

GRACE: AN INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Grace works within the context of a relationship. Before we address the issue of grace, we first need to understand how God has determined for us to exist in relation to Himself, and thereafter examine how grace works within this relationship. In this introductory session, we will explore the following:

- The purpose of God's creation.
 - Our existence in God before the foundation of the world.
 - The relational model of Father (God) and Son (humanity).
 - The purpose of humanity - to showcase the glory of God.
 - How grace empowers us to fulfil our purpose.
 - Salvation Grace - our introduction to grace.
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1. UNDERSTANDING WHY WE WERE CREATED

1.1 GOD CREATED EVERYTHING

[John 1:3](#)

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

[Romans 11:36 \[AMP\]](#)

*For **from Him** [all things originate] and **through Him** [all things live and exist] and **to Him** are all things [directed]. To Him be glory and honor forever! Amen.*

[Romans 11:36 \[NLT\]](#)

For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

From Him: Everything that exists, both visible and invisible, comes from God.

Through Him: Everything is sustained by Him and the systems He has put in place in creation.

To Him: Everything finds its conclusion in Him, pointing to His nature, bringing Him glory.

1.2. OUR ORIGIN IS GOD

[Jeremiah 1:5a](#)

*Before I formed you in the womb I **knew** you;*

Knew: God did not just know about us, but He knew us experientially before forming us in the womb. The same Hebrew word for **knew** is used here: “Adam **knew** Eve and she bore a son”. This speaks to an intimate knowing. We were not created at the point of conception. Our bodies were formed in the womb, but the essence of who we are comes from God and pre-dates the event of our birth.

[Ephesians 1:4a](#)

*Just as He chose us **in Him before** the foundation of the world.*

We existed in God before anything was created – before the foundation of the world.

1.3 CREATED TO REPRESENT GOD AS HIS SON

[Genesis 1:26](#)

*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our **image**, according to Our **likeness**;*

- Image and likeness are not references to something physical. It has to do with God’s nature and character. We have been created to **represent** God, showing forth his glory.
- We were brought out to be the visible manifestation of an ‘invisible’ God.

[Romans 8:29](#)

*For those whom He **foreknew**, He also predestined to become conformed to the **image** of His **Son**, so that He would be the **firstborn** among [IN] many brethren;*

- Jesus is not just our Saviour, but our Pattern. He came to show us how to live as sons of God.
- God has predestined for us to exist as sons. Only a son can fully express the nature of Father.
- Our journey in Christ is one of continual growth, conforming to the image of the Pattern Son, so that we can more accurately represent the image and likeness of Father.

Ephesians 1:3-6 [NKJV]

- 3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*
- 4 *just as He chose us in Him **before the foundation** of the world, that we should be holy and without blame **before Him** in love,*
- 5 *having **predestined** us to **adoption as sons** by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*
- 6 *to the **praise of the glory** of His **grace**, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Verse 4: As previously discussed, we existed in God before creation. God elected to bring us out from Himself, to be “before Him in love”. Love has to be demonstrated. Had God not brought us out, we would never be able to fully experience the various aspects of His nature. For example: If not for the fall of Adam, we would never experience the mercy and kindness of God. God brought us out to be the object of His love, experiencing the vastness of His person as we go about our lives on earth.

Verse 5: We have been brought out from God, but are not disconnected from Him. Sonship refers to the relational model that God has ordained for us to exist in. We are not Christians relating to a God, but sons (male and female) relating to a Father. Hebrews 1:3 mentions the following regarding sonship: *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of His nature”*.

Verse 6: Our lives are to be “to the praise of His glory”. We give God glory when our lives showcase His nature and character. We are to build our lives according to the standard of God’s Word. Obedience to the Word of God transforms us into His image. As His Word is built in us, His image begins to shine through us. This verse references the “glory of his grace”. We cannot showcase glory (which is the purpose for which we have been created) without understanding and receiving God’s grace.

Creation: God spoke to the environment that would sustain the creation (Genesis 1)

Gen 1:11 - “Let the Earth sprout vegetation”

Gen 1:20 - “Let the waters teem with living creatures”

Gen 1:24 - “Let the Earth bring forth living creatures”

Gen 1:26 - “Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness”

When God created vegetation, He spoke to the earth. When God created the fish, He spoke to the water. When God created the animals, He spoke to the earth. He always spoke to the environment that would sustain the creation. When God brought us out, **He spoke to Himself**, for He is our origin and source. We have been brought out, yet are still “IN” Him as sons.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF GRACE IN ACCOMPLISHING PURPOSE

John 1:14,16

14 And the **Word** became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

16 For of **His fullness** we have all received, and **grace upon grace.**

- Glory on the outside is the result of Grace on the inside. Glory is full of Grace.
- John concludes that what they see externally - glory - was the result of something called 'grace' that resided internally.
- We need grace if we are to fulfil our purpose. Without grace, there is no glory.

Ephesians 1:6a

to the **praise of the glory of His grace.**

3. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ON GRACE

3.1 GRACE NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD

Colossians 1:6B

....since the day you heard of it and **understood the grace of God in truth;**

- Grace cannot just be experienced - it also needs to be understood. A comprehensive understanding of Grace will enhance our experience of grace working in our lives.

3.2 WE HAVE BEEN SAVED BY GRACE

Ephesians 2:8-9

For **by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

- Salvation grace is a free gift - there is nothing we could have done to earn it. Here, grace comes to us as the unmerited favour of God.

3.3 SALVATION IS OUR ENTRY INTO GRACE

Romans 5:1-2

- 1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 2 *through whom we also have obtained our **introduction** by faith into this **grace** in which we **stand**; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God.*

- Salvation Grace is our introduction to the economy of Grace. We cannot camp at the introduction - once saved, we need to journey into the vastness of His Grace.

3.4 WE ARE TO GROW IN GRACE

2 Peter 3:17-18

- 17 *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,*
- 18 ***but grow in the grace** and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

- We are encouraged to grow in grace. Once introduced to grace (the free gift of salvation), we then need to pursue grace - the ball is now in our court. This requires obedience and diligent pursuit of God.

Listen to this session on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w07pEfuV2cY>

In the next session, we will define Grace and begin to look at its effects.
