

How the Grace of God Changes Us

An incredible example of the transforming power of God's grace is that He can take a man who was hostile, angry, bitter, and murderously opposed to Jesus Christ and transform him into the greatest missionary the world has ever known, a man who understood God's grace like no one else and gave himself completely, without reservation, to spread the gospel of Christ. This man is the Apostle Paul, who also wrote most of the New Testament. **1 Corinthians 15:9** *"For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain."* Like Paul, we can't clean ourselves up enough to be acceptable to God, and the truth is that He doesn't require us to. But the same grace that transformed Paul is available to do something far-reaching in our lives. Prior to our salvation in Christ, we were all spiritually dead and couldn't clean up our lives; there's no power within us to clean them up. No dead man or woman can find anything within their dead self that makes them acceptable in the eyes of God. **Ephesians 2:1-3:** *"And you were dead in your offenses and sins, in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest."* The only way any of us are made acceptable in the eyes of God is to accept, by faith, the death of His Son at Calvary as the full payment for our sins. It is the love of God. It is the grace of God. It is the goodness of God. It is the love of God poured out in our hearts. And when we receive His Son, we have Him. **Romans 6:16-17:** *"Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you."* So what did God do? He transformed us from sinners to saints and from servants of sin to servants of the living God. The question is not whether God can save someone like you or me, but whether we will accept His grace by faith in Christ and allow it to produce amazing changes in our lives. God has predestined you and me to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, which means His Will for every believer is that we be transformed into His Son's likeness. This process begins when we are transformed by His grace at the moment of salvation, our new spiritual birth. As this famous hymn says: *"Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."* The grace of God is expressed in His forgiveness of our sins, and His blessings to us include peace and fulfillment in this life and, in the life to come, unencumbered fellowship with Him for all eternity. God's grace is truly amazing!