



## Responding to Grace

There is only one way to say it. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Someone had to pay for it sometime and somehow. When a “free lunch” is offered there is often a desired response, such as sitting through a sales presentation or accepting a trial subscription to a book or a record club. Many of us have had such opportunities; take the gift, but a specific response expected. When we consider the “free gift of God’s grace”, let us first realize that it wasn’t free, but that it cost God His one and only Son and it cost Jesus His very life. God has a purpose for his grace as well as expectations of those who accept this gift. Let’s take a minute or two and examine this.

Perhaps the greatest purpose of grace is that of tempering God’s justice. God demands punishment for sin and He has provided restraint on its severity or harshness, at least for us! We have all sinned, all of us deserve death, yet God’s own Son paid our sin penalty, and in so doing, tempered God’s justice. What other purpose has grace? Consider the prospect of influencing us, to instill within us a desire to leave one life to lead another. Many passages of scripture give us the pattern for an old life given up for a new. Paul describes the Thessalonians as having turned from serving idols to serve the true and living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). God also intends that His grace be a motivation for us to become “servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). This is a direct result of being “freed from sin”, in other words, a receiver of God’s grace!

The grace of God is also a source of strength. In prayer, Paul appealed to God three times to remove his “thorn in the flesh” but God refused, stating “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” We don’t know what that thorn was and it isn’t important in and of itself. What is important is Paul’s response, one of acceptance. 2 Corinthians 12:10 tells us Paul’s words, “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Last, but not least, grace will bring about the praising of God! Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:15, “For all things {are} for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.” The more we understand about God’s grace, the more we will glorify Him.