

July 7, 2019

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Grace Expressed, Grace Received

1 Thessalonians 5:25-28

When we address a letter with “Dear So-and-so”, and close it with “Sincerely”, we may simply be using standard language void of intentional meaning. Such is not the case with Paul, introducing and closing 1 Thessalonians and other letters with this significant word, “grace”.

I. Grace is to be expressed toward our FAMILY in Christ, 1 Thessalonians 5:25-27.

- A. Grace is expressed by PRAYER (25).
- B. Grace is expressed by GREETING (26).
- C. Grace is expressed by SHARING SCRIPTURE (27).

II. Grace is to be received from JESUS CHRIST (28).

There is an urgency about receiving grace from Jesus, as our only hope for a blessed life after our present life. Romans 3:21-26 provide the theological background for the truth stated in Acts 4:12—there is salvation in no one else! Then the recipients of grace have an obligation to express grace to others, as followers imitating Jesus. Grace received...grace expressed!

Grace may be understood as an unearned and undeserved expression of favor, something that benefits or produces well-being in the one who receives it.



Brainstorm as a family ways grace can be given to one another. Then at the end of each day, see if you can testify to one

another about grace received from another family member, or commend a gracious act (act of grace) you have observed.

*And, have all received the grace of Jesus through faith in him?*

### For Further Study, Thought, and Discussion:

1. If prayer is one expression of grace, how many people are you “gracing” each day?

- What tools or helps are you making use of to encourage or discipline your prayer life?
- What additional tools are available, and should you be expanding your work of grace in prayer?

2. *“Those pastors have stopped giving us time to greet one another!”*

- What concern might there be when people “greet one another” because they have to (hey—it’s greeting time!) but otherwise don’t take the time?
- Are you experiencing barriers to greeting your family in Christ who worship with you? What are they, and are any of those barriers under your control so you can “fix” them and do what we are admonished to do?
- “Howdy’s” may fall short of the sincere kind of greeting Paul seems to encourage here. How can we greet one another in ways that are a genuine expression of mutual care and love in Christ?

3. Paul urges that this letter (1 Thessalonians) be read, and will later command Timothy, “...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture...” (1 Timothy 4:13).

- What opportunities do we have, or can we create, to read Scripture to one another? In what contexts, situations, or groups?
- How might personal daily reading and reflection on Scripture enhance our readiness to share the Word publicly, especially in a spontaneous moment of opportunity? How might daily reading help create such an opportunity?
- What benefit is derived when people hear the Word read together?

4. Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21-23 are sobering. Clearly it is possible to believe you have received grace (are saved), and even do things that seem to provide evidence to that effect, and yet not actually be a recipient of grace.

--How might that help explain Paul's closing encouragement in "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

--Should we ever assume we are all "in grace" to the point we take it for granted, and stop encouraging one another toward the grace of Christ?

**Next Week:** "Focusing on TRUTH" - 3 John