

The Fellowship of Growth in Christ

Lesson Four:

God's Grace and My Growth

We know that...

→ Our great salvation comes to us

- by grace alone
- through faith alone
- in Christ alone.

→ Spiritual growth is a struggle.

We need to understand the role of God's grace as an active force in our growth.

How do we understand God's grace operating in our spiritual maturity?

2 Peter 3:18

This is a call for us to

- pursue spiritual growth in the Lord Jesus
- develop our spiritual knowledge of the Lord Jesus

Since your spiritual maturity depends on it, you need to carefully clarify for yourself what you understand about the Bible's teaching concerning the grace and the knowledge of Jesus.

Where does God's grace fit into this situation?



Two primary problems of understanding and application were keeping him from living in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and, therefore, keeping him from experiencing any lasting victory over his sin issue.

These two problems involve misunderstanding and misapplying growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus in his life.

Problem 1:

He focused on his sin. His eyes were firmly fixed on the earthly issues of his failure and on the darkness of the sin itself.

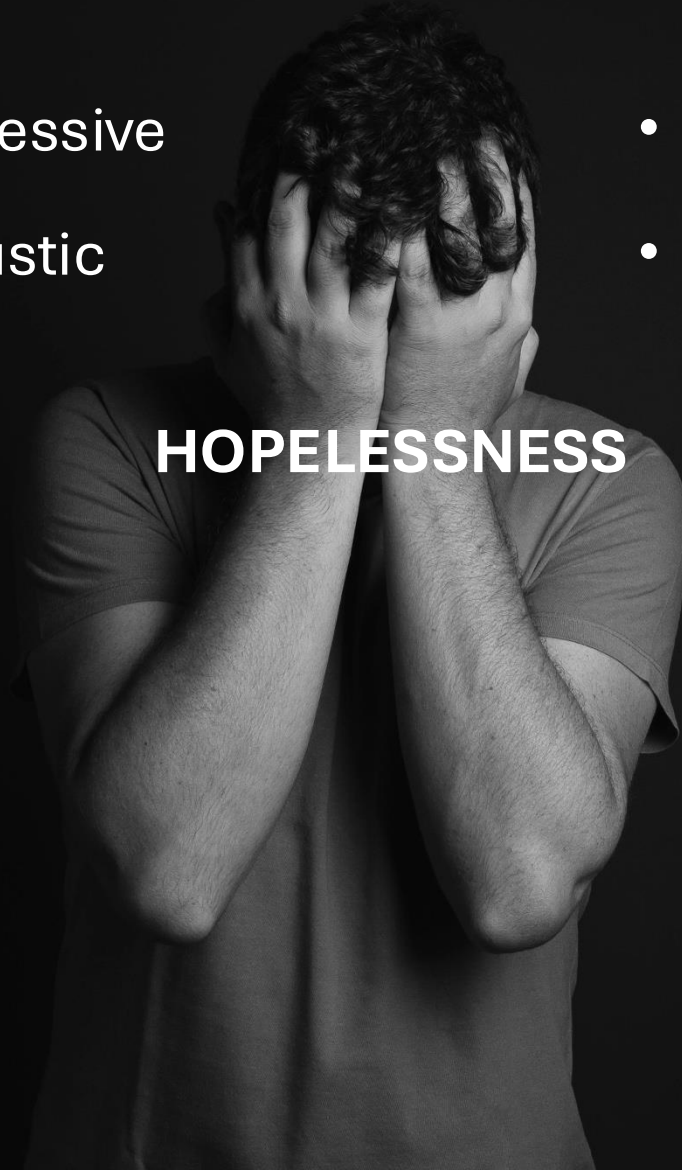
This is the wrong approach if his goal is to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Why?

SIN IS:

- Corrosive & progressive
- Destructive & caustic
- Never satisfied
- Always seeks more

HOPELESSNESS



The more you focus on your sin the more your soul is focused on you. Focusing on you keeps you in the mire of your own weakness and failure.

Sin wants you to focus on your sin and to focus on the sin in others.

The biblical alternative in facing off with sin:

- Confess our sin
- Repent of our sin
- Replace our sin

Will you be more problem-focused, or solution-focused?

Problem 2:

When you and your sins are at center stage, you aren't living from the fountain and foundation of your position in Christ, so that you are not applying yourself to live in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

A biblical understanding of God's grace and your ability to consistently apply it in your life must be the foundation of all your efforts to become more like Jesus.

What is God's grace in Christ? How would you explain God's grace to another person?

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..." (Titus 2:11-12)

In this verse, grace is personified as Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our grace — He is our favor with God!

God's active grace defined:

“Grace is God's [saving] favor, through Jesus Christ, to people who deserve His disfavor. This grace/favor is constantly active in our lives.

“We deserved God's wrath and lived under His disfavor as unbelievers. At the right time, Christ bore our curse and our disfavor with God in His body as He suffered and died on the Cross.

“God charged our sin to Christ and credited Jesus' righteousness to us.... God treated Christ as we deserved to be treated so that He could treat us as Jesus deserved to be treated.” *(Jerry Bridges)*

What are you doing to allow God's saving favor, His grace, to instruct you in holy living?

We need to discipline ourselves in a walk of grace with Jesus.

The grace of God in Scripture is always a matter of God taking action to love us in His divine favor by doing good to us.

This good that God does in your life is due to the blessings Jesus secured for you through His sinless life and sin-bearing death.

Titus 2:11-12

He has supernaturally revealed or made known to you His grace to you in Christ.

This specially-revealed grace to us in Christ is actively teaching us. We want to take full advantage of that instruction to help us grow in Christ.

“instructing” = to educate, discipline, or train up. God’s grace instructs us in godly thinking and living!

It is God's gift that you can respond to this instruction with humble, thankful obedience.

The purpose of God's special training and instruction for you has a negative and positive side for how you apply it to your life.

Negative: God's special instruction teaches you to deny certain things in life.

- Ungodliness: all that is against God and contrary to His truth. (Rom. 1:18)
- Worldly desires: ungodly wants rooted in greediness for what God forbids. (Eph 4:22)

Positive: God instructs us to live out these things:

- Sensibly: with a sound mind; self-controlled, soberly.

This is you living wisely and prudently to keep control over your desires and passions. You keep yourself under good control through wise-mindedness.

- Righteously: uprightly, justly, properly; our obligation to live the way God prescribes and describes as His standards for His children.

You allow God's grace to train you to live in agreement with what God says is right for you.

- Godly: in a godly manner (the opposite of ungodly, or all that is against God).

Godliness is making your life about Jesus, about pleasing Him in everything you think, say, and do.

We are also instructed by God's grace to look for something.

“Looking for” emphasizes what you put your trust, hope and expectations in. It's what you set your heart on.

It's a watchful, glad anticipation — you live looking forward to something...

The glorious return of Jesus, which marks the ultimate triumph of godliness over ungodliness in our lives.

This is about you being heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded, about who you are and what you are here for.

While you are not in heaven yet, and while you must still deal with sin in your life, you belong to Jesus, and He is your power over sin in your life.

Sin does not define you any longer. Jesus defines you because He lives in you.

God's grace, His special saving favor on your life, is actively teaching you to deny this ungodliness and to be wisely self-controlled as you live in agreement with what God says is right and best for you.

God does all of this through the power of the Holy Spirit working God's Word into your heart and out into how you live.

Make your life about Jesus in all that you think, say, and do, so that your heart is trained in a glad anticipation of Jesus coming to get you to take you into His glory in heaven.

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