

Walking In Grace

"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Galatians 2:21 (NIV)

To choose to live for God begins with a decision and a commitment to follow His Word. The ability to walk in His footsteps takes the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. But, after all is said and done, it is grace that pours into our life the eternal resources of heaven through which we are able to call God, our Father.

The phrase, set aside is "**atheteo**" meaning to make void, to put as of no value, to do away with something laid down, presented or established, and to act towards anything as though it were annulled. This is a very strong statement. According to what Paul is saying to us, it is possible to nullify and make void the work of grace in our lives that has been laid down and established by the Father.

The Apostle follows this by saying that if righteousness comes by the law then Christ died in vain. The Law here speaks of the act of placing ourselves, through our own efforts, in a position of worth by living according to a set standard. The Law of Moses was just exactly that, a standard for behavior that allowed Israel to enjoy **temporary** covering for their sinful condition. What is wonderful to learn, the grace of God does what the Law tried to do and could not. It places man in a **permanent** or **continual** position before the Father, one of righteousness, worth, with no past record of sinfulness. It happens all because of grace!!

One of the reasons for this letter was to refute the teaching by born again Jewish believers that it was necessary to continue to keep the Law in addition to trusting in grace alone. Paul made the case that our righteousness, or attempt of ongoing righteous conduct, fell so far short of God's grace that it wasn't even close to satisfying God's demand for righteousness. Therefore, his understanding was that we received grace through Christ's death not our righteous conduct.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus was now alive in the believer and provided supernatural strength to live for God. In no way could man hope to accomplish this great challenge in his own strength and abilities. Paul says he was crucified with Christ and thereby this grace-miracle provided access into his life for Jesus Christ to come in and live through him. He saw himself as dead to the world and Christ was living in him. To behave in any manner which would attempt to bring human energy and assistance to that truth would be to frustrate the grace of God. He understood very well that the just were to live by faith in God and not in personal works or righteousness.

To believe that through our personal conduct we are going to establish grace in our lives is to nullify, make void, and deprive grace of its power to bring us into right relationship with the Father. No matter how hard we try, we cannot add to what Jesus did or empower the Holy Spirit through performance to change our lives.

As important as Bible study, prayer, church attendance, giving, loving, godly living, as revealed in the Word, they cannot and do not make grace effective in our lives. These things certainly should be present in our lives, but in reality are the **fruit** of grace. These works are not the **source** of grace or the foundation for grace. God alone is the Source of the grace that enables us to live godly and stand in His presence clothed in Christ's righteousness.