

Just Checking #138 JULY 2013

JAMES 4:1-10

He Giveth More Grace

Just what we need; just when we need it; always more than enough

This is one of my favorite verses in James (my memory still defaults to KJV.)

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

The context from which this marvelous promise emerges is the reality of our own sinful self-absorption that is the cause of our constant discontent, disquiet and disharmony.

James 4:1-5 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come **from your desires** that battle within you? **You want something** but don't get it. You kill and **covet**, but you cannot have what you want. You **quarrel** and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because **you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend** what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that **friendship with the world is hatred toward God**? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us **envies intensely**?

In a book by Martha Ostenso there is a far-too-accurate and convicting description of a young woman who bears too strong a family resemblance to us to deny our likeness to her:

“Edith was a little country bounded on the north, south, east and west by Edith.”

We, like Edith, live surrounded by ourselves. We guard our borders fiercely lest anyone step on to our closely watched turf. We desire...more. We want...more. We covet... more. We ask... so we may spend on ourselves. This is not someone else's problem. This is my problem. This is my battle. This is my internal depraved reality.

If the passage thus ended, we would despair. But out of the darkness of this completely accurate MRI of the soul, we hear a voice from the Great Physician: “Yes, it is as bad as you feared. Worse, really... But...”

Oh, is there hope to be found in that word of contrast.. “but”? Yes, hope indeed. “But... He gives more grace!”

WHAT HE GIVES: He gives **GRACE**

Grace. Grace is often described, and accurately, as “getting what we don't deserve.” And this is certainly true as far as it goes. Romans 11:5-6 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. We are

also reminded of Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. Grace is definitely not earned, deserved, or merited by the recipient. But as I said in our March JCI, *“Grace is not just getting what we don’t deserve, that is, unearned and unmerited kindness. But in reality, grace is getting the opposite of what we do deserve. We who deserve hell receive heaven. We who have earned wrath receive loving kindness. We who merit judgment receive forgiveness. You see, if I am poor and you give me unearned riches, that is compassion. But if I am poor, and then burn your house down, kill your family, and despise you, and then you give me of your riches, that, my friend is grace!”*

Grace is what we see we need when we see what we are with clarity. We need grace, not just because of what we’ve done, but because of what we are. The very fount of our being is evil. Excuse my poor grammar but.... ***“The problem is not just what we does, but what we is! It’s what we is that is the problem. We does what we does cause we is what we is: sinners! And that’s why we need grace!”***

WHO GIVES IT: HE gives more grace

God is the source of grace. He is the author of grace. He is the fountain of grace. He is the bestower of grace. Philemon 1:3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not look to ordinances, to rituals, to ceremonies, to sacred places or days to find grace. We look to Christ alone for grace. He is full of grace and of His fullness we all receive grace upon grace. John 1:14-18

HOW MUCH HE GIVES: He gives **MORE grace**

The clearer we see sinful, sin-filled, sin-saturated, sin-dominated, sin-permeated, sin-deceived, and sin-surrounded selves, the clearer we see that we need more grace than we ever knew we needed! And though the soul-diagnosis is worse than we ever knew, the glorious good news is that giver of grace gives more grace... more than we’ll ever need! We need more grace with every passing hour. And He gives more. We need more grace today than yesterday. And He gives more. We’ll need more grace tomorrow than today. And He gives more! We’ll need more grace till the moment we are glorified. And He gives more grace!

TO WHOM HE GIVES IT: He gives grace to **THE HUMBLE.**

God resists the proud who refuse to acknowledge their need. Refuse to see your need of grace? Then you will not have it! Come with your sin, your shame, and your self-centered self to the Holy One and you shall find more grace than you need. The humble person knows his weakness, his need, his lack, his failings, his faults, his desperate dependence on God for grace. And to the humble person God pours out more than enough grace to forgive, cleanse, restore, transform, and renew.

SELF CHECK:

- 1) Do I desire to be holy, more than happy? Is the James 4:1-5 description true of me today?
- 2) Am I discontent, disquieted and dissatisfied with life as it is today? In what ways? Why?
- 3) Is this a holy discontent with my present spiritual progress, or merely discontent over my circumstances?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Consider the following passages on the self-centered versus Christ-centered soul

Titus 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

“O God of all grace, I come to Thee as one in desperate need of that grace. There is no soul more in need of Thy grace than my soul. I come without excuse, for my all my sin is all my fault. I have none to blame but myself. You have shown me grace beyond measure. In Thy steadfast faithfulness I put my hope that yet Thou wilt shown me grace, yea more grace, once again. Through the grace-bought blood of Thy Son, give me more grace to cleanse me, more grace to fill me, more grace to change me, more grace to make me more like Thyself. Make my desires to be holy, my path to be truth, my motives to be pure, my words to be healing, my deeds to be pleasing to Thee and useful to Thy kingdom. Gracious Father, gracious Son, gracious Spirit, give me more grace to know Thee, abide in Thee and to glorify Thee now and forevermore. In Christ’s name I pray, Amen.”

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity,
owning nothing yet possessing everything
that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY