

God's Grace Makes You, You

1Corinthians 1:4-9 (ESV) I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, [5] that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— [6] even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— [7] so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, [8] who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

[4] I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,

Paul realized he had a lot of ground to cover with the church of God in Corinth so the Holy Spirit leads him to begin from a foundation of thanks. Even though he disagrees with them and is going to have to correct them, he still loves them, identifies with them together in Christ, and is thankful for the work that God has begun in their lives and the work that God is doing. It is so much easier to receive correction or help from someone that you know loves you and is thankful for you.

Paul follows the salutation with a statement—**“I give thanks”**. Thanks always has an object and oftentimes a reason. Rooted even in this opening statement of giving thanks to God for the church in Corinth, Paul is trying to redirect their hearts back to thanking God for the gifts they have received from him, rather than rejoicing in the gifts themselves.

Paul is thankful to his God at all times for the gift of salvation that God has given to the Corinthians in Christ. **Notice that Paul is presently giving thanks to God for the grace of God in their lives, for the gift of salvation that has been accomplished in Christ (past tense).**

(See Psalm 86:12 and Daniel 2:23)

Do we always give thanks to God for the gift of salvation (grace of God) given to us in Christ? Do we always give thanks for the relationship that we enjoy with Christ because of the grace of God in our lives?

[5] that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—

Not only had the Corinthians already realized the accomplished gift of salvation, but Paul reminded them that they had already been made rich in Christ in every way, and more specifically in all speech and in all knowledge. They had already realized what I would call “gifts of action.” The word “enriched” has the idea of “causing to abound in. All believers, because of their relationship in Christ, have already been made to abound in everything they need for this present life.

(See 2 Peter 1:3)

Every believer has also been given everything “in speech and knowledge” they need to communicate the gospel. All that remains is for us to faithfully speak on behalf of Christ and communicate the good news, as well as taking the knowledge of Christ that we have been given through the Word and the Spirit, growing in it and putting it to use. Our speech and our knowledge are gifts from the Lord meant to be used for his gospel and his glory, never for our own glory. That was the downfall of the church in Corinth and we need to be careful not to replicate it.

Do we realize that we have been given everything we need for life and godliness through Christ? Do we put into action the gifts of speech and knowledge that we have been given through Christ so that others will have an opportunity to hear the gospel and be saved?

[6] even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—

How had God confirmed the testimony about Christ in and among them? The gift of salvation and the gifts of the Spirit at work in their life were the evidence that God had brought about life change through their belief in the

witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. God confirms the work of Christ in our life to bring salvation through the evidence of a changed life and a changed heart. That does not mean we will be perfect and not sin. If we could be perfect and sinless apart from Christ we would not need God's forgiveness and grace. As one writer said, "It is because of sin that we need grace." Even though Paul had many issues to address in the life of the church, he still realized that God had saved the believers there and had confirmed it through the evidence of belief and a changed life.

**Do we see the evidence of the life-changing grace of God in our lives?
Do we have a desire to live out what we say we believe about Jesus
as Savior and Lord?**

**[7] so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the
revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Paul emphasizes again that they have been enriched in Christ in every way because of the gift of God's grace to save them. God has confirmed the evidence of their salvation through the equipping work of the spiritual gifts. They are not lacking in one single gift that they need to do life the way God wants. They are fully equipped through Christ for all of life, every circumstance, every situation. The key question for them and for every believer is will we put into practice what we've been given? **I may have every tool in the toolbox, but if I don't know how to use it I am ill-equipped. As believers, in Christ we have been given all we need for life. It's already ours. But if we remain spiritually immature, as the Corinthians were doing, we will fail to live in the blessing of the spiritual life Christ wants us to enjoy.**

Paul pointed out a tension in life that the Corinthians needed to understand and so do we. We live in this present tense/future tense dynamic. This already but not yet reality. We live in the present (made rich in and equipped in Christ with every gift we need to be a witness for him to his glory and to do life for his glory). We also live with this eager expectation of a future reality. We are anchored to, tethered to the hope of

the future unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Paul's theology, that future reality is meant to give shape and focus to our present reality. Because we are actively waiting in hopeful expectation of the revealing of Jesus Christ at the end of the age, we live today for him and equipped by him.

(See Philippians 1:23-24)

Do we live for Jesus today (focused on living all of life all for him) because we are eagerly waiting for him to return?

[8] who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians were in desperate need of a reminder who they were because of God's grace. God had saved them, gifted them for life, and God would see them through this life to the very day of the Lord. Some Bible translations of verse 8 say, **"who confirmed you to the end,"** because Paul used the same Greek word as in verse 6. Our salvation is secure in God through Christ and so is our future eternity with the Lord. God will sustain us to the end, the duration of this life from our salvation to our final glorification. The work that he started in our lives through Christ at salvation, he will complete. We will one day stand guiltless or blameless before the Lord, because in Christ we have already laid claim to the righteousness of Christ. For Paul, we all need to realize that everything we are and everything we have has been accomplished in and through God and Christ and the Spirit.

(See Philippians 1:6; ***Matthew 25:31, 46) ***Day of the Lord

Take a moment and simply pray and thank the Lord for his work in your life. Rejoice in the sustaining power of the Lord to one day accomplish the work he began at your salvation. Rejoice in the Lord that you stand in his righteousness alone and NOT the guilt of your sin.

[9] God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul closes this section of thanksgiving to God by emphasizing the “Why” of salvation. God is faithful or as the literal Greek wording reads, **“Faithful is God.”** The grace of God comes to us because of the faithfulness of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, He calls, summons, invites us into the fellowship of his Son. He calls us to participate in this beautiful partnership or oneness with Christ. What is the most important thing? Your relationship with Jesus and how that one relationship impacts every other relationship. You and I were made for relationships. Thankfully, by God’s grace, we have been saved. We have been given the gift of salvation. We’ve been given gifts of action that have equipped us to be gospel messenger and to live all for God’s glory. We’ve been given the hope of a glory with Christ and a righteousness that is not our own. Praise the Lord for his grace and his faithfulness!

What steps can we take to live every day in the “oneness” relationship that we have been given in Christ? In moments when we are not faithful (and there will be some) remind yourself, “Faithful is God.” He will see you to the end.

(See Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 145:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:24)