



Never underestimate the value of a gift. When we receive something of worth that we didn't pay for, it is both humbling and exhilarating. The truth is that when we receive the grace of God—either our salvation, His protection and wisdom, or the heavenly rewards yet to come, we ought to be thankful beyond measure. Read what Tony Evans has to say about the magnificent grace of God

### **Day 1**

- James 4:6
- Ephesians 2:4-9

Once I was given a checker set. On each checker was a crown. That's because it was created to become a king. Not every checker will become a king. It all depends on the moves they make, but each checker was created to reign.

If you've trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you have a crown on your head, and you were created to rule. The Bible says that the grace of God gives us the ability to reign. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid for our sins, but when He rose from the dead, He guaranteed our victory.

That's why the Bible says we are more than conquerors in Christ: because we were made to rule. Satan wants to take your crown from you like checkers that have to be removed from the board because they didn't make the right moves. We want to make sure that we make the right moves so that we get the crown that God has for us.

In fact, the Scripture says grace has seated us with Him in heavenly places and where is Jesus seated? On

a throne on the right-hand side of His Father. Only ruling kings sit on thrones. We're seated right beside Him, because we are to rule with Him.

If you belong to Jesus Christ, you've got a crown and you just have to make the moves, so that you experience that crown that grace has offered you to rule under God's authority. You are not to settle for anything less than the ruling authority that Christ offers you.

## **Day 2**

- Luke 19:10
- Matthew 14:22-33

When I was a water safety instructor, I trained lifeguards. I considered myself a lifeguard first, a Water Safety Instructor second. I saved people's lives, people who were drowning or going under.

That's kind of what sin does. It causes us to drown. It takes us under. We've all been infected and affected by our sins, and the sins of others that have affected us. But the good news of God's grace is that it is in the saving business.

When I was saving someone or training lifeguards to save someone, it meant understanding that a drowning person was not in a position where they could save themselves. No matter how hard they tried, they were not able to swim back to shore or the side of the pool. Another lifeguard had to dive in and to deliver them from that which was about to destroy them.

That's the good news of grace. It reaches us when we're drowning, when we're drowning in the consequences of sin, and when we're separated from the life of a Holy God. God in Jesus Christ, dives in, sacrifices Himself on the Cross, in order to save us from drowning and being destroyed by the devastating consequences of sin.

So, when you think about being saved by grace, think about a lifeguard saving a drowning person, where you trust Jesus Christ as your personal sin-bearer. He does it apart from your "good works"—because you can't earn it. If you could earn it, you could swim to shore yourself. But because we can't earn it, and God provided it, you have to do what the person did that I was seeking to save from drowning. They had to give up trying to save themselves and relinquish themselves to me, to be their savior.

## **Day 3**

- Psalms 2:3
- Acts 12:6-8

Freedom is an awesome thing. Our nation was established to promote freedom. It is release from illegitimate bondage, something that has no right to hold you hostage. Did you know that the great news about grace is that it offers freedom? Freedom from our attempts to make our own selves acceptable to God. Freedom from the flesh to control us anymore. Freedom from something that wants to make you a slave.

We've all known what it is to be a slave to our impulses, to be a slave to illegitimate desires, or to be a slave to circumstances that we want to get rid of. Grace, then, is a freedom fighter. Grace sets us free from the handcuffs, from the bondage of sin so that we can become what we were created to be.

It's Satan's goal through the world and through the flesh to keep us hostage, to hold us in an incarcerated situation, in our own hearts and minds and lives and spirits. But the grace of God, when it's been released in our lives, connects us with the provisions of God, so that we can experience all that God has planned for us.

This is why it is in the best interests of the evil one to keep us from growing in grace so he can keep us hostage. One of the ways he does that is through legalism, our own human attempt through the flesh to meet God's standard. Now, we can spiritualize legalism and say, "Well I'm trying hard," "This is my New Year's resolution," or "I'm putting forth my best effort," but that's not how grace works.

What grace gives us is a battery, which empowers something to work. When God infused us with His grace, it came with batteries. The Holy Spirit's job is to release us to be free, but when we stop looking at and living by grace, we are literally cutting off the resource. We're hitting the off-button on the power supply that's already built in.

So, get all the grace you can handle, so you can experience all the freedom that God offers.

#### **Day 4**

- Titus 2:11-14
- Romans 3:20-24

Did you know that grace gives you the ability to either override or to work through adverse circumstances in your life? We all face things that seem to be difficult to overcome. Problems, pain, frustrations, people, and it looks sometimes like we are being overridden by that which appears to be out of our control. Enter grace. What grace does is it comes alongside of us, either to override something, or take us through something that seems to be just overwhelming.

The law of gravity holds us down, but the law of aerodynamics lifts us up. It doesn't cancel the law of gravity, but it does override it so that we can fly in an airplane even though gravity is still working.

We have three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. They're all trying to pull us down and bring us to defeat. Enter grace. The Holy Spirit uses grace to add a new law to the way we function as followers of Jesus Christ, lifting us above, without necessarily cancelling the reality of the law of sin and death that wants to hold us down. So, when you think about grace, think about its wings, its ability to lift us up and to take us beyond what our experience is saying what we have to live under and be controlled by.

I wish I could say, to follow Christ means all your problems will disappear, but the reality is some of your problems don't even show up until you are following Christ. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

So, grace's empowerment provides you strength in one of three ways. 1) It is strength to be delivered from, 2) it is strength to move through, or 3) it is strength to be changed in the midst of. But any one of these will have the same result. Strength you didn't have initially, until Someone from heaven joins you on earth, to help you lift the weight that appeared to be too heavy for you to lift. Grace gives you the power to overcome.

## **Day 5**

- Romans 3:24-26
- Ephesians 2:8

We all like things that come to us for free and we don't have to pay for them. It's a gift, like a birthday present. When you think about the word "grace," think about a gift. It is God's gift to the human race. It is unmerited favor. To put it more comprehensively, grace is the inexhaustible supply of God's goodness, giving to us what we do not deserve, could never earn, and would never be able to repay. The wonderful thing about grace is that it is free, and because this free gift is so awesome and so available to all who will receive it, you ought to be thankful for the provision of God's magnificent grace.

You know, we all have birthday parties and we either go to them or people come to ours, and isn't it exciting when somebody brings a gift and you have to receive it but you don't really earn it? You're simply being given a gift because you were born. Well, when you are born again it comes as a gift. God freely bestows on us the favor that He now can give because of what His Son has already done.

So, while grace is free to us, it was costly to God, because it cost Him the life of His own precious Son and His sacrifice on the cross. Your motivation for spiritual life ought to be that you appreciate the expensive gift at high cost to God, at no cost to you, because of His magnificent grace.