

Unlocking ... the word of the truth—the gospel ... and understanding ... the grace of God in truth ...



- (Colossians 1:5b–6 ESV) Of this you have heard before in **the word of the truth, the gospel**, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and **understood the grace of God in truth**.

THE FRUIT-BEARING, ABUNDANT GOSPEL ...

1. The fruit-bearing gospel is “the word of the truth” gospel—the grace of God in truth.

The fruit-bearing gospel yields active, living faith in Christ and love for all the saints which is anchored in the hope laid up for us in heaven upon hearing the truth of the gospel in the gospel and then—through the truth of the “true” gospel—understanding the grace of God in truth.

- (Colossians 1:3–6 ESV) We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, **the gospel**, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it **is bearing fruit and increasing**—as it also does among you, **since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth**.
- ### 2. A faithful minister, such as Epaphras, is essential to a local fellowship coming to understand the grace of God in truth.
- (Colossians 1:7–8 ESV) Just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.
- A. Epaphras taught the grace of God in truth.
 - B. Epaphras was a faithful minister on their behalf.
 - C. Epaphras was spiritually perceptive and understood that their love was the fruit of the Spirit.
- ### 3. To live in the abundance of the gospel we must understand the grace of God in truth.

The gospel yields its abundant “Spirit-fruit” in our lives when we **hear** the truth of the gospel and **understand** the grace of God in truth in the gospel. The foundation of our hope is the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. **The truth of the grace of God is God’s decision to grant his divine favor to us to save us from our sins.**

UNDERSTANDING “THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH” ...



What does it mean when God extends his divine favor—his grace—to us? We will best understand the concept of grace from its biblical usage. Definitions and word meanings are too broad and general to understand the biblical idea as we should, but they do give us a starting place.

DEFINITION ...

The Greek word for grace is χάρις [charis /khar·ece/]. It is translated variously as “grace”, “favor”, “thanks”, etc. It is defined as grace; that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech; good will, loving-kindness, favor.

BIBLICAL USAGE ...

1. **Grace is contrary in position to works.**
 - A. **Grace is not something done by human hands.**
 - (Ephesians 2:11 NASB95) Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands.
 - (Ephesians 2:11 NIV) Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands).
 - B. **Calling grace “grace” does not make it grace. —When we introduce the human element, grace is no longer grace no matter how spiritual or sophisticated our explanation.**
 - (Romans 11:6 ESV) But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

A word on sacraments ... For instance, if we

determine that a minister or priest grants, or bestows, grace through baptism and communion, then we have added a human element to grace and it is no longer grace. Roman Catholics and Methodists speak of the sacraments of baptism and communion (or Eucharist) in which **taking the bread and cup convey God's grace**, but when we introduce the human element, it is no longer grace.

C. We are *SAVED BY GRACE*. This was not “our doing” but God’s “doing.” We were dead. God made us alive.

- (Ephesians 2:4–8 ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show **the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

“Not our doing” ... οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν ... *ouk ex humon* ...

“Not of works” ... οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ... *ouk ex ergon* ...

- (Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2. Access to God’s Grace: We gain access to God’s grace through Christ by faith.

- (Romans 5:1–5 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through **our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- (Romans 3:23–24 ESV) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and **are justified by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

3. Access to God: We gain access to grace before the throne of God through our great high priest—Jesus, Son of God.

- (Hebrews 4:14–16 ESV) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to **the throne of grace**, that we may receive **mercy and find grace to help in time of need**.

4. Access to God’s riches: Our access to God’s grace—his divine favor—means full access to the riches of his divine favor through and in Jesus Christ.

- (Ephesians 1:3 ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places**.
- (Ephesians 1:7 ESV) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of his grace**.
- (Colossians 1:26–27 ESV) The mystery hidden for

ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are **the riches of the glory of this mystery**, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- (Colossians 2:2–3 ESV) That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all **the riches of full assurance of understanding** and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**.
- (Colossians 2:2–3 NIV84) My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, **Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**.
- (Ephesians 1:16–19 ESV) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are **the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints**, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might
- (Ephesians 2:4–9 ESV) **But God, being rich in mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved**— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 **so that** in the coming ages he might show **the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 **For by grace** you have been saved through faith. And this is **not your own doing**; it is the gift of God, 9 **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast
- (Ephesians 3:8 ESV) **To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.**
- (Ephesians 3:14–19 ESV) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 **that according to the riches of his glory** he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- (Romans 9:22–23 ESV) What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known **the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy**, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.
- (Romans 11:33 ESV) **Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!** How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
- (Romans 10:12–13 ESV) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, **bestowing his riches on all who call on him**. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”