



Module : Understanding, Accessing & Growing in GRACE

Session 21 : Submission to Fatherly Leadership Increases Grace

Focus : Jesus' Example of Submission to Spiritual Fathering Positioned Him for Growth into the Fullness of the Grace of God

SUBMISSION TO SPIRITUAL FATHERING INCREASES GRACE

This study is a direct continuation of our previous session and presupposes an understanding of all the principles explained there. In the prior sessions in this series, I have laboured the point that spiritual fathering and spiritual sonship is the biblically specified context for maximum grace impartation to take place (refer to sessions 1 to 8). In the present study, I wish to illustrate from the life of our Lord Jesus, how **SUBMISSION to SPIRITUAL FATHERING is a most powerful means of accessing and increasing in grace.**

The principle of honour for and thus submission to 'Fatherly Leadership' is an extremely important key for accessing what I call '**increasing grace**' (Luke 2:52). Jesus knew what it was to '**increase in grace**'.

In terms of God's grace functioning within Jesus' life, the Scriptures describe three distinct phases in which different descriptors of the GRACE of God relative to Him are noted.

(1) At 0 to 12 Years Old - THE GRACE OF GOD WAS 'ON HIM'

Luke 2:40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

(2) At 12 to 30 Years Old - HE 'KEPT INCREASING' IN GRACE

Luke 2:52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor (i.e. 'GRACE') with God and men.

(3) At 30 to 33 Years Old - HE WAS 'FULL OF' GRACE

John 1:14-16 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, FULL OF GRACE and truth. ... For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

Let's track this progression briefly ...

In Luke 2:40, the grace of God is 'upon Jesus'. In Luke 2:52, He 'grows in grace' at an ever-increasing rate - note the phrase 'kept increasing' in that verse. Between Luke 2:40 and Luke 2:52 lies the vital key that led to this, i.e. ...

**Jesus' willing submission or subjection to Joseph and Mary
as representations of spiritual fathering in His life.**

▪ **18 YEARS OF SUBMISSION BEFORE 3½ YEARS OF POWERFUL MINISTRY**

Luke 2:41-52

- 39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.
- 40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.
- 41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.
- 42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;
- 43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it,
- 44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.
- 45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.
- 46 Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.
- 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.
- 48 When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."
- 49 And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"
- 50 But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.
- 51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.
- 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Subjection to authority is an important key to experiencing blessing and increase. Before Luke comments on the extent of the increase of GRACE in Jesus in Luke 2:52, he first highlights an important condition in verse 51 which prefaced this increase, viz. the fact that he was in complete submission to the authority of his parents.

Luke 2:51 ... and he continued in SUBJECTION to them ...

Subjection = **Hupatasso** (derived from 'hupo' = under, and 'tasso' = to place in order)
= To place under in an orderly fashion.

The 'order' for Jesus was to be placed UNDER the authority and supervision of his parents, in order for them to put aspects of humanity in order and alignment to His Divinity and attendant assignment.

From the age of twelve to thirty, **one singular verse** describes Jesus' focused and prioritised behaviour, viz. Luke 2:51 " ... He continued in **SUBJECTION** ...". Many desire the characteristics of Jesus' three and a half year public ministry with all its attendant mighty works, miracles, revelatory teaching, wise utterances, effective leadership, Divine nature, etc. but fail to consider that He mastered SUBMISSION for eighteen years. Also, note the text indicates that He **CONTINUED** in subjection, i.e. He was consistently submitted – submission was neither fleeting nor sporadic – it was abiding. His submission was also WILLING and not coerced. His parents did not subject Him to them – He subjected Himself to them. Such must be the character of our submission. Forced submission is no submission. Submission must be voluntary and sincere.

- **FUNCTIONING SECRETLY WITH ZEAL IN AUTHENTIC DIVINE PURPOSE BUT WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OR SANCTION OF FATHERLY LEADERSHIP IS NOT ADVISABLE.**

Jesus did a good thing, a spiritual thing, but without the awareness, knowledge or sanction of His natural/spiritual parents, and this invalidated what He did. He functioned secretly or clandestinely. He is only twelve years old but already has a sense of His mandate and mission and is consumed with a desire to execute His Heavenly Father's business, but He proceeded to function without authorisation of his spiritual parents (Joseph and Mary).

At twelve years old (12 representing the apostolic and governance), He already had an awareness of his Heavenly origins and the assignment of His Heavenly Father. When Mary and Joseph found Him, His response was that they should have known that He would be in His 'Father's house' (Nasb) or about 'His Father's business' (Kjv), both phrases literally meaning consumed with the 'things or affairs'¹ of His Father.

Whilst Mary and Joseph were fully aware that this son of theirs was the Son of God and had come for a specific mission, they had not as yet, as His earthly or spiritual parents, given Him the sanction for this. Jesus, at twelve years old, proceeded to execute part of His Father's business in the temple – but without the knowledge or permission of His parents, who had oversight over Him. **To function in one's specific ministry calling without the requisite grace that flows forth from submission to and thus authorisation from fatherly leadership/oversight, is to function illegitimately.** This is clearly demonstrated here in Jesus' life as well as in other places in Scripture which I will draw reference to later in this study.

Luke 2:43 highlights the fact that Joseph and Mary were '**unaware**' of His whereabouts or activity.

'Unaware' = ginosko = To know, in a beginning or completed sense².

If your spiritual father is not aware of significant spiritual engagements relative to you, this could land you in trouble. Even if they may have a hint of your destiny and mandate in God, it is always advisable that they come to full understanding of your call, before you of your own volition, initiate specific major aspects of God's assignment for you. Essentially, Jesus was called to curtail and rein in His zealous passion He had to His Heavenly Father's business, and virtually suspend it for eighteen years, in willing submission to Joseph and Mary's spiritual fatherhood over his life.

His parents chastised Him for going off on a spiritual assignment without their knowledge. They found Him in the temple, listening to, asking questions of the greatest teachers of His day and providing the answers (see Luke 2:46). When chastised by His parents about this engagement without their consent, Jesus, twelve years old, said that they should have known that He would be in his Father's house. In saying this to them, He was presumptuous about what they should know and understand about Him and His destiny. Many a spiritual son acts presumptuously, hastily and prematurely in embarking on a ministry calling, presupposing that their spiritual fathers are fully aware of all the factors and specifically the timing of their activation to ministry. Although Jesus was consumed by a passion to pursue the will of the Father even at a young age, He nevertheless submitted to the instruction and requirements of His earthly/spiritual parents. Submission to this natural dimension of 'fathering' over Him was a necessary prerequisite to Him fully expressing His Divine sonship to His Heavenly Father and so fulfill His Divine assignment.

I would advise spiritual sons not to embark upon significant or strategic aspects of the will of God for their lives without at least conferring with their spiritual fathers for counsel and advice. There is tremendous safety and wisdom in this. Also, the spiritual son must be open to discipline and fatherly directives in this process. It has been the case for many who deliberately do not seek the counsel of their spiritual father, and prematurely enact some significant aspect of God's known will for their lives, but in the inappropriate manner or timing. Then, when things do not materialise as they had hoped, and in some cases, negative consequences are reaped, they choose to solicit the direct involvement of their spiritual father at this stage only. Why not prevent all the negativity and disappointment in the first place through involving your spiritual father from the onset and in the process of the unfolding nature of God's will for your life.

Consider this ...

1 Samuel 10:10-12

- 10 When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them.
- 11 It came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What has happened to **the son of Kish**? Is Saul also among the prophets?"
- 12 A man there said, "**Now, who is their father?**" Therefore it became a proverb: "**Is Saul also among the prophets?**"

Saul was anointed and prophesied with many confirming signs. The response in the majority of the people was positive and widespread as they were impressed by the seeming transformation within him ("What happened to the son of Kish") and as well by his newly attained status as 'prophet' – validated by his association with other prophets ("Is Saul also among the prophets").

The transformation within him was only apparent, not internally qualitative - he could only prophesy because he was amongst prophets and the prevailing corporate prophetic grace allowed him to function prophetically. Also, his association with a particular sphere of ministers (prophets) gave him a sense of heightened validation and boosted his spiritual image in the nation. His operation among them was empowered by the Spirit of the Lord. All of this is powerful, except for one negative factor that seems to invalidate Saul's legitimacy to function.

A particular unnamed man (verse 12) was not impressed by his accurate prophecies, nor his sphere of newly found prophetic - ministerial relationships. This man wanted to establish who the spiritual father of the group of was. He was not astounded by the proficiency in the operation of the prophetic office or prophetic gift, unless he could determine the source of fathering from which they functioned. This seems to imply that they operated illegally in the Spirit. This man was wise. The wise are not deceived by gifting – but require to access the root of fatherhood.

There is also an important lesson here. Like Saul, we too must not seek impartation and validation from a source or sphere of relationships which may be highly proficient in the operation of their gifting and calling, yet do not flow out from the blessing and authentication of accurate spiritual fathering. The absence of a spiritual fathering spirit or grace cancels any expression of spiritual giftedness.

The term 'father' highlights the point of origin of a thing - author or beginner of something; the first recipient - he who comes to be the first recipient of something. Samuel received the anointing for prophetic function before Saul. Saul should have looked to Samuel to administrate this prophetic anointing.

'Fatherhood' also relates to 'headship'. Not all gifts are headship gifts. The principle of 'father' is a principle of headship. The head lifts the rest of the body up. The father, as the head, is not there to keep the son down, but to lift the son up. The hand can throw a stone far, but not the head. But, the head instructs the hand. The hand (son) without the head (father) is useless. Before there was Saul, there was Samuel.

- **SUBMISSION IN SPITE OF FAILURE OF SPIRITUAL FATHERS TO COMPREHEND THE FULL AMBIT OR SPECIFIC DETAILS OF YOUR CALLING**

Luke 2:50 actually says that His parents did not even understand His response to their question. Even though, on Mary and Joseph's part, there was a measure of inability to completely appreciate the extent of the will of the Heavenly Father for Jesus, Jesus did not use this perceived

inability of His parents as an excuse to rebel based on spiritual ignorance. God was simply testing Jesus' heart and His capacity to obey and be subject to earthly spiritual fathering.

'understand' = *suníemi* = To comprehend, understand, perceive³.

The comprehending activity of the mind, denoted by *suníemi*, entails the assembling of individual facts into an organised whole, as collecting the pieces of a **puzzle and putting them together**. The mind grasps concepts and sees the proper relationship between them.

Even though Joseph and Mary **did not FULLY UNDERSTAND** Jesus' zeal and view about His engagements in the affairs of His Heavenly Father, the Scripture in Luke 2:51 indicates that Mary treasured all of these things in her heart. True spiritual fathers, even though at a point in time might not comprehend all that is attendant with the destiny of their sons, in their hearts, they TREASURE the various and seemingly disparate things about their spiritual sons, and over time, piece them together like a jigsaw puzzle until they see the complete or full picture. God permits this to accomplish certain things in the spiritual father (the capacity to give oversight to the unfolding destiny in the son) as well as to test the submission of the son whilst this dynamic is in process.

Submission to God's program for that particular season of His life meant subjection to His parents, even though there was a greater purpose to fulfill. God sometimes tests our hearts in these things. At a right time, Jesus was released to fully engage in fulfilling the will of the Father. Consider that at the Wedding at Cana, it was Mary who cajoled Jesus to perform His FIRST miracle even though Jesus thought the timing was not appropriate.

John 2:3-5 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Wise, discerning and Spirit-led spiritual fathers know when to activate their sons into public ministry. Jesus would go on to fulfill His Father's business and complete His Father's work in the earth. Eighteen years of submission prepared a solid foundation for a successful ministry of three and a half years.

▪ **A BRIEF ASIDE: SUBMISSION IN JACOB**

An analogy with Isaac and Jacob in reference to what we have just discussed is apt here. Jacob had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. At their birth, it was prophesied the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). Although Esau was firstborn in time, he would, because of his carnality and dis-estimation of his firstborn birthright status, forfeit this, and the firstborn status would be Jacob's preserve. It was always God's plan that Jacob be firstborn in rank. Jacob, however, went about securing the practical release and activation of his firstborn status through conniving and

deceptive means. When the specific time came for the impartation of the birthright blessing with the laying on of hands, Jacob, impersonated Esau and tricked his aged and blind father that he was Esau. For this deception, he suffered a twenty year self-imposed exile from his 'father's house', taking refuge in the wilderness under Laban, his uncle. There he would acquire his two wives Rachael and Leah, who together with their concubines, would bear him twelve sons - the foundation for the tribal configuration of the nation of Israel.

Now note the following: Jacob knew of the prophecy over him at his birth that his older brother, Esau, would serve him, thus granting him firstborn status. He should not have employed deceptive means to access the birthright of the firstborn by manipulating Esau into exchanging it to him for a meal and by craftily deceiving his father at the time of its impartation. He should have just rested in the knowledge that this, being God's will for his life, will ensure its fulfillment. He did not have to meddle in the process to secure its attainment.

Whenever we, through impatience or frustration, seek to carnally enact our ministry calling in God, we usually consciously or unconsciously reap a set of consequences that in essence defer our actual doing thereof in a meaningful way. RELAX; CHILL. Do not strive to make things happen in your flesh. God will take care of details of your unfolding destiny. Just keep your heart pure, free from bitterness and unforgiveness and be consistently obedient.

Consider that Jacob was dislocated and dislodged from his father's house for twenty years. In all the time he was serving with his uncle Laban, he actually LONGED GREATLY FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

Gen. 31:30a Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house ...

Longing for his father's house meant longing for his father's fatherly oversight, counsel, direction, etc. Within and through the house of his father, his destiny would be expressed. Jacob was disconnected from this reality for twenty years. The 'uncle spirit' in Laban abused and afflicted him, working him to the bone (see Gen. 31:42).

Possibly, Jacob might have thought that his father, Isaac, did not fully understand his destiny and calling as firstborn son – like Joseph and Mary did not fully comprehend Jesus' conviction that He must do His Father's business. Isaac was fully aware of the prophecy over Jacob at his birth signifying his firstborn status. So why did Isaac not intentionally call for Jacob at the time of the impartation of the birthright and firstborn blessing? Two considerations are worth contemplating here:

- (1) God sometimes uses the ignorance or lack of clarity on the part of a spiritual father to test the heart of or form certain realities in the son. Both Jesus and Jacob were being tested to whether or not they would, despite seeming inability of the spiritual fathers placed in their

lives to fully comprehend the fullest outworking of their personal ministry calling, still submit to their fatherly oversight, counsel and stay in submission to them within the spiritual authority of the 'father's house'.

- (2) On the flip side of this, spiritual fathers should be more consciously aware of specific details of their ministry calling so as to prevent the son embarking upon a course of action out of frustration which could incur negative consequences.

On Jacob's return to his 'father's house', the first priority was to reconcile with Esau. This he does in an attitude of deep submission to Esau, actually calling him 'lord' (See Gen. 32:17-18; 33:7-8). One can never really be fully integrated into the attendant power, authority and grace of your father's house until you live in reconciliation with your brothers, a disposition which demands mutual submission, honour, respect and regard.

In Genesis 33, Jacob reconciled with Esau, bowing to him in submission and honour and by actually sending to him a significantly large offering, because he perceived the face of Esau AS THE FACE OF GOD. Here he demonstrates the principle of mutual submission in that although it was prophesied Esau would serve Jacob, this never transpires until Jacob can demonstrate humility and submission to Esau.

Gen 33:3 But he himself passed on ahead of them and **bowed down to the ground seven times**, until he came near to his brother.

Bowing seven times denotes the completeness and sincerity of his submission and desire to reconcile.

Gen. 33:10,11 Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably. "Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty." Thus he urged him and he took it.

Complete assimilation and integration into the nature and purpose attendant with the grace configuration of your 'father's house' will not be attained until you demonstrate sincere regard for, appreciation, love and a desire to submit to your brothers. These dispositions foster reconciled and loving relationships.

▪ JESUS IS THE CARPENTER'S SON AND THE HEAVENLY FATHER'S SON

There are eighteen silent years in the life of Jesus, between the ages of twelve and thirty. These years were spent in active submission to Joseph and Mary. At thirty years of age, at His baptism, His Heavenly Father affirmed and validated his divine sonship by saying 'This is my beloved son in

whom I am well pleased.’ But before this, Jesus spends eighteen years demonstrating His willingness to support and be subject to His earthly, natural spiritual father (in the persons of Joseph and Mary). Silent, private and sustained submission in a spiritual son to a spiritual father is pre-requisite to loud and public validating affirmation of him by his Heavenly Father. A father’s recognition of spiritual maturity in his son serves to empower and authorise the son to explore his spiritual mandate with great success at an accelerated pace.

Joseph was a carpenter and Jesus was trained as one under Joseph. He supported Joseph so much He would ultimately be called ‘**THE CARPENTER’S SON**’ and ‘**THE**’ carpenter of Nazareth.

Matt. 13:55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

Mark 6:2-3 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? Is not this **THE CARPENTER**, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him.

Note: He is called the carpenter’s son and also THE carpenter. Joseph was known for carpentry. Jesus is described not only as Joseph’s son but as the Carpenter’s son. In other words, Joseph’s renown as an excellent carpenter was established in Nazareth. Carpentry was Joseph’s trade or business – the thing with which he became identified and associated. Jesus became known as the son of the carpenter. His identity was



subsumed within the calling of his father. Jesus became so excellent in this trade, that Mark called Him **THE CARPENTER**. Probably, there was no better carpenter in all of Nazareth.

Submission in humility in Jesus manifested when He submitted His spiritual calling and identity to an earthly father for thirty years of His life, supporting and developing excellence in what the father had been called to do. Then at His baptism at thirty years old, the Heavenly Father described Him as His Son. He was now ready to be subsumed fully into a higher purpose and be known by His Heavenly Father’s occupation and will for His life. First the natural, then the spiritual. If we cannot be submitted to the natural order of things, how can we hope to be effective stewards of heavenly things?

In Scripture, our Lord is called 'Jesus Christ', 'Christ Jesus' or simply 'Christ':

- 'Jesus' (and so Jesus Christ) highlights His humanity
- 'Christ Jesus', often used by Paul, highlights His ascended or resurrected disposition after the cross
- 'Christ' highlights His 'divinity' or His pre-existent eternal position and identity as the Son of God in the Triune God.

In Scripture, Jesus is called both the 'Son of Man' and the 'Son of God'. 'Son of man' refers to his humanity and references 'Jesus' as a human being, experiencing everything we experience – and also highlights the fact that He was submissive to earthly authority, leadership and fathering. 'Son of God' refers to His Divine Sonship and references 'Christ' in His eternal pre-existent position.

Now here is the important point: For eighteen years He had to excel in His position as Son of Man (spiritual sonship), before He was given public recognition and validation as the Son of God (Divine sonship) by His Heavenly Father. God could never have used Him as the 'Son of God' until He matured in his role and function as the 'Son of Man'. Similarly, God cannot use us as His Divine sons to any significant degree, until we have first proven submission to earthly spiritual fathers as their spiritual sons.

Jesus did this for eighteen years. $18 = 6 \times 3$.

Six is the number of 'man' (Man was created on the sixth day). Three is the number of divine completeness (three persons in the Godhead) and 'more excellent things'. For eighteen years, Jesus brought divine perfection and completeness to His 'manhood' – or role as Son of Man in submission to earthly spiritual fathers.

Remove the element of rebellion and the unwillingness to submit to God-ordained authority, and then you will be accurately positioned to receive the increase of the GRACE of God. At times, this must be so even when those you are called upon to submit to do not completely or accurately comprehend the scope of God's will for your life.

▪ GO DOWN TO NAZARETH

The environmental context in which Jesus was submitted to his parents is the city of Nazareth.

Luke 2:51 And He went DOWN with them and came to NAZARETH, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Note they **went 'down'** to Nazareth.

WENT DOWN = katabaino = to come or go down, descend from a higher to a lower place⁴.

From Jerusalem they descended down towards Nazareth. Descending to Nazareth denotes humility and submission. Nazareth was where Jesus spent most of His early childhood even up until the start of His public ministry.

The word Nazareth has a wide range of meanings, the prophetic application of which is explained below.

(1) Nazareth = The Guarded One⁵

This implies it was a place of protection and incubation – a place of watchfulness by your spiritual father over you – but which may seem as being confined and imprisoned. Humility is your protection, the defense mechanism you need against satanic schemes. It was told to John that the LION of the Tribe of Judah prevailed to break seals of the scrolls, but when he looked to observe the Lion he saw a LAMB. A lion denotes strength, confidence and dominance; a Lamb denotes humble innocence, purity and living sacrificially for the benefit of others. John expected to see a Lion, but he saw a lamb. All the qualities of the lion are carried within the disposition and mentality of a lamb. Humility is the container and sustainer of great strength. You are 'guarded', 'fortressed', 'buttressed' when you live with the disposition of deep and sincere humility.

(2) Nazareth = Preservation⁶

Submission to your spiritual father's instruction has the effect of preserving you spiritually and in others ways.

(3) Nazareth = Branch⁷

Many Scriptures depict the life of Jesus, and that of sons of God, as a branch (e.g. Isaiah 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zec. 3:8; Gen. 49:22; John 15:1-3)⁸. We, like Christ was, are also symbolised by the imagery of a branch. The imperative is in order for us to bear fruit in a Christ-like nature and be productive in the will of God, we are to remain abiding in the Vine (Christ), which essentially highlights the disposition of **obedience**. Submission to spiritual fathering is critical to perfect a life of obedience.

The prophecy on Joseph is that because of his abundant fruitfulness, his branch would run over the wall (Gen. 49:22). This implies that our obedience, which leads to our fruitfulness, will cause us to have an enlarged reach of influence to spheres beyond our present functioning. This is an outcome of humble submission to spiritual fathering.

(4) Nazareth = Separated, Crowned or Sanctified⁹.

Submission to the Word of God expressed through one's spiritual father will have the effect of refining you. The discipline of a father is essential in the life of a maturing son to aid his process of

sanctification, so that he could rule and steward aspects of God's will in the earth. In your purification and separation - you are crowned - being prepared for dominion and rulership.

- Nazareth: A Place of Disrepute

For some unknown reason, Nazareth was a place of disrepute. Nathanael said to Phillip, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth' ([John 1:46](#)). Submission to your father will cause you to become a man of no reputation. Every bit of the flesh and of self-will have to die within so that, like Jesus, you will become a man of no reputation or pride.

[Phil 2:7a \(NKJV\)](#) but made Himself of no reputation, ...

It was prophesied that Jesus would be called the 'Nazarene'.

[Matt.2:23](#) and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene".

Being called 'The Nazarene' symbolically implies that Jesus embodied the full range of prophetic applications in the meanings of Nazareth highlighted above. The principles described above must be internalised within us, such that we become the literal representation of humility and submission, to which GREAT GRACE will be attracted.

▪ TIME OF THE PASSOVER

It is significant that this incident concerning Jesus's self-subjection to his parents in Luke 2 occurs within the context of the **Feast of Passover**, which celebrated Israel's deliverance and exit from Egyptian bondage. At that time, Israel had to submit immediately to Moses' command to prepare to leave Egypt all in a matter of ONE NIGHT. One evening was all they had to pack up and observe the Passover Feast in their homes under the leadership of the head or father of the household. There was virtually no time to contemplate or think too deeply concerning the accuracy or validity of Moses' leadership or instruction. Instant and quick submission and obedience was required. This also is a requirement in our day. God is calling reflexive obedience and submission to authentic, credible, humble and proven leadership.

▪ JESUS KEPT INCREASING IN GRACE WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENT OF HUMILITY AND SUBMISSION

[Luke 2:52](#) And Jesus kept INCREASING in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The word used for 'increased' here is a very interesting word.

Increase = propkopto = to strike a way forward
 = to cut a way forward
 = to drive forward (as if by beating)
 = to beat or drive forward as with repeated strokes
 = to advance
 = to proceed, profit, wax, be far spent, etc.¹⁰

To 'increase' here implies a beating or active removal of obstacles or impediments in an attempt to get ahead. The word was actually used to describe the process of the lengthening out of metals by the hammering of smiths. Thus to attain 'increase' involves obvious effort on our part.

God **GIVES 'increase'** only in response to the activities of planting and watering.

1 Cor.3:6 **NKJV :** I planted, Apollos watered, but God **GAVE THE INCREASE.**
NASB : I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth

But **WE** have to plant and water **BEFORE GOD GIVES INCREASE** – there is something we have to do. We have to deliberately 'cut our way forward' into the realm or area we believe God is calling us to attain increase or a harvest.

The word 'propkopto' also contains the **idea of 'repetition'** - of repeated strokes in defining a way forward. This automatically calls for perseverance and endurance. At times you have to repeatedly, over a long period of time, engage in activities and sustain attitudes and mindsets that tantamount to you progressively carving out a new path of growth and increase for your life. We give up too easily and too prematurely. Stick with the program of striking a way forward and reap the results. Jesus cut His own path of increase in the four areas mentioned; He repeatedly engaged His mind and applied Himself actively to increasing in grace and this became apparent and evident to all.

Before His willing subjection of himself to Joseph and Mary, Jesus grew or increased in only two areas, viz. stature and wisdom.

Luke 2:40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

As a result of His submission, Jesus grew in four areas, viz. stature, wisdom, favour (grace) of God; favour (Grace) of men.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

The growth and increase of grace in the life of Jesus was evident and apparent, and was specifically noted in the words from His mouth. Just two chapters on from Luke 4, we read

Luke 4:22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the GRACIOUS words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Note that the people emphasised that Jesus is Joseph's son, and yet profound, heavenly gracious words are proceeding forth from His mouth. This is noteworthy – as result of His submission to Joseph as His earthly father, the release of the grace of God from His Heavenly Father was unhindered in His life. This revelation has got to sink deep within us. Active and willing submission to earthly spiritual fathering unlocks the fullness of God's grace in our lives, and this will become obvious to observers.

This will elevate your level of functioning even beyond what your associations with your spiritual father in the natural allows or accommodates. To the minds of the people, it was inconceivable that someone of Joseph's household could communicate words of grace ('gracious words') that Jesus was speaking. Jesus went beyond what His association with Joseph prescribed in terms of the expectation of people. Yet submission to Joseph was key to this process. David's mighty men performed feats in war that by far surpassed David's military prowess, yet they understood that it was because of their joining and submission to David that they were so successful.

▪ THE INSUBMISSION OF GEHAZI:

As was already indicated, submission is evidenced by obedience. Gehazi, a potential spiritual son to Elisha, manifested insubmission when he blatantly disobeyed and misrepresented Elisha in fraudulently extracting funds from Namaan. For this he suffered leprosy, and never walked in any dimension of the grace and anointing of Elisha, not did he receive favour from men. Gehazi did not receive favour from the King, but the Shunammite woman did. She accessed favour from the king because of her honouring of Elisha (See 2 Kings 4 and 8).

▪ THE SUBMISSION OF ELISHA TO ELIJAH:

For many years Elisha followed Elijah. At the time of the impartation of the double portion anointing of Elijah to Elisha, Elisha followed Elijah through four locations (See 2 Kings 2). These are cited below with the meanings of their names, all of which have spiritual significance.

Gilgal	=	Liberty; rolling away; a circle; (root = a wheel) ¹¹ .
Bethel	=	House of God ¹² .
Jericho	=	Place of fragrance; let him smell it; handling the devoted things; sent ¹³ .
Jordan (decent)	=	Descending; flowing down; Descending rapidly ¹⁴ .

The last location is the Jordan River, signifying humility and submission. This is the place of significant grace transactions and impartations of anointing. If there is no submission, there can be no transmission of the 'increasing' GRACE of God.

JESUS – FULL OF GRACE

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, FULL OF GRACE and truth.

John 1:16 For of HIS FULLNESS we have all received, and GRACE UPON GRACE.

Full = pléres = Full, complete; Abounding or Abundant¹⁵

Fullness = pleroma = Full measure, Abundant¹⁶

This word implies that there was no room left within Him that was not saturated in and with the grace of God. It highlights the plenitude dimension of grace with which God desires for all of us to be filled with, walk and function in. Progressively, we receive grace **UPON** grace' (Nasb) or grace **FOR** grace (Kjv). Grace is not given once off, but there is a continual downloading of it to us. There is no coming into the fullness of grace unless we master submission to God-established authority over our lives and embody the attitude and disposition of a servant.

This same word is used to described Stephen's measure of the grace of God:

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, FULL OF GRACE and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Stephen too learned how to SERVE TABLES first in humble submission to the Apostles, who delegated to him, along with others, the task of serving at the tables of widows (See Acts 6:1-6).

▪ THE SUBMISSION OF PAUL TO ESTABLISHED LEADERSHIP ACCESSED GRACE FOR EFFECTIVE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES

Authentic and legitimate spiritual leadership must recognise and authorise giftedness and calling to specific ministry functions in the Body of Christ and the wider Kingdom of God. This process is extremely important for the legitimate functioning of the person. To seek to function without human recognition and representative authorisation to do would be to function illegitimately. Specifically, the execution of significant spiritual roles and functions are best activated and its impact assured when the person(s) are regarded and sanctioned to function by their spiritual oversight in Christ (spiritual fathers). Paul and Barnabas were 'sent' from Antioch by the Antioch leadership (see Acts 13). Their 'sending' was not determined by the Antioch leadership. It was rather simply discerned by them and then they witnessed to it via the public recognition of it through the laying on of hands with prayer.

Acts 13:1-4

- 1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
- 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
- 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Compare verse 3 and 4 : V.3 : THEY SENT them

V.4 : SENT OUT by the HOLY SPIRIT

Who sent them? The Holy Spirit sent them, but this sending of God was discerned and co-operated with by men in the Antioch leadership team. Human actions mirrored Divine intentions. Paul and Barnabas did not just do as they wished. They were authorised to go by the Holy Spirit, but this authorisation was demonstrated by their submission to and co-operation with earthly leadership structure, which God placed them under.

Paul and Barnabas enjoyed great success in ministry, and part of the reason cited in Scripture is because the Antioch leadership team had laid their hands on them. Also, Paul and Barnabas would return to the Antioch church to give feedback of their ministry – they were submitted and accountable to human representations of the headship of Christ.

Acts 14:26 From there they sailed to Antioch, from which they had been COMMENDED to the GRACE OF GOD for the work that they had accomplished.

Note, the work was accomplished because they had been commended to the grace of God. The capacity to 'finish' divine assignments is a direct result of the operation of grace in your life (see Zech.4:5-7 - more on this later). Paul and Barnabas were accountable and submissive to the leadership at Antioch – they were 'under covering', which provided protection and the release and operation of grace. Grace for effective and successful function is released through the leader/ leadership God has placed over you. The Holy Spirit might have called them, but it required the impartation of the requisite grace through human leadership to successfully execute the task. The same holds true for you and I today.

Similarly, with the sending forth of Paul and Silas ...

Acts 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and left, being COMMITTED by the BRETHREN to the GRACE of the Lord.

The attempt to function in one's divine calling apart from operating in the requisite commensurate grace required for it, will result in failure and possible disaster. Note again in Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas, and in Acts 15, Paul and Silas, were COMMENDED or COMMITTED to the grace of God for very clear and specific tasks or assignments.

Commended/committed = paradidmi = To deliver over or up to the power of someone;
To surrender, to yield up, to entrust, to transmit;
To recommend to¹⁷.

In commending or committing them to grace, they were 'delivered up to the power of God's grace and entrusted to it' and not to their own strength, talent giftedness or apostleship. Great store was not held in the office, but rather in the grace of God which works through them and the office in which they functioned.

Conclusion:

Up until twelve years of age, the grace of God was ON Jesus. From twelve to thirty years old He deliberately and consciously negotiated His forward INCREASE IN GRACE, until at age thirty He was FULL OF GRACE. The singular statement cited as the main reason for His increase in Grace to the place of being FULL of Grace was His willing SUBJECTION to the leadership representation over Him. What was true of Jesus, holds true for us. Master submission and subjection and progressively increase in grace until you are FULL of it.

My desire for you and I is that we have grace **IN THE FULLEST MEASURE**.

1 Peter 1:2b **May grace and peace** be yours in the **fullest measure**.

The KJV translates verse 2 as 'grace and peace be multiplied'.

Fullest Measure / Multiplied = Plethuno = To make full; hence, to multiply, increase¹⁸.

MULTIPLIED Grace be yours in ever-increasing measure!

Randolph Barnwell

[See Endnotes Overleaf]

ENDNOTES

1. NASB margin rendering; Luke 2:49; no. 1.
2. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G1097
3. Ibid. #G4920
4. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G2597
5. Thayer, J.H. (1996), Thayer's Greek Definitions, Hendrickson Publishers, e-Sword X, Version 3.2. (11), Dictionary, #G3478
6. Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names (3). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.
7. Ibid.
8. Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
Jer. 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.
Zec. 3:8 Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you - indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.
Gen. 49:22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall.
John 15:1-3 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
9. Hitchcock, Roswell D. "Entry for 'Aaron'". "An Interpreting Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names". . New York, N.Y., 1869.
10. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #4298
11. Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names (3). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G4134
16. Ibid., #G4138
17. Ibid., #G3860
18. Ibid., #G4129

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