

HOW TO RECEIVE GRACE

Pro 3:34 Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.

Jas 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

1Pe 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

We all need the grace of God in our lives. God's grace is not only unmerited favor but it is the unmerited power, ability, and resources of God to meet our every need! The Bible is very clear that we receive the grace of God by faith. [Romans 4:16] One aspect of faith many do not see is that of humility. Three times in the scriptures it says that God gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humility and faith go hand and hand. You cannot be in pride and be in faith at the same time. We must humble ourselves to receive the grace of God. **The foundation building block of humility is agreement with God.** This is where humility begins. If we disagree with God then we are in pride. If we agree with God then we are operating in humility. Often what we feel, see, and hear is opposite to what God says. Too often we agree with our senses instead of what His Word says. When we do that we are in pride and will not receive grace. We are not in faith. Again, humility begins at the point of agreement with God. A powerful key to receiving the grace of God is to start saying what God says. Saying something that goes against our feelings or even past experience makes us feel like a phony. However, we can rest assured we are being humble because we are choosing to agree with God by saying what He says. Our tongue is the catalyst for receiving the grace of God and the power to change our life.

Jas 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Jas 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

Jas 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

Jas 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

James brings out the power of verbally agreeing with God. He says that if we do not err in our words, we will be able to bridle our whole body. This means that habits, appetites, and sinful patterns of our body will be brought under the control of God's grace when we agree with God and say only what He says. There is no power in saying what we feel, think, or have experienced. There is power in agreeing with God. This will receive the grace of God. A small bit will control a strong out of control horse. Our flesh is like that horse. We can control the animal instincts of our flesh by the bridle of our tongue. Large ships that weigh many tons and even if they are driven by fierce winds can be turned around by a small rudder. Our life often seems to be like a ship being driven by strong winds in the wrong direction. We can turn around the ship by the rudder of our tongue. It starts with humility and humility begins at the point of agreement with God!

A pastor of a large church today learned this principle and it turned around his life and ministry. God had called this pastor into the ministry but he had not obeyed the calling because of a habit in his life. He knew this habit was wrong and could not be continued if he was to pastor a church. He smoked cigarettes. He tried over and over to quit but he never could. He would say over and over, "I can't quit smoking! No matter what I do I can't quit smoking!" One day God spoke to this man and asked him why he had not obeyed the call to the ministry. He told God that he had not because he could not quit smoking no matter how hard he tried. God spoke to this man and said that he needed to start operating like He did. God gave him this scripture:

Rom 4:17 (as it is written, "I HAVE MADE YOU A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS") in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

God challenged this man to start calling those things that did not exist as though they did. He challenged him to start calling himself a non-smoker no matter what he felt like or how he acted. This man took God up on the challenge and changed what he was saying. He no longer would allow himself to say he could not quit smoking. Instead, he would call himself a non-smoker. Every morning and every night he would call himself a non-smoker. At each smoke break he would call himself a non-smoker. At first the desire to smoke did not go away and he would smoke, but as he lit the cigarette he would say, "I am a non-smoker! Thank you God, I am free from smoking!" He did this for a few days until one day he pulled a cigarette out to light it and said, "I am a non-smoker! Thank God, I am free from smoking!" Something right then rose up inside of him and he decided to throw the cigarettes in the trash. He did not want to smoke anymore! The desire to smoke had left him! A co-worker who used to smoke with him asked him why he was leaving his smoke break early without smoking. This man replied to his co-worker, "Because I am a non-smoker." His co-worker said to him, "You are not a non-smoker! I saw you smoking just yesterday!" He replied to him, "Yesterday I smoked, but today I am a non-smoker!" This man entered the ministry and now pastors a large successful church today. His life was changed by humbling himself to say what God said about him. He received the grace [ability] of God to stop smoking and enter the ministry.

James says that our tongue provides a spark. A spark can burn down a forest or a spark can be a powerful catalyst for change. It matters a whole lot what we are saying. Are you saying what God says and calling those things that don't exist as though they did or are you saying what you feel, experience, and see? The answer will tell you if you are operating in humility or pride. Our answer will determine if you are receiving the grace of God or not.

THE THREE WEEK CHALLENGE!

Scientific studies have shown that it takes about three weeks to change a habit and renew our thoughts in an area. I am issuing you a three week challenge! For three weeks I challenge you to pick an area that you have not been able to change in your life. For the next 21 days I challenge you to call those things that do not exist as though they did. We are not called to call those things that exist as though they did not. There is no power in that! In whatever area you struggle in I challenge you to start saying what you want instead of what you have experienced in the past. Your confessions

need to be in the positive and need to be first person present tense. For example if you have a problem drinking alcohol then you say every day- "I am a non-drinker! Thank you God I am free from the control alcohol. I am sober!" Say this even if you feel like drinking and even if you do take a drink! Say this before, during, and after you drink. Say this in the morning, say this at noon, and say this at night. Don't allow yourself to say, "I want to drink, or I cannot stop drinking, or I am nothing but an alcoholic!" God does not say this about you! Therefore this kind of talk is prideful. Humility begins with agreeing with God. God calls you free by the shed blood of Jesus! Jesus has set you free from sin! You need to start saying that! In whatever area of weakness you have start calling yourself the opposite. Call those things that be not as though they were. If you do then you will start operating like God does and you will start to see the grace and power of God to work in your life. That wild horse and that large ship will turn around! I urge you to take the three week challenge. I double dog dare you! Don't take it if you are not serious. If you fail the challenge by speaking what you feel, see, or experience instead of what God says then you need to start over! This is a three week challenge. You can't stop a week into it if you don't see things change totally and say it does not work! This is a **THREE WEEK** challenge! I will warn you that at first you will feel like a phony. You probably will have thoughts come to you that this is silly and won't work. You might even experience a greater pull in the wrong direction than ever before. This is just your flesh, un-renewed mind, and the enemy fighting you. Don't stop and you will see a breakthrough! I hope you take the challenge today, because I know it will change your life and you will receive the grace of God to see your life transformed and to walk in the freedom Jesus died to give you. Take the challenge! Start today! Let me know about the great things God does in your life!

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