

An Unknown Dimension of Grace

A Few of the Different Types of Grace - To help us process the magnitude of His grace, I want to point out the varying kinds of grace He pours out on us daily. This list is not comprehensive by any means, but it should help to get you thinking and appreciating God's grace.

1. **Common Grace** - God loves everyone. So, there is a common grace that He gives all people whether they acknowledge Him or not. Matthew 5:45 tells us, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."
2. **Saving Grace** - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph 2:8) By His saving grace, God has paid the ransom for everyone who will receive His gift of salvation. This alone is overwhelming.
3. **Healing Grace** – Jesus would grant this grace to the sick and afflicted.
4. **Sanctifying Grace** - There is power in God's grace and immediately after we are saved, it goes to work to purify or sanctify us. You play a part in your purification through obedience, but ultimately you have to count on His sanctifying grace and know that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" (Philippians 1:6).
5. **Provisional Grace** - Through His provisional grace, God provides for all our needs. As James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." When you get a better job or an unexpected gift, count it as grace from God.
6. **Miraculous Grace** - Look at what was happening in the early church. "Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). Through His grace, God still does miraculous things every day. He doesn't have to do this. He does it because He is full of grace.
7. **Serving Grace** - Every believer is freely given spiritual gifts to serve others and bolster their faith. 1 Peter 4:10 tells us, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." We each receive serving grace.
8. **Sustaining Grace** - Finally, in those times of trial and suffering, Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). And the Bible says, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16). God sustains us.

Today I want to introduce you to a grace than no one really talks about or teaches on for fear of being misunderstood and even loathed...

Acts 20:33-35 - ³³ "I have never coveted anyone's silver or gold or fine clothes. ³⁴ You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵ And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. **You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is MORE BLESSED to give than to receive.'**"

- "More" = *Mallon* – far more, exceedingly more
- There is a lifestyle that is "exceedingly more" blessed than the average "Christian"

- Today I want to show you the why and how of this “exceedingly more blessed” life. I am going to try and do this in a way that is easy for everyone to comprehend and remember.
- I want to use an acrostic (composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words) – **G.I.V.E.**

Let me go to a misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misused passage of Scripture...in fact we will look at several this morning to help us unlock an unknown dimension of grace...

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 - Moreover, brethren, **we make known to you the grace of God** bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty **abounded in the riches of their liberality.** ³ For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ⁴ **imploring us with much urgency** that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

G – Grace

- According to Paul when we give we enter into a dimension of God’s grace.
- It seems clear from his writings that there is only one way to enter into this unique dimension of God’s grace – only by giving!

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- Paul is writing to the Corinthians – they had the windows of God’s grace open over them...

1 Corinthians 1:4-7 - I thank my God always **concerning you for the grace of God** which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you **come short in no gift,** eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

- By all accounts this was the most spiritually dynamic Church in all the New Testament era, yet Paul is writing to them about an ***unknown dimension of Grace*** called the **GRACE OF GIVING**
- 2 Corinthians 8:10 it is obvious that the church had promised to give to help Paul take the Gospel to that part of the world, but they had not followed through. **So, Paul is writing and using the example of the Macedonian church to provoke them into this new dimension of grace.**

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- **Unusual – the Macedonian church was imploring Paul with urgency to let them give.** It wasn't the Preacher asking for an offering, it was the people asking with urgency for the opportunity to give.
- Even though they were struggling, they still wanted to give. Even though they were poor they wanted to give...
- **This takes away all of our EXCUSES**
- Paul said this grace caused them to excel beyond their ability
- **Generosity unlocks a dimension of grace that will enable you to exceed your own ability!**
- **Do you feel stuck financially? Are you struggling with your job, to pay the bills, to get ahead??? Giving will move you beyond your limitations and get you out of the rut financially!**

2 Corinthians 8:6-7 - ⁶ So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷ But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—**see that you abound in this grace also.**

- They influenced the world- the book of Philippians and Acts was written about them.
- After they received the Gospel Paul moved on: Thessalonica, Berra, Athens, Corinth
- **This Grace enabled Paul to preach to Gospel all over the region. Think about their generosity swept untold thousands into the Kingdom of God!**

I – Inspiration

2 Corinthians 9:2 - ² for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

- The Corinthians had just vocalized that they were going to give and it stirred up the Macedonians.
- **GENEROSITY IS CONTAGIOUS!**
- Share story of George Truitt (Baptist Pastor) – 1st Baptist Church in Dallas for 45 years.
 - o He was called to a smaller church to help raise money for their building. They needed 6500.00 – a huge sum of money in that day.
 - o The people had pledged 3000.00 and nobody would budge. Pastor Truitt out of frustration stood in the pulpit and said “we only have 3k, are you expecting me to give the other 3500.00 – I’m just a visitor?”
 - o A woman in the back (whose husband was counting the pledges) stood and said, “Charlie I was just thinking we were offered 3500.00 for our little home just yesterday. If the savior gave his life for us shouldn’t we make this sacrifice for him?” Charlie said, “Dear, I was thinking just the same thing...” He turned around and said to Pastor Truitt...“if need be we will raise our pledge by 3500.00”.

- People all over the church begin to cry. People who hadn't pledged or given anything started pledging and giving. The spirit of Generosity hit the church and that day they raised more money than they needed to build their Church.
- **Generosity is Contagious!**

V – Value

Matthew 6:19-21 - "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

- **What we give reveals what we value**
- **Your treasure does not follow your heart, your heart follows your treasure!**
- Your check book reveals more about your spiritual walk than you want to admit.

E – Equality

2 Corinthians 8:13-14 - For *I do not mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; ¹⁴ but by **an equality**, that now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may *supply* your lack—**that there may be equality.**

- The kingdom does not operate by Big "I's" and little "U's" – it operates in equality.
- **IT IS NOT EQUAL GIVING – IT IS EQUAL SACRIFICE**
 - Not everyone is at the same place financially.
 - This does not matter to God. God does not judge our giving based on how many zeros are on the check.
- **God judges our giving based on what is left over...**
 - The widow woman and her mite – she gave more than the rich. Not based on what she put in but based on what was left over.

Final Thought...there is a lot more I could teach out of these few chapters, but I want to conclude today by showing you something I have never seen...

2 Corinthians 11:7-9 - **Did I commit sin** in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to **you free of charge?** ⁸ **I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.** ⁹ And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied.

- Paul is implying that he committed a sin by not receiving an offering for himself to do ministry.
- **For those of you who think and teach that it's wrong to ask or receive an offering you are deceived.**
- **Because of the abuse of some we have closed a window of grace over God's people!**