

# Falling From Grace

Hebrews 12:14-15



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Hebrews 12:14-15 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: **(15) Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;**

The most misunderstood word in the Bible is the word "Grace". What is "Grace"? I heard someone once describe "Grace" by using a mnemonic. They say "Grace is God's Riches At Christ's Expense" - G.R.A.C.E. That's a good definition, but it can lead to a misunderstanding. Grace comes to a person because of Who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ did. The Bible tells us:

**John 1:17** For the law was given by Moses, **but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.**

This is one of the best definitions of Grace in the Scripture. Though God gave the Law through Moses the Bible identifies the Law as *something people are to do*. God gave the Law to be mankind's *tutor*. The Apostle Paul said:

**Galatians 3:24-25** Wherefore **the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.**

The Law is imposed on those who will not believe in Christ. If you have a *stony heart of unbelief* then God puts the *stony tablets of the Law* before you and says "do this and live". God never expected the Law to save anyone. The Law exists to *educate*, to be the mirror that

teaches every person that *they are sinners in need of salvation*. The Law speaks in order that ....

**Romans 3:19-20** .... **every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (20)** **Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

The Law of Moses brings a knowledge of your own sin, making you aware that you need the Grace of God. **The Law came by Moses, but Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ.** The Law teaches all mankind that we are not inherently holy, not righteous, not just in God's sight. We need a Savior. We need what Jesus Christ offers us. We need the Grace and Truth of Jesus Christ.

**FOCAL Hebrews 12:15** ... **Looking diligently** lest any man **fail** of the grace of God ....

**Word Study** There are three words in our text today that are *Present Active Participles* in the original language of the Scripture. What does that mean? It means that these words denote *continuous habitual action*. The first two words are **“looking diligently”**, the Greek EPISKOPEO (επισκοπεω), which means **“keep on looking out for”**. If you were back in the Old West passing through Apache territory the guide would say "keep your eyes peeled, boys and girls, or you might lose your hair!" If you were on a Safari in deep Africa passing through lion and gator country the guide would say “keep your eyes wide open, boys and girls, or you're liable to become a 'Happy Meal' ”. The writer of Hebrews tells us all **“wake up, and be very careful to watch out for this.**

**You don't want to fail of the Grace of God”**. Be diligent, keep your eyes opened **lest any person fail of the Grace of God**. The word "fail" in our text is the Greek HUSTEREO (υστερεω pronounced *hoos-ter-eh'-o*), which means **“to keep on falling short of”**. You do not want to *keep falling short* of the Grace of God.

We are exhorted in this text to *keep on being on the lookout lest we keep on falling short of the Grace of God*. We all need the Grace of God. We need the Grace of God to **save us from damnation**. We need the Grace of God to **bless us once we are saved**.

Grace is God's disposition toward those who trust in Him.

Grace is not a **wage earned**, nor a **prize given**, nor is it an **award due**. When a person **works** an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a **wage**. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a **prize**. When a person receives **recognition for his long service** or high achievements, that is an **award**. Grace is *free and unmerited favor from God*. Grace is when God looks at you and says "you neither earned nor deserved this, but because you have - like a helpless child - looked to and believed in Me I will give this to you." That's Grace.

And there's not one of us that doesn't need His Grace.

### **1. By Grace You Are Saved By God**

**FOCAL Hebrews 12:14** Follow peace with all men, and **holiness, without which no man shall see the**

## Lord:

**Word Study** The Bible tells us that **without holiness no man shall see the Lord**. Dear friends, **you cannot go to God's Heaven – the Father's House – unless you are HOLY**. What does it mean to be “holy”? The word **holy is the Greek HAGIASMOS** (*αγιασμος* pronounced *hag-ee-as-mos*'), which means "**to be consecrated, set apart, pure**". This “purity” is not judged based on what *you think*, but on what the owner of the house thinks.

**ILLUSTRATE** I heard the story once of two chimney sweeps (men who clean fireplaces and chimneys) who both accidentally fell down a chimney they were cleaning. One man covered his face as he fell, whereas the other man did not cover his face. When they emerged from the large fireplace the man who covered his face looked at his blackfaced companion. He thought, “I must be blackfaced” and, though he really wasn't, he went and washed his face. The other chimney sweep with the face all covered with soot looked at his clean faced companion and thought “My face must be clean”. Though he needed to wash his face he didn't.

Holiness is not based on what *you* think of yourself, nor is it based on how you appear *compared to other humans*. Holiness is based on what *God thinks of you*. The Bible tells us that ...

**Psalms 99:9** ... **the LORD our God is holy**.

God is holy. He is pure, righteous, and without sin. Oh that God would allow us all a glimpse into Heaven as He

allowed the Prophet Isaiah. As Isaiah was in prayer one day the Lord opened up Heaven so he could look in. There he saw the angels of God flying around the Lord's Throne crying out:

**Isaiah 6:3** ... **Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.** ...

So powerful were their cries of holiness that the **posts of the house shook** as if it were an earthquake! God is thrice holy. **God the Father is holy. God the Son is holy. God the Holy Spirit is holy**. As Isaiah looked – not at himself, nor at his neighbor to compare himself (as the chimney sweeps did) – at God he cried out in anguish:

**Isaiah 6:5** ... **Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:** ...

Isaiah's cry reminds me of the cry of the Apostle Paul, who once said (**Romans 7:24**) **“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”** Oh that God would open the smug eyes of every reader of this sermon! Oh that God would rouse the heart of every hearer of this message!

Holiness is not based on how good I am in comparison to you. Holiness is how good I am in comparison to God.

**ILLUSTRATE My Friend** Let's talk about comparative holiness. One of my best friends **doesn't smoke, doesn't**

**chew, doesn't drink, and doesn't cuss.** My friend has never done any drugs in his life. My friend has eaten and drank many exotic things in his life, but he has never tasted alcohol nor been tempted to open a bottle of wine or a can of beer in his life. Though my friend has wandered into some strange places he has never been in a bar, a strip joint, nor has he ever looked at pornography – nor been tempted by it - his entire life. My friend doesn't even play cards. If Christianity is based on how *holy we each can be in our own power* then my friend ought to be going to Heaven. Is he going to Heaven? No, I'm sorry to say, he's not. He my dog Scooter.

**You must be holy in the eyes of God if you're ever going to see God.** You cannot do that by your own works. The Bible says:

**Psalms 145:17-20** The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. [18] The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. [19] He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. [20] The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

The Lord is HOLY in all His works. How do we become holy? Not by looking to the Law, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Psalmist wrote "**the Lord is near to all that call upon Him .... He will hear their cry, AND WILL SAVE THEM**". Here is the source of salvation, dear friend. **Call upon the Lord.** Do not look at your neighbor's face – look at God's face. You fall short of God's holiness, but if you come to God and call upon Him He will save you. Look at our context. We read:

**CONTEXT** Hebrews 12:2 **Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**Word Study** The word “our” is not in the original text. Jesus Christ is the **author and finisher of faith**. We are told to be “**looking**” unto Jesus. This time the Greek word is **APHORAO** (αφοραω pronounced *af-or-ah'-o*) which means “**turn your eyes from where they are looking, and turn to focus fully on Jesus**”. Are you counting on your status to get you to God's Heaven? Look to Jesus. Are you counting on your good deeds to get to Heaven. Look to Jesus. Are you counting on your family to get you to Heaven? Look to Jesus.

Jesus is the AUTHOR of faith. He wrote the only book on the subject. He is the FINISHER of faith. We are saved from hell by faith in Jesus Christ and what HE did on Calvary.

Here is the Grace of God offered to you.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For **by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**By grace are you saved through faith.** Grace is God's disposition *toward* you because of what Jesus Christ did *for* you. When you call on the Name of Jesus the Father saves you by *crediting what Jesus did to your spiritual*

heavenly account. You are **redeemed from death and judgment, and adopted into the family of God** the day you believe on Jesus.

**Galatians 4:4-7** But when the fullness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, [5] To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. [6] And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [7] Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

It is Grace that makes a child of God. It is Grace that causes the believer to receive the Holy Spirit of God. It is Grace that takes a person from a position of servant to Son. It is God's unmerited favor - His Grace - that enters a person into the family of God, and keeps that person in the family of God.

## **2. By Grace You Are Kept By God**

**FOCAL Hebrews 12:15** Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Grace goes beyond the moment of salvation. God saves us by Grace. He then teaches us to *live by Grace*. We are *kept* by His Grace.

It is not only *possible* but it is *probable* that a Christian

will fall from Grace if he does not keep on **looking unto Jesus**. The Bible warns against a **root of bitterness springing up to trouble you**. This is a reference to what God told His people before they entered into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. Israel was going to be in a strange land filled with strange gods and goddesses. The Lord saved Israel, He loved Israel, and He told her:

**Deuteronomy 29:10-20** Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God {in order that} thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into His oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: **(13)** That He may establish thee today for a people unto Himself ..... Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a **root that beareth gall and wormwood; ... (20)** The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

There is a terrible false doctrine that says “now that I’m saved, I am free to depart from God to serve other gods”. This is false. The Christian – saved by Grace – is to continue to love the Lord above all else.

**Augustine** made the statement “**love God, then do what you please**”. If you love God first then you will put God first. If you are saved by Grace then you are commanded

to live within that Grace.

**Are you being tried? Rest in God's Grace.** The Bible tells us:

**CONTEXT Hebrews 12:5-6** ..... **despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: (6) For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**

If you are saved by Grace, then let *Grace guide your thoughts when you are tried*. God is a Great Father. He sends trials to us to strengthen our faith and to make us into what He needs us to be and what we want to be. No true Christian is comfortable with the idea of entering Heaven to the sound of angelic laughter. We want to enter Heaven as trophies of Grace. We want to hear from our Lord “Well done, My good and faithful son”.

Dear friends, you cannot see the stars of Heaven by the light of day. Only by the night can we see God's glorious handiwork. When trials and tribulations come **look unto Jesus** and trust the Grace of God. **Where reason cannot wade, faith swims.** Trust His Grace.

**CONTEXT Hebrews 12:16-17** **Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. (17) For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**

**Esau** looked away from God. He **followed his gut rather than God's Grace**. His foolishness cost him the blessing that should have rightly been his. The Bible is full of examples of those who turned from the Grace of God.

**Look at the first generation of Israel.** The Promised Land was theirs, but they **looked backward to Egypt instead of looking to Jesus**. They died in bitterness over a forty year period in the desert never receiving that which Grace promised because they *rejected Grace*.

**Look at Moses.** Here was a man that should have died at childbirth. The Grace of God saved him from the river Nile, and caused him to be raised in the Pharaoh's palace. Moses *murdered a man* and then fled to the wilderness. From the wilderness God called him by a burning bush to lead Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. **Moses began to look at Israel rather than God's Grace**. He died in bitterness never receiving that which Grace promised because *he rejected Grace*.

Faith in God's Grace, not fear in man's circumstances, should always be what motivates the believer in Christ.

**Look at King Saul.** Chosen to be the first King of Israel, he **allowed fear rather than faith to motivate him**. Saul stood in the place of Samuel and offered sacrifices to God rather than trust the Lord who loved him. **Saul looked to Saul rather than God's Grace**. He died in bitterness never receiving that which Grace promised because *he rejected Grace*.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to say:

**CONTEXT Hebrews 12:18-21** For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, (19) And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (20) (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: (21) And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

This is a wonderful picture of Mount Sinai. You, dear Christian, have not come unto the mount that might be touched, that burned with fire. You have not come to the Mount of the Law. As the people huddled in fear in the shadow of Mount Sinai the Lord told them:

**Exodus 19:12-13** .... Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: (13) There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

Only one person could come up Mount Sinai. The Law came by Moses. If anyone else touched the Mount – man or beast – then he shall surely be stoned or shot through so it shall not live. You are not at the Mount of the Law, dear believers. You are not in the place so

terrible that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. Oh how foolish are those who will choose the Law over the Grace of God! How foolish are those who will put their trust in their own hand, and not the hand of Christ. The Bible says:

**Galatians 5:4** Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you are saved by faith in God's Grace. You are saved by trusting in what God did for you and in what God continues to do for you.

**CONTEXT Hebrews 12:22-25** But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (23) To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, (24) And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (25) See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

We who believe belong to Jesus. Look unto Jesus. We are not under the Law, but are under the New Covenant of Grace. Live by Grace. Love by Grace. Do not allow anything to stand between you and the

Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Do not fall from Grace.**

Grace is the only hope you have for salvation, the only hope you have for life. The writer of Hebrews closes with:

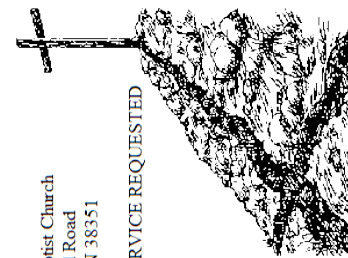
**CONTEXT** **Hebrews 12:28-29** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (29) For our God is a consuming fire.

**We have received a kingdom which cannot be moved.** You are saved by Grace, and secured by Grace. You need to live by Grace. Love God, and serve Him. Trust Him and abandon the gods and goddesses of this land. Cling to His Grace serving and trusting Him. **Our God is a consuming fire.** This is a quote from:

**Deuteronomy 4:24** For the **LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.**

God is passionately in love with those who are His. Serve only Him. Look only to Him. Move forward fearlessly trusting in His Grace.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**FOCAL Read Responsively** Hebrews 12:14-15

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: **(15) Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;**

- What is "Grace"? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 1:17; Galatians 3:24-25; Romans 3:19-20; Hebrews 12:15**

**Word Study** "looking diligently", EPISKOPEO (ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΕΩ), \_\_\_\_\_  
"fail", HUSTEREO (ὕστερεω) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. By Grace You Are Saved By God**

**Hebrews 12:14; Psalms 99:9; Isaiah 6:3; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 7:24; Psalms 145:17-20; Hebrews 12:2; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 4:4-7**

**Word Study** "holy", HAGIASMOS (αγιασμος) \_\_\_\_\_

- Holiness is not based on how good I am in comparison to \_\_\_\_\_. Holiness is how good I am in comparison to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Word Study** "looking" unto Jesus, APHORAIO (αφοραω) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. By Grace You Are Kept By God**

**Hebrews 12:15; Deuteronomy 29:10-20; Hebrews 12:5-6; Hebrews 12:16-17; Hebrews 12:18-21; Exodus 19:12-13; Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 12:22-25; Hebrews 12:28-29; Deuteronomy 4:24**

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- There is a terrible false doctrine that says "now that I'm saved, I am free to depart from God to serve other gods". This is false. What is my obligation before God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ in God's Grace, not \_\_\_\_\_ in man's circumstances, should always be what motivates the believer in Christ.

- We who believe belong to Jesus. **Look unto Jesus.** We are not under the \_\_\_\_\_, but are under the New \_\_\_\_\_. Live by Grace. Love by Grace. Do not allow anything to stand between you and the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Do not fall from Grace.**