

The following is an excerpt from our new book: “Faith & Trust”...

## Grace—

It seems like we have somehow developed the tendency to see grace only from *our perspective* and our perspective is not always God’s perspective. This is another reason why we need to change our *perspective*. I have only just begun to comprehend how important our understanding of grace is. Grace is something so magnanimous, so huge, so immense, our minds cannot even begin to grasp it. It can only be revealed by the heart and Spirit of God. We need to ask Him to give us *His perspective* and true understanding of grace (please pray):

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*I come to You in the powerful name of Jesus Christ, asking that You would give me mighty, revelation knowledge and understanding of “grace.” My mind cannot even begin to grasp the truth of what grace really is, but I believe You want me to know and understand. Your Word says, “...ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). This reveals that You want me to ask, You want me to receive, and You want my joy to be full! Oh, Father, please reveal to me what Grace truly is. I want to truly believe and receive this. In Jesus’ name I ask it, amen.*

**Message from the LORD: I do want you to ask. I want you to receive. And I want your joy to be full.**

Let’s look at Luke 2:40 again now: “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.” Because we are in Christ, the grace of God is upon us also. It is Christ who makes us worthy. We saw that John 1:14 says Jesus was “full of grace and truth.” Our standard “unmerited favor” definition does not fit there. As an example of God’s great sovereignty, as I was studying these Scriptures, He arranged for me to hear a message called, “The Domain of Grace,” by Pastor Dan Davis. He gave a definition of grace that *does fit* here, *and* with every Scripture containing the word “grace.” May I submit this to you as more of the definition of grace:

“The empowering presence of God to enable you to be what He created you to be and do what He calls you to do.”<sup>i</sup>

Grace is not *only* “God’s unmerited favor,” it is also “GOD’S EMPOWERING PRESENCE”! I believe God’s grace toward us starts out with unmerited favor, which makes the initial gift of coming into right relationship with God available. Jesus didn’t need this aspect of grace. He was already God’s Son. But once we become a child of God, His grace then provides us *so much more*. Webster’s says it is the “free unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from Him.” (*This fits “the spring and source” of the “wells of salvation!”*) It begins with unmerited favor, then it is the source of everything else and the power of *His presence* to enable us to be who He created us to be and to do what He wants us to do! This is ours to experience and enjoy! Look how this aspect of grace agrees with the verses we have looked at:

*And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the “empowering presence” of God was upon Him (Luke 2:40).*

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of “God’s empowering presence” and truth (John 1:14).*

Now look again at the grace verse we mentioned speaking of us:

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace (*God’s empowering presence*) wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2). *See what that can do to your understanding—and your faith?!*

Let’s check this out on the first mention of the word “grace” in the OT:

It is found in Genesis 6:8-9. Man had become so corrupt and wicked that God regretted creating him and determined to destroy the earth. “But *Noah* found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:8). The Hebrew word translated as grace does indicate favor. God *did* give Noah *favor*, but it wasn’t totally unmerited. Noah had a relationship with God that I’m sure *began* with God’s unmerited favor, which Noah responded to, but at this verse we are beyond that point. Verse 9 says, “Noah was a just (*moral*) man and perfect (*full of integrity and truth*) in his generations, and Noah walked with God. This walk with God (*Strong’s #1980 from root #3212*) describes a *very close relationship*. I’m sure Noah wasn’t perfect, but He loved and honored God (he was not wicked and evil like all the other people), and this caused God to give Him *grace* (*a different expression of grace*), which the entire passage reveals gave him not only favor, but a calling, purpose, a specific assignment, the knowledge and skill needed to accomplish his assignment, plus the power and strength to endure everything and succeed—all by *grace*. It was *the empowering presence of God Himself to enable him to be what He created him to be and do what He called him to do!*

We too must respond to God’s grace with faith and obedience, walking with God, abiding in Him, which gives us access to more grace, which empowers us to be and do what He wants.

1 Peter 4:10 speaks of the *manifold* grace of God: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” *Manifold* means *multi-faceted*. Grace has many definitions. It is like the multi-faceted brilliance of a diamond!

Our minds *could* tend to see grace as only one thing—so many people see only *mercy*. We must renew our minds with the truth of God’s Word revealing the *multi-faceted* grace of God. Because I had an *incomplete* understanding of grace, I didn’t even know I wasn’t realizing the *power* of grace. Everywhere the word “grace” is used in Scripture, the verse or the passage surrounding it reveals there is something dramatic and powerful happening or being spoken of. I sure don’t want to be in danger of “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof...” (2 Timothy 3:5). The power that comes from the very presence of God is present in all aspects of grace.

One of the Hebrew *root words* for grace in the OT is *Strong’s #2583*, which means “*to incline toward us as the slanting rays of evening; specifically, to pitch a tent; to encamp for abode.*” There is His *presence!* In the OT, God’s people had to set up an actual tent (the Tabernacle) for God’s presence to come into. It was the sacred place they would go into and worship God. It was their temple, but it was a movable, temporary habitation of God. Now, in the “dispensation of grace,” *He comes to us* and pitches a tent, to abide with us individually—and permanently! He spreads His Tabernacle over us and

covers us with His presence. You are His temple! And you carry His abiding, empowering presence! *That is grace!!*

Do you know what happened when God's presence filled the tent, the Tabernacle in the OT? *The glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle! The temple manifested His glory!* Manifest means *to appear, to display*. God wants to display His glory and His power in and through you! "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (*our bodies*), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

- "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16b).

You are an expression and evidence of God's grace (*His empowering presence*). You are a walking witness of the power of God's grace to deliver people out of bondage and darkness into His glorious liberty and light! Anything He has made available to you or that He accomplishes through you comes by *His power*—the power of His presence!

The Greek word for grace in the NT is *Strong's #5485*, which means: "*graciousness (as gratifying), divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life,*" and has been translated in other verses as: *joy, liberality, pleasure, favor, benefit. Gratifying means: Pleasing, indulging to satisfaction; giving pleasure, affording satisfaction.*<sup>ii</sup> That describes *relationship*—from God's perspective! It gives God joy and pleasure to give us grace. I believe it pleases Him when we receive it and reflect it in our lives. God's empowering presence is what produces the divine influence upon the heart and reflects it in your life. *Webster's* defines *influence* as:

- *Literally, a flowing in, into, or on, and referring to substances spiritual or too subtle to be visible, like inspiration.*
- *In a general sense, influence denotes power whose operation is invisible and known only by its effects, or a power whose cause and operation are unseen.*
- *Moral power; power of truth operating on the mind, rational faculties or will, in persuading or dissuading.*
- *Physical power; power that affects natural bodies by unseen operation, as, the rays of the sun have an influence in whitening cloth, and in giving a green color to vegetables.*
- *Power acting on sensibility.*
- *Spiritual power, or the immediate power of God on the mind; as divine influence; the influence of the Holy Spirit.*

Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Grace is what *gives you favor* with God *and man* (Luke 1:30; Acts 2:47; 7:10, 46). Grace is a gift. No matter what facet of grace is being given, it is always a gift. It is God's joy and pleasure for you to receive all aspects of grace and reflect it in your life!

It is *God's empowering presence* that enables you to fulfill the purposes He created you for. He designed you as a special creation with a specific destiny. He created you, custom designed, with His purpose in mind. The enemy seeks to warp that purpose *and your understanding* in order to trick you concerning the *power* you have to fulfill your purpose! This affects and warps your identity! This is why *grace* is such a significant and crucial aspect of salvation! Grace bursts into our broken, flawed world. The "*dispensation of grace*" is literally God giving us a part of *Himself!* Grace is part of God's nature. It is something of His divine nature that He imparts to us (2 Peter 1:4).

In 2 Timothy 2:1, the apostle Paul tells Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The word "strong" (*Strong's* #1743) means: "*to be empowered, made strong, enabled.*" We are empowered and made strong by grace. It enables us to be who He created us to be and do what He calls us to do.

We looked at John 1:12 when we talked about receiving: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The Greek word translated "power" in this verse is "exousia" (#1849) which is: "*in the sense of ability; privilege, force, capacity, competency, freedom, or mastery; superhuman, potentate, token of control, delegated influence.*" This same Greek word is translated in other places as: *authority, jurisdiction, liberty, right, strength.* The word power indicates *privilege, authority, and ability.* At the point of receiving Christ, we are born into God's family and we receive *authority, ability, and power to become everything He says we are. He has given us the power to become who He created us to be and do what He created us to do—but we have to use the power He gives us to do it.* Grace is *God's empowering presence* to do what we could never do apart from it!

The great power we have access to as God's child is from, in, through, and released by *His presence.* It is *not* this *power* we should be seeking—we should be seeking *His presence*—then His power will flow! Just as He caused water to flow out of the rock for His people in the wilderness—Isaiah 48:21 says "it gushed out." And as Jesus said, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). The next verse says, "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive..." (verse 39).

Ephesians 1:19 reveals: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." The Greek word translated "power" here describes the kind of power God has toward those who believe. It is "dunamis" (*Strong's* #1411) which means: "*a force; specially, miraculous power.*" This same Greek word is translated in other places as: *ability, abundance, (worker of) miracles, strength, mighty (wonderful) work.* As we saw earlier, the English word *dynamite* comes from this Greek word. This is the kind of power available to us through His presence, but we have to believe it in order to fully experience it and see it at work in and through our lives. I am praying that God will give you a life-shaking revelation of the full truth and power of His grace. Life-shaking may be a little scary at first, because it may be like a dynamite explosion that shakes everything around it, but oh, what God can do with His "dunamis" power in and through a believing person!

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<sup>i</sup> *The Domain of Grace*, by Dan Davis, Hope Chapel, 6701 Arroyo Seca, Austin, Texas 78757, 512-453-7012.

<sup>ii</sup> *Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary.*