

The True Grace of God

1 Peter 5:6-14

1 PETER

PEOPLE OF PURPOSE
IN A WORLD OF CHAOS

When life is hard it's almost impossible not to think that something has gone wrong. Either I've done something wrong, or God is abandoning me, or the gospel is malfunctioning in some way. But Peter would insist that this is simply not the case. This painful, fearful, always-waiting life of ours: It is the true grace of God! It is the way of Christ. It is the gospel way. It's like this: *First the cross, then the crown.* Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. "This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it."

Read 1 Peter 5:6-14 then discuss:

1. In the past, have you ever had to "humble yourself under God's mighty hand?" What was that like? How does a person do that well?
2. Have you come to experience him lifting you up or exalting you after your humbling? How so?
3. Peter seems to indicate that not only is God working in our sufferings and persecutions, but the devil is lurking as well. Have you had a sense of Good and Evil, God and the devil, contesting over you, maybe like Job in the Bible? How often do you think this sort of thing actually goes on?
4. A false doctrine, popularly known as the "Prosperity Gospel," asserts that it is always God's will that we be happy, healthy, and wealthy. Theologians call this "Over-realized Eschatology." (Eschatology deals with Last Things: the end of the world and the age to come.) The truth is, God does will that we be happy, healthy, and wealthy—in heaven, which is not here yet.
 - What do you think Peter would say about the Prosperity Gospel?
 - What does 1 Peter 5:12 teach you about it?
5. If living by faith in the pain, fear, and waiting of this fallen world is actually "the true grace of God," then how do you need to adjust your attitude and expectations?
6. Reflect on 1 Peter 5:10 together. Maybe even memorize it together.
 - What do you love about this verse?
 - What other Bible verses are your "go-to" texts for bolstering your faith in hard times?
7. What's your best takeaway from either this week's passage or the whole of 1 Peter?