

“Come up Higher and operate in my grace”

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast".

2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness".

Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace".

Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"

James 4:6: "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'".

2 Peter 1:2: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord".

I know that is a lot of scriptures on grace. There is even more available. I felt it important to be reminded of all the different ways grace is made available to us and the things we can do to hinder it. The biblical definition of grace is God's unmerited, freely given favor, love and kindness toward us. It is also the empowerment to do what we cannot do on our own. It is a gift that cannot be earned, only accepted and appropriated.

Grace through faith saves us. Grace empowers us to exchange our weakness for His strength. Grace gives us the ability to disallow sin's dominion in our life. Grace gives us access to approach Him for literally everything with boldness. Grace cannot be measured and definitely should not be under utilized. What a significant resource and benefit, if you will, provided to us, to walk in victory in every area of our lives.

James 4:6 reminds us that as we humble ourselves and stay in a surrendered posture toward Him, even more grace is poured out. 2 Peter 1:2 also tells us that it can be multiplied to us. How? By expanding our knowledge of Jesus. It is impossible to grow closer to the Lord and not reveal more levels of grace that He has made available to us. I do not find

it coincidental that Peter talks about grace before bringing the call to faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, brotherly affection and love. All of the challenges point to the ultimate goal, to bear fruit for Jesus.

While fasting, I definitely am more conscious to rely on the grace made available to me. But it far exceeds 21 days on a calendar year. I believe that relying on grace while fasting should condition us to rely on grace in our lives long after the fast is completed. When I feel weak, what is my first thought? To beat myself up or to lean into Him and the grace available. When I see a pattern in my life that isn't Christ like, do I sit in condemnation or do I appropriate the grace that is present and waiting to be applied?

Each day, we have opportunities to take matters into our own hands or to live with a continually increasing awareness of Holy Spirit's power inside of us and His amazing grace.

I challenge us all today, to take some time and reflect on God's grace in our lives. Thank Him for the things you see as evidence of its appropriation and take inventory of matters you work through in your own strength. As you begin to consciously exchange your weakness for His strength and live aware of the empowerment He has given you, the momentum will fuel grace upon grace until your life is almost unrecognizable. Stress will lift as you realize He never called you to walk through life's challenges helpless or alone.

Let's rock this last few days with a heightened awareness of the awesomeness of our God. Good news, it never has to end.

~Pastor Kelly