

## ***Cooperating with Grace: Three Primary Principles (Rom. 6:11-13)***

### **I. THE REIGN OF GRACE (ROM. 5:21)**

A. God requires us to cooperate with His grace. Paul urged us to not receive His grace in vain by neglecting to cooperate or lay hold of it. There is a division of labor. God will not do our part and we cannot do His part. Paul outlined three principles in cooperating with grace (Rom. 6:11-13).

***<sup>1</sup>We...plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1)***

B. Paul's dramatic declaration that we have become a new creation in Christ, with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The "he" that is a new creation is our spirit man. All things pertaining to our spirit become new. The "real you" is your spirit man, which is alive in Christ.

***<sup>17</sup>If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...<sup>21</sup>that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***

C. ***Old things passed away***: We were under ***condemnation*** before God. We were ***powerless*** with regard to sin (at the heart level). We were under ***darkness***, lacking ability to understand the Word or receive God's direction for life. We were ***destitute***, without hope of a good future in God.

D. ***All things have become new***: We are ***accepted and enjoyed*** by God. Our former powerlessness and darkness have passed, and now we have the ***authority of Jesus' name*** and the ***indwelling Spirit***, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan; walk in victory over sin; and receive understanding of God, His Word, and His will. Now we have a significant ***destiny*** in God.

E. The gospel is the good news of salvation, about receiving God's righteousness (in three tenses). Much of the misunderstanding about grace can be traced back to misunderstanding these truths. One third of our salvation is complete (the salvation of our spirit) the other two parts are not.

1. ***Justification***: *our legal position—past tense*, focused on my spirit (I have been saved)

2. ***Sanctification***: *our living condition—present tense*, focused on my soul (I am being saved)

3. ***Glorification***: *our eternal exaltation—future tense*, focused on my body (I will be saved)

F. ***Legal position***: This speaks of how God sees us and relates to us and what He has freely made available because of what Christ did *for us on the cross* and what the Spirit did *in our spirit*. In our legal position we have the fullness of grace in our spirit and full access to God's presence.

G. ***Living condition***: This speaks of how we see ourselves in Christ and relate to God and how much grace that we experience as our mind and emotions are renewed by interacting with the indwelling Spirit. The Spirit lives in our spirit and He renews our mind and emotions as we engage with Him. We can have the fullness of grace in our legal position and live in defeat in our living condition (mind and emotions).

H. What Jesus freely and instantly ***worked for us*** on the cross is what He progressively ***works in us***, as we relate to the Spirit's leadership in our life—referred to as abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:4-5).

- I. As we were under the reign of sin before our salvation, we are now under the reign of grace. We are now “dead” to the reign of sin (Rom. 6:2). In other words, we are *dead*, or *removed*, or *freed* from our former position where we were under the penalty and power of the reign of sin.
- <sup>21</sup>*As sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through...Jesus Christ...<sup>2</sup>How shall we who died to sin [freed from the reign of sin] live any longer in it? (Rom. 5:21-6:2)*
- J. ***The reign of sin:*** We were under ***condemnation*** before God. We were ***powerless*** before sin (at the heart level) and satanic attacks. We had no power to resist the sinful promptings in our heart (anger, bitterness, lust, etc.). We were in ***darkness***, without the ability to understand God, etc.
- K. ***The reign of grace:*** We received a new position, power, nature, insights, and destiny. We are now enjoyed, indwelt, empowered, and commissioned by God with a relevant purpose.
1. ***God’s acceptance with affection:*** The result of receiving this new position is that God enjoys and delights in relating to us as sons of God and the Bride of Christ.
  2. ***Indwelling Spirit:*** The Spirit gives us new power with new desires and insights that we may know God, His Word, and His will. We received power to resist sin and Satan.  
<sup>5</sup>*For if we have been united together in the likeness [benefits] of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness [benefits] of His resurrection... (Rom. 6:5)*  
<sup>22</sup>*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness... (Gal. 5:22)*
  3. ***Authority:*** We were given the authority to use Jesus’ name to release the works of God and hinder the works of Satan in our life and circumstances, as well as in others. We are seated in heavenly places with Jesus, with full access in prayer to God’s presence.  
<sup>6</sup>*...raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ... (Eph. 2:6)*
  4. ***Divine destiny:*** We have a relevant or lasting purpose in God that goes beyond the grave. We will forever reign with Him. Every day is relevant as we do God’s will, because He sees our effort and it so moves Him that He gives us eternal rewards for our faithfulness.

## II. OVERVIEW OF ROMANS 6: THE TRANSFORMED LIFE

- A. Romans 6 is the main chapter in the Scripture that teaches on personal transformation. It tells us how to access, or experience, the power of God that is available to us in our legal position.
- B. Note the three main sections in Romans 6:
1. ***Romans 6:1-10:*** Our ***legal position*** (what we freely and fully received at our new birth)
  2. ***Romans 6:11-13:*** How to ***cooperate with grace*** (three principles to access God's power)
  3. ***Romans 6:14-23:*** Our ***living condition*** (what we experience as we cooperate with grace)

### III. PRINCIPLE #1: KNOWING THE TRUTH (FAITH)

A. ***Knowing Principle (Rom. 6:11)***: We must know who we are in Christ. To “reckon ourselves” is to see ourselves in the way that God sees us as under the reign of grace (Rom. 5:21).

<sup>11</sup>***Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ... (Rom. 6:11)***

B. ***See yourself alive to God***: We must see ourselves as enjoyed, indwelt, empowered, and commissioned by God with a relevant purpose. To “reckon” ourselves is to “see” ourselves according to what the Word says about us. We see ourselves as God sees us. We see our new identity as sons of God and the Bride of Christ, who function as kings and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). We are to apply “new creation” truths to our identity. By virtue of our legal position, we are united to Jesus by the Spirit and thus, have many benefits of salvation (Rom. 6:3-10).

<sup>21</sup>***As sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through...Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:21)***

C. ***See yourself dead to sin***: We are dead to the reign of sin (Rom. 5:21). In other words, we are *dead*, or *removed*, or *freed* from our former position under the reign of sin, where we were condemned, powerless before sinful promptings, in darkness and destitute without a lasting purpose. We are now *dead* or *freed* from sin’s penalty, shame, and mandatory power over us.

<sup>2</sup>***How shall we who died to sin [freed from the reign of sin] live any longer in it? (Rom. 6:2)***

1. Sin formerly had a mandatory control over our hearts and we had no power to challenge it. The impulses of sin do not all go away—we now have power to effectively challenge them because we have the power of the indwelling Spirit in our spirit (Gal. 5:22).
2. In declaring that we “died to sin” (v. 2), Paul was not exhorting us *to do something* for God, but *to believe in something* He did for us. Paul was not saying that “sin died in us” in the sense of sinful desires dying in us, but that we died to the reign of sin (Rom. 5:21).
3. The fruit of His actual presence in us is love and peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22). Therefore, we are to turn our attention inward and thank the Spirit for His presence in our spirit. For example, as we “thank” the Spirit for His peace that is in our *spirit*, then we will actually experience His peace in our *soul* (mind and emotions).

<sup>22</sup>***The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness... (Gal. 5:22)***

D. We are transformed by changing our thinking. We are set free by the knowledge of the truth. The renewing of our mind includes ***confessing*** the Word back to God. Our confession is what we say to the indwelling Spirit about who we are in Christ (Rom. 10:8-10). Talk to the Spirit, saying, “Thank You, Spirit, for Your indwelling presence that empowers me to resist sin (Gal. 5:22).”

<sup>2</sup>***Be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)***

E. We exercise faith in the working of God, who joined us to Jesus (as described in Rom. 6:3-10).

<sup>10</sup>***You are complete in Him...<sup>11</sup>In Him you were...<sup>12</sup>buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God... (Col. 2:10-12)***

#### IV. PRINCIPLE #2: RESISTING DARKNESS (CHOOSING RIGHTEOUSNESS)

- A. ***Resisting Principle (Rom. 6:12-13a)***: We resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances. The principle of resisting involves resisting all the works of darkness, including sickness and oppression in our lives or the lives of those we are warring for in prayer, etc.  
<sup>12</sup>*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*  
<sup>13</sup>*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin...*  
*(Rom. 6:12-13a)*
- B. ***Do not let sin reign in your body***: We must resist the inward prompting of sin and the schemes of Satan. The need for self-denial is a very important aspect of New Testament teaching.  
<sup>1</sup>*The grace of God...has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup>teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly... (Titus 2:11-12)*
- C. ***Do not present your members to sin***: We must refuse circumstances that inflame sinful desires. We present our body to sin by getting in circumstances that inflame sin in us. We must avoid being in circumstances where we must trust our flesh to choose rightly. We do not go to places, buy items, or look at or talk about that which stirs up lust.

#### V. PRINCIPLE #3: PURSUING GOD AND PEOPLE (LOVE)

- A. ***Pursuing Principle (Rom. 6:13b)***: We pursue serving and relating to God and people in love. We present ourselves to God, and our bodies as His instruments, that He may use us to bless others. We pursue loving God and people. We make godly choices for love.  
<sup>13</sup>*But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom. 6:13b)*
- B. ***Present yourselves to God***: This speaks of seeking to know, love, and please God in a personal and wholehearted way. This speaks of cultivating His presence in our life and abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:5) and includes fellowshiping with the indwelling Spirit.
- C. ***Present your members as instruments of righteousness***: This speaks of loving and serving people in righteousness. We do this first in our families and in the place the Lord has put us. We are to be relational and missional. Our members include our time, abilities, money, etc. We offer our body or our whole person, as a vessel for the Spirit to use to serve others. This includes the effort it takes to be equipped to minister and to build quality relationships that glorify God.
- D. ***Summary***: We must *know truth, resist darkness, and pursue God*. We pursue loving God and people as we resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances in the context of knowing who we are in Christ and the truth about God's heart as a Father and Bridegroom. None of these principles can be omitted. Some resist sin and pursue God without knowing who they are in Christ. Some pursue God without pursuing people or resisting sin. Others pursue people (relationship or ministry) without pursuing God or resisting sin. Some are only relational and missional but without pursuing God and resisting sin which leads to spiritual burnout.