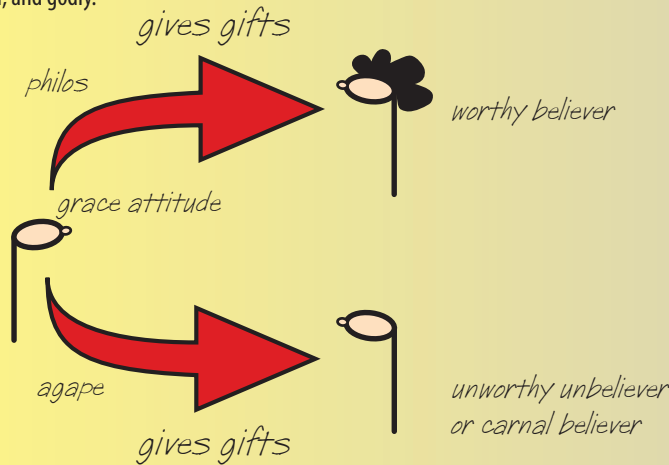


# RECEIVING GRACE

## WORTHY OF GRACE

1. Grace is given to meet a need or to make someone happy.
2. Grace is not earned: no work is required or performed to receive grace.
3. Grace is not deserved: merit implies effort to please and consequent obligation.
4. Grace is a favor or free gift motivated by compassion, mercy, or love, not reciprocation (such as payment or a reward). Such grace is based on friendship love (*philos*)—an existing mutual love relationship.
5. Grace is given without contractual arrangements (the gift is not payment for what is due).
6. Men are more inclined to give gifts to people they like or love, to people who please them, to people close to them (friends, relatives, family)—to the worthy.
7. Christians are worthy of grace (characterwise) if they are faithful, obedient, growing, spiritual, and godly.



## UNWORTHY OF GRACE

1. Grace is given to meet needs caused by sin, carnality, self-induced misery, divine discipline, or the fall.
2. Grace is not earned: no work or service is performed to merit payment or reward.
3. Grace is not deserved: the unworthy make no effort to please or to comply.
4. Grace is a free gift motivated solely by the giver's compassion, mercy, or love, since there is no prior effort to please, comply, or serve. This grace is based on the giver's mental attitude love (*agape*) that desires a mutual loving relationship.
5. Grace is given without any contractual arrangement (no binding relationship exists between them).
6. A grace gift is not a reward since the giver is not happy with their thoughts, speech, or behavior.
7. Such recipients of grace are unworthy (characterwise) because they are unfaithful, disobedient, not growing, and ungodly.
8. Giving gifts to the unworthy, to those who displease you, is pure grace—not earned (not worked for) and not deserved (because of their lack of character and negative volition toward God).
9. Men are less inclined to give gifts to people they don't like, to people who are not close to them (enemies, strangers)—to the unworthy.

## DISCUSSION OF LOVE, GRACE, BEING WORTHY, BLESSINGS, AND REWARDS

Grace is an attitude of giving gifts to meet needs or to make people happy. God's grace is shown to believers (sons and daughters) and to unbelievers (strangers, enemies). *Sustaining grace* is given to Jesus during his childhood (Luke 2:40); to the Church Universal (John 1:16); to believers in Corinth (2 Cor 9:8); to the humble (James 4:6); and to believers who draw near to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16). *Aeonian grace* is given periodically to the saints in the ages to come (Eph 2:7). *Common grace* is given to both the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt 5:45). *Saving grace* is given to God's enemies (Rom 3:24; 1 Tim 1:12–16). *Sovereign grace* is given to everyone—to unbelievers (Dan 4:17, 20–22) and to believers (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 15:10).

All of the dynamics of giving apply to grace because grace can only be expressed by giving. The verb most often used with grace is "give."

- There is a relationship between worth (being worthy) and grace: grace is more likely given to people who are worthy than unworthy, to people who are close (friends, family) than afar (strangers, enemies).
- Closeness and worth in the eyes of the giver often determine how much grace is given (value of the gifts) and how often it's given (frequency of the gifts).
- Grace given to the worthy is based on friendship love (*philos*); grace given to the unworthy is based on mental attitude love (*agape*).
- It takes more love to give gifts to the unworthy than to the worthy. The question always is: What will they do with the grace gifts I give them? Take them for granted? Not appreciate them? Squander them? Enjoy them? Or use them for God's glory?

Now, let's examine the difference between grace gifts, blessings, and rewards.

- *Grace gifts* are freely given based on the character of the giver, are always unmerited (unearned and undeserved), and expect nothing in return. They are character and relationship related.
- *Blessings* are given on the basis of obedience, good works, and grace. Blessings based on obedience and good works are rewards (merited); and blessings based on grace are gifts (unmerited). They are work, character, and relationship related.
- *Rewards* are payment earned, deserved, owed, due, and expected because of a contractual arrangement and are always merited (Rom 4:4). They are work or service related.

## FALLING SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God" (Heb 12:15a NASB).

1. To fail to attain (*hystereo*) the grace of God is to fail to receive sustaining grace, not saving grace (Heb 12:15a).
2. The cause of falling short is carnality.
3. Falling short is losing the grace gifts you could have had; that is, gifts that would normally be given to believers are withheld.
4. This loss of the gifts God wants to give is loss of blessings in this life.
5. These gifts are withheld because of God's displeasure.
6. Falling short means you will receive no greater grace (James 4:6), no grace in place of grace (John 1:16), and no grace to help in time of need (Heb 4:16).
7. Carnality reduces the amount of grace you will receive in this life because you are unworthy. Is it worth it?

