

# GRACIOUS DESIGN

Like a beautiful vignette on social media, or a layout of a glossy magazine, gracious living is pictured with inviting settings that welcome us in giving a glimpse of how life could be or should be lived. **How would you describe such a setting?**

Did you know that God has a gracious design for you, as well? In 1 Peter 2:15, Peter expresses this by the words, "such is the will of God." The word for "will" is *the-le-ma*, and it literally means, "*gracious design*," referring to God's direct will for your life. When God formed you in your momma's womb, He designed you with a specific plan to live out individually that would benefit everyone corporately. At any given time your choices are either within in His permissive, His direct or His overruling will. Here's a short definition of those:

- The Permissive Will of God - God has set principles in motion, then allows nature to take its course, so to speak. He allows us free will to make choices, and allows other things to happen; it may be as simple as choosing which shoe to tie first, or could be as horrible as a cancer diagnosis; life happens, and it may fit within His permissive will because He looks at the end result rather than the details of getting there.
- The Overruling Will of God - Here, God overrules our free will or events in life; as He sees the much larger picture, He acts accordingly. His overruling will may be the very thing that keeps us from having our own choices cause disastrous consequences in our life, or the life of others. We may not like it or even know about it at the time, but His overruling will steps in to do what is in our best interest.

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

- The Direct Will of God - This is the sweet spot, and the goal is to always abide here. It's the designed plan He has for us individually, like a blueprint; as we walk in fellowship with His Spirit we can know we are in His direct will. In v. 15 we see that His direct will for us is a gracious design, one whereby we both receive grace from Him and extend that grace to others. Living this way is only possible under the control of His Holy Spirit for He alone knows the details of our gracious design and is able to equip us for it.

You and I are no different than these sojourners who were living and working in a kingdom that was not their own. As today's text reveals, as His ambassadors we are to give His grace to others, remembering grace is not earned or deserved, grace is given because it is needed to reconcile an injustice. And yes, even when others cause us suffering we are to offer His grace. It's not easy, that's why He's blessed us with His Spirit, He makes it all possible.

**Read 1 Peter 2:13- 20 to set the context and then we will get into today's text.**

We previously looked at v. 13-15, so moving on to v. 16 we see that we are "free men," for in God's great grace we are set free. Receiving His grace should make a difference in how we live, but Peter goes on to warn that we aren't to use that freedom for a covering, or a veil.

Remember the story of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai? After meeting with God the people wanted him to wear a veil to cover his face because they were frightened by the radiance from God's glory shining on his face. Peter's use of the word here means, don't use God's grace as an outward covering to hide an evil character. God's grace was meant to change us, not hide sin in us. Too often we abuse God's grace knowing He is faithful to

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

forgive and since Christ has set us free it's easy to take liberty and wallow in the pit of our old nature. Peter says, don't use God's grace as a covering for sinful living.

In recent years, it's been preached that we should be "authentic," owning up to the sin in our life. And so we should! The problem is that people came out about their sin but didn't do anything about it. There was no repentance, only a desire to be accepted as they were, attempting to legitimize what according to God's word is a sinful lifestyle. You know, God is gracious to accept us as we are. He knows and expects us to come to Him as sinners. But, dear one, He also fully expects us to be changed, transformed, reborn, renewed, and to be repentant of our sin, for it was that sin that caused Jesus to die on the cross in our place.

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin so that we will get rid of it, not try to gain acceptance as though this is just "who we are." That's not being authentic, that's actually believing a worldly lie, for as a believer in Christ the TRUTH is that you have been born again to a living hope, given His righteousness, and by His Spirit we have been sanctified and given the power to escape any temptation. If we are going to be authentic to who we are in Christ, then let us represent His character, for that is what we've received. You and I live under the umbrella of His grace, but let's not use it as a covering of evil.

**Has there been an abuse of grace going on in your life lately? If so, take time to confess that to our Father who is not only faithful to forgive, but gives grace to change!**

**And, if not, take the time to thank Him for the changes He's made in your walk with Him, asking for His revelation in your life for future changes He might desire to make. From experience, I guarantee He's not finished, as Philippians 1:6 promises, He's working on it.**

**Moving on to v. 17, what groups of people does Peter speak of?**

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

**What does he say we are to do to all people (v. 17)?**

The word for honor means to *hold them in high value*. Ever find yourself placing different value on different people? Christ didn't. He died for all. He extends His grace to all. God's direct will, His gracious design is for us to treat others in that kind of grace.

**What are we to have toward "the brotherhood" (v. 17)?**

These are our brothers and sisters in Christ. God fully intends that His children love one another, continually, regardless of denominational lines or worship preferences or theological differences, IF they are in Christ we are to love them with a self sacrificial love that seeks their best, not condemn them because they worship different. As we've seen previously, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, all are one in Him. Can I just say, if we are going to live in His gracious design we are going to have to do something with all those other emotions toward our fellow believers that do not come from a place of love and grace. Prayer is a good place to start.

**Read 1 John 4:11-13. Why do we love others (v. 11)?**

**What does it say happens when we love one another (v. 12)?**

**How did God make it possible (v. 13)**

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

I love that term "abides." His love makes its home, its dwelling in us. It is perfected in us which means it will be complete in us. His Spirit makes that possible, but we must allow Him to live it out in us. It begins with one choice at a time to love, and then another, and another.

**Can you think of someone you need to choose to love in Christ's love? Would you commit to praying for that this week?**

**Back to v. 17, how are we to behave toward God?**

He's just laid out for us that His direct will is that we give high value to other people, and that we self sacrificially love other believers, then He reminds us why we are to be obedient in those things... because He's GOD. Not only is He God, deserving of all reverence, but He has blessed us with His grace so that we can accomplish it! We are to be a bondsman who reveres Him in His rightful position as Lord, living in awe of the one true God.

The word, "bondsman" is in the masculine form, meaning that we *initiate the action to become His bondsman*. He set us free, but now we choose to turn and serve Him as our Master. There is no other like our God. None. He alone is worthy of words of celebration and praise. We are to reverence Him as God over all.

The last one mentioned to honor, in v. 17 are those who are considered *regal in authority*, Peter says, honor them too. Being a God of order and not one of chaos, He has placed an order of authority over mankind until He returns to set up His own kingdom. We are to live in respect to those over us. Constantly giving them high value in the position they have.

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

In verses 18-20 we come upon the subject of a servant's behavior toward his master and find that they are to maintain that same level of respect and submission to their authority as one would anyone in authority over them. Not necessarily based on their treatment of us, in fact, in spite of their treatment of us. There will be times, as we live out Christ to those around us that others won't like it. Persecution will happen directly as a result of our Christianity, which we see becoming more evident as the days go by, but as we accept God's grace we are able to respond to the circumstances or person causing us grief based upon who we are in Christ rather than by what they are doing to us. We do not have to return evil for evil. Pouring out God's grace to others may have great impact, if on no one else than to us.

**Can you think of someone that you need to extend more grace to? How would you pray in that regard?**

God's gracious design is one in which we are to honor all people, give God reverence as Lord and Master, love the brotherhood, and honor those in authority over us. We have been totally blessed to receive His grace, undeserved, unmerited, and every ounce is fully needed. Is it too much of our God to ask us to treat others in that same grace? He doesn't say we are to do it on our own, in fact, He knows we cannot, so He simply says, walk by my Spirit and you won't carry out the desires of your flesh. Make it a matter of principle to walk in His grace and let it overflow to those around you. For then, then, they will see your good works and glorify God.

## 1 Peter - Week 4, Day 3

### Review

- Text: 2 Peter 2:15-20
- Living in God's Gracious Design - His Direct Will
  - ❖ Permissive Will - He allows our free will within His overall plan
  - ❖ Overruling Will - He overrides our free will to accomplish His plan
  - ❖ Direct Will - He has a specific design for each one, a blueprint
- We are free men, but don't use grace as a veil for a sinful lifestyle
- God's gracious design for us in 1 Peter 2:17 is to:
  - ❖ Honor all people - All people are to be highly valued
  - ❖ Love other believers - Self sacrificially seeking their best (1 John 4:11)
  - ❖ Reverence God - No other God, He makes all things possible
  - ❖ Honor those in authority over us - God is one of order, not chaos
- Living in the grace we've been given means extending that grace to others, requiring us to walk by the Spirit.