



Spirit-Filled and Grace-Reliant

An excerpt from [Grace, Mercy, and Peace](#)

Many believers are familiar with the phrase “rightly dividing (or handling) the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). The recognition of this phrase, however, does not stop the “dividing” of key scriptural truths from one another when these concepts should not be separated. The concepts of *grace* and *Spirit-filled* are prime examples. How often do you hear these biblical truths combined in one presentation? Yet, they are inseparable as this study will hopefully illustrate.

To begin with, let’s review a few concepts of God’s grace. For example:

- God’s grace is not an excuse for on-going sinfulness.

Romans 6:1-2, What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

- God opposes the proud but gives grace to those characterized by humility.

James 4:6, He gives a greater grace Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

- A person can belittle grace by exchanging God’s revealed plan to grow in Christ for human wisdom and self-oriented efforts. When this occurs, “good works” (keeping commandments or religious traditions) become the foundation for one to attempt to be justified and declared righteous before God instead of a person relying, by faith, solely on the sacrifice of Christ.

Galatians 2:16 & 21, nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified . . . I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

Galatians 5:1-4, It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. ²Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. ³And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. ⁴You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

- God’s grace is never withheld nor diminished from those who live in a manner that pleases Him.

Psalms 84:11, For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- Believers have a high priest who never sinned when tempted and who always sympathizes with their weaknesses. They have access to the divine throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16, For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The above observations are well known. A statement that may not be as well-known is: *As we yield to the control of the Holy Spirit, we will live by grace.* In Ephesians 5:18, believers are commanded not to be drunk with wine but to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.” When people are drunk, they are under the influence of, or controlled by, a chemical substance. In contrast, the Apostle Paul uses this example to remind believers in Christ to be under the control of only one influence . . . the Holy Spirit. *If believers are to be “full of grace” then they need to be “filled with the Spirit.”*

Paul used the word “filled” which has the meaning of permeation. The Holy Spirit should permeate a believer’s every thought, word, and deed. Greek grammarians remind us that “being filled” is not only a command, but, being in the present tense, can be rendered “keep being filled” as a way of life. A believer doesn’t merely ask the Holy Spirit for a “fill up” (like a glass of water), but a believer recognizes that “being filled” (as a way of life) is the result of continually submitting one’s will to the Lord in every situation. An obvious aspect of being continually filled with the Spirit is a believer’s habit of humbly going to Jesus in any situation, asking as often as needed for grace to be applied.

A Spirit-filled believer is wholeheartedly committed to God, the Source of grace. Paul urged believers in Romans 12:1 to present their bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God. The verb “present” means to surrender or place ourselves at the disposal of another. The Greek word tells us that it is a deliberate action involving thought, so it is a conscious act of our will to give ourselves totally to serve the Lord.

Whomever or whatever we allow to control our lives is whom or what we serve. We have a choice as believers to either serve personal desires in any given situation or to serve God (Romans 6:16). Serving God means that we will not let sin reign in our mortal bodies that we should obey its lusts (Romans 6:12). We are to control our bodies (including our thoughts and emotions) and not allow anything other than God’s Spirit to control us. By God’s grace, a believer walks by the Spirit and does not succumb to the desire of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17) and, as a result, can present (surrender) the members of one’s body to righteousness (Romans 6:13). What are the “members” of the body? Practically speaking, Paul is talking about our eyes, ears, tongue (speech), hands, legs, feet, brain (thinking), etc.

Romans 6:16, Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

Romans 6:12, Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts

Galatians 5:16-17, But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Romans 6:13, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We can observe many aspects of a Spirit-controlled, grace-filled life, but let’s examine one example that deals with verbal communication. When we are tempted to share words with another that are not edifying (even if they are factual), we should submit these words (and the thoughts behind them) to Christ and evaluate them by the truths of the Bible. If the words are unwholesome, unedifying, and not applicable to a current need, they should not be spoken. If these words, however, are edifying and appropriate to the need of the moment, then they are verbal vehicles that can deliver grace to those listening (Ephesians 4:29).

Ephesians 4:29, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

When believers are continually being filled with the Spirit in order to live for God, they will put off their unrighteous thoughts, words, and deeds and, in their place will put on righteous thoughts, words, and deeds. This is another way of saying that a believer’s members, by God’s grace, can be instruments of righteousness to God as a result of a believer’s faithfulness in being a holy sacrifice to Him. See [*You Can Change . . . One Step at a Time*](#)

Grace-filled, Spirit-controlled living is not a “white knuckle” process that says, “I can do it even if it kills me.” We can do nothing apart from Christ (John 15:5) and can do all things through His strength (Philippians 4:13). Our adequacy is not in ourselves but rather our adequacy is from God (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). We are commanded to obey God’s Word, and we are able to obey because of His power that works within us (Ephesians 3:20-21).

John 15:5, I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6, Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Ephesians 3:20-21, Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Grace is the sustaining power that enables any Christian to persevere and be an overwhelming conqueror in every dimension of life. Grace’s power, while available, is fully accessible only to a believer willing to be filled with the Spirit as a way of life. If we will follow our Savior with great joy, we will rely on God’s grace and be filled with His Spirit.