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WOMEN'S RETREAT

Grace In The Wilderness

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 2 Peter 1:5-7

Unmerited Favor

Unmerited Favor



GRACE

SCHEDULE

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Our Faith is our Grace (unmerited favor)
in the Wilderness

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the Wilderness**

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through Faith is our Grace
in the Wilderness**

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**Our Endurance through Faith is our Grace
in the wilderness**

FAVOR

FAVOR

GRACE

Session 1

GRACE

Unmerited Favor

1 Peter 1 : 1-7

**Who are being Guarded
or Garrisoned by God's
Power Through Faith**

1 Peter 1:5

defend, guard, protect, preserve, fortify,
barricade, shield, secure

Our **Faith** is our **Grace** (unmerited favor) in the **Wilderness, Yet it is also** **What is being Tested**

Faith: complete trust or confidence in
someone or God

Vulnerable

The enemy's strategy is to
direct pain to cause you to slowly
disengage (lose trust) with
God and others.

Unmerited Favor

Unmerited Favor

God wants our faith to be **strong** so that He
can move freely **through** our hard situation
bringing Glory to God. Faith is tested not
produced by trials.

HISTORY

Peter

Title – Fisherman, Disciple, Apostle, Author, Husband

Personality – Out-spoken, flamboyant, raw, unfiltered, bold, brave, moldable and corrected often.

Time – Written between 65–68 AD - Peter was martyred, hung upside down on a cross in Rome around 68 AD by Nero. Peter references his approaching death in 2 Peter 1:14 “since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me”. It was possibly written right after or before Paul died (beheaded in Rome) and what prompted him to write first and second Peter.

Writing To – Persecuted Christians (Jews and Gentiles), pilgrims of dispersion and God’s elect, living in five regions of Asia Minor (Turkey) and exhorts the readers to stay true to the example of Jesus Christ during persecution and the hope set before them. They are warned to not follow false teaching but stay true to what has been taught to them, to persevere to the end.

Persecution – Nero lost all sense of right and wrong and listened to flattery with total credulity. He was said to have seized Christians as scapegoats for the fire that burned down the city of Rome so he could rebuild it. Christians were burned alive, seemingly motivated not by public justice but by personal cruelty.

Unmerited Favor

Unmerited Favor

GRACE

Faith is More Precious than Gold

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 1: 6,7

Our Faith is like a Muscle that needs to be Used to grow Stronger

THE SPIRIT

Add = danced with joined hands

Led to embrace the whole Gospel

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

2 Peter 1:5-9

The Holy Spirit does this work within us as we grow through the wilderness. Goodness, Knowledge of us and God, Self Control, Perseverance and Love ARE being Worked into our Character. Humbly Surrender to His Plans and Workings. **Value Your Faith!**

Faith Comes by Hearing The Word of God

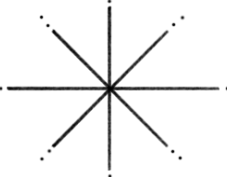
“So faith comes by hearing (what is told), and what is heard comes by the preaching (of the message that came from the lips) of Christ (The Messiah Himself).” Romans 10:17 Amp

The Holy Spirit is our helper and will bring His word to

remembrance. “But the Comforter (Counselor Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby, the Holy Spirit) Whom the Father will send in My name (in My place to represent Me and act on My behalf), He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.” John 14:26 Amp

More FAITH is not “bigger faith” but more acting on the principles of His word in faith - faith that is continually used.

“...If you have faith that is living like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain move from here to a yonder place and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.” Matt 17:20



Testing of our Faith and Glory go together

Biblical faith takes into account the **ability** of God through whom **all things are possible**. It also takes into account the **sovereignty** of God. God is not controllable but is sovereign. Our journey includes storms as well as still waters. His Glory (presence) brings peace in the storm. It is why we are blessed when going through various trials. His presence also gives us authority, power and gifts to overcome the world. We get to experience His Nature through struggles increasing our understanding of Him and bringing His Kingdom to earth. 2 Peter 1:4

FAITH IS INTENTIONAL
AND
TRUSTS IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.” Isaiah 60:1



**BREAK OUT
SESSION
1**



Connecting God's Ability and Provision with Our Current Situation

1. Write out a sentence reflecting a negative thought or overwhelming feeling that makes you feel anxious and stressed.

2. Write A New Faith Statement to Replace Your Old Thought Process. Be Specific.

Example: "Thank You Lord that you have given me, patience and understanding to parent my children well today."

Say this new statement out loud. Meditate on what it's saying, believe it and receive it.

3. How is faith through the power of God shielding you?

What is it Shielding?

Exercise it daily!

His Goodness Through Faith is Our Grace in the Wilderness

TRUTH UPON TRUTH

For this very reason, adding your diligence [to the divine promises], employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue (excellence, resolution, Christian energy) and in [exercising] virtue [develop] knowledge (intelligence). 2 Peter 1:5

For whoever lacks these qualities is blind, [spiritually] shortsighted, seeing only what is near to him, and has become oblivious to the fact that he was cleansed from his old sins. 2 Peter 1:9

Make Every Effort

(Greek = Bringing in all zeal or effort - diligence)

to Add to your Faith Goodness

**** The quality of being morally good or virtuous ****

Fruit of the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Receive and Believe God's Goodness

John 1:16, Psa 103 - No selfish or evil intent, pure, righteous, kind, gentle, patient, no tricks up His sleeves - this goodness added to our faith guards our heart and brings comfort and hope.

Stand in the middle of “no answers” and give Him thanks for all of His goodness. It's a choice not a feeling.

Leave reasoning to gain a place of trust.

Anchor yourself to a superior revelation.

All things really do work together for good.

Trust implies I do not understand.

Goodness Through Faith is a Gateway to Encounter His Divine Nature

Sometimes it takes every effort in our being to make the right and good decision - to forgive daily, to give when it isn't deserved, to walk in grace. **Be a voice in the wilderness crying out prepare the way for the Lord by acts of goodness** - John 1:23

“be eager to be found by Him at his coming with out spot or blemish and at peace in serene confidence, from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts.” 2 Peter 3:14

HIS GOODNESS BRINGS US TO
INTIMACY - HOLINESS

“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on **the grace** to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do” 1 Peter 1:13-15 / 1 Peter 3: 8 – 12

He sets us apart from the world and calls us His Own- John 1:12-14

If We Suffer for Doing What is Right and Good, We are Blessed

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” 1 Peter 3:13-17

“For just as we share abundantly in the
SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, so also our
COMFORT ABOUNDS through Christ “
2 Cor 1:5



**BREAK OUT
SESSION**

2

Connecting God's Ability and Provision with Our Current Situation

1. Look at the Faith Statement you wrote in the first session.

What specific acts of goodness need to be added to your statement of faith?

Example:

I will promote an atmosphere of God's presence at home helping me to be more patient by _____

I will say one specific and encouraging word to my husband daily.

I will choose to forgive and pray for _____ every time I remember the hurt they inflicted on my family or me.

2. Do you see the goodness of God in this struggle? If so How?

3. Share a story about the goodness of God through a recent move, deployment or TDY.

Our Knowledge of God and Ourselves Through Faith is Our Grace in the Wilderness

EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH
INTIMACY - HOLINESS

“For this very reason, adding your diligence[to the divine promises], employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue (excellence, resolution, Christian energy) and in [exercising] virtue [develop] knowledge (intelligence), and in [exercising] knowledge [develop] self-control.” 2 Peter 1: 5,6 Amp

Grow in the Knowledge Of God

exercising intelligence

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matt 11: 28-30

Exercising Knowledge is Wisdom

We learn by putting on the yoke of Jesus or abiding in His Holy Spirit. The end result is rest not just in body, but also in your soul. **Yoke is connected to work - plowing a field, but as you partake of His Nature the burden is light. He asks us to put it on because He is good (gentle and lowly in heart).**

Grow in the Knowledge of Ourselves self aware

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into **all** truth...” John 16:13, Heb 4:12, 1 Pet 5:7, Prov 21:2

We welcome Jesus into our hearts and He shines light through the knowledge of His word on our hearts to reveal thoughts, actions and motives that don't line up with His ways. He is continually purifying us and sanctifying us by the washing of His word. Psa 119 :11, Eph 5:26

Jesus was continually pushing the disciple to press past their understanding, mindsets, reasoning, to a greater reality of a heavenly mindset. He showed new revelation about the Father. All things become new.

Jesus leads us beyond ourselves so that all glory goes to Him; He Delivers Us of Ourselves

We must continually be aware of where our humanity ends and the Holy Spirit starts, keeping us humble. It takes renewing our focus daily to remind us of our need for Him.

“WHEREVER YOU GIVE GOD GLORY GOD GIVES YOU PEACE.”

BILL JOHNSON

Abiding In His Words

(exercising knowledge)

Produces Fruit

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:7,8

We must know His words to exercise them. As we exercise them we are abiding and taking on His Nature. This activates His presence and He is glorified bearing much fruit.

“While anyone is hearing the word of the Kingdom and does not grasp and comprehend it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.” Matt 13:9 Amp



**BREAK OUT
SESSION
3**

Connecting God's Ability and Provision with Our Current Situation

1. What have you learned about God through a past or recent trial? For current trials, If you haven't learned anything new yet, ask God to reveal Himself in a new way through it.

2. What have you learned about yourself in a present or past wilderness experience?

Example:

a) I have been able to give to the person that has let me down, bringing an understanding of God in that He forgives and then pursues me. I was able to walk out the same grace He has given me.. I experienced God's heart in and through me.

b) My pride is usually what keeps me from fully letting go. Until I did something good for that person did I feel like all bitterness was gone.

Our Endurance Through Faith is our Grace in the Wilderness

steadfastness, patience, faithfulness

“....and in [exercising] knowledge [develop] self-control [develop] steadfastness (patience, endurance), and in [exercising] steadfastness [develop] godliness (piety), and in [exercising godliness [develop] brotherly affection, and in [exercising] brotherly affection[develop] Christian love.” 2 Peter 1: 6,7

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance,character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:1-5

Endurance Produces Character or Godliness

Exercising faith, goodness, intelligence, self control, faithfulness, godliness, love

Integrity - Your whole self is the same in peace and pressure. Every great gift demands a response in character. Eph 6:10-18 (when you have done all - stand), John 6:68 (no where else to turn)

We are called to be faithful in our character, motivated by a love that is not understood by this world.

“We are called by God to live by faith. That’s such a familiar concept to us. But here we are also called by God to LOVE by faith. Loving by faith means we **keep doing it**, by the power of Christ, even when we can’t tell it is doing a whit of good. Even when we are not loved back.” Beth Moore - Prov 13:6, 20:28 / 1 John 2:3-9

Endurance Brings You to Phileo and Agape Love

The Highest form of love, charity. The love of
God for man and of man for God

Epithumia; physical union, marriage **Eros**; erotic, romantic love **Storge**; belonging, family

Phileo; friendship and companionship, common ground

Agape; divine love, the steady intention of the will to another's highest good. Not of emotions or feelings but of the will of choice. It is an ongoing benevolence willing what is best for another, feeling each as a member of his own body. To love even our enemies.

1 Peter 1:8, 1 Cor 13:13, 1 Thes 3:12, Col 3:12-14. Phil 2: 3-1

God is the source of all love. His presence walks us hand in hand to a greater love. He finds pleasure in just communing and being with us. God is love, so there is no other way for Him to respond. This love reflected in us, proclaims "Jesus is Lord" to the world and sets us apart. 1 John 2:3-9

"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Col 3:14

The Fruit of Agape Love is True Family & Community

belonging, accepted, valued, known, connected

“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.” Henri Nouwen

“When we break bread and give it to each other, fear vanishes and God becomes very close.”
Henri Nouwen



**BREAK OUT
SESSION
4**

Connecting God's Ability and Provision with Our Current Situation

1. Once again reflect on your New Faith Statement created in our first session. How will faithfully applying this new thought process affect the situation compared to applying it randomly or once in a while?

2. Which statement can you identify with the most?

I Don't think I have the strength to keep going in this situation

I am so tired of trying

It seems like it's not making a difference

I just want to be on the other side

How much longer Lord?

3. How can we help each other "keep on keeping on" when we head home? What would brotherly or sisterly affection and Agape love look like?

Recommended Reading

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality - Peter Scazzero

The Inner Voice of Love - Henri Nouwen

Qualities of A Spiritual Warrior - Graham Cook

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