

# An Exposition of the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter

## “THE GRACE OF GOD”

### *1 Peter 5:12-14*



**Theme:** The way to peace is through dependence upon God’s grace.

## I. The Trustworthiness of God’s Grace – **5:12a**

### A. The Reality of Grace

1. Throughout this epistle, Peter has emphasized the issue of grace in the suffering of God’s people.
  - a) God will sustain the believer by providing everything the believer needs for faithfulness.
  - b) God works to supply grace to “perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish” us in the midst of adversity so that we can be vessels of glory – cp. **1 Peter 5:10**
2. He has issued a call to make this grace the central focus of our hope – cp. **1:2, 10, 13; 3:7; 4:10**
3. He also indicates that there are ways that we can cooperate with God to receive this grace – cp. **2:19-20; 5:5**.
4. He now states that it is about this grace that he has written to them – *“Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.”*
5. The reference to *“Silvanus”* has been understood in a variety of ways – most likely that Peter used him to do two things:
  - a) He used him as an amanuensis (secretary) – hence *“through Silvanus ... I have written to you”*
  - b) He used him as a courier – delivering the letter through him.

### B. The Reliance on Grace

1. Peter indicates that through this letter he has done two things:
  - a) *“exhorting”* [παρακαλέω] – a reference to coming alongside of them in order to brace them to face their trials
  - b) *“testifying”* [ἐπιμαρτυρέω] – a reference to the personal experience that Peter has had in relying on the grace of God in the midst of trial that enables him to bear witness to God’s faithfulness.
2. He describes this grace as the *“true”* [ἀληθής] *grace* – that is,

dependable, honest, genuine, or trustworthy.

3. He indicates that this epistle provides them an awareness of God's faithfulness in the midst of struggle – cp. **1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Peter 1:3.**

## II. The Testimony to God's Grace – 5:12b

### A. The Promotion of Reliance on God

1. Peter says that one of his purposes was to exhort believers to rely on the grace of God – *“Stand firm in it!”*
2. In effect, he provides a call for the people of God to trust God to accomplish the promises of v. 10.

### B. The Proof of the Reality of Grace

1. Peter then states the other purpose was to testify of the reality of this grace through revelation as well as his personal experience.
2. Peter has the experience needed to exhort God's people to faithfulness – he can say that denial and abandonment is not the way to go!

## III. The Test of God's Grace – 5:13-14

### A. The Choice of the Believer -

1. In this section, Peter provides the duty of the believer in light of God's grace – stand firm in it!
2. That is, he calls on the believer to prioritize the knowledge of God's grace over the escaping from circumstances.
3. So often, believers' greatest desire is to avoid adversity or to escape suffering so that they will compromise God's grace to affect its end.
4. We are warned of the results of failing to choose to depend on grace – cp. **Hebrews 12:15; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 5:4.**

### B. The Consistency of the Believer

1. The test of your priority is the “firmness” of your commitment to living a life guided by grace.
2. When the believer fails to depend upon God's grace to carry them through hardship, the process of knowing God's grace is missed.
3. Peter then makes reference to an “elect woman” who stands as an example of the very admonition that he has just given them to “stand firm” in God's grace – *“She who is in Bablyon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings”*
  - a) *“She”* - can be taken either literally or figuratively:
    - (1) Literally, it would most likely be a reference to Peter's wife – cp. **Matthew 8:14 & 1 Corinthians 9:5**

- (2) Figuratively, it would most likely be a reference to the church “in Babyon” – a picture of a group of believers who were being persecuted in much the same way as were these believers – cp. **1 Peter 5:9**
- b) **“in Babylon”** – can be taken either literally or figuratively:
  - (1) Literally, it would refer to the infamous Babylon that was the seat of opposition to God since the beginning of religion at the tower of Babel.
  - (2) Figuratively, it would most likely refer to Rome – the seat of opposition to the Church throughout the New Testament era; a cryptic reference to protect the church located in the very heart of such opposition
4. In addition, **“... so does my son Mark”** – a reference to John Mark – the disciple taken under the wing of the Apostle Peter and who wrote the Gospel of Mark.
5. But, depending on God’s grace is the pathway to peace – **“Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”**