

understanding the
doctrines of grace



APRIL 30, 2025

If Calvinism is true...

- It renders all preaching vain and needless to both classes.
- It destroys holiness by removing motives of hope and fear.
- It destroys zeal for good works, for they avail nothing.
- It makes Christian revelation unnecessary.
- It makes Christian revelation contradict itself.
- Are you going to heaven?

(Source: An email argument from a concerned Arminian)

“Everything about the gospel is designed to glorify Christ and abase [reduce/lower] man. Therefore, anything that diminishes Christ’s glory is either directly or indirectly inconsistent with the gospel.”

(Steve Fernandez)

Belief in these doctrines is not an issue concerning:

- Peripheral matters to our walk of faith
- Personal preferences
- Primitive arguments

The doctrines of grace describe God's activity in the gospel whereby we are saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Two main views:

God gets all the glory for the salvation of souls

or

That glory is shared with mankind—each individual person brought to salvation.

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Known by several designations:

1. Calvinism
2. The five points
3. The doctrines of grace

There has been, and is, much:

1. Confusion
2. Emotionalism
3. Fear

What is the true origin of all lies, confusion, and fear stemming from false teaching/doctrine?

Scripture:

- John 8:44
- 1 Corinthians 14:33
- 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14-15
- 1 Timothy 1:7
- 1 Timothy 4:1-2

How we fight this:

- Ephesians 6:11
- James 4:7-8
- John 17:17

Important Introductory Questions

Doctrines of Grace refers to:

1. Doctrines = beliefs or teachings
2. Christian doctrine refers to the beliefs and teachings of the Christian Church about God and His ways. These beliefs and practices should be based on biblical doctrine (truth).
3. Biblical doctrine refers to what the Bible teaches for our belief and practice in personal holiness to the greater glory of God.

Doctrines of Grace

4. Grace refers to God's work of salvation or His work of forgiving men of their sins by His unmerited favor and blessing to us in Jesus Christ. The emphasis is on this work being God's work from first to last.
5. Doctrines of grace is a shorthand phrase about the Biblical beliefs/teachings from God's Word referring to God's work of saving mankind from sins through the merit of Jesus Christ alone.

Doctrines of Grace

6. In the phrase's historical context, it referred to five biblical/theological summations/points which church leaders of that era formed in response to five theological errors threatening the truth about the respective roles of God and man in salvation.



- T total depravity
- U unconditional election
- L limited atonement
- I irresistible grace
- P perseverance of the saved

Why study the doctrines of Grace?

1. To be a faithful and responsible student of God's Truth
 - To own (understand) and obey (live) God's Word
2. To be a faithful/responsible communicator of God's Truth
 - To graciously and accurately convey God's Word
3. To be a faithful and responsible worshiper of God in Truth
 - To glorify God in all things as His disciples

Are these doctrines essential to my understanding of God?

Since they seem to set people on edge and stir up trouble in the church, can't we just avoid talking about them and teaching them? Are they necessary to what we believe and how we live?

Are these doctrines essential to my understanding of God?

1. The doctrines of grace come under the theological heading of soteriology. This comes from the Greek word for the study of salvation. The five points come under this heading because they outline and describe God's work of saving mankind from sins.
2. However, the doctrines of grace also take in other major categories of Christian theology and belief such as *anthropology*, the study of man; *hamartiology*, the study of sin, and *Christology*, the doctrine of Christ.

Are these doctrines essential to my understanding of God?

3. What you believe about God's work in saving sinners affects every other area of your theology.
4. Therefore, this is not a nitpicky, unimportant, academic issue that you can afford to ignore and remain unclear or ignorant about.

The most vital question we need to ask and answer is this:

Are these five points taught in Scripture?

If yes, are we understanding them and are we teaching them correctly?

Historical Perspective

Let's begin to understand the doctrines of grace within the framework of God's "big picture" of salvation—God's work to preserve and pass on His truth from the beginning of the New Covenant of God's grace in Christ.

The New Testament Church: Defining Doctrine and Defying Error Through the Centuries

Jesus' Infant Church in the 1st Century

1. Jerusalem Council: The Apostles' fight for doctrinal purity.
 - Acts 15:1-35
2. Paul's fight for doctrinal purity
 - 2 Cor. 5:20-6:10; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1; Titus 1:9
3. Peter's fight for doctrinal purity
 - Acts 4, 5; 2 Pet. 3:1-2

Jesus' Infant Church in the 1st Century

4. The further away in time you get from the Apostles' ministry on earth, the greater the potential for corrupt doctrine in the teaching and preaching ministries of the church. There are two primary reasons for this:
 - Satanic deception!
 - Human error!
5. But God has always raised up faithful servants who have sought to teach, guard, and live sound doctrine. God Himself has preserved His truth in the Bible and He has passed on His truth through faithful men and women.



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