

# Notes on Grace

## Introduction

Grace is a vital principle of salvation, but it is missed by most Latter-day saints, and thus we are unable to take advantage of it and believe instead that we have to “earn our way to heaven”. This “gospel of works” leaves people tired, exhausted, discouraged and frustrated. Most of this post, and the two video clips are about why grace is essential, and what its effects are.

But let’s define what grace is. Simply put, grace is the works of God in your life. Grace is gifts of the Spirit, which take many forms: miracles, insights, visions, revelation. Search the scriptures for “gifts of the spirit”. They are listed in the New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine & Covenants. They must be pretty important if the Lord lists them in so many places. But, none of the lists is exhaustive.

There are many ways in which God manifests his grace. It takes faith to recognize them. Peter said to “grow in grace” (2 Peter 3:18, D&C 50:40). While grace is a free gift of God, it is possible to cultivate it. “Ye shall receive grace for grace.” (D&C 93:20)

In other words, as you offer grace to others, God will offer grace to you. We can best understand this in terms of how we forgive others. To me, this is glorious and empowering to think that God is willing to stoop down and work alongside us as a partner so that we can be with him where he is and fulfill our potential to be like him. Knowing this, you will never be able to look at another human being the same way, again.

**"We are saved by grace, without works; it is a gift of God. How else could it come?"** There is one work involved, however, we have to accept and receive the gift.

**"Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves."** Joseph Smith said this in the King Follett address. To put it bluntly, if you don’t know grace, you don’t know God. To learn how to be a god, yourself, you must do the works of God. But they are not works done to appease God; they are works you do for yourself. God works. His work and glory is to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man. And, we get to participate in that work, in helping to bring about our own immortality and eternal life, working in concert with God, and the whole human family.

**"Nor did we have any part in the Fall of man". "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgressions."** Adam's punishment was that he was shut out from the Presence of God. If we find ourselves shut out from the Presence of God, this would, logically, be due to our own sins and not because of Adam's transgressions. The graciousness of God is that He continues to work with us, even in our fallen condition so that we can regain his presence, and even in this life, prepare to meet God. (Alma 34:32) We may be fallen, but never forsaken, unless we, ourselves, desire it.

**"We cannot resurrect ourselves any more than we can create ourselves."** In the Gospel of John, Christ stated: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself." If we are to follow Christ, and if we are to be resurrected, could this happen on any other principle aside from

the principle that resurrected Christ? So, the way in which we are resurrected is that the Father and the Son grant us to have life in ourselves.

### Speeches about Grace

Here are a couple of speeches by Brad Wilcox. These are considered classics in Mormon doctrine and explain the principle of grace like nothing else. I took extensive notes from both these speeches and included them here. Follow are some other notes from an online lesson by Mark Curtis, then a few more of my comments.

His Grace is Sufficient - Brad Wilcox – 7/12/2011

[https://youtu.be/yLXr9it\\_pbY](https://youtu.be/yLXr9it_pbY)

The Atonement: 'After All We Can Do' - Brad Wilcox – BYU Education Week 8/18/2009

<https://youtu.be/LVUPWd7s-4c>

Grace – Notes from “His Grace is Sufficient”

"Christ doesn't just make up the difference; He is the difference...Christ is not waiting at the finish line once we have done 'all we can do.' He is with us every step of the way... [Christ's] grace is not a booster engine that kicks in once our fuel supply is exhausted. Rather, it is our constant energy source. It is not the light at the end of the tunnel but the light that moves us through the tunnel. [Jesus] paid our debt in full. He didn't pay it all except for a few coins. He paid it all. It is finished."

She said, “I know I need to do my best and then Jesus does the rest, but I can’t even do my best.” She then went on to tell me all the things she should be doing because she’s a Mormon. That she wasn’t doing. She continued, “I know that I have to do my part and then Jesus makes up the difference and fills the gap that stands between my part and perfection. But who fills the gap that stands between where I am now and my part?” She then went on to tell me all the things that she shouldn’t be doing because she’s a Mormon, but she was doing them anyway.

Grace is not about filling gaps. It is about filling us.”

Mom pays piano teacher. Child practices. Practice doesn’t pay off piano teacher. Practice shows daughter’s appreciation to the mother for providing the opportunity to increase her skills and justifies the price the mother paid. Practice increases those skills.

Because Jesus has paid justice, He can now turn to us and say, “Follow me,”

Elder Bruce C. Hafen has written, “The great Mediator asks for our repentance not because we must ‘repay’ him in exchange for his paying our debt to justice, but because repentance initiates a developmental process that, with the Savior’s help, leads us along the path to a saintly character.”

Practicing the piano has the purpose of change. In life. It develops faith.

We are not “earning heaven”; we are “learning heaven”.

You ask “have you been saved by grace?” A better question to ask is “Have you been **changed** by grace?” What has he saved us **from**? What has he saved us **for**? Not just a huge favor, but a huge investment. Moroni 7:48.

“No unclean thing can dwell with God, but no unchanged thing would even want to.”

“Heaven will not be heaven for those who have chosen to not be heavenly.”

I realize that in the final judgment it will not be the unrepentant sinner begging Jesus, “Let me stay.” No, he will probably be saying, **“Get me out of here!”** Knowing Christ’s character, **I believe that if anyone is going to be begging on that occasion, it would probably be Jesus begging the unrepentant sinner, “Please, choose to stay. Please, use my Atonement—not just to be cleansed but to be changed so that you want to stay.”** The miracle of the Atonement is not just that we can go home but that—miraculously—we can feel at home there. If Christ did not require faith and repentance, then there would be no desire to change.

If Jesus did not require covenants and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, then there would be no way to change. We would be left forever with only willpower, with no access to His power.

When a young pianist hits a wrong note, we don’t say he is not worthy to keep practicing. We don’t expect him to be flawless. We just expect him to keep trying. Perfection may be his ultimate goal, but for now we can be content with progress in the right direction. Why is this perspective so easy to see in the context of learning piano but so hard to see in the context of learning heaven?

Too many are giving up on the Church because they are tired of constantly feeling like they are falling short. They have tried in the past, but they always feel like they are just not good enough. They don’t understand grace. **[The church has not taught them correctly because the church doesn’t understand or teach the Gospel.]**

In all of these cases there should never be just two options: perfection or giving up. When learning the piano, are the only options performing at Carnegie Hall or quitting? No. Growth and development take time. Learning takes time. When we understand grace, we understand that God is long-suffering, that change is a process, and that repentance is a pattern in our lives. When we understand grace, we understand that the blessings of Christ’s Atonement are continuous and **His strength is perfect in our weakness. When we understand grace, we can, as it says in the Doctrine and Covenants, “continue in patience until [we] are perfected.”** One young man wrote me the following e-mail: “I know God has all power, and I know He will help me if I’m worthy, but I’m just never worthy enough to ask for His help. I want Christ’s grace, but I always find myself stuck in the same self-defeating and impossible position: no work, no grace.” wrote him back and testified with all my heart that **Christ is not waiting at the finish line once we have done “all we can do.” He is with us every step of the way.**

Elder Bruce C. Hafen has written, **“The Savior’s gift of grace to us is not necessarily limited in time to ‘after’ all we can do. We may receive his grace before, during and after the time when we expend our own efforts.”** So, grace is not a booster engine that kicks in once our fuel supply is exhausted. Rather, it is our constant energy source. It is not the light at the end of the tunnel but the light that moves us through the tunnel. Grace is not achieved somewhere down the road. It is received right here and right now. It is not a finishing touch; it is the Finisher’s touch.

In twelve days we celebrate Pioneer Day. The first company of Saints entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. Their journey was difficult and challenging; still, they sang: Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear; But with joy wend your way. Though hard to you this journey may appear, **Grace shall be as your day. [This journey was to prepare them to live the laws of Zion. If Brigham Young was the true modern-day Moses, he would have used this as an opportunity to perfect the Saints.]**

“Grace shall be as your day”—what an interesting phrase. We have all sung it hundreds of times, but have we stopped to consider what it means? “Grace shall be as your day”: grace shall be like a day. As dark as night may become, we can always count on the sun coming up. As dark as our trials, sins, and mistakes may appear, we can always have confidence in the grace of Jesus Christ. **[Grace is not only the idea that every day you get another chance, but grace is with you constantly – each and every day.]**

Just accept these blessings and take advantage of them.

Good definition of grace: **“The enabling power of Jesus Christ.”**

Grace is not the absence of God’s high expectations. Grace is the presence of God’s power.

This is a gospel of grand expectations, but God’s grace is sufficient for each of us. Keep trying. Don’t look for escapes and excuses. Look for the Lord and His perfect strength. Don’t search for someone to blame. Search for someone to help you. Seek Christ, and, as you do, I promise you will feel the enabling power we call His amazing grace.

[My Comment that I left on You Tube](#)

This is an incredible speech. However, he makes this comment: “Too many are giving up on the Church because they are tired of constantly feeling like they are falling short. They have tried in the past, but they always feel like they are just not good enough. They don’t understand grace.” This is true enough, but **why don’t they understand grace?** Whose responsibility is it to teach them the basic and essential principles of the Gospel? And if the church isn’t teaching the basic and essential principles of the Gospel, what in heaven’s name are they teaching? In this day of correlation and homogenization, the church ought to ensure that this vital principle is uniformly and consistently taught throughout the church. This talk was given in 2011. He cited Bruce C. Hafen, a former general authority. The brethren know about this principle, but why don’t they teach it as clearly as Bro. Wilcox did in this talk. I consider this talk to be a landmark speech, and whenever I meet a Mormon who doesn’t understand the principle of grace, and I meet a lot of them on Facebook, I refer them to this talk.

[Grace notes from “The Atonement – After All you can do”](#)

If we see the verse in the context of the chapter surrounding it, we see that Nephi simply wasn’t focusing on the central importance of our works or doing all we can do first in fact much to the contrary he was delivering a message concerning the central importance of the mission of the Messiah and the magnitude of the great gifts that come from him.

In the very next chapter Nephi extends the invitation to come by milk and honey without money and without price. No time condition is mentioned. Perhaps this is why the word *after* could also be read as **in spite of** we are saved by grace in spite of all we can do.

Separation, rather than time. Other meanings: notwithstanding, regardless of, apart from. "We are still saved by grace, after all is said and done." Above and beyond all we can do.

If we believe we have to be completely worthy before we approach God, we will never be able to do it. Those who feel like failures don't usually fight for a front-row seat at God's throne. Instead, we distance ourselves we distance ourselves even farther from the source of the worthiness. We see maybe we do this out of embarrassment or lack of self-confidence or low self-esteem. Whatever the reason we are all too quickly caught in a never-ending cycle of postponed change and postponed happiness.

Suddenly, there is no paradox, but also, there is no excuse.

Don't ask the Lord if what you have done is enough. Ask if what you have done is acceptable to Him. The companionship of the Spirit is your assurance that you have done enough. But, if you start berating yourself, you will lose the Spirit. Any effort is pleasing to God, even if you both know it is not your "all", or your "best". But even if your offering is not acceptable, God accepts it. He is more concerned with the offerer than the offering.

Listen to what Elder Gerald M Lund wrote: Remember that one of Satan's strategies especially with good people is to whisper in their ears: if you are not perfect you are failing. This is one of his most effective deceptions. While we would never be completely satisfied, We should never be completely satisfied until we are perfect. We should recognize that God is pleased with every effort we make no matter how faltering to better ourselves.

Often, I am the first to acknowledge my efforts are mediocre at best but instead of feeling bad about not offering more I just have to recognize that that's a step in the right direction. I remind myself that the word mediocre actually comes from a Latin word mediocrity which means halfway up the mountain. So instead of getting mad at myself because I'm not at the top of the mountain, I need to recognize that I am at the halfway point and that's sure a lot better than being at the bottom of the mountain and refusing to try. I'm halfway there and I'm on my way to the top so as long as mediocrity is not our goal and give me a break. Who wakes up in the morning and says today I want to be mediocre? I just really want to be mediocre? No. As long as that's not our goal then we can recognize it as a step through which everyone must pass on their way to greatness.

Don't try to impress God with your sacrifices, but let their sacrifices impress you.

Stephen Covey writes God withdrew his presence from Moses so that Moses could come to understand that his very life energy and strength came from God and that without God he would be nothing. Moses fell to the earth and for the space of many hours he experienced the contrast of being without God's sustenance. The term nothing in this context does not mean worthless or valueless, for Moses's infinite Worth and value had already magnificently been communicated to him in ways that far transcend anything he had ever experienced or visualized. **Nothing means powerlessness.** Without God we are nothing. Without God we are powerless.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Give Christ an inch, and He will take you a mile. But if we turn to Him, He will take us both the inch and the mile."

Christians say the because of the grace, we have nothing to do. Well, we still have something to do. Not to **get** the grace, but to **use** the grace.

Isaiah promised: hast thou not known? Hast thou not seen? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might, he increases strength.

Don't say "The Lord helps those who help themselves." Say "The Lord helps them **to** help themselves."

We aren't calling "human doings". We are called "human beings". Doing is simply a path to being.

Good: "Teach me all that I must **know**."

Better: "Teach me all that I must **do**."

Best: "Teach me all that I must **be**."

Saints all around the world sing a favorite hymn "Come Come ye Saints" in which the question is asked "Why should we think to earn a great reward if we now shun the fight?" Is that really what we're doing, earning a great reward? I don't think so since the word *earned* doesn't even appear once in the Doctrine and Covenants. In fact, it doesn't show up in any of the standard works.

**As we face the fight rather than shunning it God transforms us the final destination may be far away in the West but development is found all along the trail.** The great reward is not just something we will **receive** but what we will **become** through the journey. Do we believe that His grace is necessary for our salvation? Oh, absolutely absolutely. Without the grace of Jesus Christ no one could be saved or receive eternal blessings.

2 Ne 25:23 "After all **we** can do." "We", as in together in our relationship with Jesus.

C S Lewis put it this way: "We are now trying to understand and to separate into watertight compartments what exactly God does and what man does when God and man are working together."

It's not just a marriage between us and Christ. It's a sealing.

Emmanuel: God **With** us. Best definition of grace.

Heaven is not reached by supplementing. It is reached by covenanting. Not by negotiation, but by cooperation and union. **[This is the way heaven works. This is why you will either love heaven or hate it.]**

Instead of "two parts", think of "two hearts". Conformed to the same image.

Jesus, who paid justice, is now able to make a whole new arrangement with [each of] us.

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to be willing to be perfected.

Without the faith and repentance required by Christ there would be no redemption because there would be no desire for improvement. Without the covenants and the gift of the Holy Ghost there would be no means for improvement. And without endurance, the endurance required by Christ, there would be no internalization of the improvement over time.

Christ does not ask for **something** in return, but for **someone** in return.

Jesus doesn't love us because we are good. Jesus loves us because He is good.

More discussions about grace – Mark Curtis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CfMX4LepTA> - Mark Curtis - Saved by grace after all we can do

2 Nephi 25:23 For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

Does this mean:

- A. Endless checklist
- B. Checklist but feeling you aren't good enough

Matt 11:28 Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matt 11:30 For my yoke [is] easy, and my burden is light.

Grace vs Works

The purpose of grace is to make our burden light

Definition of church - April 1829

D&C 10:67 Behold, this is my doctrine--whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.

D&C 10:68 Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.

Manual - list of works: 16-17 questions for temple recommend

Luke 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain **which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others**: parable of pharisee and publican

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Given Summer 1829

D&C 20:30 And we know that **justification through the grace** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true;

D&C 20:31 And we know also, that **sanctification through the grace** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, **to all those who love and serve God with all their might, minds, and strength.**

Luke 17:9 Doth he thank that servant **because he did the things that were commanded him?** I trow not.

Luke 17:10 **So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.**

Mosiah 2:21 I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another--I say, **if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.**

**Your works alone could never save you.** No way.

Mosiah 3:12 ... **For salvation cometh to none such except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Mosiah 2:25 **And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay.** Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you.

Jacob 4:7 **Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.**

Ether 12:26 And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and **my grace is sufficient for the meek**, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

Ether 12:27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and **my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.**

Ether 12:28 Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness and I will show unto them that **faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me**--the fountain of all righteousness.

You can't skip humility and meekness, the only thing you can do is humility and meekness. Only then can you receive grace. Becoming, not doing.

2 Nephi 25:23 For we **labor diligently to write, to persuade our children**, and also our brethren, to **believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God**; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

Two things: Believe in Christ, be reconciled to God. This scripture says the same thing.

Mosiah 3:12 ... **For salvation cometh to none such except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Meaning of "**reconcile**". Call back into union. (Literal Greek meaning.) "atonement"

2 Nephi 10:24 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, **reconcile** yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, **after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.**

2 Nephi 31:19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; **for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.**

Jacob 4:11 Wherefore, beloved brethren, be **reconciled** unto him through the **atonement** of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and **be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God**, having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh.

3 Nephi 12:23 Therefore, if ye shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me, and rememberest that thy brother hast aught against thee--

3 Nephi 12:24 Go thy way unto thy brother, and **first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I will receive you.**

Reconciled with brother: forgive and have mercy

II Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

II Cor 5:18 And all things [are] of God, who **hath reconciled us to himself** by Jesus Christ, and **hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;**

II Cor 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and **hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**

II Cor 5:20 Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, **be ye reconciled to God.**

II Cor 5:21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

This is what you have to do to be saved by grace.

Jacob 1:19 And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; **wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments;** otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.

Jacob isn't using teaching as a way to earn our way into heaven, but sharing because we love the love of Christ. Same as 2 Nephi 25:23 Just like Paul worked his tail off, not to obtain grace, but to glorify God. You don't go back to that checklist. Start teaching other people the Doctrine of Christ.

"My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matt. 11:30

G2218: **ζυγός zygós**, dzoo-gos'; from the root of ζεύγνυμι zeúgnymi (to join, especially by a "yoke"); a coupling, i.e. (figuratively) servitude (a law or obligation); also (literally) the beam of the balance (as connecting the scales):—pair of balances, yoke.

Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)

Can fall for grace. Constantly reconcile oneself to Christ.

D&C 20:32 But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

D&C 20:33 Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation;

2 Nephi 33:9 I also have charity for the Gentiles. **But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ**, and enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the strait path which leads to life, and **continue in the path** until the end of the day of probation.

2 Nephi 33:10 And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, **for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me**; and they teach all men that they should do good.

Mark: "Share a yoke with him."

## Grace

What do you think Moroni meant when he said "lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing."? How is it that by grace we are saved by just coming unto Christ and doing His will? I have learned through study and experience that a man could do all the good deeds in the world and still be an unprofitable servant. Why? Because they give offerings to the Lord of everything except that which He wants. And that offering which He wants is a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Which is why I believe this previously mentioned offering of a broken heart and contrite spirit to be the new and everlasting covenant. Because it is the only offering that he truly asks of us to become holy. And that is what He wants of us. "Come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing." Just wanted to share this with you.

What do you think Moroni meant when he said "lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing."?

## My answer

I have just recently learned that "grace" refers to gifts of the Spirit, and other manifestations of godliness such as dreams, visions, visitations, and revelations. The Book of Mormon is contrasting these good gifts with the "unclean gifts" from the adversary.

This passage is puzzling unless you understand what "grace" is.

Most other religions misunderstand the Bible, when they read "grace". They think it just means "unmerited favor" from God. This is true, but that "unmerited favor" takes the form of "good gifts". These gifts come through the Holy Ghost. They are unmerited, because the Holy Ghost cannot dwell in unclean temples, but thanks to the Atonement, the Lord sends us these gifts.

Brad Wilcox defines grace as "getting what we don't deserve", and mercy is "not getting what we do deserve."

The Greek word in the NT that is translated "grace" is "charism", as in "charisma" or "charismatic", a word associated with gifts of the Spirit -- endowments of light and truth. The Book of Mormon, when you take the context, gets "grace" right. We don't talk about it much because we don't understand it. But, with this new definition, "grace" is easy to understand.

D&C 93 says that Christ grew from grace to grace, and that we also have to grow from grace to grace. Joseph Smith taught that we must progress one small step at a time, from exaltation to exaltation, or in other words from ascension to ascension, or in other words from grace to grace.