

## Activating Grace

### John 17:9-11

(9) I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

(10) And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

(11) And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

### John 17:15-17

(15) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

(16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

(17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

### 2Co 12:7-10

(7) And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

(8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

(9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

(10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

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The key to victory with Jesus is LEARNING TO COOPERATE WITH ALMIGHTY POWER.

ACTIVATING GRACE.

The biggest hindrance to victory with Jesus is NOT UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MUST APPROACH IT.

- What is the first thing people think about when they think of becoming victorious?
- What do they think they must do?
- How must they approach it?

This message from God is to enlighten you and explain to you that YOU CANNOT LIVE THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Only one person can do it and it is not you nor is it I.

Jesus did not pray for the world in his last prayer in John 17.

- He did not even pray that His people be taken out of the world of troubles and turmoils.
- BUT HE PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD "KEEP"US FROM THE EVIL IN THIS WORLD.
- PROTECTED from the evil while still in the world.
- This PROTECTION is a form of STRENGTH that God works in our lives that protects us from falling before evil.
- AND IT IS GRACE!
- GRACE means DIVINE EMPOWERMENT.

We need to learn how to activate grace in our lives and enjoy this KEEPING PROTECTING power.

Paul related an experience in prayer that helps us understand this truth as well.

- He prayed for his surroundings to change.

- He prayed for his trials to cease.
- But God refused.
- Just as Jesus prayed, not to take us out of our world of troubles, but TO PROTECT US WHILE IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS WORLD.

God answered him saying, "My grace is sufficient for you."

- All that you need in your situation is not some elaborate deliverance from everything that goes bad.
- You simply need GRACE.
- MY POWER UPON YOUR LIFE.

Paul then realized how God works!

- He discovered an awesome and amazing realization!
- He became a fool in glorying in infirmities.
- God told him that when he was weak then God's strength was perfect and full and complete!
- God allows infirmities to remain in our lives because they manage to humble us and not allow us to think more of ourselves than we should, because GOD REQUIRES OUR WEAKNESS.
- This means our pride and know-it-all, and over confidence in ourselves, HINDERS HIM.
- You see, when we look to ourselves so highly, WE WILL NOT LOOK TO GOD FOR HIS STRENGTH.
- And if we do not look to God, God cannot do anything for us.

God weakened Paul enough to be able to get Paul out of the way and work in Paul mightily with HIS POWER!

Too many people get in God's way.

- THEY are too strong.
- When THEY get out of His way, and get their minds on what THEY can do, then they can call out to God for help, for HE is realized to be strong when WE are weakened.

And GOD'S GRACE is HIS STRONG power there for us!

- That is why God said HIS GRACE is enough for Paul.

The full potential of God can only work for you WHEN YOU SEEK HIS STRENGTH to empower you.

- He actually requires you to ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH IT TAKES TO DEAL WITH SOMETHING.
- If you do not ask, it is because you automatically assume you have to do it in your own power.
- You do not even think to ask God for strength.

Gal 2:20

(20) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Notice what Paul said about Himself.

- "I am crucified with Christ."
- That is utter weakness.
- Paul was baptized into Jesus' death, and he knew it was necessary because PAUL and PAUL'S POWER was only a hindrance to God.

Did Paul live a strong victorious life?

- No!
- He said it right here!
- Here he tells us who the only one is who can live a victorious life.
- JESUS CHRIST!
- CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.

And then Paul said that HE DID NOT FRUSTRATE GOD'S GRACE.

Gal 2:21

(21) I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Recall that Paul only needed God's GRACE in the midst of trials, instead of

some supernatural lift away from out of his problems.

- He learned that WHEN HE IS WEAK, the God's GRACE is strong.
- So he found out how he had been FRUSTRATING GOD'S GRACE.
- HE was living forth HIS NATURAL LIFE with it's NATURAL STRENGTH to deal with problems.
- God finally WEAKENED Paul enough for him to cry out to God for help.
- THAT is where God wants us all to be!
- Weak enough where we give up trying out our own power and abilities, and DEPEND UPON GOD'S POWER.

Would it not be wiser to REMAIN WEAK all the time, and not force God to have to put a thorn in your side to get you to see that your natural efforts are only frustrating God's power from working IN YOU and STRENGTHENING YOU?

- How do "we" remain weak?
- We simply relegate ourselves to the fact that our strength is not strong enough, so we might as well not even try using it, and simply ALWAYS depend upon God's Spirit to strengthen us instead.
- Simply say, "God, I know my strength is not strong enough. Without you I can do nothing! So I lock onto you like a branch to a vine, so that YOUR LIFE can have freedom to flow through me and EMPOWER me to deal with anything that comes my way. I will not frustrate your power from working by thinking I can do it myself without asking you to empower me. I remain WEAK so your grace can work and your power can work mightily in me."

We can think so highly of ourselves, and that plugs up our vessels until God cannot flow through us.

- We are nothing.
- We must realize we are nothing but vessels.
- Stop thinking so highly of yourself, if you have a problem with pride, and realize you are frustrating God's grace from working in you due to your infatuation with yourself.

You must give GRACE an opportunity to work!

- If you never think to ask God's Spirit to strengthen you, then you forever frustrate His Spirit, and He does not work in your life.
- Give miracles an opportunity by stepping out in faith into an otherwise impossible situation, and believe GOD CAN WORK ANYWAY!

Rahab took a leap of faith in Jericho and put her neck on the line by harbouring the two spies.

- This risk is like risks people take when they step into impossible situations but trust God to be there for them.
- God saw that and put Rahab into the genealogy of Jesus Christ!
- It's this kind of faith that JESUS COMES THROUGH.

It is a step of faith to not even try to use your own power and instead ask God to empower you!

- Jesus comes through THAT KIND OF FAITH!

The only key to all of this is to simply GIVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY!

"Paul, my grace is sufficient for you. But always remember -- so long as you are weak then and only then is my power able to work in your life. But as soon as you think you can handle it yourself, thinking you're strong, then you frustrate my grace and I will not empower you."

Grace is for you, so it will not work against your will.

- It will not fight YOU.
- Cooperate with the fact that you are dead!
- The Spirit of glory raised Jesus from the dead.
- YOU DIED WITH HIM IN YOUR BAPTISM.
- He can only QUICKEN those who are dead with Christ.
- If you act like you are alive and need no power from God, then he cannot empower you because you do not agree that you died.
- Paul knew he died and was crucified with Christ.

- So CHRIST WAS ABLE TO LIVE IN HIM -- and the SPIRIT OF GLORY QUICKENED HIM.

It is a spirit of resurrection.

- It cannot resurrect unless there is death.
- And you might be dead with Christ by baptism, but unless you AGREE WITH THAT and consent to it's reality, then you are left helpless.
- You must have faith in your death with Christ so you realize you need HIS SPIRIT TO HELP YOU.
- And with THAT kind of faith, as soon as you pray "GOD HELP ME THIS MOMENT!" He empowers you.

The first beattitude is this:

Mat 5:3

(3) Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This poor in spirit idea is simply being HUMBLE and not strong in yourself, but knowing He alone is your source of hope.

- The entire KINGDOM of Heaven is your's to be blessed with if you understand this and be humble!
- You must give the Spirit of glory some material to work with!
- And that is the need to understand YOU ARE DEAD, and you are USELESS on your own.
- Your death with Christ gives you a right to be energized by His Spirit.
- But unless you cooperate by stopping all your fleshly efforts of yourself, and ask God instead to strengthen you, YOU GET NOTHING.
- And you will wonder why you cannot get victory.

God wants NOBODY to live a weak life.

- That does not glorify Him whatsoever.

So act dead!

- Accept the fact that you cannot handle life in your own power.
- Reckon yourself dead to sin.
- And this will give grace a chance, for this thinking will urge you to ask GOD TO EMPOWER YOU!

Phi 3:3-7

(3) For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

(4) Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

(5) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

(6) Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

(7) But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Paul used to boast about his pedigree.

- He had a heritage in his birth that many Jews would desire to have.
- He could boast to those who admired such things if he wanted to.
- But he said he had no confidence in it at all, when he might have not known what he knew.
- What he knew was that anything that caused him to think highly of himself -- anything that was GAIN TO HIM -- was loss to Christ!
- Christ lost the opportunity to work his power in anybody who thinks too highly of themselves.
- So we must lose all confidence in any natural quality we might have, because our infatuation with it will only rob God of opportunity to work in our lives, since we will not seek Him as much as we would if we had no confidence in our fleshliness.

Paul said he counted all those things but dung!

- Why?
- Because he wanted to KNOW CHRIST!
- He wanted an experience with Jesus!



- And that does not happen when we are caught up with ourselves.

ONLY JESUS CAN LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!

- And He gets inside you through the baptism of the Holy Ghost!
- So you cannot have this victory without the Holy Ghost.

PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE HOLY GHOST AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE IT BUT ARE NOT VICTORIOUS HAVE THE SAME OVERALL PROBLEM.

What hinders people from getting the Spirit is the same thing that hinders the Spirit from working in people who do have it.

SELF.

Not being weak in ourselves enough.

This crops up in many forms.

I was extremely shy and backward in my personality as a teenager.

- I could hardly raise my hands in worship because I was so self-conscious.
- So it was no wonder I could not get the Holy Ghost for months after I was first baptized.
- I was SELF conscious of people looking at me too much.

Not only that, but SELF hindered God's Spirit in another way.

- I was clinging to some things of the world that I knew were taking too much of my praise away from God towards them.
- I was overly addicted to rock and roll music until it was like a idol to me.
- And MY OWN OPINIONS were too strong in my life, until God's opinions were not reigning.
- Down deep inside I did not want to let these things go, and I refused anybody's words to me that told me to let them go for Jesus.

- I stubbornly thought that if it was really wrong, then Jesus can tell me after He gives me the Holy Ghost.
- But seek Him as I might, I was not getting the Holy Ghost.

Finally, as troubles exploded in our home one day, I said enough was enough.

- I would not hold out on God any more.
- I grabbed my vinyl albums loaded with ungodly songs and lyrics, and took them to the basement of my house and smashed them all with a hammer.
- My stepfather ran to my mother saying I had gone crazy and was smashing my albums.
- I was destroying my idols!
- I was saying, God you are going to be NUMBER ONE in my life with no rivalry any more!

I threw away my shyness since suddenly the love for God became stronger than my concern over people seeing me.

- You see, true love is not there when a person is self-conscious about people seeing you love the one you are supposed to be loving.
- If you cannot plainly show people you love Jesus, then it boils down to the fact that you're more concerned with yourself than you are with Jesus.
- When you really love Jesus, you will FREELY praise Him.

Oh, how I wanted to openly worship God, but was too self-conscious to do it.

- But one day I said I was sick of this weak Christian life, and threw caution to the wind, and LET LOOSE IN REAL VIBRANT PRAISE.

And I received the Holy Ghost only two weeks later at an altar where I raised my hands and shouted his praises!

If you cannot praise God freely, then you re too self-conscious and God

sees your love concern for yourself to be greater than for Him, and He will not give you His Spirit!

Act 5:32

(32) And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

What must we obey?

1Pe 5:6

(6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

One man and his wife were from a mainline denominational background, and were baptized in Jesus' name when the truth came to town.

- But although they left the mainline traditional denomination they were from, and attended Pentecostal church, they were not receiving the Holy Ghost either for months and months.
- While his wife was at home one Sunday night, the man prayed at the altar.

He and his wife were always so quiet.

- And it was this that made the pastor become thrilled because quiet Brother so-and-so began shouting "Hallelujah!"
- He shouted, "Praise the Lord!"
- He continued doing that until all of a sudden he burst out speaking in other tongues.
- The pastor was thrilled for he knew how long this man was not receiving the Holy Ghost.

Psa 98:4

(4) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Isa 12:6

(6) Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One

of Israel in the midst of thee.

The next service the man's wife came to the pastor and told him that when her husband came home, she received the Holy Ghost there in the house!

- She said the two of them always felt that shouting and worshipping so loudly was disrespectful.
- Their mainline denominational traditions molded them until they were disgusted with such hollering in church.
- They never lost that traditional thinking.
- And she said that her husband came home that night and told her that he received the Spirit.
- He explained to her how he finally came to realize that perhaps GOD DID WANT THAT SORT OF PRAISE despite their traditional thinking.
- He realized that perhaps although his tradition conditioned him to think it was disrespectful, that perhaps it was what God wanted in reality, and he had been conditioned incorrectly.
- So he said if it takes it, he'd praise God aloud.
- And so that is when the pastor heard him start to shout.
- And, sure enough, that release of "his" traditions and ways was what he needed to do to BECOME WEAK, and let go of HIS WAYS, and deny himself by doing what he stubbornly refused.
- And God saw His surrender and gave him the Holy Ghost!

And she said that she would likewise let go of her tradition and praise God that way, too, for after all the Pentecostals might be right!

- And she got the Spirit baptism that very night in her house, too!

His traditions, my idols, and my self-consciousness were all SELF CENTRED and FLESHLY, and refusal to let them go was simply being too strong in myself, and a hindrance to God being strong instead.

- I became weak when I stopped resisting.
- I became weak when I let my love for God come out like I had always wanted it to, but allowed my self consciousness to get in my

way instead.

- That man became weak in himself when he released his stubborn views of how he should and should not praise God.

Speaking of quiet people, I noticed that people who claim they are quiet can become very loud or emotional about OTHER THINGS, such as getting angry at their kids, or being given a lot of money as a gift, or watching their favourite hockey team score a goal.

- When we become emotional over something more than we do in praise to God, there is more love for the something than there is towards God!
- People have no problem expressing themselves in OTHER things!

As a shy person, naturally, I am living proof that a love for Jesus can become stronger than any shy concern over self-consciousness, enough to cause anyone to let loose and praise God anyway!

And the very same way people do not get the Holy Ghost is the reason many who have it simply never enjoy victory!

- SELF GETS IN THE WAY!
- It could be anything, but so long as it's YOUR opinion you will not let go of, despite words spoken to you by those who truly care for your soul (for God uses people to get messages across to us), or overly self conscious concern over people looking at you in church, WHEN YOU ARE STRONG HE IS MADE WEAK IN YOU AND CANNOT DO WHAT HE WANTS.

When you face a battle, and do not even think that ONLY JESUS CAN LIVE THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE INSIDE YOU, then you will simply try your best, and wonder why you fail all the time.

YOU ARE NOTHING!

The only righteousness about us is that God made us His righteousness.

2Co 5:21

(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You're not supposed to try your best to do as many righteous deeds as you can in order to be righteous!

- God MAKES YOU HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1Co 1:30-31

(30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

(31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

God is the one who made Jesus to be our righteousness, and sanctification.

- And God did that so we would not be strong and thereby frustrate his work from being done in our lives.
- Verse 31 says it's done so that if there is going to be any glory, it's going to be in the Lord, and not in ourselves!
- In other words, He will resist anything to do with blessing you because you did your best!

Eph 2:9

(9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It's not how much you can work yourself up to be so holy, because God will refuse that sort of effort.

- He knows that if you could make yourself holy, then you would wind up boasting about yourself, and causing the true God worthy of ALL praise to lose that worship.
- He is worthy of it all.
- Not us.
- And so he will resist the ones who try THEIR best.

It's not Paul who lived, but Christ who lived in PAUL!

Eph 2:8-10

(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

(9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God will get the only praise because we are meant to be HIS WORKMANSHIP, and not the workmanship of ourselves.

You know what happened to Lucifer when he started to worship himself.

Eze 28:17

(17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Look at movie stars who are lifted up in their own eyes, and kings and leaders who are exalted.

- They cannot handle it.
- They become corrupt.
- And so will you, so God especially will not honour nor strengthen anyone who exalts themselves and tries to be strong in themselves, in whatever form -- be it overly self-consciousness, or pride, or stubborn refusal to release what God wants you to release, or not even realizing that you are not supposed to try your best, but seek God's Spirit to fill you and allow Him to live through you.

You would think the over-self-conscious person has a completely different problem than the proud boastful person.

- Not really.
- IN BOTH CASES SELF IS THE HINDRANCE.
- The self-conscious person cannot give God the praise He deserves for fear of other people watching.

- If one was God conscious instead of self conscious, one would not even think of people looking at oneself.

God's glory needs to fill our minds and souls so much that it crowds out any thought of self-consciousness, etc.

The bottom line is that when you feel to praise Him or run the aisles.. DO IT -- and do not allow self-consciousness to stop you!

Self-consciousness is too powerful in someone who also gets offended at something, and cannot worship God because of it.

- Imagine something more important than worship to God, such as YOUR FEELINGS hurt.
- Who do we think we are?
- We deserve ourselves to be pitied more than God should be worshiped?

Self needs to be laid on the altar tonight.

- If you do not have the Holy Ghost, it is because SELF has been in your way.
- If you're too shy to worship openly, then you're too shy to get the Holy Ghost.
- I promise you that if you take a frightful step, always frightful to the shy people, and lift your hands and praise Him, you will break through into the Holy Ghost, so long as there are no idols or other stubborn holds in your life!

Someone else won't let go of drugs because they feel so good.

- But keeping them will stop you from getting God's Spirit, and you'll be lost.
- You have to obey God in order to receive the Holy Ghost.
- Someone else might be living in common-law, and that is disobedience to God.



- Get married and obey God and God will bless you.

There can be many things that hold us back from blessings, but all of them are in one category SELF HAS TOO MUCH POWER IN OUR LIVES.

- And that frustrates Gods grace!
- Let go and let God have his wonderful way!

Let God's grace empower you.

- Activate it by cooperating with it's needs and get your SELF out of the way, and become WEAK as far as you running the show is concerned, and let God run the show!

Paul's possible exaltation above measure would disallow God's grace from empowering him, and God did not want that.

2Co 12:7-10

(7) And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

(8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

(9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

(10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

His grace is all you need, but you have to understand how to activate it in your life!