



Module : Understanding, Accessing & Growing in GRACE

Session 7 : An Open Heart of Love For Grace to Flow

Focus : Grace Dispensed from Open Hearts in Fathers to Open Hearts in Sons

In our previous session, we stressed the importance of being connected to an authentic Apostle of God. This apostle has an endowment of grace, which is also representative and inclusive of the entire five-fold ministry. So in referencing 'apostolic grace', we are not only focused on apostles but the entire spectrum of the five-fold ministry gifts. The ministry of the apostle is foundational to all ministry gifts in the Body of Christ (1 Cor.12:28 ff.; Eph. 2:20).

Spiritual leaders of spiritual households (churches) essentially function as spiritual fathers who represent the nature and will of the Heavenly Father to the sons given into their care and oversight. These spiritual fathers, irrespective of their unique ministry calling, must be relationally and covenantally connected and submitted to the grace, doctrine and counsel of an apostolic father. Ideally, this apostolic father should be an apostle, but at times the practical outworking of this economy can be complex, e.g. a spiritual father may themselves be fathered by an individual who is not an apostle, but is any one of the other five-fold offices. Still, in these instances, it is essential for this five-fold minister who provides fathering to the leader of a household, to be covenantally related to an apostle – an apostolic father, from whom they receive the grace of Christ vested in apostles.

The focus of the present study is to stress that a strong loving relational dynamic needs to characterise the relationship between those who impart grace and those who are intended as the recipients of the grace. All relationships in the Body of Christ must be rooted in and be expressions sincere love of the HEART¹. Relationships between Apostles and other five-fold ministers must be loving, honouring, respectful, etc. (e.g. see Galatians 2). The same holds true for the relationship between a Senior Elder and his/her spiritual father, be it an apostle or any five-fold minister. Also, at grassroots level, the same is to be true of the relationship between a spiritual father who leads a church, and the spiritual sons he is leading. The issue I want to stress is that all relationships are to be expressions of sincere love and honour, so that grace can flow unhindered. The quality of the relationship will determine how efficiently grace can be imparted.

Let us begin the Scriptural basis for our study with Paul's words to the Philippians:

Phil. 1:1-8

- 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
- 2 **Grace to you** and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 I thank my God in all **my remembrance** of you,
- 4 always offering **prayer with joy** in my **every prayer for you all**,
- 5 in view of **your participation** in the gospel from the first day until now.
- 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**
- 7 For it is only right for me to **feel this way about you all**, because **I have you in my heart**, since both **in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**
- 8 For God is my witness, how **I long for you** all with the **affection of Christ Jesus.**

In our previous study we highlighted that the Philippians were PARTAKERS of the grace of Christ resident within the Apostle Paul. In a later study we will give attention to some of the ways they practically did this. Suffice it for now to observe the fact that they were beneficiaries of a grace deposit stewarded by Paul as an apostle. What I want to stress in this study is the **highly loving quality of Paul's heart toward the Philippians and also their hearts toward him.**

Note that Paul speaks in **intensely affectionate terms** to the Philippians, e.g.

- ✓ "I thank God when I **remember** / think of you" : [verse 3]
- ✓ "When I pray for you, I **pray with joy** in every prayer **for you**" : [verse 4]
- ✓ "I **HAVE YOU IN MY HEART**" : [verse 7]
- ✓ "It is only right for me to **FEEL this way about you**" : [verse 7]
- ✓ "I **LONG FOR YOU** all with the affection of Christ Jesus" : [verse 8]

Paul's sincere and heartfelt affection was completely extended to this church. They too displayed their deep affection and love for Paul. There was an absolute sincere and significantly deep level of the spiritual 'father-son' relationship between them. This context is important to understand.

Two issues:

A. A SPIRITUAL FATHER/LEADER MUST LOVE THOSE HE/SHE LEADS

One cannot overlook the intensity of Paul's heart toward the Philippians. When a spiritual father feels warmly and passionately concerning his sons, the grace of God in him will flow from him/her to them. One of the biggest hindrances to the flow of grace is when the relationship is cold, strained or tense. He says to them, "I HAVE YOU IN MY HEART". Leaders are to hold their people in their HEARTS, not just in their 'heads'². Paul had the Philippians in the minds of his spirit and soul ("I remember you" – verse 3) as well as within the deepest

emotions of his heart. 'Heart-leadership' is the platform from which grace is to be dispensed. As leaders we should love those we lead with deep sincerity and intensity. In fact, a leader's love for Christ is reflective in how he loves and feeds/nourishes God's people (Cf. Jesus' words to Peter: "If you love me, feed my sheep"³). You are not leading if you are not feeding. Your feeding of the flock of God through impartations of grace via your ministry of the Word of God must be motivated by and be an expression of your love for God and His people. No one has the right to lead anyone whom they do not love. Any ministry or spiritual gift is rendered illegitimate if the motive for its expression is not rooted in love⁴.

A leader should be deeply affectionate of the people he leads, as the greatest grace impartations flow forth from the platform of an affectionate heart.

1 Thess. 2:7,8 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having SO FOND AN AFFECTION for you, we were well- pleased to IMPART to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because YOU HAD BECOME VERY DEAR TO US

B. SPIRITUAL SONS MUST LOVE THEIR SPIRITUAL FATHERS

The Philippians felt similarly about Paul as he felt towards them. Their love for him as their apostolic father commensurately matched his love for them. From the inception of Paul's ministry - from the time Lydia opened her home to him (Acts 16) - without interruption, they supported him in many ways, e.g. standing with him in the most difficult times of his ministry (Phil. 1:7) and by their financial support of him in a very significant way (see Phil. 4). They did not just partner with him supportively, but 'in the gospel', suggesting their actual involvement in the work itself. In a later session, we illustrate the practical ways in which spiritual sons are able to honour and support the mandate of God vested in and through their spiritual fathers and/or apostolic oversight.

The point I want to make in highlighting the two issues above is this: Love and affection is demonstrable and is a two-way street. It must flow bi-directionally between both fathers and sons. This is a hugely significant point if ever we as the household of God are going to maximise the flow of grace transfer. If anything taints, strains, dilutes the purity of a flow of love between fathers and sons, this would inhibit grace transfer, no matter how substantial the presence or potential of grace is.

While it is true that the grace impartation through the WORD/DOCTRINE and LIFE EXAMPLE of your spiritual father must define the nature and character of the father-son dynamic, there is a deeper level beyond the mere engagement with the Word. This would be when the relationship is characterised by ...

- a. Turned or Restored Hearts
- b. Mutual Honour
- c. Intense Love
- d. Accomplishment of Purpose (This will be explored in a later session)

ISSUES TO NOTE:

1. FATHERS MUST HAVE A TURNED HEART TOWARDS SONS

Both the one who carries and dispenses grace, as well as the one receiving the grace, is to have an open heart. This OPEN HEART must begin with the fathers, who impart the grace of Christ.

Firstly, a TURNED HEART is necessary if ever there is to be an OPEN HEART.

Mal. 4:5,6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (KJV)

The Hebrew word translated 'turn' here is 'sub', meaning 'to restore, return or re-establish'⁵. Thus the word 'turn' here suggests a RESTORATION. Things are only restored to positions from which they have fallen. The father-son dyad was always God's ordained principle in which He would not only make Himself known but also his methodology through which He would execute His purposes.

The heart of the fathers must be turned towards sons and the heart of the sons must be turned towards fathers. In the order of things in the verse above, the heart of fathers TURN first; then the heart of sons turn towards them. I believe fathers can demonstrate a 'TURNED HEART' of such great and sincere love for those they lead, that even the most hardened of hearts amongst their potential sons will be turned toward them.

In some parts of the global church, there is great expectation laid on people to function in spiritual sonship, but without a strong representation of fathering already present. Father's beget sons. Sonship will be the natural result to one who is a father and demonstrates that fatherly position and responsibility, motivated by great love (Consider that "sons were born to David at Hebron", a place of covenant, confederacy and conjugal relationships – see **2 Sam.3:2**).

2. SONS MUST HAVE A TURNED HEART TOWARDS THEIR SPIRITUAL FATHERS

Note in Malachi 4:5,6 cited above, it not just the father-son principle per se that has the effect of breaking the curse. It is the quality or degree to which the hearts have turned or are restored within this dynamic. I have met many spiritual fathers who can identify their spiritual sons and many spiritual sons who can point out their spiritual fathers, but the TURNING or RESTORATION within one or both of their respective hearts has not fully occurred. We cannot just be politically correct in having fathers and sons. The nature of these relationships demand all of your heart, or else, it will be powerless to break any curse. It is not the relationship per se that breaks the curse, but the intended GRACE transmittance within the relationship that is key to breaking the curse. But grace will only flow where the relationship is governed by sincere love from heart to heart. Love from sincere heart begins with 'TURNED HEART'

HOW IS A SON TO DEVELOP A 'TURNED HEART' OF LOVE TOWARD A SPIRITUAL FATHER?

How is a son to develop a TURNED HEART which will be characterised by deep love from an 'open heart' towards his spiritual father? This could be activated in the following ways:

- 2.1. Respond to the 'turned heart' of love in a spiritual father
- 2.2. Turn to 'See' the 'Voice within the voice' : Value the Word of God in the Voice of your Spiritual Father
- 2.3. Recognise and be profoundly aware of the Grace of God in your spiritual father
- 2.4. Honour the grace of God in your spiritual father.
- 2.5. Maintain an enduring disposition of intense love for your spiritual father within your heart

Let us give brief attention to each point above.

2.1. RESPOND TO THE TURNED HEART OF LOVE IN A SPIRITUAL FATHER

We have already alluded to the necessity for the spiritual father to be loving as reflective of the love of the Heavenly Father. To this love, a spiritual son will turn and respond reciprocally in love and honour.

We love God, our Father, because He FIRST loved us (1 John 4:10,19). Our love for Him is only possible because it is responsive to His love, which we receive. A spiritual father must LOVE much. All God's servants must be motivated by great LOVE for people in their ministries.

As love is demonstrated, this love received, has the effect of awakening a capacity to love in the ones loved. Fathers can awaken the love potential within their sons. Of course, just as many reject our Heavenly Father's demonstration of love, so too will many reject the love of a spiritual

father. But, the responsibility to love nevertheless is still required. If you are called as a spiritual father, you will always be as such, even to those who do not see you as their spiritual father. And as such, you will always LOVE.

In the Parable of the Lost Son recorded in Luke 15:11-31, after coming to his senses, the wayward son has the courage to act upon his internal resolve to 'go back' to his 'father', because he knew the character of his father to be loving and forgiving. Obedient and God-pleasing responses in sons can be activated because of the unwavering and unchanging loving disposition within fathers. Amongst other factors, the core motivation for a deviant son to return to the right place relationally with his father, will be the knowledge within him that his father has not vacated his place of intense love, that daily waits and looks out for the return of the son to his rightful place. The majority of leaders that I am familiar with within my sphere of working are credible men and women of God who have a heart of sincere love for their spiritual sons. Sons must respond to this love.

As much as I am amazed at the love of the father for the 'lost son', I am all the more in awe at the love he has for the elder son, who was equally 'lost'. The elder son never left his father's house, but left the representation of the father's love for the others son within the house. He is the 'older' but not necessarily the more 'mature'. He is the firstborn son in time, but not in rank, for the firstborn in rank is the son who is most like the father in nature⁶. All sons of God are to be firstborn sons in rank in Christ⁷. In responding to a father's love, a son must also love other sons as the father loves them.

All this begins with seeing the value and worth of a father, who quintessentially, should be an embodiment of the love of God, our Heavenly Father. When a son fails to perceive 'value' in a father, he will tend not to see value in his brother, the other son of his father. The great worth and honour ascribed to your spiritual father, positively shapes the view of your brother, whom your father loves; so you will love your brother in the same fashion.

1 John 5:1b " ... everyone who LOVES the Father LOVES WHOEVER has been BORN OF HIM."

We cannot love our Heavenly Father, whom we have not seen, without loving our brother, whom we see.

1 John 4:20,21 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Similarly, in my exhortation to you as a spiritual son to respond to the love of God demonstrated in and through your spiritual father, you are to love him/her and also give evidence of this by

loving the entire household of sons within your spiritual father's oversight. Within this culture of love, the quantum, quality and rate of grace impartation will be increased.

2.2. 'TURN' to 'SEE' THE 'VOICE WITHIN THE VOICE':

VALUE THE WORD OF GOD IN THE VOICE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

God is Spirit, full of GRACE. 'Spirit' has neither physical form nor constitution – it is invisible and cannot be seen with the natural eye. Spirit is like wind – breathe – or air set in motion. Grace is the anatomical make-up of God as Spirit. God, who is Spirit, does not have a physical mouth. He uses men on the earth through whom He may speak His Word.

Rom. 10:14-15a

- 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have **not heard**? And how will they **hear without a preacher**?
- 15a How will they **preach unless they are sent ...**

The 'Grace of God' is couched or contained in the Words that He speaks. Grace is imparted to men via the Word of God spoken to them. When men hear this Word with humility and great readiness of heart and mind to receive it, grace is imparted to their spirits⁸. When this word is obeyed, the soul is purified⁹ and progressively perfected and God's glory is displayed in nature and character for men to see and obtain a knowledge of God. Spiritual fathering takes place primarily through the release of the Word of God from a spiritual father to a spiritual son. No man of his own has the capacity to adequately spiritually father someone else. It is only through the grace of the Heavenly Father present within an earthly spiritual father that true spiritual fathering takes place. This grace is expressed through the medium of the Word of God from the father to the son. Thus, it is the 'voice' of the Heavenly Father expressed in and through the voice of an earthly spiritual father that truly fathers you. When your spiritual father speaks, one has to discern God's voice within his voice, i.e. discern "the voice within the voice" (this term is explained more fully below).

Recall that the Thessalonians received the Word that Paul brought to them as the Word of God, not the word of man:

1 Thess. 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe

John TURNED to see the 'the voice':

Rev. 1:10-13

- 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,
- 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."
- 12 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;
- 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle.

Note here that John hears a voice behind him. He then turns to SEE the voice. He does not turn to hear the voice. He is really concerned about SEEING the person from whom the voice is emitting. When he turns, he sees seven golden lampstands, which is a symbolic representation of perfected doctrine. 'Lampstands' is a picture of apostolic doctrine. In the centre of all of this, he sees one like the 'son of man', i.e. the voice he heard, which he now turns to see, came from man (son of man). The term 'son of man' is a reference to Jesus in His humanity (as apposed to 'son of God – a term that primarily references His divinity). The point to note is that the voice came through a human representing something divine.

Your earthly spiritual father is a human, pregnant with perfected apostolic doctrine, who when he speaks into your life, it is like a prophetic activation (as indicated by the phrase 'sound of a trumpet'). You cannot ignore this 'voice'. It is 'loud' and has the effect of transitioning you into the fullness of your purpose and destiny. You will know your spiritual father by this voice. It is the voice that has caused you to turn to see and regard it. You will never truly honour your spiritual father in the Lord until you have a deep awareness and knowledge of the fact that God's Voice to you is vested in and through him/her. If you do not TURN to SEE (honour/regard) the voice that speaks God's Word to you, you will not with an OPEN heart of love embrace the person whose voice it is.

God communicates to the entire church through the spiritual FATHER over that church, as is clearly evidenced in the pattern reflected in the verses above and also demonstrated in the letters to the seven Churches in Asia, all of which are addressed to 'angels' or leaders of each church¹⁰. God's Word and voice to you in terms of His speaking that established doctrine and core principles, is locked up within your spiritual father. The first step in having an open heart of love towards your spiritual father, is to first have a TURNED heart of honour that has responded to SEE and VALUE the voice of God in the voice of a human vessel. When a spiritual father speaks to you, he/she speaks representatively of the Spirit of the Heavenly Father.¹¹ Having a turned heart towards a spiritual father, in essence, is to have a turned heart towards God Himself.

2.3. RECOGNISE AND BE PROFOUNDLY AWARE OF THE GRACE IN YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER IN CHRIST

Paul had grace given to him for the Ephesian believers¹². If they are to access this grace, they have to embrace the person and representation of Paul. In representation, he was an Apostle as well as a spiritual father to them. Both these representations are representations of GRACE. Grace, designed to benefit you, is packaged in the personhood of 'father'. The matter of 'fathering' is not really about fathering per se, but about what it is intended to communicate, viz. 'grace'. When you value 'grace', you will value the 'carrier of that grace'.

The recognition by the spiritual son of the worth and value of the spiritual father and the GRACE resident within him/her is a key factor. If you do not appreciate highly the representation of spiritual fathering God has positioned in your life, you will easily be prone to vacillating in your love and honour posture toward them. In our previous session we indicated the importance of PERCEIVING or RECOGNISING grace¹³. Failure to recognise grace translates in failure to receive grace; failure to receive grace means that there can be no reward, advantage or benefit accessed.

The Negative Example of Lot: Lot could not perceive the grace of 'father' in Abram. The name '**Lot**' means '**veiled, covered, concealed or myrrh**'¹⁴ – hence alluding to the inability to see accurately, probably because of a root of bitterness¹⁵ (as suggested by 'myrrh'). He separated from Abram and thus the grace of '**exalted father**' or '**high father**', the meaning of **Abram's name** could not benefit him (see Gen. 13). His heart was not TURNED to Abram, but away from Abram even though Abram's heart was turned toward him. He elected to remain orphaned when the grace of fathering in Abram was made available to him to mature him into sonship. He could not 'exalt' (esteem/honour) the 'father' grace vested in Abram, and thus this grace, designed for his benefit, bypassed him.

Lot choose to forgo the opportunity of being included as part of Abram's legacy, in which all families of the earth are blessed (Gen.12:1-3). His disconnection from Abram brought his family into desolation (Matt. 23:37-39) and he with his daughters incestuously produced two sons, Moab and Ammon, who would in time become great nations, the Moabites and Ammonites, who emerged to be significant enemies of God's purposes in the nation of Israel (Gen.19:30-38). Moab, amongst other things, means 'What father?', i.e. it discounts the need for fathering. He (i.e. Lot) who could not see the value of fathering, produced an offspring (i.e. Moab), which evolved to be a spirit still present in the earth that denies the need for fathering. What you sow, you reap.

Abram's name was later changed to **Abraham** meaning '**father of a multitude**'. In English, this simply involves the addition of the letters 'a' and 'h'. In Hebrew however, the change demands the insertion of the fifth letter of Hebrew alphabet, 'HEY'¹⁶, representative of **an insertion of grace**, since the number five is symbolic of grace. Grace always attended Abram, but greater grace now attends him when his name is changed because now the ambit and range of his fathering grace is vastly extended. Herein are important lessons:

- (i) When the principle of fathering is 'exalted' (amplified, honoured, regarded and respected), greater grace attends that spiritual father to provide fathering in a far wider capacity. When you esteem the grace highly, that grace will increase to have its intended effect laterally. If you cannot lift up the fathering grace in honour vertically, that grace will not impact you horizontally. Grace flows downward gravitationally when you uplift and esteem the carrier of grace.
- (ii) Even Paul implied to the Corinthians, that the sphere or 'metron' of his own apostolic fathering grace will be extended to many more far and wide when their faith increases.

2 Cor.10:14-16 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.

- (iii) As a spiritual son, be aware that your spiritual father him/herself is growing in grace. As your father grows in grace, so should you grow commensurately in grace too. Timothy knew Paul's 'ways in Christ'¹⁷, a reference not just to Paul's character and nature, but also to how Paul progressed or moved in Christ – how he developed in the execution and finalisation of God's purposes in all things. Ruth, a spiritual son to Naomi¹⁸, said to her "your God will be my God"¹⁹, indicating that she coveted the quality of relationship she enjoyed with God. She also said to her, "where you GO, I will GO"²⁰, metaphorically suggesting that she will track Naomi's development and upward growth in her relationship with God.

Abram progressed from 'Abram' to 'Abraham', representing an increased grace endowment within him. Lot did not experience the benefit of 'Abraham' because he could not esteem 'Abram'. You will never come to experience the increased grace of Christ vested in your spiritual father by virtue of his own growth and development as a father, if you are not honouring him as he grows. Spiritual fathers who are ever increasing in their grace endowment from Christ Himself will have a grace configuration that has a much more profound character, stature and significance – and all this is designed to advantage you. If you celebrate 'exalted father', you will enjoy the benefits and blessings of the grace that attends 'father of a multitude' - Selah.

David's Men: The men who celebrated and followed David whilst he was still a fugitive from Saul in the cave of Adullam, found security and greater expression of their own giftedness when he was later crowned king at Zion²¹. They were initially in debt, discontented and in distress, but by accessing the grace of God vested in David, some emerged to be David's mighty men. Grace made the difference. They recognised and honoured the grace of God in David, even while David

was yet in his own process of development into the fullness of all God called him to. Stay the course in faithfully following, faithfully loving and faithfully honouring your father in the Lord as he grows in his own walk and destiny in Christ. Grace grows incrementally with development in your spiritual father also. As he grows – so will you.

Nazareth's Dishonour of Jesus: An inaccurate perception and poor esteem for what your spiritual father represents and embodies will render in vain (in your life) the grace he/she carries. Jesus could do no great works in Nazareth, his hometown, because they viewed Him as 'the carpenter, Mary's son' and not as the Son of God²². This bred offence and unbelief within them. Jesus equated this to dishonour, which stifled His intended release of grace there. Grace that is not recognised will not be honoured, and where grace is not honoured, Divine works are inhibited.

2.4. HONOUR THE GRACE WITHIN SPIRITUAL FATHERS/LEADERS

Honour is a huge subject and will not be thoroughly dealt with here. It refers to a disposition within a person by which they accord great worth and value to another, and hence will express the attendant esteem and respect to the other in tangible ways. To dishonour is to then have a negative opinion in the mind, whereby the other is deemed to have no significant worth or value, and hence they are lightly esteemed or altogether disesteemed.

When you submit to the temptation of becoming offended against an authentic and sincere servant of Christ who functions in a fatherly capacity over you, and this offence produces dishonour in your heart for this leader, you have placed yourself outside the range of the GRACE vested within them to be expressed through them. You can be so close to grace, and yet it may not impact you, because of the state of your heart. Always ensure a position of love and honour toward God-ordained, biblically accurate and spiritually relevant fatherly leaders. I have personally instructed my spirit and soul that they WILL NOT entertain the slightest notion of dishonour, disrespect or dis-esteem for God's leaders in my life – not EVEN FOR ONE SECOND!

You cannot discredit/dishonour an authentic and pure servant of God and simultaneously hope to access and thus benefit from the resident GRACE of Christ within them. Honour is prerequisite to and facilitative of grace transfer. Dishonour is a grace inhibitor. Firmly establish esteem, respect, a high regard and love for your spiritual father/leader as an unalterable and non-negotiable disposition within your spirit - so that GRACE can flow unimpeded. Deliberately establish an irreversible heart attitude of HONOUR within your being. Encourage others around you to do the same. Corporately, you will in time establish a CULTURE of HONOUR, which will become the environment that GRACE will gravitate to, saturate and permeate all who have generated it. Honour invites grace; dishonour repels it.

Eph. 6:1-2 Children, **obey your parents in the Lord**, for this is right. **Honor your father and mother** (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

The text above refers both to natural parents and spiritual parentage. The phrase “in the Lord” is also used in reference to spiritual fathering in 1 Cor. 4:5, where Paul said that he became a father to the Corinthians “in Christ”. In this text, honour is most powerfully demonstrated by OBEDIENCE to your father’s WORD or doctrine. But if there is no esteem for his/her person and the resident grace of Christ within them, what they commend will not be heeded. The spirit of honour must be engendered within us all. You will be amazed at how the grace of Christ will be abundantly demonstrated in your life.

Dishonour is probably one the most dangerous areas to venture into. You always lose. The temptation to be lured into this entrapment of the enemy is usually a test from God to check out the integrity of your own heart. I encourage us all to pass the HONOUR test. There is great reward when you do.

When a father is honoured with all sincerity and reverence, sons will also honour each other, creating a house of honour which becomes a house of grace. To reiterate a prior statement, when a son fails to perceive value in a father, he will not see value in his brother. GRACE thrives and multiplies within a HEART, within a CULTURE and within an ENVIRONMENT of mutual and reciprocal love, demonstrated in HONOUR among God's sons, irrespective of their role or ranking for functionality within the Kingdom. When hearts are filled with honour, hearts of honour will create a house of honour, in which grace thrives.

If love between fathers and sons is to be the context in which grace transmission is to be abundant, then honour, a natural outcome of demonstrated love, will be the fuel that ignites this love bonfire, so that grace could erupt, bursting forth to benefit all. Romans 12:10 below links love and honour.

Rom. 12:10 **Love** one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo** one another in **showing honor**. (ESV)

2.5. MAINTAIN AN ENDURING DISPOSITION OF INTENSE LOVE FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHERS WITHIN YOUR HEART.

No doubt, the relationship between a spiritual father and his spiritual son is defined by the flow of the Word of God in doctrine and life from father to son. King Josiah walked in the ways of King David, his father²³. Hundreds of years separated these two individuals, yet Josiah was remotely fathered by the principles that governed David’s life.

Within the context of a son being the recipient of WORD/DOCTRINE from his spiritual father, as well as the impartations of grace from the LIFE example of his father, intense LOVE and CONNECTION between the two must be fostered to facilitate grace flow and transmission. The rest of this study is devoted to this principle.

When a spiritual father loves deeply, he does not just impart doctrine, but his very life or soul as well. His life is his doctrine which has become flesh.

1 Thess. 2:7,8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also OUR OWN SOULS, because ye were dear unto us. (Kjv)

1 Thess. 2:7,8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well- pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also OUR OWN LIVES, because you had become very dear to us (Nasb)

The impartations of grace can grow exceedingly when the father is prepared to not just teach, counsel, correct, preach, etc. but when he/she is prepared to lay down their very lives and give themselves holistically over to serving the purposes of God in their sons. This they must do, without becoming too familiar that contempt is bred and the grace is disesteemed, for this does not benefit the son. Spiritual sons, on their part, must thus themselves embrace not just the WORD of their spiritual fathers, BUT their LIVES also. To desire the grace which they are designed to impart without embracing them as persons, is to fall short of the potential grace that could be imparted. In order to receive the full potential of grace, it is wisdom to also receive completely the carrier of that grace. To desire to access the grace without wholeheartedly receiving the grace carrier is like wanting to drink of a glass of water without wanting to hold the glass itself.



THE ISSUE OF CONNECTEDNESS TO THE HEAD:

Psalm 133: 1-2

- 1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!
- 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes.

Oneness (a more correct translation than 'unity' in the text above) is likened unto precious oil poured on Aaron's HEAD which flowed to the beard and then to his entire body, even reaching the furthestmost extremities of his robe. The consistency and uninhibited manner of this flow from the head to the body will be determined by the degree to which the body parts are connected to each other, and by which the body as a whole is connected to the head. Breakage at any point will result in a stoppage of the flow to the next part. Grace flows very similarly. The grace of God

in your spiritual head or spiritual father will flow to you dependent upon the quality of the partnership or joining and the degree of love.

Colossians 2:19 correlates the issue of connectedness to the 'head' with that of 'growth' and 'increase'.

Col. 2:19 and **not holding fast to the head**, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, **grows with the growth** which comes from God.

Here, the body grows with the growth that God gives for two reasons:

- the body is connected to the head (Jesus Christ)
- the contribution of each part of the body

The effective functioning of the Body of Christ, the Church, is largely determined by the extent to which there exists a 'holding fast' to the head. Contextually in the verse above, the head is a reference to Christ, the head of the Church.

Christ is functionally represented in men who function representatively of and for Him, the Head. For all that is in the 'head' to be transmitted to the whole body, there needs to be proper connection to the head, which also implies submission. For increase to be transmitted from the head to the body, there needs to be subjection by the body to the dictates of the head. If there is no connectedness and submission, there can be no transmission of the increase of God. In similar fashion, the grace deposit in your spiritual father or representative 'head' will flow to you in a consistent, unbroken stream when you are accurately, solidly and lovingly conjoined to him/her.

LOVING AFFECTION FROM AN OPEN HEART : The Corinthian Case Study.

The core issue is not simply the question of whether you have a spiritual father or not, but rather what is the quality of the relationship and the levels of observance of divine principles and protocols within that relationship. You cannot just be positioned in a politically-correct fashion, i.e. in the sense of being able to identify your spiritual father, who in turn recognises you as a son. The extent to which you are 'plugged in' is important.

Deriving total benefit from those who lead you requires that you have an **OPEN HEART** toward them. For maximum GRACE-impact upon your life, there must be a reception of both the message and the messenger. You cannot fully receive the full dimension of the power of the message or revelation until you embrace the messenger also. Grace is locked up within the person. To reject the person is to reject the grace of God in him/her that could benefit you.

In Galatians 2:9, Paul says that when Peter, James and John 'perceived' or recognised the grace given to him, they in turn extended the right hand of **fellowship** to him and Barnabas. **Fellowship** implies deep and intimate partnership, association and sharing. By this Peter, James

and John became recipients of Paul's grace. You cannot fully embrace the grace a person carries until you have learnt to embrace the person themselves. Reception of grace and truth (*recall John 1:14 – Jesus was full of grace and truth*) is conditional upon intimate relationship – otherwise, although a measure of grace may be imparted, it will not have the intended significant and enduring effect.

This requires **both the leader and those led to have open hearts toward each other**. But leaders can activate this process by their gentle, tender, affectionate style of fathering and leadership, built upon the foundation of a life completely embodying everything they desire to impart.

Paul was the Apostolic father to all the spiritual households of faith within the city Corinth.

1 Cor. 4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

The Corinthian church was established by Paul (see Acts 18:1-11; 1 Cor. 2:1-2). The church at Corinth was like the church in any other city. It was comprised of multiple households of faith (spiritual households or churches), each led by an elder, who was meant to function in a fatherly disposition over that household. Paul was the Apostolic father over this entire community. Each elder or leader of the multitude of households scattered throughout the city was in strong relationship with Paul, as an apostle. Paul fathered the city of believers in and through the leaders or elders of each household throughout the city. In this way, apostolic grace was disseminated throughout the city.

Upon the founding of the church in Corinth, Paul stayed with them for eighteen months. Thereafter, in his first letter he addressed many concerns, mainly moral, with them. After three years of separation from them, his relationship with them became somewhat strained. Corinth was invaded by a false apostolic expression in this time, and the effect of this subtly brought the authenticity of Paul's apostleship into doubt. Some outrightly denied that he was a true Apostle of Christ. This automatically would inhibit the intended flow and impartation of the grace of Christ from Paul to them. To deny that someone is an apostle ordained by God in your sphere, is to negate the potential reception of Apostolic grace attendant with that person. Paul had to argue for his apostolic credentials, e.g. see 1 Cor.9:1,2; 2 Cor.11 and 12:11,12.

Apostolic epistles addressed to a church would invariably be received by the leaders of the church as is modeled for us in the Book of Revelation, where the seven letters to the seven churches are addressed to the angel (leader) of each church²⁴. So then it would seem that the predominant relational strain would be between Paul and the elders/leaders of some of the households within the city of Corinth. This by extension would include the believers in the city. When a leader's relationship with the apostolic source to whom they relate is not cordial,

honouring and loving, then the flow of grace will be impeded to this leader and the people he leads.

As Paul cared for the Corinthians deeply, he pleaded passionately as a father to them in his second letter:

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange - I speak as to children - open wide to us also.

Note the meaning of the Greek terms used here:

Opened	=	platuno	=	To make broad, enlarge ²⁵
Restrained	=	stenochoreo	=	To crowd into a narrow space ²⁶
Affections	=	splágchnon	=	Bowels or inward parts ²⁷ ; symbolically the seat of emotions and passions ²⁸

2 Corinthians 7:2,3 Make ROOM for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that YOU ARE IN OUR HEARTS to die together and to live together.

Careful examination of the two Scriptures cited above reveal the following :

- Paul describes himself affectionately to the Corinthians as their 'father'
- With his mouth, he released spiritual resource, grace and revelation to them
- This was motivated and matched by his 'open heart' – imparting not just what came out of his mouth, but also his entire life
- He affirms the fact of his purity of spirit, motivation and conduct amongst them, and upon these bases, ...
- He appeals to them not to be restricted in their hearts with reference to him, but to open their hearts, making room for him and not to restrict him in any way.

From the point of view of the spiritual father, his/her heart needs to be WIDE OPEN, if ever his/her mouth is to SPEAK a GRACE-FILLED Word. I am of the view that if a leaders' heart is not opened towards his people, he could sermonise to them, but will never impart any measure of substantive grace because his heart or spirit, from which that grace is to flow, stifles the flow of grace. In this regard, spiritual leaders must excel in love, and if the spiritual father has a severe undealt emotional wound in his soul that inhibits his/her capacity to love, they should seek help from more mature sons of God (usually mature fathers in the Lord to whom they relate) who could walk with them, and by the power and aid of the Spirit, bring them to wholeness. A 'hurt' spiritual father cannot produce grace to heal the 'hurt' in spiritual sons²⁹.

From the point of view of a spiritual son, if you have been hurt or disappointed previously by leaders or authority figures from any sector, not just spiritual, and this hurt now causes you to be distrusting of credible and sincere spiritual leaders that God has placed in your life, then allow the Spirit of God to bring healing in this area of your soul.

Note that Paul urges the Corinthians not to RESTRICT HIM as their apostolic father within their own hearts and within the deepest parts of their emotions and passions. They literally 'crowded him out' as the Greek suggests. Crowding out suggests that one is displaced or suffocated by the overwhelming throng of many others within a limited space that can only accommodate a set number of persons. There are key relationships in your life that must be prioritised, viz. your relationship with God; your relationship with your spouse and children; your relationship with your spiritual father; your relationship with other believers; etc.

In Paul's case, the Corinthians were influenced by false apostles who sought to discredit Paul. In this sense others 'crowded' him out and he became displaced in their affections towards and honour of him. Never permit someone else's dishonour for your spiritual father in Christ to subtly lodge itself within your spirit. Never permit someone else's disrespect for your spiritual father to lure you into a mindset and covert or subtle expressions of disrespect. Never allow someone else's blindness as to what your spiritual father represents in Christ to cause you to lower your esteem of your spiritual father. At the bedrock of maintaining an open heart of love and deep affection laced with honour, is the desire to honour God and position yourself for a continuous flow and reception of grace.

In respect to the issue in the previous paragraph, I refer the reader to two passages of Scripture for your personal study – these are illustrative of the danger of entertaining dishonour toward God's servants and the effect of this to render you grace-deficient. There is so much truth in these texts, but I will mention the principle in brief here.

- Read **1 Samuel 25**. Abigail refused to allow her husband's (Nabal) dishonour of David, to be her mindset.
- **Matt. 7:6b** **Do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.**

In Revelation 21:12, the gates of the city of God (church) are pearls, symbolic of fathering leadership, which when engaged, grant you access into the protective culture and blessing of the city of God. Casting your pearl before swine in this regard would be tantamount to you permitting someone (swine), who fails to appreciate the value of your spiritual father, to discredit, deride, disgrace and dishonour them. Not to correct this would be to grant tacit agreement to it – you are allowing your PEARL to be trampled upon by others. The consequence of this that those who trample the pearl ultimately have the effect of tearing you into pieces. In other words, you, by condoning someone's blatant dishonour of your spiritual father in Christ, subtly erode the

protective hedge of grace meant to secure you. Abigail refused to be party to Nabal's disesteem of David - she did not 'cast her pearl before swine', and her bold intervention to honour David brought saving grace to her life and purpose.

Some theologians also argue that some Corinthians reacted negatively to Paul's correction of them, which he expressed in his first epistle. Herein is a caution. Never allow the correction of your spiritual father to result in offence within you. True spiritual fathers discipline redemptively from a heart of love. The inability to receive correction negates the reception of further grace designed to benefit you. (The issue of discipline is addressed in my study manual, 'Maturity in Sonship', freely downloadable from my website)³⁰

Contextually, 2 Cor. 6:11-13 occurs within a particular scenario. Slowly read the whole chapter:

2 Corinthians 6

- 1 And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the **grace of God in vain**
- 2 for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"
- 3 giving **no cause for offense in anything**, so that the ministry will not be discredited,
- 4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,
- 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,
- 6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,
- 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,
- 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true;
- 9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,
- 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.
- 11 **Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.**
- 12 **You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.**
- 13 **Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also.**
- 14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?
- 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.
- 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you.
- 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

In the verses preceding verse 11-13, Paul encourages them NOT TO BE OFFENDED, for this will render GRACE in vain. Be careful of offence toward your spiritual father entering your heart; it will render the grace of God in vain. This kind of offence may come from a lack of understanding an action or decision. Even at the exposure of his/her possible weakness, cover the fault/sin in honour. Remember, although they are your father in Christ, they are also your brother in the Lord, and the same protocols governing brotherly relationships and resolutions of conflicts or misunderstandings must apply (see Matthew 18:15-17).

The proceeding verses after 2 Cor. 6:11-13 contain exhortations not to be unequally yoked with the world and to be separated from worldly influences so that God could be a FATHER to them. This contains another reason why many spiritual sons do have an open heart towards their spiritual fathers as they should. Their succumbing to temptations in the world negatively impacts their innermost affections of love and honour toward spiritual leadership at times. This has the effect of resulting in dishonour.

Consider the possibility that Lot could not abide in proximity to Abraham because his heart was drawn towards Sodom, for immediately after their separation, he positioned his tent towards Sodom, a city representing carnal, fleshly indulgence³¹. If this be true, the strife between his and Abram's herdsmen became a convenient scapegoat for his disconnection. If a son internally harbours a strong and serious inclination toward a particular expression of disobedience toward God without willingness to correct it, and knowing that this action would contradict everything his spiritual father stands for, it will hinder any intimacy between them (as well as with God). If this persists, the opportunity for the father to administrate any little problematic issue, which is within the father's ability to resolve, will not be afforded to him/her. The son will use the issue as an opportune excuse to disconnect from the father, when all the while, he really wants to vent a hidden inclination of the heart, which he knows is incompatible with the nature of Christ vested in his spiritual father.

After Lot separated from Abram, he 'positioned' his tent toward Sodom³². By the time the angels are sent to warn him of God's intent to destroy Sodom, he is sitting 'in the gates of Sodom'³³, implying he became a leader in the city, for only elders sat in the gates of cities to make key decisions for the city. He was sucked into the culture of the city to which he was positioned towards. His proximity to Abram had a restraining influence over him, but having left Abram, all the restraints were removed and his righteous soul became vexed/tormented by things he heard and saw³⁴ in Sodom. Spiritual fathers watch over your soul, but if you refuse fathering, you submit your soul to torment. When you are not fathered, your soul will potentially be subject to anguish, misery and distress, as Lot's was.

A father represents restraint in the life of a maturing son, until such time as when the son matures, he is able to restrain himself. Until that time, to disregard the fathering principle, is to empower indiscipline that tends to keep the son entrapped in immaturity, a state that always defers the accessing of the son's inheritance³⁵.

Also, Lot in his capacity as an elder, was powerless to influence the culture in Sodom. Never underestimate the power of grace imparted to you through relating to your spiritual father – it confers upon you protection to keep yourself untainted by the world so that your ability to influence it may be maintained. Lot's words of warning to his sons-in-law to urgently leave Sodom fell on deaf ears – because it appeared to them as if he was jesting³⁶. He lost authority and power in his voice, that even when he was to save others by warning them, his words were powerless to convince them of the impending destruction. Lot became grace-deficient because of an absence of spiritual fathering that Abram could have provided to him. Remember, grace is primarily received by the hearing of God's words in and through your spiritual father. You too then are meant to impart grace by your own speaking, but if you deliberately elect to remain fatherless, your words become powerless, for they lack Divine authority that only grace can give.

BE GIVEN TO YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER AS YOU ARE GIVEN TO THE LORD

Consider the Macedonians – they gave themselves to the Lord AND to Paul.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

- 1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the GRACE OF GOD bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:
- 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.
- 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,
- 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.
- 5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and THEN TO US by the will of God.

The Macedonian church was GIVEN to PAUL, just as they were GIVEN to the LORD. Paul fathered them spiritually. They viewed him as a representation of Christ to them. They were unreservedly committed and loyal to him – being completely given in their hearts to him. If you are given to your spiritual father, just as you are given to the Lord and have an open heart toward Him, in like manner, you should have an open heart toward your spiritual father. This fosters greater love, affection and degrees of connectedness, and so **GRACE** will flow like a mighty stream.

Sonship is initially entered into by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (John 1:12). This sonship is to be matured from infancy all the way to maturity. This necessitates a continual downloading of the Grace of Christ, which comes to you in human form in the person of an apostolic father and/or spiritual father in Christ. Jesus said that whoever receives the one He sends, receives Him and the Father who sent him³⁷. When Paul went to the region of Galatia, the Galatians received him as Christ himself³⁸. In this way, as we receive the ones God sends to us in the capacity of spiritual fathering, we are receiving Christ Himself represented in and through

them, and every accurate reception of Christ in this fashion is designed to grow and mature your sonship in Christ. It is not about the person of your spiritual father; it is about GRACE you need to mature as a son and to be empowered to effect God's purposes. Fathering is the mode and method by which grace is meant to be imparted.

Much has been said in this study. I want you to remember and work on two things: (1) Love and (2) Honour your spiritual father in Christ. As you, WITH AN OPEN HEART, devoid of offence of any kind, commit to the two things above and to all their associated implications, I guarantee that the GRACE of GOD will increase significantly within your life.

We should all assess the state of our hearts:

1. Is my heart FULLY **TURNED** to my spiritual father in Christ?
2. Is my heart FULLY **OPENED** to my spiritual father in Christ?

Your heart has to be TURNED in order to be OPENED. In this context, GRACE flows effortlessly. The Psalmist was convinced that he would never be able to RUN, i.e. moving with accelerated speed, in expressions of obedience to God's Word, until his heart was ENLARGED.

Psalm 119:32 I shall run the way of Your commandments, For You will enlarge my heart

Grace comes to an open heart, one which has been enlarged by the Lord Himself, so that in your spirit you receive grace, the outward working of which will be obedience. Note the text above suggests that GOD HIMSELF can enlarge your heart. If you feel restricted within your heart to love your spiritual father, although you really desire to, then simply open your heart to God right now and allow Him to supernaturally enlarge you internally. The Holy Spirit is faithful to highlight potential hindrances, heal you of these and enlarge your heart to love your spiritual father and run obediently in the Word of the Lord, thus progressively advancing you to maturity in Christ.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the most profound examples of the father-son relationship is that between Paul and Timothy. Timothy, who became his 'like-minded'³⁹ or 'equally-souled'⁴⁰ son, was undoubtedly the recipient of an unusually significant grace deposit from Paul as is evidenced in the epistles he wrote to him. The framework and context for this however was an extremely strong bond of love.

Paul loved Timothy : **2 Tim. 1:2a** To Timothy, my **BELOVED** son:

Timothy loved Paul: **2 Tim.1:4** longing to see you, even as **I RECALL YOUR TEARS**, so that I may be filled with joy

Another example of this is the father-son model of Naomi and Ruth:

Naomi loved Ruth:

Naomi was passionate about securing REST and SECURITY for Ruth.

Ruth 1:9a May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

Ruth 3:1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?

Ruth loved Naomi:

Ruth 4:15 ... for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons"

Based on Ruth 4:15, the book of Ruth must be seen from the vantage point of the description of Ruth as a spiritual SON to Naomi, her spiritual father. Yet, more accurately, Ruth is not simply a SON to Naomi, she is more precisely, 'BETTER THAN SEVEN SONS'.

Ruth 4:15 "May he (*i.e. Obed*) also be to **you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age**; for your daughter-in-law (*i.e. Ruth*), WHO LOVES YOU and IS BETTER TO YOU THAN SEVEN SONS, has given birth to him."

This description of Ruth as 'better than seven sons' highlights for us the pedigree of spiritual son that she was. 'Seven' denotes perfection and rest. Ruth went beyond this because she is 'BETTER' than seven sons. As representative of the ideal spiritual son, Ruth is held up as a model or standard son. The name 'Naomi' means 'good, pleasant and agreeable'⁴¹ but its root meaning is 'GRACE'⁴². As a spiritual son to Naomi, Ruth became the recipient of great grace. There are many factors that led to this, but one was key, viz. the LOVE between them. The grace of God received by Ruth as a result of her obedience to every single one of Naomi's instructions, secured migration and upgrade for her in the following respects: she moved from ...

- not knowing Jehovah God to knowing Him intimately,
- being alien to Abrahamic promises to inheriting them,
- widowhood (husbandless) to marriage,
- barrenness to fertility (childlessness to child-bearing),
- begging in a field to owning the field,
- begging after the reapers to being their employer,
- gleaning one measure of unprocessed grain in the open field behind reapers to receiving six measures of processed grain at Boaz's threshing floor,
- poverty to wealth,

- belonging to a people that despised the idea of fathering (Moab) to being integrated into a tribe (Judah) of a nation (Israel) that would produce the promised Messiah,
- being without significance in her time to establishing a powerful spiritual legacy in and beyond her time - she is included in the genealogical record of our Lord Jesus Christ⁴³.

GRACE IMPARTATIONS FROM A FATHER TO A SON MADE THE DIFFERENCE! May you and I experience the difference GRACE brings within the father-son dyad.

Naomi, on leaving Moab and re-entering Bethlehem, was bitter⁴⁴, but she engaged the culture of the Word and Divine principles (like the Levirate principle) of Bethlehem (House of Bread) in Judah (representative of the apostolic). Because of this, she overcame her bitterness in order to release the resident grace vested within her as a spiritual father to Ruth. Ruth followed and clung to her while she was yet bitter because she perceived GRACE within Naomi that was intended to be discharged to her. Lot did not follow Abram in his journey from 'Abram' to 'Abraham'. Jacob's sons listened to him (Jacob) when he summoned them because they knew when he speaks, he does not speak as Jacob (supplanter) but as 'Israel (one who prevails and has power with God)'⁴⁵. For you as a son to maintain an abiding position of love and honour towards your spiritual father, look beyond his/her human weakness and perceive the Divine resource of GRACE they carry.

Foundational to a spiritual father's and spiritual son's commitment in their relationship and how it will be used to hasten the fulfillment of God's global purposes, is the necessity of strong love between them. Grace will thrive within a father-son relationship of pure and sincere, divine love from AN OPEN HEART expressed between the two.

With GREAT LOVE in Christ, may GREAT GRACE be yours in ever increasing measure,
Randolph

[NOTE: The issue of spiritual fathering and sonship will be dealt with as a separate module soon]

See ENDNOTES Overleaf.

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thamonaiddoo.com ; apostolicleader.co.za; soleyn.com; josephmaterra.org; touchthenations.co.za; lifeenterprise.co.za; elijahmorgan.eu; gmh.co.za; godihear.com; egen.co; peace.org.au

ENDNOTES

1. 1 Pet. 1:22
 2. Num. 11:12
 3. John 21:15-17; See Psalm 100 also
 4. 1 Cor. 13:1-3
 5. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #H7725
 6. Sam Soleyn at the Apostolic leadership Summit – Sandton 2016
 7. Rom.8:28,29
 8. Gal. 6:18
 9. 1 Pet. 1:22
 10. Rev. 2 and 3
 11. Matt. 10:20; 1 Sam. 23:2; Mal. 2:7
 12. Eph.3:1,2
 13. Here below is point 6 in the notes from the prior session, Session 6:
Grace Given to an Apostle and a Spiritual Father must be Perceived : In Ephesians 3:1,2 quoted above, Paul is emphatically stating to the Ephesians that he has in his person as an apostle, a deposit of grace from Christ that is earmarked for them. Failure to recognise and receive Paul as an apostle would abort the intended transfer of grace to them. What you fail to perceive of what God vested in another meant to benefit you, does not benefit you. Failure to connect with a credible and authentic apostle either directly or indirectly through one's spiritual father, will translate in failure to access a critical dimension of grace meant to mature you in the sonship in Christ. This grace must be perceived (i.e. seen/recognised/acknowledged) in order to be received.
 - Gal. 2:9** and **recognizing the grace** that had been **given to me**, James and Cephas (i.e. Peter) and John, who were reputed to be pillars, **gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship**, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- Peter, James and John perceived the grace of God given to Paul. This perception or recognition is a spiritual activity and capacity and not a natural one. Failure to recognise that an individual carries within him/her a specific deposit of God's grace, will naturally prevent any kind of participation in that grace. You cannot partake of a grace that you cannot perceive or recognise. Before the reception of grace there must be the perception of grace. Perception determines reception, which determines reward. Peter, James and John extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul – they began to share in the grace of God given to him and benefitted from this. Remember that the mystery of the church as a revelation was not given to another apostle, but to Paul, and so the other apostles had to relate to and partake in the grace of God in Paul, by which understanding of revelation could be made plain. (Here we see apostles relating to each other and partaking of the respective grace configurations within each one).
14. Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names (3). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.
 15. Bitterness is grace killer. Heb. 12:15 indicates bitterness will cause you to come 'short' of grace. You can be so close to grace but not be able to access it because of a bitter heart. Refer to my teaching on this issue on my website. Here is a direct link to the pdf doc : <http://randolphbarnwell.com/PDF's/Healing%20The%20Wounded%20Soul/2.%20Bitterness.pdf>
The audio teaching will be posted soon to the site.
 16. Bullinger E.W. (1967), Numbers in Scripture, Kregel Publications, 136
 17. 1 Cor. 4:17
 18. Ruth 4:15
 19. Ruth 1:16
 20. ibid.
 21. See 1 Sam.22 – 2 Sam.23
 22. Mark6:1-6
 23. 2 Kings 22:1-2
 24. Rev. 2 and 3
 24. Thayer, J.H. (1996), Thayer's Greek Definitions, Hendrickson Publishers, e-Sword, Ver. 9, Dictionary, #G4115
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 26. Strong, J. (1890) Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, S.T.D., LL.D., e-Sword, Ver.9, Dictionary, #G4698
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 29. I recommend reading my PDF notes and listening to my audio series, 'Healing the Wounded Soul' freely available on my website.
 30. Here is a direct link to this resource:
http://randolphbarnwell.com/PDF's/Maturity%20in%20Sonship%20manual/Maturity%20in%20Sonship%20Stages%20Manual_2.pdf
 31. Gen. 13
 32. Gen.13:12
 33. Gen.19:1

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34. 2 Pet. 2:7,8
 35. Galatians 4:1ff.
 36. Gen.19:14
 37. John 13:20
 38. Gal. 4:14
 39. Phil. 2:20
 40. The Greek term 'like-minded' in Phil.2:20 is 'isopsuchos', meaning 'equal in soul'. See Strong's #G2473
 41. Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names (3). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos.
 42. Ibid.
 43. Matt.1:5
 44. See Ruth 1 and 2
 45. Genesis 49:1-3