

# First Step Up Is Down: 3

## The Outworking of Grace

“Come up Higher” – so that we can come up higher, we must first learn to take a step down, that down step is an act of humility and submission.

To be humble is to be submissive to someone higher or greater. It is not as many believe, to debase yourself or make yourself to be so unworthy, so poor, or so insignificant. That is a form of inverted-pride which God resists.

The Bible says that if we humble ourselves then God will exalt, lift and raise us up.

### **1 Peter 5. 5-6 and James 4. 10**

Both these verses tell us to humble ourselves under God and He will exalt us and lift us up.

“God gives grace to the humble” - It is the *grace of God* that exalts us and takes us to the next level.

### **What is grace?**

Grace (Gk *charis*.) - “endue with favour, kindness, goodness and blessing”.

- It is an attribute of God;
- An outworking of God's love toward us
- It is the free and unmerited gift of God.
- It is the blessing of God

### **1 Peter 5.8-12**

Here the apostle exhorts us to not only be humble under God, but that we also should be aware and alert of the schemes of the devil and resist him (v8-9).

He goes on to say that God is the God of all grace and by that outworking of grace in our lives He will perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you.

In verse 12, Peter confirms that what he had just declared to them was the same message of grace which Paul had preached to them.

Some of Paul's teachings on this message of grace:

### **Ephesians 2.5-6**

- We are saved by the grace of God
- The grace of God has quickened us though we were dead in trespasses and sins
- The grace of God has raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places
- The grace of God lifted us from one level to another – as the Psalmist could say “*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps*” (Psalm 40.2)

## 2 Corinthians 12.7-10

- “Lest I be exalted above measure..” - become haughty, self exaltation brings us low but being humble exalts us. Paul was receiving many revelations, which we now have as the NT, the revelations could make him proud and have feelings of grandeur and importance.
- This 'thorn in the flesh' was not an affliction to keep Paul humble – it was a 'messenger of satan to buffet' him, to get him to focus on himself and not in the Lord.
- The word buffet means to 'strike with the fist, maltreat and violently abuse'
- God's reply to Paul's pleadings were “My grace is sufficient for you” - grace was all he needed to lift him up. Because of the grace of God, Paul could declare “when I am weak, then I am strong”. Grace lifted him from a time of weakness to a time of strength.

## 2 Corinthians 8.9

- He became poor so that we might become rich
- This verse tells us that Jesus humbled himself so that we could be exalted by the grace of God.
- Jesus laid aside everything (*became poor*), His Deity, his reputation, his stately form and became as a man, so that we could be beneficiaries (*become rich*) of grace – favour, kindness, goodness and the blessing of God

## 2 Corinthians 9.7-10

- Purposeful & bountiful giving is honouring God with your substance – act of worship, also humbling yourself to God.
- God is able to make all grace [all favour, all kindness, all goodness, all blessing] abound toward you.
- That you might abound - to cause to overflow, exceed, excel, be pre-eminent – to cause to rise above and beyond.
- This type of giving causes the grace of God to go to work on your behalf increasing and blessing you – raising you up to a new level