



Knowing the Holy Spirit and God's Love

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with links to reference scripture

Generations after we are dead and gone what in our existence will have mattered?

For those of us who have come to know the greatest commandment, God offers to share a role in what he holds most precious. There are names of our generation in the Lamb's book of Life that are in need of discipleship. What can make our existence more valued throughout eternity than fulfilling the role God offers to us of our neighbor coming to know salvation?

Many Churches reach the widest portion of their congregations by focusing on the first and greatest commandment. **This booklet** extends the relationship we are learning with Jesus in the first commandment and applies it to the second commandment. [John 15:1-11 \(RSV\)](#), It requires us to abide in Christ, if our life efforts are to produce eternal fruit.

Practical application of Christ's teachings comes through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [John 14:26](#)

Imagine how our lives can change when we reach out to God and happen to ask for a gift He has been waiting to give us.

Our own journey toward the "learning of grace" was accelerated when we began praying: *"Lord, teach me to listen and to possess a heart that is willing to hear."*

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Grace

Introduction

Come to realize the depth of love that our Heavenly Father goes to in encouraging us to change our decision-making from an earthly perspective to include Heaven in our concept of life.

What is Grace? *Grace is a gift through Christ's sacrifice* for those willing to receive it. Grace can take us from our current state and raise us to the standards in heaven where God's will is done. The acceptance of this gift requires a *willingness to learn* what God would have us know.

We are not forced into this growth; we must seek it. Because it is voluntary, many opportunities pass us by where God offers to extend grace to us. Many times our growth is stunted because *we assume our judgment is adequate* rather than seeking the Holy Spirit to help teach us God's grace.

Self-Reliance Vs. Grace

Chapter 1

Imagine the patience the Holy Trinity (God the Father, Jesus the son, and the Holy Spirit) have during times of our spiritual blindness.

For example: The Disciple Peter's thinking repeatedly focused on the "*here and now*." Such thinking failed to take into account "God's will" which includes a perspective of his creation throughout time.

1. Matthew 14:22-33 Peter loved and trusted Jesus with his life. None of the other disciples got out of the boat in rough seas to walk on the water.
2. Matthew 16: 15-23 Jesus explained to his disciples that He must suffer, that he must be killed, and that He would be raised on the third day. Peter relied on his own "humanistic thinking" refusing to take into account "God's agenda."
3. Matthew 17:1-8 **The God of the Universe** even tells Peter to listen and take into account what Jesus is teaching.
4. Matthew 26: 31-35 When self-reliance motivated Peter to pledge his loyalty to Christ, Jesus informed Peter that he would deny Christ three times that same night.
5. Luke 22: 54-62 Upon the third denial, Christ looked straight at Peter. Peter left and wept bitterly. This incident brought Peter's self-confidence to an all-time low.

Peter's denial was a "symptom." His recurring problem involved Peter not allowing God into his decision-making process.

The Degree of God's Love

Chapter 2

Despite Christ explaining to Peter, the Father himself telling Peter to listen, and Jesus responding with as strong an language as, "Get behind me, Satan!," Peter was undeterred from thinking he was going to protect Jesus Christ.

John 18: 7-11 Peter ended up using a sword to cut off the ear of the servant who was among those arresting Jesus.

Had Peter's decision-making prevailed, Peter's violence may have continued until himself and others were killed. Had Peter prevailed, the moment may have been remembered as a *bloodbath* rather than the time that Christ was *submitting* himself for the salvation of mankind.

1. Peter was like many modestly mature believers; willing to die for Christ, but *blind to his role* in living for Christ.
2. Luke 22: 51 Jesus performed the miracle of healing the servant's ear because God's plan worked around Peter's spiritual immaturity.
3. Christ's message is that God's new relationship with man *does not give* up on those who love Him! God then offered Peter additional opportunities until Peter finally comprehended the message!

At what point did Peter learn to listen to "God's will?" John 21:1-19

What explanation is there for Jesus to ask Peter if he loved Christ more than this catch of 153 dead fish? [John 21: 15](#)

Had Jesus **not** intervened, just how many successful catches would it have taken for the disciples to return to their routine of fishing and **ignore** sharing Salvation to the World?

Peter love the messiah with all of his heart and mind yet, [Peter's soul had not yet learned to love Christ's spiritual direction.](#) (The greatest commandment is not quite as simple as it appears.) Such love aligns our direction with that of Christ. [John 15:1-11](#) specifically verses 4 and 7.

For Peter to comprehend this, it took humility from the master as taught in the washing of the feet. [John 13:2-17](#)

[John 21:1-19](#) How did Jesus ask Simon Peter that second and third time, "**Do you love me?**" and then plead for him to "**feed my sheep.**" Potentially, the member of the Holy Trinity had tears in his eyes as He created this pivotal moment. This dearly loved child was to finally learn; *["quit drawing your own conclusions and yield to the spiritual direction of God."](#)*

How do we ask for this grace? Prayer to the Father seeking His will, based on the Word of the Son ([John 1:14](#)), and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us.

We cannot comprehend the patience or the depth God's love for those who are open to learning this lesson.

The Holy Spirit

Chapter 3

Is there a benefit to being Born Again and then proceeding to seek righteousness?

(John 14: 15-26) ¹⁵⁻²¹ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be^[a] in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

²³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

²⁵⁻²⁶ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

We may recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit most commonly during times of "my will to thy will" submission before a Holy God. A Born-again Christian may be going from a heart of "I am only willing to do," transformed to "**What would you have me do?**"

God allows us to learn "how to serve" Him through prayer. Some appreciate the presence of the Holy Spirit beyond submission to aid in discernment. The Holy Spirit offers to teach us *how to apply* Christ's teachings. However, this requires our willingness be open to receive his grace (gifts of spiritual learning) rather than rely upon our short sightedness. It is done through prayer and an awareness of how He responds.

Have you ever asked a Christian of true maturity for a long-term commitment? Much of the time their reply may be, "*I'll get back with you.*" During the following weeks they may spend time on their knees seeking the direction in life God would have them take.

Practical Application

Chapter 4

When we pray to God the Father, his response may be through The Holy Spirit also known as the Holy Ghost. He can use many forms of communication with persons who know him and those who are about to learn of Him. While "the presence of the Holy Spirit" may have a physical sensation at times, such experiences should *not deafen us* to the many opportunities of learning and direction that the Holy Spirit offers.

Let's start with a personal testimony as to the [timing](#) of the Holy Spirit and then proceed to other forms of communication that may more commonly occur.

A man on social media expressed deep despair. A person then started praying for the man, "[Thy will be done.](#)" After praying weekly, two months later while praying, a thought suddenly occurred, "[Be a friend.](#)" Not having seen the man in years, out of faith the person appeared at the man's door step that next morning not knowing what to say or do. The man did all the talking, stating he had handed his problems over to God that prior evening. The issues were so overwhelming that the person listening had no answers, but simply invited the man to church. The sermon *happened* to be on love, [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#), which initiated the first step of the man's life being rebuilt within Jesus Christ and his marriage later restored.

The more determined *our will* is to locate God's direction for us, the greater our ability to proceed with an "open obedience" in following His will. With such a degree of submission, the Holy Spirit may send us "[clues](#)" for our initial "moves" that may develop additional trust or overcome other factors within our personalities that hold us back from learning at a faster rate. When looking back, we can appreciate the [love shown](#) by choosing to *work on us* first. As we grow in his grace, opportunities for [effective](#) service may be blended in. Our prayer may change to asking for "guidance not to stray from His path" so that we do not delay God's progression of events.

It is rather like a game of chess. Each potential move has a number of options which affect ongoing moves. Those of us experienced in seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit may not

initially have their questions answered. However, they are open in seeking out the **clues** that result in more beneficial moves along the way. Those without patience to follow His guidance may “**assume**” they have received their answers from God without doing the degree of listening that is required. This “mis-move” may cause delays in achieving the destination God desires for us.

A recent set of “clues” occurred in my own life:

At first, I thought this booklet was complete at six pages in length. However, when I went to translate it into another language, I immediately ran into a mental block. Why could I not proceed with this routine and simple task?

Previously in my walk with the Holy Spirit; when a “statistical unlikelihood” confronted my path, I began to evaluate whether or not the **clue** was **alerting** me to something.”

Several things were going on in my life:

- A man from Africa had e-mailed our ministry regarding his struggle in receiving Christ.
- A friend had recommended a certain book on Christianity for me to read.
- I did not quite grasp the conversation I had with a man who was experienced in campus ministries.

Because of “**guidance**” from the Holy Spirit,” I followed up on all three options with extra care since I was unsure what my next “chess” move was. As time progressed, my earlier conversation with the campus minister promoted new learning and additional insight which helped to extend this booklet.

As in the life of Peter, our [effectiveness](#) in serving God corresponds with our ability to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Why Might this be Important?

Chapter 5

From a heavenly perspective, what might one [speculate](#) the function of earth to be if not for producing souls for heaven? We may comprehend that it is important to “Love the Lord, your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul and with all of your mind” [Matthew 22:37-39](#). Yet, how many of us regard “love your neighbor as yourself” as good advice rather than honor it in our heart as a commandment?

We may think about our relationship to God in heaven. However, what relationships will we have with our fellow souls in heaven? Consider how we pray to God. Is it by sound waves or by thought? *Speculation* might have us communicating with fellow souls by thought. If so, could we live in harmony in heaven with [anything less](#) than “loving our neighbor as ourselves?” Potentially there is a [reason](#) for us to start learning such things on earth.

Our final degree of learning is likely to be received as a gift. However, no matter the level of progress we are at, [our willingness to receive](#) this gift is determined on earth. We are given [free will](#) to choose to receive God’s gift of grace.

If we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, certainly we would want to offer our neighbor this opportunity. Jesus speaks of our responsibility to share this, within parables. [John 15:1-17](#), Matthew 13:[1-9](#) & [18-23](#), and [Matthew 25:14-30](#).

Perhaps the reason many of us turn a blind eye to this responsibility is that we do not feel we have the skills to develop such a conversation. *There are alternatives for those of us with lesser talent* so that **we** may also be effective in this service to God.

The Message of Grace made Easy

Chapter 6

Christ's message is a simple one:

God loves us. He is offering his gift of grace (spiritual learning) through Jesus that we may rise to a level of obedience which is *acceptable* in His holy presence in heaven. God's will is done in heaven, and He wishes to prepare us for that day. God simply asks us to provide the willingness to receive these skills so that our relationship may flourish.

A prayer of re-birth needs to be understandable:

Dear Heavenly Father, I have placed a lifetime of selfishness ahead of your will and wish to turn from my sin. I ask for your forgiveness. I now give to you my **entire** existence, my hopes, my dreams, and my ambitions. Please be my Lord so that I may submit to your desires ahead of my own. Allow your will to become my motivator for the remainder of my life. Amen

Why are hearts reluctant to receive Christ's message?

Jesus Christ is asking us to give up many things which makes us feel secure and that we cherish, and to place God's will as the *first* priority in our lives. We are then expected to submit to a spiritual re-birth similar to that of an infant who is open to experiencing a whole new world of learning.

The first step in the hope of changing a heart begins with prayer, asking “His will be done” for that individual. Be patient in prayer. God’s timetable in offering special opportunities may reach into years or decades rather than days or months.

For those of us who lack the talent to develop a conversation on faith, *we still have the ability* to share the printed Word. Our own booklet is available at: realprayer.org/en/sharing



Such booklets can be mailed with get-well cards or notes of caring. They can be delivered in person with a smile, and the words, *“I have a gift for you.”*

Sharing by *e-mail attachments* or *social media links* may require a greater follow-up to promote the booklet to being read.

While “evangelism booklets” or Bible tracts can bring a message of value, the individual may need further support to answer their questions. Pray for guidance and evaluate options including those resources within your church. *Could you offer to accompany the person to church?*

While young children tend to be very open in their learning, their expanding minds may have questions. It is essential any questions are answered in a way the individual finds relatable. If not, things of faith may be tuned out. Later, faith may only be a consideration at *moments of personal struggle* when the individual’s norm is no longer within their comfort zone. Such

times need to be evaluated. Is the individual being open to spiritual learning?

Rather than provide a set of predetermined answers, do we have an experience in our own personal growth where Christ touched our lives that relates to the question being asked? If we don't have an answer to a question, consider prayer and asking God for his path. We are not alone. There are options and clues through resources beyond ourselves. There is nothing wrong with replying *"I do not know, but I will get back with you."*

People with questions about God can sometimes *sense* an environment where the Holy Spirit is present. It can occur with one-on-one counseling. The environment is strengthened when like-minded individuals are in a small group such as bible study, or around a camp fire at a retreat. Those who are blessed like Billy Graham can foster such an environment on a larger scale. Ingredients include gratitude, submission, and a humility before God. Opening in prayer which touches upon this topic may be a consideration. After such resources are provided, if the time is right, do not forget these five words: *"Will you pray with me?"*

The bottom line is that it takes a great deal of **trust** in both the message and in the messenger for us to reach into the unknown to ask God to come into our lives. Not only does the message need to be delivered, it needs to be personalized to correlate with the questions being asked.

A Step toward Spiritual Maturity

Conclusion

Some church leaders who obtain great results do not view themselves as leaders, but as servants that possess some spiritual maturity in recognizing God's direction. An opportunity for service that begins with apprehension can turn into an adventure as we anxiously await, "*What comes next?*" Pride can give way to humility upon realizing these accomplishments do not belong to us. It is by His design. We were simply called to help along the way.

What is viewed as Christian leadership can fall back to the washing of the feet. ([John 13: 12-17](#))

How far into God's grace will we take ourselves and others during this lifetime?

Does our prayer life overly focus on asking for "this or that" as we attempt to balance on top of our wobbly path? Peace of mind comes from the result of asking to be taught the things needed to navigate our way upon His path.

What appreciation is felt at the point we comprehend the grace, patience, and love that God provides during this instruction in preparing us to be in His holy presence.

A prayer to consider:

Dear Heavenly Father, teach me your grace that I may learn the things that you would have me know.

Amen

Link to John 15:1-11



Are we abiding in Christ?

Does our prayer ask for God's help in our plan or does our prayer ask for direction within His plan?

When our own words are not enough,
try sharing the "Real Prayer" booklet
by printing it, e-mailing it, or using a
social media link.

realprayer.org

