



**Title: Grace Living**  
**Theme: Walking in God's Amazing Grace**  
**Series: Living in the Aroma of God's Grace**

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)

***God's grace is the most expensive gift there is.*** Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price on the Cross of Calvary and today we are going to participate in an ordinance given to the Body of Christ, “Communion,” to help us remember that cost. Hebrews 9:22 says, “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22) Someone has to pay the price of sin. The cost for the person who committed the sin is separation from God, which leads to broken fellowship with the Triune God and a life surrendered to self-will and a life of bondage. The great news is that Jesus paid the only price that would be accepted and His sacrifice broke the power of sin, setting free those who were once held in bondage. I recently read this phrase in a message put together by Rick Warren, “Grace is God's Riches at Christ's Expense.”

Today's Scripture is written instruction inspired by the Holy Spirit informing us how to live for the Lord. The application for the word “gift” (*charisma*) in 1 Peter 4:10 is the special ability given to Christians for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ. Every Christian has a calling and there is empowerment sent from the “Throne of Grace” to accomplish all that God ordains each Christian to do.

*I would propose to you that Christians are to be good stewards of the grace and gifts that the Holy Spirit has given them.* 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:2) These gifts also include home and property and any open door of opportunity that has been given to you.

*Just what is involved in “Grace Living?”*

### **Shine like stars**

First, *Christians who live in the aroma of God's grace shine like stars drawing attention to the works of Christ in a sin-stricken world.* Therefore, they are hungry for Paul's instructions in Philippians 2:12-13, “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed -- ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

Walking in God's amazing grace begins with being hungry to receive the life of Christ within us. Not only was Jesus humble enough to leave the abode of God and walk this sin-stricken world, He had the heart of obedience. Philippians 2:8 says this about Jesus Christ, "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on the cross." (Philippians 2:8)

Our key text for the first division of this message gives us an exhortation to diligence and seriousness in Christian living. Readiness to obey the gospel of Christ speaks loudly and clearly to everyone. Therefore, it is imperative that we let people know how to live the Christian life, a life that shows God's grace and a right response to His grace is obedience.

Mark Twain wrote, "Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example." Perhaps the most annoying thing about a good example is the fact in our own strength we cannot follow the example of someone else. The fact is admiration for a person who is a good example can only inspire us, it cannot enable us. Unless that person can enter into our spirit and take control of our hearts and share his specific gifts, we cannot attain to that person's heights of accomplishments. It takes more than an example on the outside; it takes allowing someone inside who is able to give us their power before we can achieve what they have achieved.

A "disciple" (*mathetes*) means to be a pupil of some teacher. The practical application for this message is the acceptance in mind, views, practices and life of Jesus Christ. (The New International Dictionary of the Bible) Personal Salvation in Christ's Name brings with it responsibilities which Paul relates to Christian obedience. Therefore the first principle to "Grace Living" is a heart that is hungry for obedience to the Words of Christ accomplished only by allowing the Holy Spirit of Christ into our hearts and life. He must be the one who enables us. Trying to achieve it on our own accord leads to dead religion which is what happened to the religious leaders of Jesus' day.

Once Christians are hungry for a heart of obedience to Christ they can walk in the empowering of the Holy Spirit to achieve their high calling. Christians are to "...continue to work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling..." To "work out" (*katergazesthe*) means to pray a task through to completion.

This is a special direction from the Holy Spirit and it is stated forcefully like a coach would yell out to his team to perform a certain task. Christians are to put into practice daily what the Lord Jesus had placed in their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle is not advocating salvation by works which is doing something taught in the Word of God hoping to gain your salvation by your own efforts. There are three aspects of the believer's salvation: 1.) "Justification." 2.) "Sanctification," and 3.) "Glorification." The truth worth grasping in this part of the message is "Sanctification." "Sanctification" is the presence of the Holy Spirit taking the Word of God and doing a cleansing work in born again Christians, of which they more and more are being changed into the image of Christ.

Christians who express "Grace Living" will take great care and circumspection in their growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians die to themselves for the Christ they love who enables them to enjoy true pleasure in this life. Reverent fear causes Christians to not lean upon their own understanding of things, or just go along in life doing what seems right in their own eyes. No, they want to know what God's will is, get the Lord's perspective on what righteous living is and to feel Lord's presence within them.

It is like when I got my computer, I would seek out Justin, Derek or my wife, people who I knew had lots of experience with computers. I would depend upon them to give me clear directions and I would ask them at different times to sit with me and go through everything they taught me until I knew for sure how to accomplish the procedure needing done.

All teachable children will seek out their parents or someone in authority, such as a teacher, coach, pastor, or supervisor to get directions. They enjoy the presence of those who have authority over them so they can be assisted through the processes of life. Children who are living in rebellion will not seek the direction of, nor do they desire the presence of those who have true authority over them. They would rather blunder along in life living for self with no concern for others instead of sacrificially living for the good of those around them.

"Grace Living" involves Christians who are illuminated with the truth of "fear and trembling." These Christians have knowledge of the fact of human insufficiency in accomplishing the will of God. Christians who enjoy "Grace Living" have found and live under the leadership of Jesus Christ in their lives. Christians who grasp the grace of God know their strength and ability to accomplish the Lord's will comes from God. They have the same revelation as Isaiah who wrote, "Lord, you established peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us." (Isaiah 26:12)

Paul tells the Body of Christ that God works in them so they can have a desire to do His will and accomplish His good purposes. The Greek word for "works" (*energeo*) means to be supernaturally energized and enabled to accomplish God's purpose through Christ-like character. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament; The Complete Word Study of the New Testament; Word Meanings of the New Testament; Vines; Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon; Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains)

The Christian life has tremendous potential for God and Christ. When Christians live by the leading of the Holy Spirit they have real joy and peace achieving God's purposes.

The true story of a college girl by the name of Cindy illustrates the truth the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp. Cindy returned home from nursing school for the holidays. Her parents noticed her unusual behavior of expressing disappointment and discouragement.

At the dinner table she told her mom and dad, "I have something to tell you." Her father said, "Just tell us what is on your heart, so we can understand. We want to pray for you and about it – whatever it is."

Cindy went on to tell her parents that she went to nursing school because she thought they wanted her to, her mom was a nurse, so she thought she was to follow in her footsteps. She told her mom and dad, "I can't go on like this. I don't feel that the Lord wants me to be a nurse."

Her mom and dad told her that they wanted God's will for her, they knew that to do anything outside of God's will and enablement meant that everyone is going to be unhappy.

There would be no joy of fellowship with God, and Christ nor enablement from the Holy Spirit if Cindy did her own will, or followed the world's view. Now, as an adult it was Cindy's responsibility to seek the Lord with all her heart and life and put trust in the Lord Jesus alone for guidance.

Christians who enjoy "Grace Living" as children of God, die to themselves, to the world and the things in. The flesh, the world and the devil can make you do things that will only make you unhappy and unfulfilled. Christians are enabled to overcome the flesh and the world and discern the lies of the devil through a personal relationship with Christ.

There are no shortcuts in this matter of "Grace Living." It is through prayerful reading of God's Word and a full surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Christians who live out the grace of God upon their lives seek out good Godly counsel from Christians who have proven themselves faithful to exercise the "grace gifts" sacrificially for the good of others.

### **How to live in the aroma of God's grace**

*Living in the aroma of God's grace enables Christians to live out a positive active response to the Spirit of Christ working in them.* Walking in the "Amazing Grace of God" empowers Christians to administer the various forms of God's grace or gifts. 1 Peter 4:11 is Holy Spirit inspired to instruct Christians on how to live in the aroma of God's grace. The Apostle Peter exhorts us with, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it in the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 4:11)

There is a long-standing misconception in the church structure where people convince themselves that only one person is to minister in the local church. This one person is often referred to as the pastor, preacher, reverend, minister, etc. The Biblical truth is that all can and should minister in one way or another. "Grace Living" finds its foundation with God and through the understanding that every Christian has a gift (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31) that they have received for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ and for the reaching out to those who are without Christ.

There are two key truths to grasp in this passage of Scripture if everyone, Christians or non-Christians, are going have an opportunity to live in the aroma of God's grace. There are two activities of the Christian Church, the speaking forth of God's Word and service.

The first grace mentioned in 1 Peter 4:11 is the gift to teach or preach the Word of God. Christians are exhorted to make sure all instructions given for whatever reason are born of God's Word. They must make every effort to study and show themselves as preachers of God's Word who correctly handle the Word of Truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Christians who are living in the aroma of God's grace catch the heart of Peter's exhortation, they do not offer their own opinions or propagate their own prejudices. They do not preach to the crowd to draw attention to themselves. These Christians proclaim in a way that the listener knows that they are agreeing with God and not the speaker.

There is nothing more encouraging than getting the whole counsel of God's Word from someone who has been living the grace filled life of God before making a decision. The greatest blessing outside of praying steadfastly for someone is to be able to share the whole council of God's Word on a certain matter. This gift of utterance can express the grace of God publicly, privately, or in Christian ministry to the sick.

It was once said of a great preacher, "First he listened to God, and then he spoke to men." It is Christians who have grasped the heart of the Lord through prayerful study of God's Word before speaking who avoid the embarrassment of speaking according to the flesh, from a world's view or even worse, speaking a lie of the devil. True grace preaching is not done to display the preacher or teacher but to bring spiritual hearts to connect with the heart of God. The Bible says, "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21 - KJ)

In "Preaching that Transforms" I read the true story of a butcher who ran a little shop on the edge of London. He decided one Sunday to go to church to hear the great preacher, Charles Spurgeon. His wife chose not to go with him. The butcher went to church, and returned home. That afternoon his wife began to question him. "What songs did they sing?" The butcher replied, "I do not remember the songs exactly."

Then she asked, "What was his exact text?" The butcher replied, "I do not exactly remember his key text." The wife became very frustrated and asked, "What good did it do you to go the church then?" The butcher replied, "Between the songs and the truth presented in the whole of the message I am brought to this conclusion. The scales in my shop that says 14 ounces is a pound is going to be corrected to say 16 ounces to a pound."

When people exercise their Holy Spirit given gift to speak God's Word, whether through song, preaching, teaching or writing, people are given an opportunity to experience the truths of Christ and allowed to put their lives in the correct balance.

The second exhortation to "Grace Living" is to be a servant, one who serves according to the leading and enabling of the Holy Spirit. William Barclay writes, "When you engage in Christian service, you must not do it as if you were conferring a personal favor or distributing bounty from your own store, but in the consciousness that what you give you first received from God. Such an attitude protects the giver from pride and enables the gift to be given in true humility."

There are many Biblical signs that indicate that a child of God has been blessed with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These "gifts" (charisma) are numerous and may be grouped into three categories; 1.) Service Gifts: administration, leading, encouragement, faith, giving, helps, and showing mercy; 2.) Sign Gifts: distinguishing between spirits, gifts of healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues and miraculous powers; 3.) Support gifts: word of knowledge, word of wisdom, faith and prophecy. All gifts of the Holy Spirit are given as He chooses and, when operated under the fruit of agape love, will bring balance and joy to the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11).

The Holy Spirit through the writings of Peter is exhorting Christians to exercise the gifts of administration, leading, encouragement, faith, giving, helps, and showing mercy in a way that causes those whom Christians are serving to praise the Lord. There are churches who serve others with the hopes of raising church attendance. They have great club houses but few conversions to Christ. I have sat and listened to many testimonies and heard individuals go on and on about friends, their church and everything but God and Christ.

We make it a point in this church when we exercise any of the service gifts, to let people know when we help them, we are serving Christ. We do not do so to get church numbers. I have heard promise after promise of people who tell me “we are going to start coming your church” because we did something for them. I let them know we do not help them to gain numbers, but to serve Christ and encourage them to trust in the Lord. I know of churches that are very good at gaining numbers in their church by exercising the service gifts.

I also know of churches who exercise the service gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Recently, I visited with a couple who has for a long time had a church meet their greatest needs through the service gifts. Their testimony was, “I know that there is a God and Savior who is looking out for us.” That is the testimony that “Grace Living” produces.”

*Gracing Living begins with the understanding of the cost paid for us on the Cross of Calvary, “Grace is God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense.”*

Because of that cost, Christians live out “Grace Living” through a life of obedience out of reverent fear and trembling. They want to shine like stars in a sin-stricken world. They do so by living in the empowerment of the Holy Ghost to exhort others with the Word of God and through service done in a way that brings glory to God and Christ.

One of the most influential Christians who exhibited “Grace Living” and touches lives as powerfully today as he did in the late 1700 and early 1800’s is John Newton, the writer of “Amazing Grace.” His own evaluation of himself was, “a wretch who was once lost but then was found, saved by amazing grace.”

God’s grace began in Newton’s life through his mother, who died when John was a child, but not before she had given him some Christian training. Like most young people he gave up his mother’s Christian teaching and surrendered to a life of bondage that led him to be abused, become a servant on a slave ship and eventually the captain of his own ship that also carried slaves.

While living a life that had given up Christian convictions, God allowed him to experience His grace once more, no doubt because of the prayers of his mother.

While steering his ship through a violent storm, John Newton experienced what he called his “great deliverance.” He recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, “I prayed, ‘Lord, have mercy upon us.’” God answered that prayer and as he sat in his cabin John became convinced it was God’s grace that got them through. For the rest of his life he observed May 10, 1748 as the day of his conversion, a day of humiliation in which he subjected his will to God’s directions.

During his days as a sailor he had begun to educate himself, teaching himself Latin, among other subjects. After serious health problems he quit sailing and finally ended up where he could become a disciple of Christ through teachings of George Whitefield, evangelistic preacher and leader of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. He also became influenced by the Biblical teachings of John Wesley. The “Grace Living” of these two great men of God inspired John Newton to learn Greek and Hebrew.

After persistence, John became an ordained preacher of the Word of God. Many were influenced by his teaching and writings about the Word of God, by his speaking in the local church and holding meetings in other places. He started weekly prayer meetings and became the author of over 280 Hymns. Hymns that speak for the Word of God through songs like, “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds,” “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” and one of his favorites, “Amazing Grace.”

John preached until the last year of his life even though by this time in his life he was blind. John Newton knew the grace of God upon his life and he extended “Grace Living” by exercising his Spiritual gifts diligently.

“Amazing Grace” was not the original title to that great Hymn so loved and use of God today. The first edition of this hymn was in Olney Hymns under the title, “Faith’s Review and Expectation,” along with 1 Chronicles 17:16-17 which reflect the heart of John Newton, “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men, O LORD God.” These were the Words of King David, who exhibited “Grace Living.”

Christians who exhibit “Grace Living” have the heart of King David who sat before God in prayer saying these very words, “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant.” Christians are amazed at God’s grace and grasp His plan to use them and prosper them according to His good purposes. “Grace Living” enables Christians to grasp God’s grace for them which always says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11) Let us pray!