



## **BIBLICAL ILLUMINATION**

### **Words Every Christian Should Know (and Be Able to Explain)**

"be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

#### **FAITH**

Faith means putting your trust in God and having confidence that he will fulfill his promises. Faith is more than intellectual agreement. Faith is so important because it is the means by which we have a relationship with God: "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph 2:8).

Genuine biblical faith expresses itself in everyday life. James writes that "faith by itself, apart from works, is dead" (James 2:17). Faith works through love to produce tangible evidence of its existence in a person's life (Gal 5:6). Put another way, the obedience that pleases God comes from faith (Rom 1:5; 16:26) rather than a mere sense of duty or obligation.

Faith is how we receive the benefits of what Jesus has done for us. He lived a life of perfect obedience to God, died to pay the penalty for our sinful rebellion against God, and rose from the dead to defeat sin, death, and the devil. By putting our faith in him, we receive forgiveness for our sins and the gift of eternal life. Simply put, faith means relying completely on who Jesus is and what he has done to be made right with God.

Faith is the instrument through which, by God's grace, Christ's perfect righteousness and atoning sacrifice are credited to us. It is God's gift, not a work of any kind (Eph. 2:8-9).

#### **Justification by Faith**

Justification refers to the moment when a person is objectively declared righteous before God based on the righteousness of Christ's atoning death (Rom. 8:33-34). This act of declaration takes place through faith in Christ and not as a result of human works or effort (Eph. 2:8-9).



Through justification, a person is made to be in right standing before God, changing what was once an estranged and hostile relationship to one of adoption into the family of God.

### *Justification and Works*

Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer (Eph. 2:10). Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). While good works do not establish justification, they do verify a genuine faith and make our justification evident to others.

## **GRACE**

Grace is one of God's attributes. The grace of God in our redemption in Christ is God's free, sovereign undeserved favor or love to man, in his state of sin and guilt, which manifests itself in the forgiveness of sin and deliverance from His justice.

There is nothing we have done or could ever do to merit God's grace. We receive it by God's sovereign choice alone (Rom. 11:5-6).

The Bible describes at least 5 different categories or expressions of grace: saving grace, sanctifying grace, strengthening grace, sharing grace and serving grace.

**Saving grace** is the grace God gives to sinners to influence their hearts and turn them to Christ. We cannot be saved apart from God's grace. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)

**Sanctifying grace** is God's power and ability to purify us and enable us to live holy lives in a corrupt and contaminated world. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age," – Titus 2:11-12 NKJV. We are enabled to live and reflect Christ's righteousness and true holiness from both our positional holiness and behavioral holiness.



**Strengthening grace** is the grace God gives us to stand strong in faith and live the Christian life from a position of strength and not weakness spiritually. We are empowered to do the will and work of God for our lives “strong” and “courageously” (Joshua 1:5 – 9). We need God’s grace to live. Romans 5:1-2 tells us: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand” (NIV). It’s through faith that we stand in grace. Strengthening Grace is God’s power, strength and ability to energize and inspire us to live victoriously, to reign over the challenges and circumstances of life.

**Sharing grace** is God’s power and ability to meet our needs and take joy in giving generously to others. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” – 2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV. This Sharing grace enables us and equips us to live a lifestyle of generosity. We excel and abound in a joy-filled life of giving and receiving; sowing and reaping with a cheerful and grateful heart.

**Serving grace** is the grace God gives us to serve Him. He gives us grace gifts, talents, passions and callings that are unique to each one of us. God has graced or gifted each of us in a special way so we can serve Him in a powerful and fruitful manner. Whether your serving grace is in the area of leadership, hospitality, teaching, mercy, giving or some other area, God enables and equips you for serving by His grace. Serving Grace is God’s power and ability to serve Him and others with His divinely imparted gifts and aptitudes.

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” – 1 Peter 4:10 NKJV

One simple definition of God’s grace is this: Grace is love acting. There is nothing passive about God’s grace, just like there is nothing passive about His love toward us. God, who is LOVE, has been and continues to act on our behalf, and His love in action is what GRACE is all about. So, if God’s grace, in its general sense, is “Love Acting”, then: Saving grace is Love Rescuing, Redeeming and Reconciling. Sanctifying grace is Love Cleansing. Strengthening grace is Love Empowering. Sharing grace is Love Supplying. Serving grace is Love Assisting.



## **PEACE**

According to the Bible, the peace of God, “which transcends all understanding,” is the harmony and calmness of body, mind, and spirit, that supersedes earthly circumstances; a tranquil state of appreciation and faith when we submit to and trust the commandments of God and Christ. It requires a mixture of humility and courage to experience God’s peace, seeking beyond the mere abilities of our own understanding, trusting in the power and grace of God.

There are two aspects to peace—objective and subjective. Just as two countries have a status of peace with each other through official agreements, so Christians are declared at peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). This means that we still have the status of peace with God regardless of how we feel or how well we keep his commands at any given time.

At times, people still feel anxious in this troubled world and feel a lack of peace from the sin in their lives. These feelings should spur us on to trust in God, repent of our sins, and seek to live in such a manner that honors our Lord. Christians should always be exceedingly thankful and find unfathomable comfort in the fact that the blood of Christ sufficiently atones for all their guilt and sin.

## **THE CROSS**

God in his perfection must uphold all his attributes. We cannot separate God’s love from his holiness, or his mercy from his justice. God must be true to all his attributes, because to do otherwise would be to deny his own self.

God would not be God if he did not possess all his attributes in the simplicity and perfection of his essence” (229). Jesus was born in the flesh so he could fulfill the whole law and be the perfect sacrifice on behalf of all who put their faith in him (Heb. 10:11-14).



At the cross Jesus offered up his life as the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice for all who trust in him for salvation (e.g. John 10:14, 15). According to Horton we observe, "the clearest evidence of the complete consistency between God's goodness and his sovereignty, justice, wrath, and righteousness in Christ's cross" (p. 266). At the cross we see God's "righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

## **GOSPEL**

The Gospel is the good news of what Jesus did to redeem his people (his birth, life, death, and resurrection) and inaugurate the kingdom of God and the new creation (1 Cor. 15). It is good news because we are unable to save ourselves, as all our works are tainted by sin and we are all guilty in Adam (Rom. 5:12-21).

Without Christ being born in the flesh, keeping the law perfectly, and being the perfect once-for-all sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:11-12), we would be without hope. Because of God's love for the world in sending his Son, there is a way to peace with God: it is the narrow gate that is through faith in Christ alone:

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matt. 7:13-14)

## **SALVATION**

There is salvation in no other name, because only Jesus could save us from ourselves (Acts 4:12).

Salvation: "the deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin that is granted to those who accept by faith God's conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus." Salvation is available in Jesus alone ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)) and is dependent on God alone for provision and assurance.



The sinner occupies a sevenfold position before God. He is a debtor, a condemned criminal, an enemy, a slave, defiled and unholy, dead, and a poor stranger.

Man in his sevenfold position as sinner needs the sevenfold salvation God has provided through His Son. As debtors, sinners need forgiveness. As condemned criminals, they need justification. As enemies of God, they need reconciliation. As slaves to sin, they need redemption. As defiled and unholy, they need sanctification. As dead, they need newness of life. As poor strangers, they need adoption. The seven aspects of salvation are forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, newness of life, and adoption.

The seven elements or aspects of salvation are divine works; they designate the divine side of salvation. The human side of salvation, as we have seen, is conversion, which includes repentance, faith, and baptism. The seven elements of salvation are works which God performs when the sinner properly enters into Christ. When the sinner accepts God's gift of salvation through repentance, faith, and baptism, God lifts him out of the world, places him in Christ, and bestows upon him spiritual riches indicated by these seven elements of salvation.

### Glorification

Glorification is the final stage in the process of salvation. It refers to the future time when a Christian reaches moral and spiritual perfection at the time of death or at Christ's return (Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:22). Glorification also involves the physical perfection that we will have once our bodies have been resurrected. When we are glorified, we will have a fuller knowledge and understanding of God and His Word (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 13:12).

## FORGIVENESS

An outstanding blessing included in God's gift of salvation is the forgiveness of sins. The forgiven sinner's past life, regardless of what might have been included, exists no more. Bridges are burned behind him; gates of yesterdays are closed. He is dead to the past. His life history previous to conversion is considered non-existent. He is treated as if the day he became a Christian were the first day of his life.



Through divine forgiveness, man's sins have been washed away (Acts 22:16) ; he has become as "white as snow" (Isa. 1:18; Ps. 51:7). His sins have been removed from him " as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:12). His iniquities have been subdued, and his sins have been cast into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:19.) They have been "blotted out" (Isa. 44:22), "sought for . . . and not found" (Jer. 50:20), cast behind God's back (Isa. 38:17), and remembered no more (Jer. 31:34).

## **JUSTIFICATION**

The scene is the supreme court of the universe. The sinner, on his own merit, stands before his holy Judge as a condemned criminal, guilty of sin and worthy of destruction. God's holy nature requires Him to condemn and to punish the sinner.

As an act of grace, however, God has ordered a stay in the execution of sin's penalty, eternal death. Sinners, therefore, do not fall dead the moment they sin today. The execution of sin's penalty has been postponed until the second death so that sinners can have opportunity to accept God's plan of salvation. Apart from God's grace, the total human race would have been destroyed. Through infinite love, God provided that His sinless and perfect Son, Jesus Christ, would become the sinner's Substitute. As the sinner's Substitute, Christ perfectly satisfied all the requirements of the law. He obeyed the law's precepts and suffered the law's penalty. This He did, not for Himself, but for sinners. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). The believer's sin is imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer.

When repentant believers receive Jesus as their Substitute, they become vitally united to Him. They enter into Christ, and Christ enters into them. The saving work that Christ performed for them is then actually applied to them. In consequence of this vital relationship with Christ, God can justly treat the sinner as if he himself had done those things which his Substitute did for him. The sinner is treated as if he himself had obeyed the law's precepts, and as if he himself had suffered the law's penalty.





In view of the sinner's relation to his Substitute, God imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner. On the basis of this imputed righteousness, which the sinner receives through faith, God as Judge declares that the sinner is righteous in relation to the law. He is justified; he is without condemnation.

## **RECONCILIATION**

Sinners are enemies of God. They live in opposition to God's government. Man, in sin, asserts self in active hostility and antagonism to the Ruler of the universe. Self and God move in opposite directions. There can be no fellowship between man and God as long as man is determined to live contrary to Him. "Men are at war among themselves, and man is at war within himself because there is no peace with God." Enemies of God need reconciliation. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:10). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7, 8). "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21).

Christ's sacrifice provided the basis of reconciliation of God, the King of the universe, and His enemies. God is propitiated; sinners are reconciled. Sinners have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer are they God's enemies; they are His friends.

## **REDEMPTION**

Redemption is liberation of a slave from bondage by payment of a price. The word "redeem" is translated from three Greek words: *agorazo*, to acquire at the forum (Rev. 5:9; 14:3, 4), *exagorazo*, to acquire out of the forum (Gal. 3:13; 4:5), and *lutroo*, to loose by a price (Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18). God, the Redeemer, performs His work of redemption through Jesus, the Redeemer. The scene is the agora, the market place. Slaves of sin are in bondage, "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). God, the Redeemer, purchases slaves of sin in the market place with





the precious blood of His Son, who voluntarily gave His life as a ransom price for sinners. Having paid the purchase price, the Redeemer removes the redeemed from the market place so that they will never again be exposed to sale. The Redeemer, then, sets the prisoners free; they are given perfect freedom. Out of appreciation and love for the Redeemer, the redeemed give themselves to Him as His servants. (1 Pet. 2:16.)

In forgiveness, God is Creditor; in justification, He is Judge; in reconciliation, He is King; in redemption, He is Redeemer. The debtor is in the banking house with indebtedness. The criminal is in the law court with condemnation. The enemy is in the king's palace with enmity. The slave is in the market place under bondage. The debtor receives forgiveness; the criminal, righteousness; the enemy, peace; the slave, freedom.

## **SANCTIFICATION**

Sinners need sanctification. They are unholy, desecrated, polluted, and profane. (1 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:2.) In that condition, they cannot abide in God's holy presence nor be used in His sacred service. Like old silverware in a rubbish heap, they were made for the Master's use, but, in their present condition, they are not suited for that purpose. They need to be separated from sin, dedicated to God, and consecrated for service.

Sanctification originates in God's grace; it is based upon Christ's sacrifice (Heb. 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12); it is conditional upon man's faith (Acts 26:18). God performs this work of sanctification through His Son, Jesus Christ. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Christ is the sinner's sanctification. In other words, Christ's holiness is imputed to the believer at conversion. Through his vital relationship with Christ, the believer is holy before God. When a person enters into Christ, he stands on holy ground. He is separated from the world and is dedicated unto God. He has been sanctified; he is a saint.



## **NEWNESS OF LIFE**

Sinners are dead in sin. They are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5), "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), and "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18). They are dead to the spiritual realm of life. There is no redemptive contact between the sinner and God. Blind men are dead to the realm of sight; deaf men are dead to the world of sound; paralyzed men are dead to the realm of touch; sinners are dead to the things of God. The windows of the heart are closed heavenward. Sinners have horizontal existence, but no vertical life. For them, life is without a third dimension.

When sinners enter into Christ, they become new creatures. When Christ enters into them, they receive newness of life. Having established a union with Christ, believers receive a special quality of life from Him. They are on a new level of existence. Life for them acquires a new dimension; to the horizontal is added the vertical. They sustain relationships not only with men, but also with God. Life is not merely extended to the around; it is lifted to the above. Windows of heart and mind are flung open Godward, and through them enters the sunshine of God's life, light, and love.

## **ADOPTION**

Adoption is that act of God in salvation wherein He, as Father, places His begotten child in the position of an adult son with all the privileges of legal inheritance. He who is adopted is an heir. Newness of life and adoption are linked together. Newness of life gives the nature of sonship; adoption gives the position of sonship.

As begotten children and adopted sons, believers are heirs of God. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16, 17)

## **IMPUTATION**



Imputation is one of the most under-taught teachings in the church today, and every Christian needs to know it. God credits to us the righteousness of Christ, and this comes through faith alone, which is also God's gift to us in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9). Additionally, our sin is credited to Christ, who, though he knew no sin, was punished for the sins of all who trust in him for salvation (2 Cor. 5:21).

Martin Luther called this the Great Exchange: Christ's righteousness counted (credited) to us, and our sin counted (credited) to Christ. You can also think of this double imputation as a balance sheet, with Christ's assets on one side and our liabilities on the other side. God doesn't look at our hearts and judge us as righteous based on our holiness; rather, we are judged as righteous because of the perfect work of Christ that is imputed to us. We don't have to be punished for our sin either, because God imputed the punishment we deserve to Christ who bore it in full at the cross.

## **RESURRECTION**

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is our greatest hope, since it showed that our Savior conquered sin, death, and the devil at the cross, and the grave could not hold him. We can also take great comfort in knowing that we, too, will have resurrected bodies like Christ one day. We won't always be separated from our physical bodies but will one day be reunited with them, and we won't be able to sin anymore! Praise God!

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:20-22)

One day suffering, pain, evil, and death will be no more, and all believers will behold the beauty of their Savior at last and for always:

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have



passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Rev. 21:4-5). Here are 10 words every Christian should know—and be able to explain—in order to "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).