

Second Edition



Knowing the Holy Spirit and God's Love

realprayer.org/grace.pdf

Prelude:

Generations after we are dead and gone what in our existence will have mattered?

For those of us who have come to know the greatest commandment, God offers to share a role in what he holds most precious. There are names of our generation in the Lamb's book of Life that are in need of discipleship. What can make our existence more valued throughout eternity than fulfilling the role God offers to us of our neighbor coming to know salvation?

Many Churches reach the widest portion of their congregations by focusing on the first and greatest commandment. **This booklet** extends the relationship we are learning with Jesus in the first commandment and applies it to the second commandment. [John 15:1-11](#) (RSV), It requires us to "abide in Christ" if our life efforts are to produce eternal fruit.

Practical application of Christ's teachings comes through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [John 14:26](#)

Imagine how our lives can change when we reach out to God and happen to ask for a gift, He has been waiting to give us.

Our own journey toward the "learning of grace" was accelerated when we began praying: "*Lord, teach me to listen and to possess a heart that is willing to hear.*"

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Grace

Introduction

Come to realize the depth of love that our Heavenly Father goes to in encouraging us to change our decision-making from an earthly perspective to include Heaven in our concept of life.

What is Grace? *Grace is a gift through Christ's sacrifice* for those willing to receive it. Grace can take us from our current state and raise us to the standards in heaven where God's will is done. The acceptance of this gift requires a *willingness to learn* what God would have us know.

We are not forced into this growth; we must seek it. Because it is voluntary, many opportunities pass us by where God offers to extend grace to us. Many times, our

growth is stunted because *we assume our judgment is adequate* rather than seeking the Holy Spirit to help teach us God's grace.

Self-Reliance Vs. Grace

Chapter 1

Imagine the patience the Holy Trinity (God the Father, Jesus the son, and the Holy Spirit) have during times of our spiritual blindness.

For example: The Disciple Peter's thinking repeatedly focused on the "*here and now.*" Such thinking failed to consider "God's will" which includes a perspective of his creation throughout time.

1. Matthew 14:22-33 Peter loved and trusted Jesus with his life. None of the other disciples got out of the boat in rough seas to walk on the water.
2. Matthew 16: 21-23 Jesus explained to his disciples that He must suffer, be killed, and that He would be raised on the third day. *Peter rejected this teaching* and rebuked Jesus Christ for having said it. Peter's "*humanistic thinking*" refused to take into account "God's agenda."
3. Matthew 17:1-8 **The God of the Universe** even tells Peter to listen and take into account what Jesus is teaching.
4. Matthew 26: 31-35 When self-reliance motivated Peter to pledge his loyalty to Christ, Jesus informed Peter that he would deny Christ three times that same night.
5. Luke 22: 54-62 Upon the third denial, Christ looked straight at Peter. Peter left and wept bitterly. This incident brought Peter's self-confidence to an all-time low.

Peter's denial was a "symptom." His recurring problem involved Peter not allowing God into his decision-making process.

The Degree of God's Love

Chapter 2

Despite Christ explaining to Peter, the Father himself telling Peter to listen, and Jesus responding with as strong a language as, "Get behind me, Satan!" Peter was undeterred from thinking he was going to protect Jesus Christ.

John 18: 7-11 Peter ended up using a sword to cut off the ear of the servant who was among those arresting Jesus.

If Peter's decision making prevailed, Peter's violence may have continued until he and others were killed. This moment would have been remembered as a bloodbath. *Because God's agenda* was the opposite; This moment is known in history as when Christ submitted Himself to man as a sacrifice allowing humankind a path to spend eternity in God's presence.

1. Peter like many modestly mature believers was willing to die for Christ but was blind to his role in how to live for Jesus Christ.
2. Luke 22: 51 Jesus performed the miracle of healing the servant's ear because God's plan worked around Peter's spiritual immaturity.
3. Christ's message is that God's new relationship with man *does not give up* on those who love Him! God then offered Peter additional opportunities

until Peter finally comprehended the message!

When did Peter [learn to listen](#) to “God’s will?” [John 21:1-19](#) Evaluate the conversation when Jesus asked Peter if he loved Christ more than “**these**,” a catch of 153 fish? [John 21: 15](#)

Had Jesus **not** intervened, just how many successful catches would it have taken for Peter and possibly others to [return to their routine](#) of fishing and **ignore** sharing the Message of Salvation throughout the world?

Peter loved the Messiah with all his *heart* and *mind* yet relied upon his [own judgement](#). This was the [source](#) of accomplishing nothing from God’s perspective, [John 15:5](#).

In [John 21:15-19](#) Jesus asked Simon Peter that second and third time, “Do you love me?” and then plead for Peter to “feed my sheep.” Jesus was creating a pivotal moment where Peter would come to recognize the need [“to love God with all of our soul.”](#)

This spiritual love creates [the desire](#) to “do things [God’s way](#).” It aligns our direction to that of Jesus Christ. This relationship [is required](#) if our service is to produce results of eternal value, [John 15:5](#). This journey begins with prayer; “[yielding our heart to the role](#) Christ offers us within the Father’s agenda.” We are then [encouraged to ask](#) for what is needed within this servanthood. [John 15:7](#).

How do you and I ask for this grace? Prayer to the Father seeking [His will](#), based

on the [Word](#) (Jesus Christ the Son, [John 1:14](#)), and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us.

We cannot comprehend the patience and depth of God's love for those who are open to learning this lesson: “[Obedience is derived through love for the Living Word, Jesus Christ](#). Take up your cross... [Matthew 16:24-27](#)

As in Peter's life, our effectiveness in serving God corresponds to our ability to listen to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit

Chapter 3

Is there a benefit to being Born Again and then proceeding to seek righteousness?

[\(John 14: 15-26\)](#) ¹⁵⁻²¹ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be^[a] in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

²³ Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love

them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

²⁵⁻²⁶ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

We may recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit most commonly during times of "my will to thy will" submission before a Holy God. A Born-again Christian may be going from a heart of "I am only willing to do," transformed to "What would you have me do?"

God allows us to learn "how to serve" Him through prayer. Some appreciate the presence of the Holy Spirit beyond submission to aid in discernment. The Holy Spirit offers to teach us how to apply Christ's teachings. However, this requires our willingness to be open to receive his grace (gifts of spiritual learning) rather than rely upon our short sightedness. It is done through prayer and an awareness of how He responds.

Have you ever asked a Christian of true maturity for a long-term commitment? Much of the time their reply may be, "*I'll get back with you.*" During the following weeks they may spend time on their knees seeking the direction in life God would have them take.

Practical Application

Chapter 4

When we pray to God the Father, his response may be through The Holy Spirit also known as the Holy Ghost. He can use many forms of communication with persons who know him and those who are about to learn of Him. While "the presence of the Holy Spirit" may

have a physical sensation at times, such experiences should *not deafen us* to the many opportunities of learning and direction that the Holy Spirit offers.

Let's start with a personal testimony as to the timing of the Holy Spirit and then proceed to other forms of communication that may more commonly occur.

A man on social media expressed deep despair. A person then started praying for the man, "Thy will be done." After praying weekly, two months later while praying, a thought suddenly occurred, "Be a friend." Not having seen the man in years, out of faith the person appeared at the man's doorstep that next morning not knowing what to say or do. The man did all the talking, stating he had handed his problems over to God that prior evening. The issues were so overwhelming that the person listening had no answers, but simply invited the man to church. The sermon *happened* to be on love, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, which initiated the first step of the man's life being rebuilt within Jesus Christ and his marriage later restored.

The more determined *our will* is to locate God's direction for us, the greater our ability to proceed with an "open obedience" in following His will. With such a degree of submission, the Holy Spirit may send us "clues" for our initial "moves" that may develop additional trust or overcome other factors within our personalities that hold us back from learning at a faster rate. When looking back, we can appreciate the love shown by choosing to work on us first. As we grow in his grace, opportunities for effective service may be blended in. Our prayer may change to asking for "guidance not to stray

from His path” so that we do not delay God’s progression of events.

It is rather like a game of chess. Each potential move has a number of options which affect ongoing moves. Those of us experienced in seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit may not initially have their questions answered. However, they are open to seeking out the **clues** that result in more beneficial moves along the way. Those without patience to follow His guidance may “**assume**” they have received their answers from God without doing the degree of listening that is required. This “mismatch” may cause delays in achieving the destination God desires for us.

A recent set of “clues” occurred in my own life:

At first, I thought this booklet was complete at six pages in length. However, when I went to translate it into another language, I immediately ran into a **mental block**. Why could I not proceed with this routine and simple task?

Previously in my walk with the Holy Spirit, when a “**statistical unlikelihood**” confronted my path, I began to evaluate whether or not the **clue** was **alerting** me to something.”

Several things were going on in my life:

- A man from Africa had e-mailed our ministry regarding his struggle in receiving Christ.
- A friend had recommended a certain book on Christianity for me to read.
- I did not quite grasp the conversation I had with a man who

was experienced in campus ministries.

Because of “**guidance**” from the Holy Spirit,” I followed up on all three options with extra care since I was unsure what my next “chess” move was. As time progressed, my earlier conversation with the campus minister promoted new learning and additional insight which helped to extend this booklet.

In learning to listen to the Holy Spirit, our **direction** can be aligned within Jesus Christ. This relationship places us on the path where our lives can bear much fruit. [John 15:5](#)

Why Might this be Important?

Chapter 5

From a heavenly perspective, what might one **speculate** the function of earth to be if not for producing souls for heaven? We may comprehend that it is important to “Love the Lord, your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul and with all of your mind” [Matthew 22:37-39](#). Yet, how many of us regard “love your neighbor as yourself” as good advice rather than honor it in our heart as a commandment?

We may think about our relationship to God in heaven. However, what relationships will we have with our fellow souls in heaven? Consider how we pray to God. Is it by sound waves or by thought? *Speculation* might have us communicating with fellow souls by thought. If so, could we live in harmony in heaven with **anything less** than “loving our neighbor as ourselves?” Potentially there is a **reason** for us to start learning such things on earth.

Our final degree of learning is likely to be received as a gift. However, no matter the level

of progress we are at, [our willingness to receive](#) this gift is determined on earth. We are given [free will](#) to choose to receive God's gift of grace.

If we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, certainly we would want to offer our neighbor this opportunity. Jesus speaks of our responsibility to share this, within parables.

[John 15:1-17](#), Matthew 13:[1-9](#) & [18-23](#), and [Matthew 25:14-30](#).

Perhaps, the reason many of us ignore this responsibility is that we do not feel we have the skills to develop such a conversation.

[There are alternatives for those of us with lesser talent](#) so that **we** may also be [effective](#) in this service to God.

The Message of Grace made Easy

Chapter 6

Christ's message is a simple one:

[God loves us](#). He is offering his gift of grace (spiritual learning) through Jesus that we may rise to a level of obedience which is [acceptable](#) in His holy presence in heaven. [God's will is done in heaven](#), and He wishes to prepare us for that day. God simply asks us to provide the [willingness](#) to receive these skills so that our relationship may flourish.

A prayer of re-birth needs to be understandable:

Dear Heavenly Father, I have placed a lifetime of selfishness ahead of your will and wish to turn from my sin. I ask for your forgiveness. I now give to you my entire existence, my hopes, my dreams, and my ambitions. Please be my [Lord](#) so that I may submit to your desires ahead of my own. Allow [your will](#) to become my motivator for the remainder of my life. Amen

Why are hearts reluctant to receive Christ's message?

[Jesus Christ](#) is asking us to give up many things which makes us feel secure and that we cherish, and to place God's will as the [first](#) priority in our lives. We are then expected to submit to a spiritual re-birth similar to that of an infant who is open to experiencing a whole new world of learning.

The first step in the hope of changing a heart begins with prayer, asking "His will be done" for that individual. Be patient in prayer. God's timetable in offering special opportunities may reach into years or decades rather than days or months.

For those of us who lack the talent to develop a conversation on faith, [we still can](#)

share the printed Word. Our own booklet is available at:

realprayer.org



Such booklets can be mailed with get-well cards or notes of caring. They can be delivered in person with a [smile](#), and the words, "[I have a gift for you.](#)"

Sharing by [e-mail attachments](#) or [social media links](#) may require a greater follow-up to promote the booklet to being read.

While "evangelism booklets" or Bible tracts can bring a message of value, the individual may need further support to answer their questions. Pray for guidance and evaluate options including those resources within your church. [Could you offer to accompany the person to church?](#)

While young children tend to be very open in their learning, their expanding minds may have questions. It is essential any questions are answered in a way the individual finds relatable.

If not, things of faith may be tuned out. Later, faith may only be a consideration at *moments of personal struggle* when the individual's norm is no longer within their comfort zone. Such times need to be evaluated. Is the individual being open to spiritual learning?

Rather than provide a set of predetermined answers, do we have an experience in our own personal growth where Christ touched our lives that relates to the question being asked? If we do not have an answer to a question, consider prayer and asking God for his path. We are not alone. There are options and clues through resources beyond us. There is nothing wrong with replying *"I do not know, but I will get back with you."*

People with questions about God can sometimes *sense* an environment where the Holy Spirit is present. It can occur with one-on-one counseling. The environment is strengthened when like-minded individuals are in a small group such as bible study, or around a campfire at a retreat. Those who are blessed like Billy Graham can foster such an environment on a larger scale. Ingredients include gratitude, submission, and a humility before God. Opening in prayer which touches upon this topic may be a consideration. After such resources are provided, if the time is right, do not forget these five words: *"Will you pray with me?"*

The bottom line is that it takes a great deal of **trust** in both the message and in the messenger for us to reach into the unknown to ask God to come into our lives. Not only

does the message need to be delivered, but it also needs to be personalized to correlate with the questions being asked.

In Discipleship we are to **ASK**

Chapter 7

Jesus teaches discipleship in John 15 1-11.

Verse 5 explains that it is essential for our "direction is to be aligned with that of Jesus in looking to the father." Verse 7 then instructs for us to Ask for the things needed to serve Him.

What might this "asking" within our prayer life include?

1. Gaining spiritual growth to prepare ourselves for the special opportunity of service that He may offer.
2. Respecting the Father's timing, the path being offered, and further defining the role we are to fulfill within His service.
3. Asking for the talent needed to fulfill that role He places before us and asking the same for the others who are involved.
4. Asking for "Thy Will be done" every step along the way, including for the recipients of the outreach.

When our prayer life is yielding little, it may require us to re-visit "step 1," our spiritual growth. Grace requires us to grow. The growth needed to fulfill the opportunities of yesterday may be inadequate for opportunities Christ has in our future. A life-long trait such as ego, self-justification, lack of love or compassion

for others may be a *luxury* we can no longer afford. [John 15:7](#) may include asking God to bring us the righteousness required to meet the needs in discipleship.

At the point Peter's discipleship went from self-reliance to a relationship that "abides in Christ," [His life grew to honor God:](#)

- ☞ Peter's role in the Great Commission helped believers come to know salvation.
- ☞ The humility Peter displayed during his own death glorified God. ([John 21:18-19](#) /Petrine Cross)
- ☞ Peter's writings in the Bible touch each upcoming generation to this day.

Accepting our Role in Discipleship

Chapter 8

In Christ's day "*a talent*" was "a unit of measurement of something valuable, such as gold or silver." In Christ's Parable of the Talents, ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)) most editions of the bible use this term "*talent*" as a "varying amount of a valuable God given ability" on loan from our master, Jesus Christ. It is to be invested to grow his flock.

Have you ever known a Christian with five talents? One of those who can counsel someone involving a struggle, refer to the perfect scripture, and conclude, God is the answer. They then commonly ask, "*will you pray with me?*" The person who had been struggling may then walk away with a direction in life.

How is this degree of ability gained? They likely began with the same *fears and feelings* of inadequacy as the single talent servant felt

within "The Parable of the Talents." The difference in the outcome is derived through obedience and *how we pray* to our Master.

God loves us! For those who He calls, each are given talent(s) according to his or her ability. Jesus Christ wants us to succeed and in [John 15:7](#), instructs us to "Ask" for the things needed to fulfill this role.

A woman dying of cancer asked her family to have one last reunion. While gathered, she asked the question, "*how can I be confident that I am going to heaven?*" In a room full of Christians that had attended church for decades, only one replied. The response was "*to have lived a good life.*" One of the nephews returned home and for days questioned that response. Yet, his heart remained blind to the correct answer.

After about a week, the nephew finally cried out to God in prayer, "How can I let my aunt [know about your salvation?](#)" Immediately, the memory involving the prayer of "re-birth" that the nephew prayed a decade or two earlier, came flowing back into his mind. By "asking" ([John 15:7](#)) in the context of seeking Christ's direction within discipleship, the nephew received his first talent. The aunt later expressed appreciation in having received a letter from the nephew that included that prayer of being "born of the spirit." The message in this prayer includes asking God for "[a heart of submission to His Will.](#)"

As in the Parable of the Talents, ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)) when the inexperienced receive the responsibility of that first or second talent, *it can be scary.* If we depend upon ourselves, we will fail. Fear can then promote the talent to be "buried" in the back of our mind and ignored until our day of judgment. **Or,** as in [John 15:5](#),

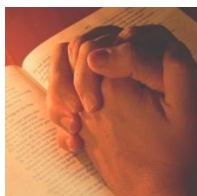
we can learn through prayer to align our direction to that of Jesus Christ in looking to the Father.

Discipleship is as much of a journey in prayer as it is in physical and spiritual outreach. **God is the architect** (the designer) of his plan. He offers us the opportunity to play a role. As with Peter, participating in this can bring our life to achieve something that is "of value into eternity." We are to "Ask" what this role is, how to perform it, and for God to extend his grace to the recipient of this outreach.

Sometimes discipleship may begin by befriending someone who is struggling. A friendship started, not for our own benefit, but for their benefit. Matthew 25:35-40 speaks of examples of types of general service that can place us in a position for discipleship. These positions can be opportunities for our own growth as well as the recipient receiving an earthly benefit.

As we grow in the ability to "abide in Christ" and be guided by the Holy Spirit through prayer to the Father (John 15:5); our participation in general service may place us in a position to respond to specific opportunities that God presents to us. He is the One who knows with whom, how, and when a heart may be open to change.

Growing in the skills of discipleship allow us to be **one of his children** who are in a position to respond when called upon to intervene within a special moment of grace.



A Step toward Spiritual Maturity

Conclusion

Some church leaders who obtain great results do not view themselves as leaders, but as servants that possess some spiritual maturity in recognizing God's direction. An opportunity for service that begins with apprehension can turn into an adventure as we anxiously await, "What comes next?" Pride can give way to humility upon realizing these accomplishments do not belong to us. It is by His design. We were simply called to help along the way.

What is viewed as Christian leadership can fall back to the washing of the feet. (John 13: 12-17)

How far into God's grace will we take ourselves and others during this lifetime?

Does our prayer life overly focus on asking for "this or that" as we attempt to balance on top of our wobbly path? Peace of mind comes from the result of asking to be taught the things needed to navigate our way upon His path.

What appreciation is felt at the point we comprehend the grace, patience, and love that God provides during this instruction in preparing us to be in His holy presence.

A prayer to consider:

Dear Heavenly Father, teach me your grace that I may learn the things that you would have me know. In Christ's holy name, I ask, Amen

Is our prayer life one of asking God for help with our plan or, one of submission to ask Him for our role in His plan?



Do we ask God to do the leading that we may "abide in Jesus Christ?" John 15:5

The "[Grace](#)" booklet promotes how to grow in discipleship. When this booklet is given out with corresponding sermons, it can aid a congregation in memory retention. Reality is that many parishioners lack the skill to articulate Christ's message. An alternative may be to offer the message in print.

The "[Real Prayer](#)" booklet is a message of God's grace. In lieu of attempting an intimate conversation, a more informal approach may be to offer this publication "as a gift." Sermons alone may result in inaction. Providing the "tools" for the lesser skilled servant may allow their discipleship to flourish.

For those of us with lesser skill, might a booklet or other needed tool be stored where it is "readily accessible?" How about a vehicle glovebox, purse, saved [.pdf file](#) for e-mailing, or QR code to forward? →

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