

## Doing What You Cannot

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The real strength of Jesus' message is not our ability in *ourselves*, but our potential in *Him*. God has made us in His image and likeness to reveal His goodness and to show His greatness in human form. Jesus Himself is our picture of the goodness of God in action. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38).

The Apostle Paul becomes for us the example of a man redeemed from a life of sin against God who turns his world "right-side-up" with the power of this Gospel. In Paul's writings, he points to the most vital aspect of the message he has been given. Every one of his letters begins with the exhortation: "Grace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Grace*. In our walk with God, it is the most vital subject of all. Grace is at the heart of all that God is doing in humanity, yet it remains a sometimes vague and neglected subject. We assume that everyone understands what grace is, but too often this is not the case.

There are two aspects of grace that we must come to understand. *First, grace is the gracious heart of God the Father that moves Him to love us and lift our lives into the realm of His highest and best.*

God's grace looks beyond our sin and shortcomings and sees us in the light of forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus. Although we could never earn His blessings through our own good deeds, He has chosen to freely bless our lives.

*Second, grace is the power of God at work in us to fulfill what He has designed.*

*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* defines grace this way. "Grace is the divine influence of God in the heart and its reflection in the life." Grace is God's ability in us to do what we cannot do on our own. The Apostle Paul said, "...By the grace of God I am what I am..." (1 Corinthians 15:10 NKJV). In other words, whatever we become and whatever we accomplish for God will be the result of His grace and ability.

In Second Timothy 2:1, Paul says, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (NKJV). We are called to be strong in His grace.

In his book, *Covenant and Blessings*, Andrew Murray summarizes these two facets of grace well:

Grace is not only the power that moves the heart of God in its compassion toward us, when He acquits and accepts the sinner and makes him a child. It is all so the power that moves the heart of the saint and provides it each moment with just the disposition and the power which it needs to love God and do His will.

**Dennis Burke Ministries**

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