

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Grace and Work

### Introduction

Many participants in either side of the grace/work discussion tend to think that these are mutually exclusive. This is not the truth. These two balance each other just like most other truths. For us to function properly in either grace or works we must understand the balance and the place for each aspect of this truth. Grace deals with who we are, our identity; work deals with what we do, our function.

### Grace and Faith

Our identity as a child of God is established by His grace. All that is necessary for us to be acceptable to the Lord has already been accomplished. There is nothing that we can do that can improve on what Jesus has already done for us. We cannot earn what has already been freely given.

While grace has been made available to us by the Lord Jesus, we receive and operate in grace through faith.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; (Ephesians 2:8 NASB)

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; (Romans 12:6 NASB)

through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:2 NASB)

For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (Romans 4:16 NASB)

Much of the current teaching concerning grace presents it as a passive truth. Nothing needs to be done; therefore, doing anything is a hindrance to grace. The end result of this type of teaching is

passive believers who are waiting on God to do something because they don't have to do anything. This produces perpetual babes in the Lord that don't mature or grow up in Him.

When we realize that we receive and operate in grace by faith, it gives us a new perspective. Faith is not passive but active.

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:17-18 NASB)

Faith is evidenced by works. Real faith always results in works. Now we see that grace is tied to faith which is tied to works. There is an inter-relationship between these truths. To try to make any of these interrelated truths stand apart or separate from the others is to do a disservice to the spirit of truth and will result in an erroneous or ineffective teaching.

## Training

Jesus made in clear in His teaching that maturing was necessary for one to fulfill the expectations of the Lord.

"A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40 NASB)

For us to be like Jesus, conformed to His image, we must become fully trained. This is not a passive process. Training requires learning, discipline, change, and understanding.

But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14 NASB)

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Hebrews 12:11 NASB)

Two aspects of our training involve *practice* and *discipline*. Neither of these is passive in nature but both require our active involvement in what the Lord is doing in us and with us.

## Learning God's Ways

You have probably heard the saying from TV or books, "Like the Bible says, God works in mysterious ways ...". I cringe every time I hear this. First, the Bible doesn't say that. It was said by Benjamin Franklin. Second, the Bible makes it clear that God expects us to learn and understand His ways. Look at what the Scriptures say about the Children of Israel.

"THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; (Hebrews 3:10 NASB)

God was angry with them for two reasons: 1) they went astray in their heart, and 2) they did not know His ways. When do you think that God expected them to learn these two things? It would seem that He intended for the wilderness to train them in these areas. [Deu. 8:2-5] They received God's grace in abundance. He delivered them from bondage, led them directly, protected them from the elements and their enemies, gave them food and water, and an inheritance that they

were to receive. Yet He became angry with them because they frustrated His grace by failing to have their hearts changed and failing to learn His ways. Are we guilty of similar conduct and lack of change? Have we accepted grace as the end all and failed to operate in grace through faith?

This is what the Scriptures say was the end result for the Children of Israel:

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ([Hebrews 3:12 NASB](#))

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. ([Hebrews 4:2 NASB](#))

There is a solemn warning for us in these Scriptures.

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