

GOD'S GRACE
(PHILIPPIAN'S FIRST GREAT THEME)
PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2

BACKGROUND: "Grace is the bedrock truth upon which all of Christian belief and practice stand. While grace was not a new concept before Christ's arrival, the world could not fully understand grace until He came (I Peter 1:10-13). That's because grace is heavenly by nature and therefore utterly foreign to the world. Only God, as a man, could reveal something so quintessentially divine." Charles R. Swindoll, The Owner's Manual for Christians, p. 3.

IS NOT DEFINED BY ONE WORD. It is God's favor upon the undeserving, His kindness, His power, His gift. In Philippians you will see that God's grace is to be shared and its power brings love and joy. To be justified by grace (**see Romans 5:1**) has the meaning of a sinful man being forgiven and reconciled to a holy God. This grace "insures that those who have been truly regenerated will persevere until the end of life." Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, p.1469. This special grace "marks the difference between believers and unbelievers." Zodhiates, p. 1470. (**Philippians 1:2, fn 1:2, Ephesians 2:5-9, fn 2:8-10, Romans 4:22-5:1-2, Romans 5:15-17, fn 5:2, Philippians 1:6-7, fn 1:6[1st]**) *What word or words best describe the grace of God that is working in your life?*

THRIVES IN THE DEPTHS OF HUMILITY. Philippians shows us that experiencing God's grace begins with a mind set on Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself to death on the cross for us. "For the sinner, *tapeinophrosune* (humility) involves the confession of his sin and a deep realization of his unworthiness to receive God's marvelous grace." Zodiates, p. 1366. Jesus opens the floodgates of grace when I, in the humility of Christlikeness, value other's lives before my own. Grace flows when I humbly confess that "I am what I am" by God's grace. (**Philippians 2:1-8, fn 2:3, James 4:6,10, fn 4:6-7, 10, Psalm 100:3 fn 100:3, Romans 12:3, fn 12:3, I Corinthians 15:9-10, fn 15:9-10**) *What part did God's grace play in your "accomplishments"?*

TEACHES YOU AND ME in Philippians the secret of being content in all situations. "Self-controlled, upright, and godly lives...are produced by embracing the grace of God. Spiritual discipline, Scriptural memorization, and accountability structures have their place. But a profound encounter with the grace of the gospel is the only thing that can produce a change at the level of our desires." Gospel Transformation Bible, footnote for Titus 2:11-14. (**Philippians 4:11-13, fn 4:13, Titus 2:11-14, fn 2:14, II Corinthians 12:6-10, fn 12:7-8,**) *How could you embrace the grace of God daily? Why would you want to do that?*

Are you taking time to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit with the Living Word teaching you and giving you His joy, His love, and His peace?