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Waste not Gods Grace

2Corinthians 6:1-4

Paul's message: Reconciliation (brought into favor w/ God). Now God made us ambassadors of Christ--given the ministry of reconciliation. We are co-laboring w/ Jesus bringing others to faith, salvation & reconciliation. Paul warns-not to receive God's grace in vain. *God's done it all-our part is to respond*

2 Cor 6:1-4 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain 2 for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation" 3 giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, 4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God....

Don't let God's love be wasted on you. Beck

Do not let it go for nothing. NEB, New English Bible

Can God's grace actually be squandered, made ineffective & nullified?

What does it mean to waste God's grace? Am I guilty of wasting God's grace? How can this happen? What downward steps does a person take to waste grace?

Paul's is an urgent message. *Parakaleo*—to call to ones side, beg, exhort, admonish. *Picture a friend so concerned for your spiritual well being, they go out of their way to come to you, put an arm around you & passionately plead w/ you—get back on track w/ Lord. I've gotten mad but that doesn't help*

EM Bounds 'The weapon of prayer' Man has a natural unwillingness to be reconciled to God' Paul's method is better--urges, not demands, not harsh or severe *1Thes 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.*

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How many in Corinth were taking Gods grace in vain? Don't know!

So he exhorts-don't waste God's grace, don't receive it in vain. **It is possible to get A's in bible memorization but flunk out on personal relationship w/ Christ--received grace in vain .**

In Corinth they were learning about Jesus, memorizing bible verses, making the gospel their own but falling short of the gospels intent for their lives. ***Illus-you can be a grommet chef--fix meals for others & yet starve to death yourself. Famous fashion designer & go around in rags yourself.***

Grace in **vain Kenos** – empty-used of vessels that contain nothing, believers w/ no Christ-like life. Barren when it comes to bearing fruit. Sardis Rev 3:1 '**name alive but dead**' -- **Sodom apple**.

They had correct doctrine but didn't practice the truths in them. Boasting in the promises but not applying them to daily living. Going thru the motions w/o emotion. Preaching cream but living skim milk. Telling of faith but living in defeat. Times we feel destitute, defeated but only temporary state, passing predicament, not terminal condition.

How do we break the cycle of knowing much but having little. Declare bible truths but live a defeated life. We need to start standing on the promises & not just sitting on the premises.

Elijah – 1 Kings 17,18 after a great victory over prophets of Baal experienced a sense of failure, empty felt abandoned by God. Threats of Jezebel sent him running, hiding in a cave, **monstrous depression** in a state of unbelief of wasted grace. God said 'what are you doing here Elijah? Told him to get up and get back to the things God called him to. He did, it was only a temporary setback, wasted grace restored.

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How is Grace wasted: 1. Satanic threats 2. Eyes off Lord--a failure of faith **Peter** 3. Fear is running scared & creates blurred vision 4. Discouragement causes complaining. – **Recovery:** 1. Word of God 2. Wait in silence 3. Listen w/ intent to hear 4. Direction & correction—get to work

His was only a temporary setback—his wasted grace was restored when he Turned to Gods word, waited in silence for a revelation, listened w/ the intent to hear and do whatever God said & finally got direction & correction and got back to doing will of God.

King Saul had wasted grace, terminal unbelief **1Sam 15:11** *“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands.”* :23 *“For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.”* Saul received God’s grace in vain—chance after chance until he went to point of no return and God rejected him.

The root of the problem is critical in solving the problem—to waste Gods grace, receive it in vain, stems from a single root. Deal w/ the root & you’ll correct the problem. *Illus 40 qts oil to Merced—rear main seal, drop trans-oil filter*

Unbelief is the root of wasted grace. Peter on water **Matt 14:28-31** *And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”* 29 *And He said, “Come!”* *And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.* 30 *But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”* 31 *And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”* Failure of grace always traced back to unbelief

David tried to do good protecting Nabal’s herds from marauders, risking his life only to suffer insults. **1Sam 25:21** *Now David had said, “Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good.”*

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Doing good to others only to have them turn on you is hurtful and demeaning. David was about to retaliate when Abigail intervened. How much more demeaning is it to God when He does good and we ignore Him. He looks for proof of our response to His grace. *Lk 17:17 But Jesus*

responded and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-where are they?"

Lk 13:6,7 And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'"

Judas received God's grace in vain—1, hand picked by Jesus Jn 6:70 Did I myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?' 2, A thief yet made treasurer Jn 12:6...he was a thief and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. 3, Given Divine authority. Matt 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 4, Honored at Passover Jn 13:26 So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas. 5, What you do, do quickly 6, Kiss of friendship at betrayal. Gal 4:11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. Gal 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

So Paul urges believers to let God's word not fall on deaf ears & hard hearts but receive it for what it is the living, abiding word of God that brings the light & life of Christ to us.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. The normal work of God's grace

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We may go thru dry spells, wilderness experiences, times where we feel a void in our spirit & unable to sense the work of God in our lives. Feels like God has left us. Like David *Ps 22:2 Day and night I keep on weeping, crying for your help, but there is no reply--(TLB)*

It's not a permanent condition but only temporary, a passing predicament not a lasting one. *J Vernon 'and it came to pass'...didn't come to stay*

The root cause of waste grace is **unbelief**, receiving it in vain is **unbelief**.

Quote ??? It being the cause of many Christians failing to enter into Gods grace. From long standing setback of Elijah to the few minute fiasco w/ Peter

Matt 14:28-31 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Failure in the Christian life can always be traced to the three thieves of the Christian faith--**little faith**, **doubt** & **unbelief**. When God begins a good work, He will complete it, see it thru, bring it to pass....if we keep the faith.

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Luke 13:6-9 And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

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One of the big perils to the Christian life is dwindling grace. We start out receiving the full blessings of God w/ all the privileges & promises which are ours in Christ Jesus, then after a while we grow indifferent. Treat our relationship w/ Jesus like an old movie we've seen over & over & are now have lost interest in it.

2 for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"--

For the unbeliever God's timing for salvation is now, don't wait, today is the day. *Illus Satan called meeting methods to deceive no heaven, no hell, no God 'no hurry'*

For believers God gives new mercies every morning--unclaimed graces drain the pot of our spiritual life & hides the ever present reality of Jesus. Yesterdays victories can't sustain us in today's battles. Last weeks grace will not satisfy for today's needs. Trying to living our Christian life on what God did in the past will only frustrate what He wants to do now.

Exod 16:16-20 "This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.'" And the sons of Israel did so, and some gathered much and some little. When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. And Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them.

Every day we need a super abundant dose of God's grace in our lives. He makes it available and plentiful.

3 giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited,

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To continue in sins of the past causes God's grace to be received in vain.

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Rom 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Alan Redpath 'Blessings out of Buffetings' You will speedily dissipate the grace of God if you imagine that all His fullness of supply is being given to you to excuse you and allow you to continue living in sin and failure.

We can waste God's grace by trying to be something or someone we are not. To live up to an expectation we have for ourselves or others have for us. Maybe we fail to meet the ideal and live in constant dissatisfaction w/ our Christian life or condemnation because we always feel like a failure. What we are and what we want to be is so far apart that we live in a state of constant defeat.

Paul rejected this kind of thinking & said "I am what I am by the grace of God" '

1 Cor 4:3-4 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. (NIV)

Sir Robert Anderson in 'Types in Hebrews' 'The true effort of the Christian life is not to become what we are not, but to live worthily of what God in His infinite grace has made us in Christ.'

How not to take Gods grace in vain or recover from months or years of squandering, wasting Gods grace? 1. Read a biography 2. Memorize scripture 3. Begin a routine of prayer—Tozer 'How to Pray' EM Bounds 'Weapon of prayer' 4. Read your bible daily 5. Journal 6. KLHT-1040 7. Bible teaching CD's 8. Do ministry.

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1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Pet 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.