A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF GRACE, OBEDIENCE, AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY

Grace Is Not a License to Sin

How Modern Believers Twist the Unmerited Favor of God into Lasciviousness, and What the Apostles Actually Taught About Baptism, Newness of Life, and Keeping God's Commandments

> *"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*
>
> **— Jude 1:4 (KJV)**

CHAPTER 1

The Modern Counterfeit of Grace

Walk into almost any modern church congregation today, listen to popular Christian radio, or scroll through faith-based social media, and you will hear one word celebrated above nearly all others: grace. Grace is sung about in worship choruses, printed on coffee mugs, and preached from thousands of pulpits every Sunday morning. On the surface, this devotion to grace sounds deeply biblical. After all, the New Testament proclaims that salvation is a gift from God, and without His mercy, no human being could ever stand justified before a holy Creator.

Yet beneath the surface of modern religious culture, a subtle and dangerous distortion has taken root. For millions of professing Christians, grace has quietly been redefined. Instead of viewing God's grace as the undeserved pardon that rescues a repentant sinner from the death penalty of the law and empowers them to live a transformed life, modern Christianity routinely treats grace as a permanent exemption from obeying God's commandments. In everyday practice, grace has become a spiritual credit card with no limit—a divine permission slip that allows believers to live however they please, disregard the explicit instructions of Scripture, and still feel completely secure in their salvation.

Consider how common this mindset has become. When confronted with clear biblical commands—whether regarding sexual purity, honesty in business, controlling one's tongue, forgiving enemies, or honoring the Sabbath and the moral law of God—the standard reflex among many modern believers is to wave a hand and say, 'We are not under the law; we are under grace.' In this popular theology, obedience is dismissed as 'legalism,' keeping God's commandments is portrayed as an insult to the cross of Christ, and holiness is treated as an optional hobby for unusually zealous believers rather than an essential requirement of walking with God.

This is not a new problem, nor did it catch the early apostles by surprise. Nearly two thousand years ago, Jude, the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus, looked out at the early congregations and sounded an urgent alarm. He had originally intended to write a pleasant letter celebrating their shared salvation, but the Holy Spirit compelled him to change course and warn them about an infiltration of false teachers who were corrupting the gospel from the inside out.

> *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*
>
> **— Jude 1:3–4 (KJV)**

Look closely at Jude's exact words: 'turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.' That single phrase exposes the exact spiritual sickness infecting much of modern Christianity. The men Jude warned against did not openly deny that Jesus existed, nor did they claim to reject God's grace. On the contrary, they talked about grace constantly. Their error was that they took the genuine, precious grace of God and twisted it into something God never intended it to be—an excuse for unrestrained, shameless living.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding Lasciviousness: What the Word Actually Means

To grasp the full weight of Jude's warning, we must understand what the King James translators meant when they chose the English word 'lasciviousness.' In modern everyday conversation, people rarely use this word, and when they do, they often assume it simply refers to private sensual thoughts. In the original New Testament Greek, however, the word is aselgeia (Strong's G766), and its meaning is far broader, bolder, and more alarming.

In ancient Greek literature and throughout the New Testament, aselgeia describes unbridled lust, shameless excess, insolence, and a brazen refusal to recognize moral boundaries. While other Greek words for sin, such as porneia (fornication) or akatharsia (uncleanness), describe specific acts of impurity that a person might try to hide in shame, aselgeia describes an attitude of complete defiance toward God's standards. A person walking in aselgeia no longer blushes at sin. They do not hide their disobedience; they defend it, normalize it, and boast about their freedom while trampling God's commandments underfoot.

Across the New Testament, the Greek word aselgeia appears ten times. Every single time it is used, it is condemned in the strongest possible terms as behavior that is utterly incompatible with belonging to Christ. Jesus Himself placed it at the top of the list of evils that defile a human being from the inside out.

> *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."*
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> **— Mark 7:21–23 (KJV)**

The Apostle Paul repeatedly warned the churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, and Ephesus that lasciviousness belonged to the dark, unconverted world they had left behind, never to the household of faith. When listing the 'works of the flesh'—the behaviors that will permanently bar a person from inheriting the Kingdom of God—Paul placed lasciviousness right alongside idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, and murder.

> *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*
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> **— Galatians 5:19–21 (KJV)**

Similarly, when writing to the Ephesians, Paul described the spiritual numbness of Gentiles who had turned their backs on God, explaining that once a person silences their conscience, they plunge headlong into lasciviousness without restraint.

> *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."*
>
> **— Ephesians 4:17–19 (KJV)**

Notice the progression Paul describes: darkened understanding, blindness of heart, becoming 'past feeling' (losing all spiritual sensitivity to sin), and finally giving oneself over to lasciviousness. When a modern believer uses the doctrine of grace to numb their conscience against the conviction of God's law, they are walking down that exact same path. By convincing themselves that God's commandments no longer apply to them, they become 'past feeling' toward behaviors that Scripture plainly calls sin.

The Apostle Peter also used the word aselgeia multiple times, particularly when warning against false teachers who infiltrated the church promising 'liberty' while leading believers back into moral corruption. In 2 Peter 2, he compared this shameless behavior to the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, which grieved the righteous soul of Lot day after day.

> *"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness [aselgeia], those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."*
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> **— 2 Peter 2:18–19 (KJV)**

Here is the ultimate irony exposed by Peter: those who twist grace into a license to ignore God's commandments always claim to be preaching 'liberty.' They accuse faithful, commandment-keeping Christians of being in bondage, while they themselves remain enslaved to their own lusts, pride, and disobedience. True liberty is never the freedom to sin; true liberty is the power to stop sinning.

CHAPTER 3

What Sin Actually Is—And What Grace Actually Saves Us From

To understand why modern Christianity has become so confused about grace and obedience, we must look at how the Bible defines sin. Today, many people define sin vaguely as 'hurting someone else,' 'having negative vibes,' or 'not being a good person.' Because their definition of sin is subjective and emotional, they assume God's standards shift with modern culture. The Bible, however, gives a crystal-clear, objective definition of sin.

> *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."*
>
> **— 1 John 3:4 (KJV)**

Read that definition again: 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' The Apostle Paul affirmed the exact same truth in his letter to the Romans when he wrote, 'where no law is, there is no transgression' (Romans 4:15), and again, 'I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet' (Romans 7:7).

Think about what this simple biblical truth means. If God's law had been abolished, nailed to the cross, or made irrelevant for Christians, then sin itself would no longer exist—because without a law to break, no one could ever commit a transgression! Yet the entire New Testament calls believers to repent of sin, resist sin, confess sin, and overcome sin. The very existence of sin proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that God's moral law remains intact, binding, and authoritative.

What, then, is the penalty for breaking God's law? Scripture leaves zero room for misunderstanding:

> *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
>
> **— Romans 6:23 (KJV)**

Every human being who has ever lived (with the sole exception of Jesus Christ) has broken God's commandments. As Paul wrote in Romans 3:23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' Because we have transgressed God's holy law, we stand justly condemned under the penalty of that law—which is eternal death. No amount of future good deeds can erase past crimes. If a man commits murder on Monday, obeying the law for the rest of his life does not cancel out the murder he already committed; the law still demands his life.

This is where the true, breathtaking beauty of God's grace enters the picture. Grace does not abolish God's law; grace rescues us from the death penalty of the law that we earned by our past sins. Through His sinless life and sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus Christ paid the penalty that the law demanded of us.

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*
>
> **— Ephesians 2:8–10 (KJV)**

Modern teachers love to quote Ephesians 2:8–9 ('For by grace are ye saved through faith... Not of works'), while conveniently stopping right before verse 10! Look at why God saves us by grace: 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' We are not saved *by* good works—because past law-keeping cannot erase past sins—but we are saved *unto* good works, so that we will walk in obedience to God from that moment forward.

Imagine a governor who grants a full pardon to a prisoner sitting on death row. That pardon is pure grace; the prisoner did not earn it and could never buy it. The pardon cancels the death penalty hanging over the prisoner's head and opens the prison doors. Now ask yourself: did the governor grant that pardon so the prisoner could walk out of the prison gates and immediately start robbing banks, assaulting citizens, and breaking the state's laws all over again? Of course not! If the pardoned man treats his pardon as a license to commit crimes, he proves he never repented, and he will swiftly find himself back under

condemnation. In the exact same way, God's grace pardons us from the death penalty of our past sins so that we can walk free from sin's bondage—not so we can continue breaking His commandments with impunity.

CHAPTER 4

Baptism, Covenant, and Walking in Newness of Life

How does a repentant sinner enter into this saving grace, and what obligations come with it? In modern evangelicalism, receiving grace is often reduced to a quick, emotional prayer repeated in thirty seconds—sometimes called 'accepting Jesus into your heart'—with little or no mention of repentance, baptism, or entering into a solemn covenant with Almighty God. Yet when we open the pages of the New Testament, the apostles present a radically different, far deeper picture.

On the Day of Pentecost, when thousands of people realized their guilt before God and cried out to the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Peter did not tell them to simply believe in grace and live however they wanted. He gave them a direct command:

> *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*
>
> **— Acts 2:38 (KJV)**

Notice the sequence: first comes repentance—a genuine, heartfelt turning away from sin (breaking God's law) and turning toward God. Second comes baptism in water, which is far more than a casual public announcement. According to the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 6, baptism is a literal spiritual burial and resurrection—a solemn covenant act in which the old, rebellious, law-breaking self is put to death and buried, so that a brand-new person can rise up to live a completely new life.

> *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his*

> *resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*
>
> **— Romans 6:1–6 (KJV)**

Pause and absorb the power of Paul's argument in Romans 6. He anticipates the exact heresy that dominates modern pulpits today: 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?' His answer is the strongest possible rejection in the Greek language: 'God forbid!' Why is continuing in sin unthinkable for a baptized believer? Because in baptism, you entered into a covenant death. You agreed to crucify your 'old man'—the rebellious nature that ignored God's commandments—and bury it in a watery grave. When you came up out of the water, you rose to 'walk in newness of life,' no longer serving sin.

Further down in the same chapter, Paul addresses the exact slogan used by millions of Christians today—'we are not under the law, but under grace'—and shows how utterly they have twisted its meaning:

> *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."*
>
> **— Romans 6:14–18 (KJV)**

Look at verse 15: 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.' Paul explicitly defines what 'not under the law, but under grace' means. Being 'under the law' means standing condemned under the law's death penalty without mercy. Being 'under grace' means being pardoned from that death penalty and given the Holy Spirit so that sin no longer rules over you as a master! Far from freeing you to disobey God, grace makes you a 'servant of righteousness' who obeys God 'from the heart.'

Entering into baptism is entering into the New Covenant with God. And what is the central promise of the New Covenant as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah and quoted in the Book of Hebrews? God did not promise to erase His laws under the New Covenant; He promised to write them directly onto the hearts and minds of His people!

> *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"*
>
> **— Hebrews 8:10 (KJV)**

Think about how completely modern theology has turned the New Covenant upside down. God says the New Covenant consists of putting His laws into our minds and writing them on our hearts so we will love and obey them naturally. Modern preachers, however, claim the New Covenant means God threw His laws in the trash so we don't have to keep them anymore! Those two teachings cannot both be true. One comes from the Word of God; the other comes from the spirit of lasciviousness that Jude warned us against.

CHAPTER 5

The Unbroken Testimony of Jesus and the Apostles

If there were any doubt about whether baptized, grace-saved Christians are required to keep God's commandments and strive to live like Christ, a survey of the teachings of Jesus and His apostles settles the matter beyond question. From the Sermon on the Mount to the final chapter of the Book of Revelation, Scripture speaks with one unbroken, unmistakable voice.

The Words of Jesus Christ

During His earthly ministry, Jesus anticipated that people would claim He came to cancel God's law. He addressed that false assumption head-on at the very beginning of His public teaching:

> *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*
>
> **— Matthew 5:17–19 (KJV)**

Heaven and earth are still very much here, which means not even the smallest stroke of a letter ('one jot or one tittle') has passed from God's moral law. Furthermore, Jesus issued a

sobering warning against anyone who breaks even the least of God's commandments and teaches others to do the same—a precise description of modern preachers who tell their congregations that God's commandments are obsolete.

Later, when a young man asked Jesus what he needed to do to have eternal life, Jesus did not say, 'Just believe in grace and ignore the commandments.' He pointed him directly to obedience:

> *"And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."*
>
> **— Matthew 19:17 (KJV)**

And on the night before His crucifixion, speaking privately to His closest disciples, Jesus tied love for Him directly to keeping His commandments:

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments. ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*
>
> **— John 14:15, 21 (KJV)**

Jesus even warned that on the Day of Judgment, many professing Christians—people who called Him 'Lord,' preached in His name, and even performed miracles—will be rejected by Him because they lived lawless lives:

> *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*
>
> **— Matthew 7:21–23 (KJV)**

The Greek word translated 'iniquity' in Matthew 7:23 is anomia—which literally means 'lawlessness' or living without God's law. Jesus will turn away millions of religious people who claimed His name because they refused to obey His Father's will and lived in lawlessness.

The Testimony of the Apostle Paul

Modern antinomian Christians almost always appeal to the Apostle Paul to justify abandoning God's commandments, completely ignoring Peter's warning that 'unlearned and unstable' people twist Paul's hard-to-understand writings 'unto their own destruction' (2 Peter 3:16). When Paul is allowed to speak for himself, he repeatedly affirms that faith establishes the law rather than abolishing it, and that keeping God's commandments is what truly matters.

> *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*
>
> **— Romans 3:31 (KJV)**

> *"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."*
>
> **— 1 Corinthians 7:19 (KJV)**

And in his letter to Titus, Paul explained the true mission of God's grace in the life of a believer. Grace does not excuse ungodliness; grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and live righteous, self-controlled lives:

> *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*
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> **— Titus 2:11–14 (KJV)**

Look at what grace actually teaches according to Titus 2:12: it teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly right now in this present world. If a person's version of 'grace' teaches them that they do not need to deny worldly lusts or keep God's commandments, then whatever they are believing in is not the grace of God described in the Bible.

The Testimony of the Apostle John

No apostle spoke with greater bluntness about those who claim to know God while ignoring His commandments than John, the beloved disciple. Writing near the end of the first century, when early proto-Gnostic teachers were claiming that spiritual enlightenment freed believers from moral obedience, John exposed their claims as flat-out lies:

> *"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."*
>
> **— 1 John 2:3–6 (KJV)**

Read those words slowly: 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' John leaves zero gray area. He adds that anyone claiming to abide in Christ must walk 'even as he walked'—meaning we are called to imitate Christ's own life of sinless obedience to His Father. Later in the same letter, John dismantled the popular modern lie that God's commandments are a heavy, impossible burden:

> *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*
>
> **— 1 John 5:2–3 (KJV)**

And in the Book of Revelation, when John looked into the future to see the faithful remnant of God's true church standing firm against the deception of the end times, how did the Holy Spirit describe them? Not as people who abandoned the law in the name of grace, but as people who harmonized genuine faith in Jesus with faithful obedience to God:

> *"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."*
>
> **— Revelation 14:12 (KJV)**

> *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*
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> **— Revelation 22:14 (KJV)**

CHAPTER 6

How Modern Christians Practice Lasciviousness Today

It is easy to nod in agreement when reading ancient warnings from Jude, Peter, Paul, and John, while failing to recognize how thoroughly this exact error has saturated modern church life. Today, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness rarely looks like an explicit sermon titled 'Go Ahead and Sin.' Instead, it operates through subtle, socially acceptable phrases and theological shortcuts that quietly neutralize God's commands.

First, consider the slogan, 'Nobody's perfect; we're all just sinners saved by grace.' While it is true that every believer still battles human weakness and occasionally stumbles—which is why 1 John 1:9 promises forgiveness when we confess and forsake our sins—modern Christians routinely use this phrase to excuse habitual, unrepentant sin. Instead of grieving over sin, fighting against it, and striving for perfection as Jesus commanded ('Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' Matthew 5:48), believers shrug their shoulders at ongoing dishonesty, bitterness, greed, or sexual immorality, treating sin as an inevitable permanent lifestyle rather than an enemy to be conquered.

Second, consider how the Ten Commandments themselves are treated in modern churches. Many congregations proudly display the Ten Commandments on stone monuments outside their buildings, yet inside the sanctuary they teach that at least one—or all—of those commandments were nailed to the cross. Believers routinely treat God's seventh-day Sabbath (Exodus 20:8–11) as a mere suggestion or an obsolete Jewish ritual, take God's name lightly in casual speech, allow modern idols of entertainment, wealth, and self to occupy first place in their hearts, and excuse anger and hatred toward others—all while assuring themselves that 'grace covers everything.'

Third, consider the modern distortion of 'once saved, always saved' or unconditional security without obedience. In many circles, people are taught that because they walked

down a church aisle at age twelve, recited a prayer, or got wet in a baptistery, their eternal ticket to heaven is permanently punched regardless of how they live afterward. When someone who claims to be a Christian lives indistinguishable from the surrounding unbelieving world—watching the same immoral entertainment, practicing the same sexual habits, speaking with the same profanity and gossip, and ignoring God's commands—pastors and friends still assure them they are saved because 'salvation isn't based on works.' Yet the Book of James explicitly refutes this dead, fruitless counterfeit of faith:

> *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ... Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"*
>
> **— James 2:14, 17–20 (KJV)**

Even the demons believe in God and know who Jesus Christ is—and they tremble in terror! Intellectual belief without obedient action does not save anyone. When a person claims to rely on God's grace while refusing to repent and obey His commandments, they do not have saving faith; they have presumption. And the Book of Hebrews issues a terrifying warning to those who enter into the knowledge of the truth through baptism and then deliberately continue living in sin:

> *"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"*
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> **— Hebrews 10:26–29 (KJV)**

Read verse 29 again: those who treat the blood of the covenant lightly and continue in willful disobedience actually 'do despite unto the Spirit of grace.' In other words, using grace as an excuse to ignore God's commandments is not honoring grace—it is insulting the very Spirit of grace and trampling on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 7

The True Covenant Walk: Becoming Like Him

When we strip away the modern counterfeits and return to the pure, unadulterated Word of God, the relationship between grace, baptism, covenant, and commandment-keeping becomes extraordinarily clear, harmonious, and inspiring. There is no contradiction whatsoever between being saved by grace and keeping God's commandments. On the contrary, each requires the other.

Here is the true biblical pattern from start to finish:

1. We Were Condemned by the Law Because of Our Sin. Every one of us broke God's holy, righteous, and spiritual commandments (Romans 7:12, 14). Because 'sin is the transgression of the law' (1 John 3:4) and 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23), we stood helpless under a sentence of eternal death.

2. God Offered Us Pardon Through Grace. Out of immense love, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to live a life of spotless obedience to the Father's commandments and to die on the cross in our place, paying the exact death penalty our law-breaking required. That pardon is pure grace—completely unearned and unmerited.

3. We Enter Into Covenant Through Repentance and Baptism. To receive that pardon, we must repent—turning away from our rebellion against God's law—and be baptized into Christ's death (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4). In that sacred covenant act, our old law-breaking self is buried, our past sins are washed away by the blood of Christ, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. Grace Empowers Us to Walk in Newness of Life and Keep His Commandments. Rising out of the watery grave of baptism, we enter a lifelong covenant to become like Jesus Christ. Through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, God writes His laws upon our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10). We no longer view His commandments as restrictive rules to evade, nor do we keep them in a vain attempt to earn salvation on our own merit. Instead, we keep them out of deep love, gratitude, and covenant loyalty to the Savior who rescued us from death (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

> *"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

> **— 1 Peter 1:14–16 (KJV)**

> *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*
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> **— 1 Peter 2:21–24 (KJV)**

Look at the clarity of 1 Peter 2:24: Christ bore our sins on the cross 'that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.' That is the entire purpose of the gospel. God did not send His Son to suffer and die in agony so that believers could casually break His commandments while hiding behind the word 'grace.' He died to break the chains of sin, reconcile us to the Father, bring us into an everlasting covenant, and transform us into the very image of Christ.

As believers living in an age of widespread spiritual compromise, we must heed Jude's urgent call to 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 1:3). We must refuse to let modern culture turn the glorious grace of God into lasciviousness. Let us cherish God's grace with all our hearts—not as a license to sin, but as the divine mercy that pardoned our past, sealed our baptismal covenant, and empowers us every single day to walk in newness of life, become like our Savior, and faithfully keep the commandments of God.

> *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*
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> **— Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (KJV)**