chose to go on living by their own fleshly desires rather than yielding to God's purposes in faith. Jude provided a similar warning about people who change the grace of God into a license to live by their own desires. (Jude 4, 16, 18) It always leads to spiritual death. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh {after receiving the Spirit at your own crossing of the Red Sea} you will die" {experience a spiritual life that is continually dying}. (Rom. 8:12-13)

The people in the second group also fell short of the life of promise; but they were not destroyed. God permitted them to live out their lives in the wilderness because they were willing to live as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11:13) And yet, they also represent those who lack sufficient faith or understanding to enter into the life of promise. There are many of these wilderness Christians today. They die as saints in a limited form of faith, not having received the promise. (Heb. 11:39-40) Even though they will lack the perfect love that enables God's children to stand before the Lord with "boldness" on the Day of Judgment (1 John 4:17), they will be saved in the end, "yet so as through fire." (1 Cor. 3:15)

The last grouping was made up of a very small minority. Only Joshua and Caleb had enough faith to press into the life of promise. They represent the few who find establishing grace and reign with Christ in His Kingdom-life of holy



love. “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14) Very few are willing to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl by fully laying down their “psuche” life.

### **The Messiah and His Kingdom**

Before looking at the specific Scriptures that reveal how grace establishes the heart in holy love, it will be helpful to take another look at why Christ came into the world. Throughout the Old Testament, the Father had promised to send a Messiah to establish a heavenly kingdom where His children could live in true “righteousness and holiness before Him *all the days of our life.*” (Luke 1:74-75) Our Father wanted offspring who could live in holy love and display His character in everything they did. The Messiah was therefore sent to be the source of this life.

I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, *when I show myself holy through you before their eyes...* And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws... *I will save you from all your uncleanness...* (Ezk. 36:23-29 NIV)

God’s people in the Old Testament continued to “profane” His name. They did not have the capacity to live in holy love and display His image. The Father therefore planned to send a Messiah, Jesus Christ, to manifest His divine life—His “zoe” life—through each of His children. He purposed to save them from “all uncleanness.”

This “much more” of salvation, referred to as *establishing grace*, is intended to reveal to the nations how Christ is the true Savior of the world. Unfortunately, many of God’s called-out people have fallen short of the grace that establishes His Kingdom-life of holy love within the heart. While the Lord is faithful and is willing to do the work that He was sent to do, many have been unwilling to submit to His full salvation.

And the glory {the “zoe” life of perfect love} which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them {every believer has access to His glorious life}, that they may be one just as We are one {sharing in the same divine life}: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me {as their Savior}...that the love with which You love Me {perfect love} may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22-23)

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord...? (Heb. 2:3)

We are told that the “grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” (Titus 2:11) This “grace” has instructed everyone to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” (v. 12) But not everyone responds to what God has graciously been leading them to do. Consequently, this grace that has “appeared to all men” ends up being received by many “in vain.”

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain... Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:1-2)

If God’s children would fully yield to everything the Holy Spirit has been instructing them to do and would set their minds on the establishing grace that has been promised, many more would find His Kingdom-life of holy love. The Messiah is faithful to keep His Word. He has promised to show Himself holy through those who respond to His teachings. He desires to share His nature of holy love with everyone who wears His name.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...and I will love Him and manifest Myself to him. (John 14:21)

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, *be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ* {when He comes as the Messiah to show Himself holy through you}... because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:13-15)

I will come to you... Because I live {in the eternal “zoe” life}, you will live also {in the same life}. At that day you will know that I am in My Father {living through Him}, and you in Me {living through the same life}, and I in you {revealing the light of life to the world}. (John 14:18-20)

### **The Work of Grace**

After recognizing the selfishness and carnality that was still being displayed through the Corinthian Christians, the apostle Paul felt compelled to describe how grace, when it has truly had an effective working within the heart, leads to a life of self-sacrificing love. Paul knew that God’s work of grace was designed to destroy all selfish desires so that we can walk as Jesus did. We therefore find him using his own life as an example to instruct others what it means to be “saved by grace.”

*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 {labored for the eternal good of others}, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* (1 Cor 15:10)

Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more {through a work of God’s grace}: in labors more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in death often. {It was establishing grace that enabled him to remain “more than a conqueror” through all these difficulties.}... Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked...in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles...in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides other things, *what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.* (2 Cor. 11:23-28)

*For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example {by yielding to this same work of grace}, as I follow the example of Christ.* (1 Cor. 10:33-11:1 NIV)

I am not saying this because I am in need, *for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances...* {He was quite obviously living through Christ’s constant and abiding “zoe” life, which satisfies the soul regardless of the surrounding conditions.} I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... *I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.* (Phil. 4:11-13 NIV)

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died {we are all required to go through the same “door” of dying to the “psuche” life}; and He died for all, that *those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him...* (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

Paul revealed Christ’s “light of life” in everything he did. And He attributed this overcoming life of holy love to the grace of God. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will lead everyone to sacrifice themselves for the good of His eternal kingdom. It is the only true sign of establishing grace. Those who have a nature that is naturally self-seeking still need to receive the grace that does away with the old selfish nature. They are receiving, in vain, the grace of God that goes out to all men to turn them from this way of life. (2 Cor. 6:1; Titus 2:11-12;)

We are not implying that everyone will be taken along Paul’s specific course. The self-sacrifice and hardships that occur in our service to the Lord will vary with each individual. As Jesus revealed to Peter, God has a specific will for each of His children. (John 21:20-22) We are not to be comparing ourselves to what God has asked our brother to do. Our primary concern is to finish our own prepared course. We are saved by grace and made like Christ in holy love so we

will be prepared to complete the work that He has planned to do through our lives.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone boast. {The calling is too high to be worked out in our own strength by the efforts of our flesh. The calling is only available by responsive faith.} For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus {to live through His “zoe” life} for good works, *which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* (Eph. 2:8-10)

It was because Paul had permitted God’s grace to have an effective working within his heart that he was enabled to labor more abundantly than everyone else. He did not receive God’s grace in vain. He yielded to what grace was intended to do in his life. And because this work of establishing grace had perfected the Lord’s Kingdom-life of holy love within his heart, he was enabled to go through these great difficulties with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14:17)

While this same grace is available to all, and continues to go out to all men, not everyone permits it to have an effective working within their heart. That is why it is so necessary to “exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” {living by your own will for your own lusts -desires} (Heb. 3:13) If Paul had an opportunity to personally minister to our readers today you would find him exhorting, and comforting, and charging every one of you...“that you would walk worthy of God *who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*” (1 Th. 2: 11-12) Yes, the Son is calling you into His heavenly Kingdom-life so He may manifest His life of holy love through you.

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

I have come that they may have life {the eternal Kingdom-life – “zoe”}, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

It was grace that led Paul to avoid being a burden to others while he chose to “labor and toil...night and day” in ministering to them. (1 Thess. 2:9-12) He knew that it would do very little good to preach a gospel about being saved by the “life” of Christ if he was still showing worldly signs of trying to profit from what he was doing. He wanted the people to see the light of Christ’s sacrificial love revealed in everything he did. While he had every right to be supported for

his labors in the Lord, perfect love would not permit him to receive resources that would cause others to be overburdened.

The Pharisees are examples of “ministers” who fall short of the grace of God. Even though they are able to pray much, fast often, preach with eloquence and tithe on everything they receive, they still reveal a “self-indulgent” nature. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, *but inside they are full of extortion {greed – NIV} and self-indulgence.*” (Matt. 23:25) Rather than working night and day for the good of others, they are more interested in using their influence to pressure others into giving them more for their own little kingdom and for their personal benefit. Similarly, we find pastors today looking for this same favoritism for their own gain. Consequently, in spite of all their words, they actually hide the one salvation that Christ has come to give His true followers. And they will one day pay dearly for misleading the flock that Jesus has been calling into His life of holy {having its source in and flowing out from God}, self-sacrificing love.

### **The Means of Grace**

We know there are earnest souls who want to become like Jesus in love. It will therefore be helpful to understand how to grow in “grace.”

Everyone who is born of God receives a measure of enabling grace. Converting grace puts enough of Christ’s love within our heart to begin sacrificing ourselves for the good of others. We should also note that God never asks us to do more than we can bear. And yet, grace will always lead to some measure of self-sacrificing love. All we need to do is respond to what He is leading us to do.

God honors those who have responded to the convicting work of His Spirit with a willing heart. As we begin to pour out His love by living for the good of others, He gives more grace—always giving back a little more in “the same measure” we have used. Everyone who takes this course in the time of testing will continue to receive an ever-increasing supply. This is also what prepares us to receive establishing grace.

Give {in whatever way the Spirit has been leading you to give of yourself}, and it will be given to you {the supply of self-giving love that you pour out will be returned with a more powerful work of enabling grace}: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom {within your heart}.  
(Luke 6:38)

The King James Version of the Bible has added words to this Scripture to imply that the return will be *provided by men*. But these added words are not in the original Greek. Their presumption has led to a wrong interpretation. God is

the One who gives the return. He puts more of His life within our heart so we may continue to grow in His nature of love. None of the early disciples accumulated money because of their giving. They did not have gold or silver, but they had a powerful work of God's grace working through their lives.

We should also note that we can only receive a *return from God* when we do not look for earthly rewards. (Matt. 6:1) That includes seeking personal recognition in order to feed the pride of life. God cannot fill the heart with His heavenly rewards when people are still attempting to develop their "psuche" life through this worldly means. Self-seeking is the essence of the self-centeredness He is working to remove from our heart.

God always returns what we pour out when we do so without expecting anything in return for ourselves. He gives grace for grace, always adding a little more to what was given away. Those who take this course in the time of testing can expect to find the fullness of life that has been promised in the Scriptures.

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in {self-sacrificing} love to one another and to all...so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness... (1 Thess. 3:12-13)

Also, those who follow this course in all earnestness as they press on through the wilderness testing period, will eventually discover the remains of an enemy within their heart. They will find hidden away within their heart a remains of their old selfish and self-seeking nature. And it will continue to resist Christ's way of self-sacrificing love. This ongoing choice to keep pressing forward in Christ's way of love, especially in the more difficult trials, can therefore become a painful process. (Heb. 12:6) It is in this stage of grace that we must press forward with all diligence, regardless of the difficulty, while looking for the Savior to do away with this inward enemy and to establish our heart in holy love.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, *which has great reward*. For *you have need of endurance*, so that after you have done the will of God, *you may receive the promise*: "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry {Christ will reveal His "zoe" life of holy love within your soul.}... But if anyone draws back {to the old self-seeking and self-serving way of life}, My soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb. 10:35-39)

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

We have spoken openly to you... You are not restricted by us, *but you are restricted by your own {selfish} affections*... (2 Cor. 6:11-12)

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (Jam. 4:3)

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you {He always gives more than you pour out}, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8)*

### **Testing our Lives for the Signs of Grace**

While Paul wrote to the churches in general as “brethren,” he still warned individuals to examine themselves to determine if they were in the one true “faith” that results in an inward revelation of Christ’s life of holy love. (2 Cor. 13:5) These same lessons must be taken seriously by every believer today. We encourage everyone to test their inward nature by these eternal truths. We cannot afford to “fall short” of this work of God’s grace.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously... Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed {the grace that leads to abounding love} and will enlarge *the harvest of your righteousness... Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves*, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ...*because of the surpassing grace God has given to you*. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! (2 Cor. 9:12-15)

Moreover, brethren, *we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia*: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty *abounded in the riches of their liberality*. (2 Cor. 8:1-2)

The early Pentecostal church in Jerusalem displayed the same kind of liberal giving. They revealed the kind of love that God planned to reveal through each of His children. We should note that they were not living under a governmental system that presses socialist principles onto others. They were merely expressing the Christlike nature of love that is found in His eternal kingdom. It led them to naturally pour out their lives in sacrifice for the good of others. In other words, they were revealing what “great grace” naturally does. It brings everyone into the unity of “zoe” life that is shared by the Father and the Son. (John 17:22-23) This heavenly life of love within the heart is what enables every member of the body to live together with “one heart and one soul.”

Now the multitude of those who believed were of *one heart and one soul* {having received a measure of the glory that makes people

perfect in love}; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common {sharing their resources as people had need}... *And great grace was upon them all...* (Acts 4:32-33)

Every called-out child of God needs to examine their own heart and life to see if they have received this same kind of “great grace.” In effect, we are missing the mark if we are still trying to justify why we do not believe that Christ’s instructions to the rich young ruler apply to us. Rather than trying to figure out if God has been asking us to give up our resources for the work of His Kingdom, we should be asking ourselves if we have received this “great grace” that makes it possible to do so with a deep sense of peace and joy in our heart. We are speaking about a form of life that makes our inner nature like Christ’s divine nature. Christ’s indwelling life naturally pours itself out for the good of others without expecting anything in return.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich {in the life of heaven}. (2 Cor. 8:9)

This nature of self-sacrificing love that Paul and some of the early Christians revealed cannot be worked up and maintained by simply trying to conform to laws. The law cannot change the inner nature. For example, under the Old Testament law, God was able to demand the tithe and a few other special offerings. But that was as far as He could go while working with a carnal nature under law. The carnal man would revolt if he was asked to do more. But in this New Testament age of fulfillment, when we are to live through Christ’s life of perfect love, it becomes possible to pour out our lives in whatever way the Spirit is leading us to do with “peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” This “great grace” completely sets us free from the self-seeking nature and its natural hold on the things of this world.

If then you were raised with Christ {to share with Him in His heavenly life}, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... {This is a very specific command that will be used on the day of judgment to expose any remains of the self-seeking nature.} but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be. (Matt. 6:19-21)

All Christians are “rooted and grounded in love” through the new birth. (Eph. 3:17) Everyone who is born of the Spirit will be found serving the Lord in some way. But that does not mean they are able to comprehend the “love of



Christ which passes knowledge.” (Eph. 3:19) As long as the flesh-life lives on, there will be some remains of selfishness and self-indulgence within their heart. And this old nature will prevent them from fully comprehending this life of love that Christ has come to manifest through His disciples.

Many of those who have been called out by God, end up losing their first love. Like Demas, they end up turning away from their original desire to live wholly for God, “having loved this present world.” (2 Tim. 4:10) While they do not necessarily leave the church or their positions in the church, they begin resisting the grace that is intended to perfect the heart in Christ’s life of self-sacrificing love. They no longer sacrifice themselves for the Lord and His kingdom as they once did. They are now attempting to serve two masters. (Matt. 6:24) And this turning back has caused them to be unfit for “the kingdom of God.”

For many are called {to enter into the Kingdom-life of promise}, but few are chosen {because they choose to live for themselves in unbelief when God begins to test their willingness to follow Jesus through the cross and into a real death to their flesh-life}. (Matt. 22:14)

No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back {to the things of this world}, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)

Remember Lot’s wife. {Although she was initially delivered from destruction, she still lost her life for looking back to the things of this world.} Whoever seeks to save his {“psuche”} life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. (Luke 17:32-33)

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. “...Now the just shall live by faith {by responding to all truth while waiting for the Kingdom-life to be established within their heart}; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in Him.” But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Heb. 10:36-39)

### **The Birthright and the Blessing**

If we are to avoid falling short of God’s establishing grace, it will be necessary to distinguish between the “birthright” and the “blessing.” Every Christian receives the “birthright” that provides access to the “blessing”—the Kingdom-life of promise—when they are born again. This new birth makes them one of God’s “firstborn.” It gives them a right to a very special privilege. But the birthright is not the blessing.

Many have sold their birthright by going back to live for the pleasures of this world. While they may avoid gross sin, they have still turned the grace of God into a license to live for their own pleasures. And while they may think they are living innocently, God sees this matter of living for the pleasures of this world as spiritual idolatry. "Do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.'" (1 Cor. 10:7) He actually destroyed these people for following what they considered to be an innocent course of life. But living for ourselves and our own pleasures is in direct conflict with the life of Jesus. Because this self-seeking nature is in opposition to the light of truth that is in the nature of God, it will remain under wrath and separated from the Presence of God's eternal life.

God... "will render to each one according to his deeds";  
{supplying} eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking... indignation and wrath. (Rom. 2:5-8)

Like Esau, many have turned away from the grace that would lead to the "blessing" of perfect love, simply to enjoy a few years of pleasure in this dying world. *May God help every eternal soul understand the reality of this warning!*

Pursue...holiness {pure and holy love}, without which no one will see the Lord: *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God...lest there be any fornicator {with the world} or profane {unholy} person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.* (Heb. 12:14-16)

Esau did not commit gross sin. He lost his birthright and the right to the blessing simply because he chose to live for his own pleasures. He chose to seek out life, liberty and happiness through the temporal world. Because he rejected the "door" of dying to the "psuche" life—which is the way to the eternal "zoe" life of "grace and truth," he departed from this world without the "blessing."

It will be necessary to pursue holiness rather than the pleasures of this world before Christ's heavenly life can be found. Those who continue to carry on a relationship with this world, in an attempt to support their "psuche" life, are living in a form of spiritual adultery that will keep them separated from Christ's eternal "zoe" life.

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (Jam. 4:4)

Those who are truly in a justified state are already walking in a form of holiness to God. And they will be found walking in all revealed light. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness {resist known light}, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:6) But those who are earnestly

pressing forward in their faith by walking in all revealed light have not necessarily received the establishing grace that “purifies” and perfects the heart in holy love. (Acts 15:8-9) Many have received the “birthright” but have not yet received the “blessing.”

### **Credited Righteousness**

God has provided a means for crediting His children with righteousness while they are waiting for the Lord to establish His Kingdom-life of holy love within their heart. Because some of our readers may be concerned about their own lack of divine love, we will close this chapter by explaining how to walk in “credited righteousness” while waiting for the “blessing.”

God used Abraham as a spiritual type to explain this truth. A careful study of the following Scriptures will reveal how Abraham was counted as being righteous, based on his “faith” in God’s ability to do what He had promised.

Now the Lord had said to Abram {Abraham}: “Get out of your country...{and go} to a land that I will show you... *I will bless you... And you shall be a blessing* {to others}... So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him {seeking out the life of promise in responsive faith}... (Gen. 12:1-4)

Therefore it {the blessing that finally comes from God} is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all... And not being weak in faith, he {Abraham} did not consider his own body, already dead...and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. {He did not dwell on his powerlessness. In fact, he mistakenly believed for a while that he might even help God produce the life of promise through his own fleshly efforts.} He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and *being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was accounted* {or credited} *to him for righteousness.”* (Rom. 4:16, 19-22)

The same principle applies to us. We are “credited” with Christ’s righteousness while we remain fully persuaded that God will do what He has promised. It implies that we must continue to believe in everything He reveals, and this belief must be demonstrated by accepting it into our hearts, which goes way beyond giving a mere intellectual assent to it. Abraham revealed how true faith responds to God’s leadings, even when the path ahead is not known. Christ has only promised to manifest His life of heavenly love within those who respond to His teachings. (John 14:21) It is therefore necessary to press forward

in our faith until we have come to the place where the “blessing” is to be received.

We should also note that the primary objective of receiving the “blessing” of perfect love is to become a greater blessing to others. He blesses us so that we may be a blessing.

Most Christians, like Abraham, will start out with the *mistaken belief* that it is necessary to help God produce the life of the Son. God therefore needs to wait, as He did with Abraham, until these earnest souls have lost all hope in their own strength {until they are “as good as dead” to the old self-originated form of life} before He will fulfill the promise. We are in a place to receive the blessing supernaturally, through faith, once we have died to the flesh-life. “Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all.” (Rom. 4:16)

Self-produced righteousness will inevitably produce carnal traits—the form of life represented by Ishmael. Not only does it fail {in trying circumstances}, but it also prevents us from receiving the blessing through faith. Consequently, the heart is not able to naturally manifest “the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” (1 Pet. 3:4) Let us therefore seek out that life that comes directly from the precious Lamb of God—the One who poured out His life for our good.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection... Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promise... {In the same way} God made a promise to Abraham...saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.* (Heb. 6:1, 12-15)