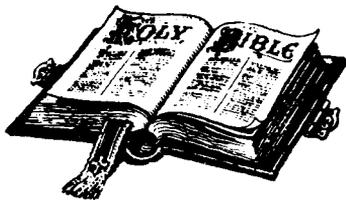


# THE INSTRUCTOR



*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16*

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## GRACE AND WHAT IT DOES NOT DO

Many people who talk the most about grace seem to rely the least on what the Scriptures say about grace. Grace is an important subject and needs to be carefully and honestly studied. The truth about grace needs to be believed and taught to others. Grace is very valuable and needs to be received by all.

### WHAT IS GRACE?

"Grace" is defined by THAYER as "good-will, loving-kindness, favor, . . ." WEBSTER defines "grace" as "Favor, kindness, mercy, etc. . ."

The grace of God is his favor or mercy. It is an expression of God's love. It is undeserved by man. There is nothing that one can do to earn it. Neither can one merit God's favor.

### GRACE DOES NOT

Although grace is undeserved it is wonderful, valuable and accomplishes great things. However, there are some things that grace does NOT do. Let us now consider some of those things that grace does NOT do.

1. GRACE DOES NOT REMOVE RESPONSIBILITY OR ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS FROM A PERSON. It seems that many people have the mistaken idea that since God has extended His grace to man that man is not responsible for his actions and that God will not hold him accountable for his actions. However, the word of God's grace teaches us very clearly that all people must give an account to God for their actions. In Romans 14:12 the apostle Paul declared: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." John

declared: ". . . and they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. 20:13).

2. GRACE DOES NOT UNCONDITIONALLY SAVE ALIEN SINNERS FROM THEIR PAST SINS. The fact that a person must believe (to say nothing of repentance, confession and baptism — see Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10 & Acts 2:38) in order to be saved indicates that grace does NOT unconditionally save sinners. (See John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31 & Mark 16:15-16).

3. GRACE DOES NOT UNCONDITIONALLY OR AUTOMATICALLY SAVE GOD'S CHILDREN WHEN THEY SIN. Jesus Christ "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. 5:9). NOTE: Jesus will eternally save those who OBEY Him! Obedience is a condition of eternal salvation!

In Acts 8:12-24 Simon, a child of God, sinned being ignorant. He tried to buy the power to impart the Holy Spirit to others by the laying on of hands. His heart was not right in the sight of God because he had thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. NOTE: He really thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. But he was wrong! What he thought was not right! He was destined to perish! He was guilty of wickedness! He was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity!" The grace of God did NOT automatically

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## THE INSTRUCTOR

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### *Editorial . . .*

## CHURCHES, HOMES, AND "FELLOWSHIP MEALS"

Some brethren argue that since churches in the first century often met and worshipped in the homes of Christians (where Christians ate their meals), we have the right today to eat meals at the place of worship. This argument is made in an effort to "justify" churches sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for so-called "fellowship meals" in which eating is done to satisfy hunger as well as for the purpose of "having fellowship."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone were of the disposition to "prove all things" and to "hold fast to that which is good" as Paul commanded in I Thess. 5:21?

Let us examine the above argument and see if it **proves** what it is alleged to prove.

### OBSERVATIONS:

1. The fact that churches sometimes assembled in homes where ordinary meals were eaten does **not prove** that churches may arrange and provide facilities for the eating of ordinary meals. I do not have reference to **relieving** poor saints. Churches do have an obligation to relieve needy saints. (See 1 Tim. 5:16; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Rom. 15:25-33; 2 Cor. 8 & 9; Acts 11:27-30; 6:1-6).

2. The fact that sometimes churches

assembled in homes (where ordinary meals were eaten) **proves** that it is Scriptural for churches today to assemble in homes of Christians (where ordinary meals are eaten.)

3. If this fact (that churches sometimes assembled and worshipped in the homes of Christians where ordinary meals were eaten) **justifies churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for so-called "fellowship meals"**, then the fact that some of the Christians in whose homes the church met, played mechanical instruments of music there (if they did), would **justify** churches sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for churches having mechanical instrumental music as "**fellowship playing.**" If not, why not? Are YOU ready to "justify" such?

4. If this fact (that sometimes churches assembled in homes where ordinary meals were eaten) **justifies** churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for so-called "**fellowship meals**", then the fact that Christians washed their feet in their homes would justify churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for "**fellowship feet washings.**" Are you ready to engage in "**fellowship feet washings**" in church assemblies? It would be "**fine, Christian fellowship**" according to the usage of the word "**fellowship**" (and "Christian") in relation to so-called "**fellowship meals.**"

5. If this fact **justifies** churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for so-called "**fellowship meals**", then the fact that Christians **bathed** themselves in their homes would justify churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for **baths** to be taken in the assemblies or at least prior to the assemblies for public worship. Believe it? Who can?

6. If this fact **justifies** churches providing their so-called "**fellowship meals**" (which are simply ordinary meals that satisfy hunger), then the

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# CHURCHES, HOMES & FELLOWSHIP MEALS”

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fact that Christians **disciplined** (by paddling or spanking, etc.) their children in their homes would **justify** churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities (and assemblies) for children to be **disciplined**. What about it? Don't quibble!

7. If the fact that churches sometimes met in homes of Christians for worship **justifies** churches arranging, sponsoring and providing the facilities for so-called “**fellowship meals**”, then the fact that some Christians ran or conducted a **business** in their homes (if they did) such as **making and selling candles and shoes** would **justify** churches arranging, sponsoring and providing the facilities for the **making and selling of candles and shoes** and that in the assemblies. This could be called “**fellowship candle and shoe making and selling**.” Are you ready to go along with a church that does that? If not, why?

## QUESTIONS

1. Would the fact that a church met (for worship) in a home and baptized a person in a **bath tub** that Christians took baths in **justify** a church in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for “**fellowship bathing**”? What about in the assemblies?

2. Would the fact that a church baptized a person in a **spa** in which Christians took hot baths **justify** churches in sponsoring and providing facilities in which Christians would take hot baths when they assemble? What if that assembly is just before the “assembly worship” begins? Would that justify it?

3. Would the fact that a church baptized a person in a **swimming pool** attached to the home of a Christian in which the church assembled for worship **justify** churches in providing facilities for

“**fellowship swimming**”? Suppose the “**fellowship swimming**” took place just prior to the regular assembly worship? Would that justify it?

4. Would the fact that a church baptized a person in a **private pond** that was used by Christians to **raise catfish** commercially **justify** churches in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for the raising of catfish commercially? If not, why not? Here's why: **The church is NOT authorized to engage in such endeavors!**

5. Would the fact that a church preached the gospel over a radio station over which Christians advertised “pigs for sale” **justify** churches in arranging, sponsoring and providing facilities for advertising “pigs for sale” in their assemblies? Why? It is simple, isn't it? Advertising “pigs for sale” is **not** the work of the church! God has **not** authorised churches to engage in the work of advertising “pigs for sale.” Please consider carefully the principles laid down in Eph. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:21; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9 and Eph. 5:23-24.

## CONCLUSION

**No**, the argument that since churches sometimes assembled in homes in the first century where common meals were eaten justifies churches today in sponsoring, arranging and providing facilities for so-called “**fellowship meals**” is **neither logical nor Scriptural!** Please discard the argument and cease the practice!

Remember it was **an inspired man** who wrote to the church of God at Corinth and said: “**And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation . . .**” (1 Cor. 11:34).

“**So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**” (James 2:12).

(CRS)

## GRACE AND WHAT IT DOES NOT DO

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forgive his sin because he had sinned either through **ignorance** and/or **weakness**. The blood of Christ did NOT cleanse him "**even as he sinned.**" Even his being a new convert did NOT cause God's **grace** to forgive his sin automatically nor unconditionally. He was commanded to "**Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.**" (Acts 8:22). Obviously God's **grace would cover his sin when he met the conditions laid down in the word of God's grace.**

Let us not make promises beyond the revelation of the grace of God.

(CRS)

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

You are invited to attend a series of GOSPEL MEETINGS at the building of the East Albertville congregation February 12-17, 1989. JOHN CLARK of Houston, Texas will be the speaker. We will meet at our regular times on the Lord's Day and at 7:00 o'clock each evening Monday through Friday.

JOHN CLARK will speak on the subject of EVOLUTION each evening Monday through Friday (Feb. 13-17). He will discuss EVOLUTION in the light of what the WORD OF GOD says.

Make plans to be with us and tell others about these meetings!

**ALL ARE INVITED!**

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## — SENTENCE SERMONS —

Faith that obeys God enables one to escape the eternal fire of hell.

\* \* \* \* \*

Deeper giving (of money, time and self) means deeper living.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are known by what we say — and by what we don't say.

\* \* \* \* \*

Instead of picking you up, alcohol will let you down.

\* \* \* \* \*

To stand and walk straight one must kneel often

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