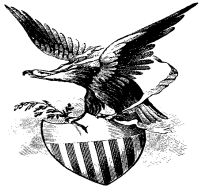


Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God



Greater Grace

by Pastor John Griffith

As James writes to Jewish believers dispersed abroad he speaks to them and us of a tremendous promise, the promise of "greater grace" to the believer who is not wrapped up in the pursuits of this world. We find this promise in James 4:6.

When he begins in verse 6 with the word "but" James is drawing a contrast between the disloyal believer, he has just described in verses 4 and 5, who is spiritually unfaithful and is a friend of the world and the loyal advancing believer of verse 6.

He says that God "gives greater grace." Literally it says that He keeps on giving, He keeps on initiating and providing grace to the advancing believer.

Is grace something that is important to the believer? You bet it is! Grace is a term that encompasses all that God is free to do for the believer both temporally and eternally and it is based on the cross work of Christ.

From the previous context of verses 4-5 we find that God has set a high standard for love and devotion on the part of His people. We need to remember that He is a jealous God, and intensely desires the devotion of those that are His. (This can be seen in Exodus 20:5 and 34:14.)

He gives greater grace, the divine operating assets needed for survival in the ongoing battle of living one day at a time after salvation φ2. This provision is greater than the rigorous demands He makes on us and is totally sufficient to deal with the pressures of life.

He documents this assurance that we have of this grace provision with a quotation from O.T.. "Therefore (dio - introduces verification of the truth just presented) "it says" (quote here from LXX of Prov 3:34) "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble."

When it says God is opposed to the proud it is very strong statement. The verb is *antitassō* and it means to stand against someone, it is a military term which indicates to line up against, to oppose, or to resist. That it is put in the present tense, a gnomic present, it states a principle that is always true. God's integrity, His righteousness and justice is always set against the proud.

The word for proud is a compound, *húperēphanos* (huper = over, beyond; *phonomai* - to appear or show oneself, when put together it indicates to show oneself above others, therefore to be proud or arrogant. It speaks of a self assumed air of superiority over others. The bottom line is that it refers to self-glorification, self-deification. The one who is proud is going to rely on his own abilities and strengths to deal with the

pressures of life instead of God's grace provision. God desires us to rely on grace while it is the great deceiver's objective to get us to rely on our self. Satan is the author of all the "do-it-yourself" spiritual enterprises.

"But gives grace to the humble." This is the contrasting message of encouragement, the promise to the advancing believer. It really focuses on all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross.

The question here is what is the humble? The word is *tapeinos* and it describes one who exhibits the mental attitude of humility (the humble one is the subject of vs:7-10). Since this noun is in the dative case in the Greek and its the dative of advantage, which says that it is to the believer's advantage to be classed as humble, it describes one who willingly submits to God's word.

Peter in 1 Peter 5:5 gives us some important information about humility. He says we are to "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another" (literally, to fasten firmly on ourselves something that distinguishes the advancing believer from others). What he is telling us is that humility is to be a characteristic evident in the life of the believer in their dealings with one another. (Definitely not what those James was writing to were manifesting in their dealings with each other as noted in James 4:1-5.)

It is a mental attitude (MA) that results from thinking according to the norms and standards of God. It has observable results when it is present in the life of the Believer.

It is an absence of arrogance, pride, self-glorification, self interest to the exclusion of true sensitivity to others,

(sensitivity based on the standard's of doctrine not on one's emotions). Paul makes it very clear that humility is to characterize the worthy walk of the advancing believer as noted in Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3 and Colossians 3:12. The worthy walk describes a life that is in balance with the known truth one understands. In other words it describes one who lives according to the divine viewpoint understood at what ever point of spiritual growth they are at.

Lack of humility among believers will manifest itself in rivalries, verbal assaults as noted by James of these believers in verses 4:1-2.

Some Observations

1. This verse is a promise to those believers who honor God by not being a friend of the cosmos, the world system.
2. Those believers who are advancing spiritually and adhere to the doctrinal principles they know are candidates for this "greater grace".
3. The believer who refuses to compromise or to violate known truth for his/her own benefit, temporal personal gain, who does not take short cuts for any reason and waits on God for the provision comes under this "greater grace."
4. "Greater Grace" is God providing for and blessing the believer who will not take the easy opportunistic way out of his/her circumstances.
5. God will provide special grace for those who wait on Him rather than succumbing to the tests or temptations faced. The temptation to revert to worldliness and self-reliance is intense.

6. Examples: Abraham had to learn patience, to rely on God instead of himself. He had to learn that human ability could not solve his problems. And against all odds he received "greater grace," the promised heir. He was repeatedly tested related to priorities all along the way and he flunked many times.

Paul who suffered more than any was repeatedly provided for and delivered. Many times he could have compromised truth to gain a momentary advantage but he doggedly adhered to the Word of God.

7. There are many areas we can all improve on in our lives to make them more consistent with divine viewpoint in order to ensure that we are the recipients of "greater grace" down the road.

8. When we follow the pattern of the cosmos, and have no consideration for God or His will we are choosing to deny ourselves this greater grace.

9. Remember, God is able and willing to provide blessings beyond your ability to do so. Even beyond your wildest dreams and imaginations. (1 Cor 2:9)

10. Your sin nature will attempt to deceive you into thinking that you know what is best for you, not God.

11. The proud are those who place themselves above the teachings and commands of scripture. They think that they are special cases! "Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose?" (James 4:5)

12. Anyone who sets themselves up as the authority and abandons the clear teachings of scripture exhibits pride and arrogance.

13. Know that those who maladjusts to scripture and becomes a law unto themselves God stands against them.

14. But to those who assume the humility associated with advancing as a believer and walking worthy will be given greater grace to see them to the end. And along the way they will enjoy the blessing God has for the grace oriented believer who patiently endures.

15. The proud/arrogant all will face at some time in their life their own "private waterloo," some test, some CHP that is bigger than they are prepared to handle on their own.

May we remember that God is ready and willing to provide this greater grace as He vindicates His word in us as we apply it bringing glory to Him day by day.

Epigrams

The greatest question of our time is not communism versus individualism; not Europe versus America; not even the East versus West. It is whether men can live without God.

by Will Durant

The alternatives are clear: either we return to the God of the Bible or we perish in the pit of lawlessness.

by Carl F.H. Henry