

I Need More Grace!

BY JERRY D. PORTER



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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE is all about God's amazing grace. John Wesley defined grace as the entirely undeserved and unmerited glorious free love of God that is bestowed on us through Christ Jesus (*Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*).

As a young missionary I taught a simple grace lesson to a small group of Dominican Republic pastors:

- **Drawn by GRACE:** "When we were still powerless, . . . while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6, 8).

- **Saved by GRACE:** "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- **Spirit-filled by GRACE:** "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. . . . And much grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:31, 33).

- **Growing in GRACE:** "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

- **Gifted by GRACE:** "To each one of us grace has been given . . . some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:7, 11).

- **Sustained by GRACE:** "There was given me a thorn in my flesh. . . . Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'" (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

I reminded the Dominican pastors that our whole Christian life is about God's amazing grace. But I find no biblical instruction to pray for grace. So how do we receive this unmerited favor?

In their letters to the Church, James and Peter both quoted a simple text found in Proverbs 3:34:

- "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Submit yourselves, then, to God" (James 4:6-7).

- "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

I exhorted my pastor-colleagues to embrace the grace God gives the humble. After a time of prayer, we returned to our missional task of launching the Church of the Nazarene in this beautiful Caribbean island.

One month later, my missionary father visited us and spoke to those same pastors and me. He talked about humility in the life of the believer, reminding us that it can be illusive. We can become proud of our humility! His teaching connected humility with gratitude. The more grateful I am to God and others, the more humble I am.

Then I saw a great truth: As I express genuine gratitude, God's grace flows in my life. In Spanish, *gracias* is "thank you" and *gracia* is "grace." Divine grace dwindles when my haughty spirit shouts, "*No gracias!* I deserve better!" But when my contrite spirit exclaims, "*Gracias,*" God-grace flows freely in my receptive, needy life.

We need God's grace every day. As we learn to humbly embrace a *gracias* attitude, we will delight in the amazing, transforming *gracia* of God! ♦

We would love to hear your *gracia* stories. Send them to <HolinessToday@nazarene.org> or 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

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