

LETTERS TO LEADERS

BY

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STAND IN GRACE

Paul writes in Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

UNDERSTAND GRACE

As leaders in the body of Christ, we must have a balanced and strong understanding of the grace of God so we may properly lead God's people to walk in the grace of God "wherein we stand."

DIFFICULT TO DEFINE

The Greek and Hebrew words translated grace do not give a clear definition of what "grace" really is. To compound things, the Greek and Hebrew words for "mercy" are just as general as the words for grace. To further complicate things, the Greek and Hebrew words for grace and mercy do not clearly distinguish between grace and mercy. The same is true in the English.

As I have typed and studied all of the grace and mercy scriptures, I have distinguished them with these simple definitions:

DEFINITION OF GRACE

Grace is God's power to keep from falling (from righteousness as well as the moral conduct defined by the law).

DEFINITION OF MERCY

Mercy is God's willingness and power to forgive us when we fall (when we repent with tears of sorrow).

GRACE IS NO EXCUSE

Often I hear Christians excuse their or someone's sin by saying they or someone lives by the grace of God. That is an erroneous understanding of the grace. Grace was sent by God to save us, not to give us the liberty to live in sin or even live in the flesh. It is true, we are not accepted by God on the basis of our obedience to the law. We are accepted by God on the basis of our faith toward Jesus Christ. But we need to understand that this faith toward Jesus Christ opens to us the grace-power of God that will cause us to live far above what the law required of us.

MERCY IS THE ANSWER

The wonderful love of God has provided mercy for those of us who fall in sin or live by the flesh. This mercy of God is activated by our sincere repentance, even with tears of sorrow.

NO ADDITIONS

Paul writes the letter to the Galatians, because the Galatians were deceived to add circumcision to their faith in Jesus Christ. He warns in Galatians 5:2 "... that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

The problem is far more subtle than whether we be circumcised or not. It is a matter of adding anything to our salvation. We are saved by grace through faith.

SIMPLICITY OF SALVATION

Our job as leaders is to make this simplicity clear to everyone, Christians, Jews and other unbelievers.

In His love

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