

FUTURE GRACE

*The Purifying Power of the Promises of God
OR Living by Faith in Future Grace*

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1. Definitions

Future: that part of time yet to be experienced.

Present: the instant of experience.

Grace: God's omnipotent commitment to do only what is good for his unworthy people, bringing them to conformity to Christ, glorification, and all-satisfying joy in fellowship with himself. That is: fulfilling all his promises to them because of Christ. This includes the help arriving in the next ten seconds, our inheritance in the resurrection arriving possibly centuries from now, and everlasting demonstrations of his kindness in Christ Jesus.



Definitions (cont.)

Faith: receiving Christ as the supremely valuable treasure that he is, and being satisfied with all that God is and promises to be for us in him.

Past Grace (or Bygone Grace): All the good that God has ever done for his undeserving people before this present instant in their lives. The death of Christ and his resurrection are the foundational acts of past grace that give rise to all the others his people enjoy—past and future.



Definitions (cont.)

Living by Faith in Future Grace (Examples)

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped.”

Hebrews 11:8, 10

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out . . . For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”

1 Peter 4:11

“Whoever serves, [do so] as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.



2. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The Passions Behind Faith in Future Grace

Passion #1: A Passion for the Supremacy of God

Bethlehem's Mission Statement

*We exist to spread a passion for the
supremacy of God in all things for the joy of
all peoples through Jesus Christ.*



Why Stress A Passion for God's Supremacy?

1. Because he is passionate about his supremacy.

Isaiah 48:9-11

For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.



Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.



2. Because God says all our behavior should make him look supremely glorious

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.



We will see that living by faith in future grace draws attention to the glory of God.

1 Peter 4:11

Whoever serves, [let him do it] as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Psalms 50:15

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.



[Passion #1: A Passion for the Supremacy of God]

Passion #2: A Passion for Joy

Psalm 100:2

Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.



We will see that living by faith in future grace means rejoicing in future grace.

Matthew 5:11-12

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before”



[Passion #1: A Passion for the Supremacy of God]

[Passion #2: A Passion for Joy]

Passion #3: A Passion for Holiness

What do I Mean by Practical Holiness?

- Obedience to God's Word in the everyday life.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Genuine love for other people.



1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (Example of Love as Holiness)

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ *so that* he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.



Why We Have a Passion for Holiness?

It is the only pathway to eternal pleasure in God.
No holiness, no heaven.

Key Texts to Show that Practical Holiness is Necessary for *Final* Salvation

Hebrews 12:14

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness
without which no one will see the Lord.

James 2:17

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works,
is dead.



Key Texts to Show that Practical Holiness is Necessary for *Final* Salvation (cont.)

Galatians 6:8-9

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

1 John 2:4

Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him



Key Texts to Show that Practical Holiness is Necessary for *Final* Salvation (cont.)

2 Thessalonians 2:13

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

1 John 3:14

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.



Key Texts to Show that Practical Holiness is Necessary for *Final* Salvation (cont.)

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.



The Holiness Required from Us Will Be Worked in Us

Philippians 1:6

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:8–9

who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”



The Holiness Required from Us Will Be Worked in Us (cont.)

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 32:40

I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.



The Holiness Required from Us Will Be Worked in Us (cont.)

Jude 1:24–25

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Romans 8:30

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. hearts, that they may not turn from me.



The Holiness Required from Us Will Be Worked in Us (cont.)

Hebrews 13:20–21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.



The Problem Raised by the Necessity of Holiness

If we are justified once for all by grace through faith apart from works at the point of true conversion, then how can our final salvation be conditional upon a transformed life of holiness?

Romans 3:28

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.



The Solution Given by the Westminster Confession, Chapter XI

(1) Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone...

(2) Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; *yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is not dead faith, but worketh by love.*



So the crucial question now is: Why does practical holiness (i.e. love) inevitably accompany justifying faith?

Preliminary answer:

Faith itself is the agent of the works. They do not merely *accompany* faith. They come through or by faith. Faith is the agent that produces the works. And it does so necessarily. Thus the works are evidence of true faith, and are not the means of our salvation the way faith is. They are the evidence that faith is real and thus are necessary for final salvation. But they are not the *ground* of our salvation, the way the death and righteousness of Christ are, nor are our works the *means* of our salvation, the way faith is.



How God will Assess Our Works at the Judgment The Analogy of 1 Kings 3:16-27

Recall the story of how two harlots brought a baby to king Solomon, each claiming that the baby was hers. They asked king Solomon to act as judge between them. In his extraordinary wisdom, he said that a sword should be brought, and that the baby should be divided, with half given to the one woman and half to the other. The true mother cried out, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death” (v. 26). Solomon said, “Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother” (v. 27).



How God will Assess Our Works at the Judgment The Analogy of 1 Kings 3:16-27 (cont.)

What was Solomon looking for? He was *not* looking for a deed that would *earn* the child, or would *create* a relationship that did not already exist. He was looking for a deed that would *demonstrate* what was already true, namely, that the child was truly this woman's child by birth.

That is the way God looks at our deeds on the judgment day. He is not looking for deeds that *purchase* our pardon in his judgment hall. He is looking for deeds that prove we are already enjoying the fruits of our pardon. He is looking for the practical evidences of our living by faith in future grace.



How God will Assess Our Works at the Judgment The Analogy of 1 Kings 3:16-27 (cont.)

The purchase of our salvation was the blood of Jesus, sufficient once for all to cover all our sins. We do not add to the worth of his atoning death or of his righteousness imputed to us by God (which we call justification). But the means by which we receive this gift is faith (= being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus). That kind of faith frees us from lifelong slavery to the fear of death and works through love.

Therefore, faith is not only the means of *justification*, it is also the agent of *sanctification*.



How, Then, does Faith Do this Great Work of Sanctification?

Preliminary Answer:

Faith severs the root of sin. Sin has power by promising a better tomorrow (or at least a better this evening) and by promising superior satisfactions. But true faith is of such a nature that it severs the root of sin by embracing a better future and providing a deeper satisfaction. The future grace of God is the better future and faith in future grace is that deeper satisfaction. When you live by faith in future grace, the power of sin is broken by the power of a superior satisfaction in all that God promises to be for us in Christ.



Summary: A Passion for God's supremacy
A Passion for joy
A Passion for holiness

These Three Passions Raise Three Questions:

1. What kind of life will magnify the supremacy of God most?
2. What kind of life will forever satisfy the deep longings of our soul?
3. What kind of life will produce a practical holiness that is necessary for final salvation, but do it in such a way that our justification is still by grace alone, through faith alone, based on Christ's death and imputed righteousness alone?

Our answer to all three questions is:
Living by faith in future grace.



3. IS THIS ANSWER BIBLICAL?

The Foundations of Sanctifying Power

Faith is the Great Worker

1 Thessalonians 1:3

We give thanks to God always for all of you... remembering before our God and Father your *work of faith* and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every *work of faith* by his power



Faith is the Great Worker (cont.)

Acts 26:18

[I send you] to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are *sanctified by faith* in me.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only *faith working through love*.



Faith is the Great Worker (cont.)

1 Timothy 1:5

The aim of our charge is *love that issues* from a pure heart and a good conscience and a *sincere faith*.

Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.



Grace as Future Power

The grace in which we trust is not only God's disposition to save the unworthy, but the power of God exerted to bless us in the future with all that we need

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the *grace* of God I am what I am, and his *grace* toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the *grace* of God that is with me.



Grace as Future Power (cont.)

1 Corinthians 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:23

The *grace* of the Lord Jesus be with you.



Grace as Future Power (cont.)

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, “My *grace* is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.



Grace as Future Power (cont.)

Conclusion

Therefore, though grace was given to us “before the ages began” (2 Timothy 1:9), and was the disposition of God that moved him to send his son to die for us (Romans 3:24), it is also a divine power promised for our entire future, and given for our present experience.



Faith Is Profoundly, Pervasively Future-Oriented.

Faith can look *back* and believe a truth about the past (like the truth that Christ died for our sins). It can look *out* and trust a person (like the personal receiving of Jesus Christ). And it can look *forward* and be assured about a promise (like, “I will be with you to the end of the age”).

But even when faith embraces a past reality, its saving essence includes the embrace of the implications of that reality for the present *and the future*.



Faith Is Profoundly, Pervasively Future-Oriented (cont.).

Romans 5:10

If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son [past], much more, now that we are reconciled [present], shall we be saved by his life [future].

Thus when faith looks back and embraces “the death of his Son,” it also embraces the reconciliation of the *present* and the salvation of the *future*.



Faith Is Profoundly, Pervasively Future-Oriented (cont.).

When faith looks *out* and trusts Christ in the present, its saving essence consists in being satisfied in him now and *forever*.

John 6:35

Whoever comes to me [present] shall not hunger [future], and whoever believes in me [present] shall never thirst [future].

Thus when faith looks out and embraces Christ in the present, it also embraces his never-ending all-sufficiency.



More Texts to Show Faith's Future Orientation

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.



More Texts to Show Faith's Future Orientation

Romans 4:19–21

Abraham did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised



More Texts to Show Faith's Future Orientation (cont.)

John 14:1

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.



More Texts to Show Faith's Future Orientation (cont.)

Conclusion

Saving faith is profoundly and pervasively future-oriented. *There is no saving act of faith—whether looking back to history, out to a person, or forward to a promise—that does not include a future orientation.*

Therefore, faith banks on and embraces the future that God promises and thus breaks the power of sin which lures us with the deceitful promise of a happier future.



Faith Is Being Satisfied with All God Promises to Be for Us in Christ.

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

John 7:37-38

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”



Faith Is Being Satisfied with All God Promises to Be for Us in Christ (cont.)

1 John 5:3-4

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Therefore, faith includes love for God in the sense of valuing him and treasuring him above all else. And so faith is a being satisfied in all that God is for us—and promises to be for us in Jesus.

Therefore, faith severs the root of sin which is the promise sin makes for a better future and a better satisfaction.



The Function of Bygone Grace: Solid Ground Under Faith in Future Grace

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Romans 5:9–10

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.



The Function of Bygone Grace: Solid Ground Under Faith in Future Grace (cont.)

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



What Is the Role of the Holy Spirit in Enabling Obedience?

Galatians 5:22-23

The fruit of the Spirit is *love*, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control...

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through *love*.

Galatians 3:5

Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with *faith*?



Why Does the Spirit Unite Himself to Faith as the Way of Bringing about the Works of Love?

Because the Holy Spirit's mission is to glorify Jesus, and so makes conscious faith in Christ-exalting promises the means by which he works.

John 16:14

He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Galatians 3:5 (again)

Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?



What Is the Role of Gratitude in the Motivation of Obedience?

Nowhere in the Bible is gratitude connected explicitly with obedience as a motivation. We do not find the phrase “out of gratitude” or “in gratitude” for acts toward God.

Christian obedience is called the “work of faith,” never of the “work of gratitude” (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).

We find expressions like “live by faith” (Galatians 2:20) and “walk by faith” (2 Corinthians 5:7), but never any expression like “live by gratitude” or “walk by gratitude.”

We find the expression “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6), but not “gratitude working through love.”



What Is the Role of Gratitude in the Motivation of Obedience? (Cont.)

We read that “The aim of our charge is love that issues from...sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5), but not “from sincere gratitude.”

We read that we are “sanctified by faith in [Jesus]” (Acts 26:18) but never that we are “sanctified by gratitude for Jesus.”

We read that “faith apart from works is dead” (Jas. 2:26), but not that “gratitude without works is dead.”



What Is the Role of Gratitude in the Motivation of Obedience? (Cont.)

Preliminary Conclusion

The explicit, conscious connection between the work of Christ and the grace of God on the one hand and our obedience and holiness and love on the other hand, is faith in future grace, not gratitude.



Beware the Debtor's Ethic

The temptation to say: “God has done so much for me, what can I do for him?” is very great. That is, we can slide into thinking that obedience is pay back. But it is very dangerous for three reasons:

1. We can never pay God back—not one penny's worth—because every move we make in love and holiness is a move that God himself supplies (1 Corinthians 15:10), and so we are simply going deeper in debt to grace by our obedience, not paying any of the debt off.
2. If we could succeed in paying God back for all he does for us, or for any of it, to that degree we would nullify grace and turn it into a business transaction. Grace is free or it is not grace.



Beware the Debtor's Ethic (cont.)

3. Thinking of obedience as empowered by gratitude directs our attention backward to bygone grace rather than forward to future grace. In this way the debtor's ethic tends to divert us from the wealth of grace yet to be known and distracts us from the very power of obedience we need—future grace. You can't run your car on gratitude for yesterday's gas.



Beware the Debtor's Ethic (cont.)

A Tribute to Gratitude

There are ways that gratitude helps bring about obedience to Christ. One way is that the spirit of gratitude is simply incompatible with some sinful attitudes. I think this is why Paul wrote, “There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather *giving of thanks*” (Ephesians 5:4). Gratitude is a humble, happy response to the good will of someone who has done or tried to do you a favor. This humility and happiness cannot coexist in the heart with coarse, ugly, mean attitudes. Therefore the cultivation of a thankful heart leaves little room for such sins.



A Tribute to Gratitude (cont.)

A second way that gratitude advances obedience is that it strengthens faith, and vice versa. When gratitude for God's past grace is strong, the message is sent that God is supremely trustworthy in the future because of what he has done in the past. In this way faith is strengthened by a lively gratitude for God's past trustworthiness.

On the other hand, when faith in God's future grace is strong, the message is sent that this kind of God makes no mistakes, so that everything he has done in the past is part of a good plan and can be remembered with gratitude (Eph. 5:20). In this way gratitude is strengthened by a lively faith in God's future grace.



A Tribute to Gratitude (cont.)

This interwovenness of the profoundly and pervasively future-oriented nature of faith and the ordinarily past-oriented nature of gratitude is what prevents gratitude from degenerating into the debtor's ethic.

Gratitude for bygone grace is constantly saying to faith, "Be strong, and do not doubt that God will be as gracious in the future as I know he's been in the past."

And faith in future grace is constantly saying to gratitude, "There is more grace to come, and all our obedience is to be done in reliance on that future grace. Relax and exult in your appointed feast. I will take responsibility for tomorrow's obedience."



4. HOW DOES IT WORK FOR HOLINESS?

The Origins of Radical Love

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

1 Timothy 1:5

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.



How Does It Work For Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love (Cont.)

Matthew 5:43-44

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

Matthew 5:11-12

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



How Does It Work For Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love (Cont.)

Matthew 7:9-12

Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹² So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”



How Does It Work For Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love (Cont.)

Luke 14:12-14

He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”



How Does It Work For Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love (Cont.)

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.



How Does It Work For Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love (Cont.)

Hebrews 12:1b–2

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before him endured the
cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right
hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 13:12–14

¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to
sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore
let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach
he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we
seek the city that is to come.



5. HOW DOES IT WORK AGAINST SIN?

Battling the Forms of Unbelief

Battling the Unbelief of Anxiety

Definition: The loss of confident security in God owing to feelings of uneasiness or foreboding that something harmful is going to happen.



Battling Anxiety in General

Matthew 6:25-33

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious...Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"...But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.



Battling Anxiety in General (cont.)

Lamentations 3:22–23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Matthew 6:34

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.



Battling Anxiety in General (cont.)

Psalm 56:3

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.



Battling Anxiety about Being Useless

1 Corinthians 15:58

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.



Battling Anxiety about Feeling Weak

2 Corinthians 12:9–10

[Christ] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



Battling Anxiety about Difficult Decisions

Psalm 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Psalm 25:8-9

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.



Battling Anxiety about Afflictions

Romans 5:3–5

We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.



Battling Anxiety about Aging

Isaiah 46:3-4

Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; ⁴ even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.



Battling Anxiety about Not Persevering to the End in Faith

Philippians 1:6

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 32:40

I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.



Battling Against Anxiety about Death

Romans 14:7-9

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.



Battling the Unbelief of Covetousness

Definition: Desiring something not for God's glory or in such a way that we lose our contentment in God as our supreme Treasure.

Hebrews 13:5–6

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶ So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.



Battling the Unbelief of Covetousness (cont.)

Philippians 4:11–13

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret [Phil. 3:8!] of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

John 6:35

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.



Battling the Unbelief of Covetousness (cont.)

Scripture warnings are based on the tragedy of losing the supremely precious future grace.

Luke 12:15

Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Mark 4:19

The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.



Scripture warnings are based on the tragedy of losing supremely precious future grace (cont.).

1 Timothy 6:9–10

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.



Battling the Unbelief of Lust

Definition: Pursuing illicit thoughts or images in the mind with a view to stimulating sexual pleasures—with or without external stimuli.

Lust Grows out of Suppressing the Knowledge of God and His Promises

Ephesians 4:22

Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through *deceitful desires*.



Lust Grows out of Suppressing the Knowledge of God and His Promises (cont.)

1 Peter 1:14

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

1 Thessalonians 4:4–5

Each one of you [should] know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.



Lust is overcome by being satisfied with the promises of God—mainly, friendship with God!

2 Peter 1:3–4

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.



**Be killing lust (by faith in future grace) or
lust will be killing you.**

Romans 8:13

If you live according to the flesh you will die,
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds
of the body, you will live.



Battling the Unbelief of Bitterness and an Unforgiving Spirit

Definition: Holding a grudge or savoring the thought of getting even with no true desire for the salvation and reconciliation of the offending person.

A Crucial Consideration of Bygone Grace

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



The future grace you will receive cuts overcomes the need for vengeance.

Matthew 5:11–12

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Peter 3:9 (compare 2:21)

Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.



The promise of God's vengeance releases you from that role.

1 Peter 2:21–23

For to this [unjust suffering] you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued handing over [his cause] to him who judges justly.



The promise of God's vengeance releases you from that role (cont.)

Romans 12:19

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

In the End There Will Be No Unrecompensed Sins

They will all be duly punished, either in the cross (Isaiah 53:6) or in hell (2 Thessalonians 7-10). We may leave that finally to God.



Battling the Unbelief of Impatience

Definition: Murmuring against Providence when we are forced to walk the path of obedience in an unplanned place or an unplanned pace.

Genesis 45:7 (The story of Joseph)

And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

Genesis 50:20 (The story of Joseph)

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.



Battling the Unbelief of Impatience (cont.)

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

B. B. Warfield: “He will so govern all things that we shall reap only good from what befalls us.”
(Faith and Life, p. 204)



Battling the Unbelief of Impatience (cont.)

God Works While We Patiently Wait

Isaiah 64:4

From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.

Psalms 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. ² He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.



Battling the Unbelief of Impatience (cont.)

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.



William Cowper's Hymn, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

God moves in a mysterious way
his wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs
and works his sovereign will.

You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
in blessings on your head.



William Cowper's Hymn, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" (cont.)

His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
and scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
and he will make it plain.



Final Summary of Living by Faith in Future Grace

Future grace → Faith → Love → God glorified

Hebrews 10:34

You had compassion on those in prison, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

