



## TIME OF GRACE®

### *The Power of "And": Grace and More Grace*

#### Study Notes

#### *Summary*

Every Christian needs to do what God wants. Obey his will. Follow commands. Pursue his plan for our lives . . . AND . . . we need to know how to do it. What teaches us to follow God's will? What inspires us to want to obey his commands? What enables us to say yes to God and no to sin?

- **Titus 2:11-15:** <sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. <sup>12</sup>It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. <sup>15</sup>These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.
- Grace is your \_\_\_\_\_.
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- Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_ teaches us to change.

#### *Points to Ponder*

1. Compare Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; and 1 John 1:19. What do these passages have in common with today's Big Idea?
2. Read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. What shocking changes did this tax collector make in his life? What verses prove that grace was his biggest motivation?

3. Think of a spiritual change you need to make in your life. How can you make sure grace (and not just guilt or your own willpower) is the driving force behind that change?

### *Homework for Next Week*

Read Titus 3:1-7.

Time of Grace Ministry  
**The Power of “And”:** Grace and More Grace  
Titus 2:11-15  
October 18, 2020

*Pastor Mike Novotny*

If you're anything like me, there's a bunch of things in your life that you wish you could just push a button and change. And I'm not just talking about diet and exercise habits; I'm talking about spiritual things. So how do you do it?

If you think about your words, your choices, your relationship with alcohol, your romantic life, your financial decisions, the things you do for God, the temptation you either resist or fall into, how do you do it? In other words, I'm asking you about one of the biggest themes in the book of Titus; the theme of self-control. How do you come face to face with the temptation - maybe one that knows your name all too well - and say no to it so that you can say yes to God? If you and I are in a spiritual war and if it's not just coincidence but the Father of Lies, the devil, who's trying to pick the bait that works best, how do you find the spiritual strength to say no so you can say yes to God?

My answer to that question is: And. God seems to know that those moments are so difficult that you need to remember this and this and this and this and this and this and this. In other words, you're the kind of person that needs lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of motivation. And I'm like that, too. If you've heard what we say in our culture, right? Old habits are hard to break and you can't teach an old dog new tricks. And objects that rest tend to stay at rest. In other words, something really big has to happen to get a person to change.

God knows that if you're going to make some change with your words, with your actions, when it comes to alcohol or relationships, with your selflessness or with your generosity, he's going to have to give you a whole bunch of reasons and so he does. I don't have time to list them all today but think for a second about the Bible. The Proverbs would say don't sin. That's stupid. That will mess up your life if you want to lack self-control and get drunk. You know what's going to happen the next morning. And the Bible would say remember when you do good, you make God look good. His teaching becomes attractive when you're selfless and sacrificial and a good person. And why in the world would you want to hold onto sin and live in it if it could cost you forever with God? That wouldn't make sense. And don't forget that God, forever and ever, will not forget the good works of his people; they won't save you but God certainly says that your labor is not in vain. It's like reason after reason that God gives to inspire you to do good.

And then there's today. Today, in Titus 2, we're going to find the number one way that God motivates people to change. As much as he loves to promise and reward, give opportunities and threats about the danger of sin, the best way that God knows to change a heart, to flip your life upside down, to inspire you to do the right thing, is what we're going to tackle today. So if there's a part of your life that you're really looking for more self-control, I pray that what God says here is exactly the path that it takes to get there.

So let me read to you the end of Titus 2; I'm going to start today with verse eleven. The apostle Paul says this: "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what's good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you."

In other words, Paul is saying here that God does not want you to think like Pitbull. Any of you know the Miami-based rapper named Pitbull? No? No one here? I asked that question at our 7:30 service this morning at St. Peter and our poor older brothers and sisters in the faith were very clueless about this illustration. If you ever listen to the radio, you probably recognize Pitbull's voice. He's super talented, super famous. But a couple years ago in 2011, Pitbull wrote this famous song called, "Give Me Everything." And I'm not going to rap it for you right now - you deserve better than that - but I am going to let you read it with me. Here's what Pitbull said. He said, "I might drink a little more than I should tonight and I might take you home with me if I could tonight and baby, I'm going to make you feel so good tonight cause we might not get tomorrow."

Do you know the problem with Pitbull's logic though? He wrote that song in 2011. Which means there was a tomorrow! Which meant that if he drank too much on that night he woke up hungover. Which meant that if he took some strange girl home, they woke up next to each other; maybe it was awkward or embarrassing or shameful. Maybe she was pregnant. When you live like all there is is tonight, you get to have a lot of fun in the moment but you forget that there is a tomorrow. And I tell you that today not because I want you to become big Pitbull fans or block him from your playlist but because do you know what lives inside of your heart? A little Pitbull. Why else would temptation be that tempting? If there wasn't something inside of you saying, "Well, what about tonight? That would feel good tonight. I would love to do that right now. Tomorrow? Let's not think about it. Close the calendar; I want to think about this moment." Doesn't that explain 99 percent of your sinful choices? You just wanted to say it in the moment so you said it. You're frustrated with the kids so you blew up. You like didn't sit down and make a pro and con list; it's just in the moment it felt good so you gave into it.

And Paul says here that he wants to teach us to say no to that part of our heart. That we can feel it, we can acknowledge it, we can say, yep, that would feel good - and - I'm not going to do it. I'm going to be self-controlled. I'm going to say no to worldly passions, as Paul puts it. I'm going to live a godly life in this present age.

Which brings us back to the question: Okay, but how? In the moment, when that little Pitbull is so persuasive, how do you find the strength to say no to something that would make you feel so good? And the answer to that, I brought with me today. The answer to that are the 10 Commandments. By the way, these aren't the original 10 Commandments; they're actually made of wood. Do any of you know how the 10 Commandments start? If you grew up in Sunday School or the church world, anyone here want to shout out how the 10 Commandments begin?

No one knows? No? If you had to take a guess, what would it be? You shall have no other gods, no other gods before me. That's the first commandment of them all, right? Do you know where the First Commandment is in the original Hebrew? Oh, there it is; in this line. Which begs the question, what's up here? Before God gave the most important commandment in human history - don't worship or love anything more than you love me - what did he say? I'll translate for you: And God spoke all these words saying, "I am Yahweh; your God. The one who brought you up from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery."

Before God got to these rules, he brought up this relationship: I'm your God. Before he told the people exactly what they should do, he told them what had already been done for them: I brought you out of the land of slavery. I loved you and I saved you. In other words, before God asked his people to change and do all these commandments, he gave them the greatest power source to do it; the good news of his love. And this, brothers and sisters, is what we call gospel motivation.

Let me show you all the grace in this text. Paul says in Titus 2, "The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people." If you're taking notes in your program, write this down. Paul is saying that grace is your past. He says that it has appeared. Remember, grace is love that you don't work for. It's not like a contract or a wage you get from work; it's a completely free gift. And if you're a Christian here today and not just a generally religious person, there was some time in your past that grace appeared. Maybe you kind of grew up thinking that common thing that God loves fairly good people and if I try my hardest, probably I'll go to a better place when I die. Karma is like the way the human heart works unless it's taught differently.

And then grace appears. Then someone tells you the message of this book; that God loves people because he loves people. There's this message of Jesus and his love, his cross, his death, life, and resurrection that brings salvation - did you catch the passage? - to the good people? No, all people. Like, whatever your background, whatever your story, you don't have to work for it. You don't have to fix your karma or climb some ladder to impress God. Instead, he just loves and then he loves and he keeps loving. And if anyone's ever saved you or rescued you or loved you when you didn't deserve it, if you were in the pit of an addiction and everyone bailed and they should have but there was that one person that didn't give up, I bet you'd do anything for them. Because when you receive love that you know you didn't deserve, it changes the human heart. And Paul reminds every Christian grace appeared. It didn't ask for your I.D., it didn't pull up a spiritual CCAP, it didn't discriminate based on your past. It just loved you because God so loved the world he gave his one and his only Son.

But it's not just the past. Paul says in our next verse, verse 13, that we Christians wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now this is something I never thought about when I was a teenager. I did not give enough time to think about how incredible it would be to see the glory of God. That someday in the future - Paul's talking about the day that Jesus comes back from heaven - we will be so blessed. The word "blessed" in the Bible simply means happy. We have this happy hope, this for sure future, that the glory of Jesus will appear in the skies. The word "glory" just means something that makes you go, "Whoa." And when Jesus comes back, the sight of his face is going to be so glorious and so good that whatever sin you said no to in the moment will seem like the best choice in

human history. No one will one day see the face of Jesus and say, "Well, dang, I wish I would have..." No, instead they'll be so, so happy they didn't. In other words, Jesus is like the amazing buffet; steak done just like you like it, shrimp with a little seasoning on top, free drinks all paid for. And on your way to the buffet, you see an old Taco Bell burrito laying in a dumpster. And you're really hungry. Are you going to eat the burrito? No, you're on your way to something infinitely better! So why choose something so small and disgusting that might, I don't know, taste a little good and probably not so good? Because you're waiting for something that's going to make you so happy. And that's what the Christian says about sin. Sin tempts like that old burrito. It says, "I'll make you feel good. You need me." And you say, "Are you serious?" "Well, I can make you happy. I can make you feel so good tonight." "I'm going to feel good forever! What in the world would you offer me as good as my God? He is appearing and he is my hope. I have a for sure future and I am going to be so, so blessed. He's my great God and Savior." And that inspires you to say no to sin and yes to him. In other words, Paul's saying our next fill in the blank, that grace is also your future. Grace appeared in the past, glory's coming in the future. And right now, there's more grace.

Last passage for today, Titus 2:14. Speaking of Jesus, Paul says, "Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what's good." Write this down - Paul says that grace is also your present. When Jesus redeemed you, when he paid the price and died on the cross for your sins - I love this language - he redeemed you from all wickedness. Like whatever wicked, twisted, messed up thing you've done that you think doesn't make you worthy of being here in church, no, he took care of it. And he purified for himself a people; completely pure. No stain, no wrinkle, no blemish; just beautiful and delightful and wonderful to God. That's what every Christian is in the sight of our heavenly Father. And if that weren't enough, Paul says these are people who are his very own, eager to do what's good. He made you his. He called you his own; a relationship that he'll never give up on and that makes you so excited to do what's good.

At least, that's what I experienced. I'm not sure if my wife over there remembers this but on November 22nd, 20 years ago, I asked her to be my first girlfriend. Hiding in the back of my 1999 Saturn SL2 was a single rose and I popped the trunk and I asked her, "Would you?" And she must have been drinking a lot that night because she said yes. No, she wasn't drinking; she wasn't drinking at all. What happened to me over the next few months, I simply cannot describe in logical terms. I never had a girlfriend before; I'd only had one kiss in my life before. Only been on one date before. I'd barely ever held a girl's hand in my life. So when I fell in love for the first time, I was eager to do what was good. I was willing to spend any amount of money, plan any elaborate date, I suddenly started writing poetry which I still can't explain. I think for a seven month, was it, anniversary, I bought 12 dozen roses and made a scavenger hunt where she found me on the island green of a golf course. Now after 20 years, I'm like, "Do I have to get you a Christmas present?" Married life. Oh, my goodness, but when love gets to your heart, when you experience something you've never had before, no one has to demand a gift from you. Instead, you become eager to do what's good.

And this, friends, is what Christianity is all about. We live in a world of what have you done for me lately, you get what you paid for, contracts and fine prints; people who love us when we're loveable and they don't love us when we're not. And then we open this book and we meet grace.

We meet Jesus. And his love is so unique and it's so wonderful and he delights in us when we just don't deserve it and it gets in so deep that God doesn't have to command us. He doesn't have to threaten us; we just want to. What used to be a "have to" or "you're supposed to" or "church people really should," became a "get to" and "I can't wait to" and "God, just tell me how to," because grace teaches us to say no to sin and yes to him.

So put Paul's teaching all together and you get today's big idea; I'd love for you to write it down. That it is grace that teaches us to change. If you want things to be different, don't just beat yourself up, don't just ask for accountability. Instead, tap in to the life-changing power of God's grace. Some of you longtime Bible people maybe know that this is all over the Scriptures. John put it this way: "We love because he first loved us." The apostle Paul said, "Christ's love compels us not to live for ourselves but for the one who gave his life, who died for us, and was raised again."

So before I say amen, let me leave you with one application and one last story. Here's the application: Now you know why your pastors talk every single week about roots. Yeah, before this message, we played that roots video on the screen and I was standing over there in the darkness and I was watching you. I wanted to see who was captivated by the roots video and honestly, not a whole lot of you and I think I know why. Because, you know, week after week after week after week, you know, it's the same thing. It's the roots, it's the roots, it's the gather, group, give, go, gather, group, give, go. Yeah, I've heard that all before but do you know why we do that? Because roots produce fruit. When you're rooted here, when you don't skip church because there's an easier option on a Sunday, but you gather, guess what you get to hear about? Grace. And when you've had an up and down spiritual week and you go to your group and someone reminds you that God's love is persistent and undeserved, guess what you get? Grace. And when you open your Bible and pull up that app and check the box and read the gospel, guess what you get? You get grace. And guess what grace produces? Anyone know the passage? "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness," and? Ah, and self-control. Roots produce fruit. And grace teaches us to say no so we can say yes to God. So, get roots. Anytime, God will change you.

Just like he changed that wee little man. If any of you grew up in the Vacation Bible School, Sunday School world, you might know one of the most famous Christian kid songs ever; a song about a wee little man named Zacchaeus. Do you know Zacchaeus wasn't just a wee little man; he was a wicked little man. The Bible says he wasn't just a tax collector from Jesus' day who hustled people out of their money; he was a chief tax collector. This little detail you'd never pick up in the Bible that he lived at one of the major ancient intersections of the first century, which meant that he was able to hustle more people out of more money than almost anyone else. He was hated and loathed and despised. All he did was take. He drooled, I imagine, as he collected the taxes until one day, something changed, where little Zacchaeus stood up and he said, "Half! Everything I have, I want to give away half to the poor," and no one told him to do it. And then he looked at all of his neighbors that he had hustled out of money over the years and he said, "If I've taken anything from you or you or you, I want to give it back. No, I want to give you back four times what I took." And no one told him to do it.

Now if you're new to church, there's something you should know. For most of us here, the hardest thing for us to change is what we do with money. We're so afraid to give it away that it's really hard to. Martin Luther used to say the last thing to be converted is a person's pocketbook. And do you know who are the people in the church most likely to not give? Rich people. If you have a buck and I tell you to give 10 percent, that's a dime. If you have a million and I ask you to give 10 percent, that's a lot. So how in the world did Zacchaeus do it? Why? Well, I'll show you a picture. There's the wee little man up there in the tree and down there with his hand extended is someone you might know; someone you might call your Savior. And then the Savior passed on by and he looked up in the tree and he said, "Zacchaeus, you come down cause I'm going to your house today." And the crowd whispered and they muttered and they complained, "Doesn't Jesus know who this is?" And Jesus knew exactly who it was because he knew that people can change. He knew that the most unlikely parts of our lives can be flipped upside down and he knew the exact way to do it.

So I'm not sure what change you want to make in your life. I'm not sure where you need a lot more self-control but I do know the best place to start. Grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and to live a self-controlled life. So brothers, sisters, get good roots in grace and you just might find the life that God always wanted you to have.

Let's pray.

Oh Father, if we could do it, our lives would be so good. If we didn't feel anxiety and fear and worry when it comes to money - we just gave and trusted you - it would be so good. And if we went home to our workplaces and our relationships and our marriages and our parenting and we were just like you - patient and kind, full of grace and truth, willing to forgive and let things go and not live in the past - it would be so good. But we can't do it without you and so, I'm praying directly today, Father, for your Spirit. We're going to leave here today and I can't walk with every person and they can't walk with me but you can. You're present everywhere, you are all powerful, you know exactly what we need and it's easy for you. So I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to produce in our hearts what we can't do on our own. Give us self-control. Fix our eyes on eternal things; that we would have a greater pleasure and a greater hope that fuels us through our toughest temptations. We pray this for your glory and for our good and because it's the only logical way to respond to grace. I pray this all, Jesus, in your beautiful, wonderful, your gracious and saving name, and all God's people who agreed, they said, "Amen."