

How could I receive God's grace?

Herod knew the truth but was paralyzed by guilt. How do we move from knowing we're wrong to accepting God's grace and actually changing?

Answer: Brokenhearted repentance accompanied by a plea for mercy and forgiveness. The desire to acknowledge one's sin while seeking the forgiveness of the ONLY ONE who can eternally forgive the sinner, the Lord Jesus Christ, is what gives us power to repent [lay aside tendencies and change directions] to pursue righteousness. Repentance is a **gift** that the Holy Spirit gives to each one who recognizes their sin and rebellion against God's holy, loving commandments, which He established for the moral health of His universe. The need for repentance which produces a brokenhearted cry for mercy and forgiveness is clearly explained by Jesus, Himself:

- Luke 18:9-14 Also He [Jesus] spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, **saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'** I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

- Matthew 9:12-14 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but **sinners, to repentance.**"

- Luke 13:1-5 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but **unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**"

- Luke 15:6-8 [Jesus said] And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be **more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

- Luke 24:46-48 Then He [*Editor's Note: Jesus after His resurrection*] said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the

dead the third day, and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.

The clearest illustration, to us, in the Old Testament would be David's acknowledgement of his sin of adultery and murder as he cast his broken heart into God's hands without ANY EXCUSE and recognition of his complete guilt.

- **Psalm 51** Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.

Returning to **Your Great Question**: Herod knew the truth but was paralyzed by guilt. How do we move from knowing we're wrong to accepting God's grace and actually changing?

Answer: Brokenhearted repentance accompanied by a **plea for mercy and forgiveness**. Pray and continue to pray through **Psalm 51**, crying out for mercy and deliverance from sinful inclinations and actions.

All of us are united in the common-to-all-humanity need for forgiveness and power to choose righteousness.

All our love to All,

From one Sinner to Another -
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