

The Defining Marks and Potential Pitfalls of the 5-Fold Graces

“Christ himself gave the ***apostles***, the ***prophets***, the ***evangelists***, the ***pastors*** and ***teachers***, to ***equip*** his people for works of service, *so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become ***mature***, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” ***Ephesians 4:11-13****

We NEED the full and multi-faceted expression of all of the graces to help mature and equip one another for the specific works of ministry God desires for us. As a 30,000 foot view, it may help to see the graces in the following way:

Apostolic Grace matures you in HEALTH.
Prophetic Grace roots you in HOLINESS.
Evangelistic Grace anchors you in HOPE.
Shepherding Grace gives you a HOME.
Teaching Grace stirs you with HUNGER.

On the following pages, we will look at the defining marks of each of the 5 graces, as well as some of the warnings and pitfalls we would be wise to avoid. For all 5, we will look at:

- *A Biblical and Practical Definition for the Grace*
- *The Defining Marks that Set this Grace Apart*
- *What Happens if this Grace is Lacking in our Community*
- *The Practical Indicators You are Strong in this Grace*
- *The Misuses and Abuses of the Grace*

APOSTOLIC GRACE:

**Apostolic Grace matures you in HEALTH
so you are BUILT UP and SENT OUT to your fullest destiny!**

Definition:

Apostle (from *Apostello*): To **send** someone to the place they've been **appointed**. In the Bible, apostolic grace is given to PROTECT the Order and Health of the Body, to BUILD UP people or churches to walk in their destined calling, and to SEND people to their place in the Kingdom of God.

Apostolic Anointing: To bring *people* and *places* into **health** and **maturity** so they experience **vitality** and **longevity** in their calling.

3 Defining Marks of Apostolic Grace:

1. **“Builder”:** You help people and places grow up into maturity.

“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building. By the grace God has given me, ***I laid a foundation as a wise builder.***” 1 Corinthians 3:9-10

Key Scriptures: Prov. 27:17, 1 Cor. 14:12, 2 Cor. 12:19, Eph. 2:20, Eph. 4:12, Eph. 4:29, 1 Thess. 5:11, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Pet. 2:4-5.

2. **“Innovator” & “Pioneer”:** You find what is **lacking** and how it can be **filled**, often by going **first**.

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, ***I am doing a new thing!*** Now it springs up; ***do you not perceive it?*** I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” ***Isaiah 43:18-19***

Key Scriptures: Is. 55:11, Jer. 29:7, Rom. 12:1-2, James 1:4-5

3. **“Sender”:** Your greatest joy is not to ‘retain’ people but to **release** them to run.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and ***to the ends of the earth.***”
Acts 1:8

Key Scriptures: *Isaiah 6:8, Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 8:14, Acts 9:17, 30, 38; Acts 10:8, 20, 29, 33, 36; 11:22, 13:3, 4, 7, 26; 15:3, 25, 30, 33; 17:10, 14, 19:22, 20:1, 17; 22:21, 28:28.*

What happens wherever we lack Apostolic Grace:

Burnout: The work grows **slow, sideways, or stagnant**; discouragement, fear, and cynicism set in where faith once led. ***We give up.***

Blow Up: Leaders lack **health** in character or competence and stray from their call. ***Their charisma places them in rooms that their character cannot keep them.***

4 C's Needed to Walk in Health in the Church:

Character: Who you are when no one's looking ("*Character*" is literally, 'tested through fire, refined')

Competence: Possessing the needed skills, ability, and knowledge to do something well.

Connection: Intimacy with others; relational maturity.

Pursuing Coaching/Covering: Being a life-long student, eager to be led and shaped without suspicion or offense.

8 Indicators You are Strong in Apostolic Grace:

1. You **build** people in both *integrity* & *influence* and **send** them to thrive in both.
2. You have a sense to '**see** *potential*' in people before they see it in themselves.
3. You aren't motivated by a title or recognition, but take satisfaction in things working as intended. (*When it is healthy, you're happy!*)
4. You don't do everything yourself. You put people to work, not merely *delegating*, but *elevating* their full potential.
5. You carry great **influence** and are sought to help people or organizations grow.
6. You regularly **see the next step** needed, including *roadblocks* & *accelerators* to reaching the goal.
7. You don't like fads or shortcuts, but greatly prefer doing the *fundamental things well* with *consistency over time*.
8. You love input from **contributors**, but don't make space for **complainers**. You are not intimidated by people disagreeing with you. *You simply want the team to win.*

Misuses & Abuses of Apostolic Grace:

4 Warnings for highly Apostolic people:

1. Bulldozing and/or a poor bedside manner

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently." **Galatians 6:1**

If you place **progress** before **people**, you will carry a **vision** that breeds **division**. And if you aren't careful, you will find the floors of the cathedrals you've built stained with the blood of those you stepped on along the way.

2. Compassion Fatigue

You love people, you see needs, and you desperately want to offer help. But it is SO important that you remember that JESUS is the hope of the world. You are the BRANCH that has been called to abide in the Vine. Be intentional to protect your soul and only say "Yes" to the places HE is calling you.

3. Lack of Longevity or Follow Through

Many apostolic leaders are entrepreneurial by nature. They are self-starters with big dreams. It can be all too easy for these leaders to see fruit in a new field and misunderstand the slowness of fruit in their own. Paul said, “you’ve had many teachers, but not many FATHERS.” Apostolic leaders are fathers and mothers who make sure to stay in the mud and mess of what they’ve birthed until it is experiencing the maturity God intended.

4. Missing the Launch Point

“When” to send sons and daughters is just as important as sending them. If you are apostolic, be cautious of the dual pitfalls of either sending a leader before they are ready, or holding onto them too long. Just as you can’t push a parachuter out of a plane at 150 feet above the ground, you also cannot send them once the flight is over. One will be dead; the other will be paralyzed with the regret of having never felt the wind on their face.

PROPHETIC GRACE:

**Prophetic Grace roots you in HOLINESS
through calling you to INTIMACY and DEPENDENCY!**

Definition:

Prophet: A compound word meaning, “To say something from another.” A prophetic voice is a hearer, seer, and “say-er” of what God is saying in heaven, so that it would be lived out on earth.

3 Defining Marks of Prophetic Grace:

1. You Make Intimacy with Jesus *Everything*:

“You, God, are my God, **earnestly** I seek you; I **thirst** for you, my **whole being longs** for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because **your love is better than life**, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be **fully satisfied** as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.” **Psalm 63:1-5**

Key Prophetic Scriptures of Intimacy: *John 15:1-5, Psalm 73:26, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 63:1-11*

2. You Seek to Hear and Obey the Lord *in Everything*:

“My sheep **listen** to my voice; I know them, and they **follow** me.” **John 10:27**

Key Prophetic Scriptures on Hearing and Obeying: *Proverbs 3:5-6, John 5:19, John 10:27, John 14:26, John 16:13, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22*

3. You Declare How to Remain on God’s Path *above Everything*:

“I am **jealous** for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a **pure virgin** to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your **sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**” **2 Corinthians 11:2-3**

Key Prophetic Scriptures on Declaring the Path to Obeying God: *1 Corinthians 14:3, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, 1 Peter 2:9, Isaiah 12:4, Joel 2:12-13*

8 Indicators You are Strong in Prophetic Grace:

1. You have a **deep prayer life** and/or love being still to listen to God (*Journalers*).
2. God naturally speaks to you in a **variety of ways** (*promptings, visions, words, images, dreams*).
3. You regularly receive **specific encouragement or direction from God** for you and/or others.
4. Your ‘default’ on any decision is to **stop and ask what God has to say**; you don’t move without it.
5. What you say you’ve heard from the Lord **regularly** comes to pass.
6. You have a **high standard for justice** and not offending God’s **holiness**.
7. You love to **intercede** and to listen to God on behalf of the needs of others.

8. You are willing to walk in ***courageous compassion*** to say what you sense, even though it may not be understood or embraced.

Misuses & Abuses of Prophetic Grace:

1. The “God Card”

We all hear God through a “filter” of our own experiences, personality, current maturity, and even our unhealed wounds. We are fragile earthen vessels who carry tremendous treasure (*2 Corinthians 4:7*). Because of this, we must be very careful of what we tell others “God said.”

There is a VAST difference between **REVELATION** (*what I heard/sensed*), **INTERPRETATION** (*what it means*), and **APPLICATION** (*what am I to do with it*). We would do well to stand simply and humbly upon what we sensed, trusting God’s Word and Community to help confirm what it means as the whole Body walks in unity together.

2. Holding judgment and/or lacking humility

There can be a tendency in highly prophetic people to see the world (*and especially one’s own convictions*) in black and white, and right and wrong: “*God said it. That settles it.*” But how to apply truth and faithfully follow God is often far more nuanced than mere truth axioms, requiring the whole Body together: “*the eye cannot say to the hand, I don’t need you*” (*1 Corinthians 12:21*).

In some cases, prophetic people can also fall into a dangerous line of thinking that they hear God more, that they hear Him better, or that they are more committed than others to be sensitive and obey Him. We must avoid this, clinging to humility, patience, and the reality that every person (*whether they know it or not*) are STARVING for the love and presence of God.

3. Only wanting to share “good” prophetic words or always sharing words of fear and doom

In 1 Kings 22, King Ahab didn’t want to listen to the prophet Jehoshaphat, because “he only prophesies bad things for me.” There can be a tendency in today’s culture to only desire using prophecy to give a word that feels good in the moment. We would do well to remember that all prophecy is given for our “encouragement, comfort, and building up to the fullness of maturity” (*1 Corinthians 14:1*). That said, some of the things that will ultimately mature us and bring us comfort and encouragement don’t always feel comforting in the moment. There is a wound from a friend that heals like a refiner’s fire, burning off the dross that doesn’t belong to us anymore. And there is discipline from a loving Father that reaps a harvest of righteousness (*Proverbs 27:6, Hebrews 12*).

That said, we prophesy from the NEW Covenant and the finished work of Jesus. There are a number of “prophetic words” that call for fear, shame, or violence that are unworthy of the Cross of Christ. Perfect love casts out fear, and prophecy is given to call us into deeper intimacy with our Father.

4. Isolating from Community

Sometimes, prophetic people so much love being in the stillness with Jesus, they can forget the need for vulnerability and presence in community. Prophetic words are best received when they come from the context of the family you are actively sharing life with. Be still before your Father, but then bring those treasures to your brothers and sisters, *remembering to receive what they bring in your life, too!*

EVANGELISTIC GRACE:

Evangelistic Grace anchors you in HOPE as you adopt a lifestyle that GATHERS hearts to Jesus and watch God IGNITE their faith!

Definition:

Evangelist/Evangelistic: Comes from two words. **Euangelion:** Good News, 'Gospel' (75 occurrences), **Euangelizō:** Bring, Announce Good News, Declare the Gospel (55 occurrences).

*An Evangelist is one who lift their voice to **continually** and **confidently** identify and share the hope they've found in Jesus to all the people and situations they encounter.*

3 Defining Marks of Evangelistic Grace

1. Urgency and Contagious Passion for the Lost being Found:

"He said to them, Go into all the world and preach and **publish openly** the good news (the Gospel) to every creature [**the whole human race**]." **Mk. 16:15 AMP**

Key Scriptures: Lk. 19:10; Acts 1:8; Acts 26:18; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:1; 1 Tim. 2:3-4

2. A Burning Heart for the Least, the Lost, the Last, the Lonely, and the Lepers of Society (You go into dark places as light!):

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **proclaim good news** to the **poor**. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the **prisoners** and recovery of sight for the **blind**, to set the **oppressed** free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's **favor**." **Luke 4:18-19**

Key Scriptures: Is. 1:17; Micah 6:8; Zech. 7:9-10; Matt. 4:23, 9:35-36, 25:31-46; Lk. 10:30-37; 1 Cor. 9:22

3. Deep Desire to GO, PLANT a Needed Seed, and then GO to the Next Field...

"Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, *do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*" **2 Timothy 4:5**

"When they came up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away**, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at **Azotus** and traveled about, **preaching the gospel in all the towns** until he reached **Caesarea**." **Acts 8:39-40**

Key Scriptures: Matt. 9:37-38, 10:7-8, 24:14, 28:18-20; Mk. 13:10, 16:15; Lk. 9:2

What happens wherever we lack Evangelistic Grace:

We Become a Club: Our focus turns INTERNAL to the desires and comforts of Christians and away from the Great Commission. We become a social calendar for **moral materialism** instead of a thriving **maternity ward**.

Or

We Become a Cult: We add 'requirements' of what is needed *beyond* the Simple Gospel that is neither 'simple' nor 'gospel,' and become a barricade to the very people He died to save!

8 Indicators You are Strong in Evangelistic Grace:

1. You walk with a '**missionary mindset**,' positioning your time, finances, and if possible, even your place of residence to live among the people you feel called to reach.
2. You LOVE meeting new people and hearing their stories. You know how to engage with others in a way that is both '**natural**' and '**interested**.'
3. You can naturally relate people's stories to your own and to the **Gospel story**, showing them who and where God is at work in their life.
4. You see **every conversation as an opportunity** for greater hope, freedom, and life, and you actively look for God to open the opportunity.
5. You have **DEEP compassion** for the disenfranchised, overlooked, misunderstood, and forgotten, and you take intentional steps to **show** God's love to them.
6. You love *your community* and are active to **build relationships** everywhere you go. *You know your neighbors...and the cashiers at the grocery store.*
7. You can't help but talk about Jesus, and **testimonies** of what He has and is doing in your life make their way into conversations without much effort.
8. You've personally **led others** to place their faith in Jesus.

Misuses & Abuses of Evangelistic Grace:

4 Warnings for highly Evangelistic people:

1)Pride

Highly evangelistic people can tend to think sharing their faith is the "full" or "real" gospel, causing them to minimize other critical pursuits of the Gospel (including their own spiritual health); or to look down upon other believers as "not as sold out" or free as themselves. Pride always comes before a fall. Don't fall for it :)

2) Treating people like a project

We must be motivated by love and led by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we will make our pursuit of their hearts about US. *Valuing the person as God does is key.* No one likes to feel like they are being recruited to a pyramid scheme. "Agenda" masquerading as "love" always leaves a bitter taste in our mouths. It is vital that we ask Jesus to help us see them the way He does, remaining sensitive to whatever step HE is leading them to take in the moment. We must not ever spiritually manipulate people to pray a prayer, but trust the Father to draw hearts to Himself as we love them and obey Him.

3) LIVING like you're a project

It is vital we remember that our worth and adoration was purchased at the Cross and not by what we "do" for God. What's more, He is far more interested in us going WITH Him onto the harvest field, not

all we are trying to do *FOR* Him in our own effort. We have all of His heart right now, and it is from the overflow of wonder, sitting at His feet as His beloved that we are best postured to carry good news.

4) Impatience and Offense with your brothers and sisters in Christ

When we belong to a diverse family, some of our brothers and sisters will desire to see the family kept safe (*shepherding grace*). Some will want to see the family grow deep (*teaching grace*). Some will value health (*apostolic grace*). Some will long to sit at the Father's feet in delight and care for injustices being made right (*prophetic grace*). Meanwhile, you are BURNING to see souls come home.

It is easy to fall back into scarcity mindsets and make bad agreements that cause you to get offended or to simply want to give up, believing no one cares about preaching the Gospel. We NEED your voice, and the grace in you is intended to mature your brothers and sisters to step past fear, distraction, discouragement, or whatever other hindrances may be standing in the way. Don't give up, and don't forget that you need all of the other graces as well in order to be mature and complete.

SHEPHERDING GRACE:

**Shepherding Grace gives you a HOME where you feel you belong,
AND where you NURTURE and PROTECT others into a place of belonging!**

Definition:

Shepherd (*poimēn*): One who **leads** sheep to safe and fertile pasture where they can **rest** and **eat**; one who **tends** their needs, **binds** their wounds, and **protects** them from outside threats as members of their flock.

A **Shepherd** leads people into **safe spaces of belonging** where they can be **restored** from their wounds, **protected** from attack (*outside & within*), and **grow** to their fullest potential, as a valued member of the family.

3 Defining Marks of Shepherding Grace

1. **“Nurturing”:** In prayer and presence, you tenderly and patiently partner with the full **restoration** God has for each of His kids.

“I will place **shepherds** over them who will **tend** them, and they will **no longer be afraid** or **terrified**, nor will any be **missing**,” declares the Lord.” **Jeremiah 23:4**

Key Scriptures: Ps. 23:1-6, Jer. 3:15, Jer. 23:4, Ezek. 34:1-16, Jn. 21:15-17

2. **“Protecting”:** Like a mama bear, you **fiercely defend** and **advocate** for those you love against any attack from without or within.

“I will **search** for the lost and **bring back** the strays. I will **bind up** the injured and **strengthen** the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with **justice**.” **Ezek. 34:16**

Key Scriptures: Num. 27:15-20, Ps. 23:1-6, Ezek. 34:16, Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:1-4

3. **“Removing Aloneness”:** You are **active** to connect **WITH** those in your community (*family, church, workplace, neighborhood*), and to connect them **TO** the greater flock.

“If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not **leave the ninety-nine** on the hills and **go to look for** the one that wandered off? And if he **finds** it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way *your Father in heaven is not willing that **any** of these little ones should perish.*” **Matt. 18:12-14**

Key Scriptures: Jer. 23:4, Matt. 18:12-14, Jn. 10:3, Jn. 10:14-15, Eph. 4:11-16

What happens wherever we lack Shepherding Grace:

We Become Cold: God's Church compromises '**family**' in the pursuit of '**function**,' and becomes professional, machine-like, and results-based. In the pursuit of **progress**, **people** fall through the cracks.

Or

We Become Calloused: Some people 'mesh' with the community culture and find a place to belong, while *many others struggle*, causing cliques, competition, jealousy, and sibling rivalry (*Cain & Abel, Jacob & Esau, Isaac & Ishmael fighting for their seat*).

Or

We Charge Toward Deception, Offense, & Attack: Because of feeling unseen, unvalued, or neglected, **sheep begin to wander** into either isolation or into 'clusters of offense' where they spend their energy resenting both the shepherds and the field. Without the rest of the flock they were made for, they fail to realize they are headed into attack.

8 Indicators You are Strong in Shepherding Grace:

1. You **value people** first, and not the **progress** they bring to the team.
2. You **connect** to people deeply, giving them your full attention when you are together and checking up on them often when you are apart.
3. You **celebrate** the people in your life, showing up for their birthdays, promotions, and 'wins!'
4. You **support** the people in your life, being an ever-present comfort, listening ear, and practical help in the disappointments, setbacks, and heartbreaks. *You're still there when everyone else has moved on.*
5. You **protect** the people in your life from drama, and offense, & accusation, often acting as a **buffer** between them and the problem through your prayer or presence.
6. You are a hub that **leads** the people you love into a place of belonging with **other** people you love. *You are a connector of community.*
7. You **ache** over the burdens of others — *both long-time friends and people you've just met*. You feel people's pain deeply and desire to step in to help bear the burden.
8. You **sit with people** and **stay with them** through the ups and downs of their journey; you pursue them and have many life-long relationships of depth.

Misuses & Abuses of Shepherding Grace:

4 Warnings for Highly Shepherding people:

1. Enablement / Over-shepherding

Sometimes, in our love for someone and our belief in their potential, we can find ourselves taking responsibility that isn't ours to take. Coddling, making excuses, or 'covering sins' to the point of ignoring dysfunctional mindsets and behaviors will hurt the flock. True compassion also requires correction. "God disciplines those He loves" (*Hebrews 12*).

"Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." **Warren Wiersbe**

2. Inward Focus

On the other side of the spectrum, we can easily build super safe communities with high values of honor, but move to the extreme where “safe” becomes “sanitized” and stops making place for the broken. In this case, “safe” is the enemy of “saving” the lost. The bar becomes so high, it is too steep for the broken to belong. Wherever this happens, we slowly become Pharisees, insulating our families, kids, and church from the “world,” running from the very ones Jesus desires to rescue. Shepherds need those with the evangelistic and apostolic graces around them! It’s the only way to keep “community” from becoming a “commune.”

3. Lack of Personal Boundaries Needed for Health

Shepherds love so much, they have to establish clear boundaries. Otherwise, they become a counselor and a “listening ear” for everyone, at the neglect of their own health, spiritual life, family, and the joy of being alive! Saying “no” can be tough for shepherds who lament that, “they need me.” The truth is they need JESUS. And He invites you to partner with Him in specific places to join Him on their restoration journey, but HE is the Rescuer. You are His kid, and you need discernment from Him on where HE is calling you. Otherwise, your “Yes” for Him will become your “I Can’t Anymore.”

4. Compassion Fatigue/Cynicism/Burnout

Loving and leading as a shepherd is hard, because sheep are prone to wander...and some of them bite! If you step into shepherding grace, it will mean loving people in their brokenness. It will often not be reciprocated and will sometimes break your heart. They may get deceived. They may start to believe things about you that aren’t kind or true. They may leave. If you don’t stay FIRST as a kid at the feet of Jesus, drawing all of your identity, approval, and worth from Him, you will seek it in sources that will only disappoint you.

The Spiral of Compassion Fatigue/Betrayal Unless there is Restoration:

Trauma (Shock, Betrayal, Hurt, Disappointment, Heartbreak)

Retreat (Guarded from putting yourself out there again, Timidity)

Anger (At the person; at God)

Callousness (You grow cold/numb)

Counter-Attack (You become an outspoken opponent against anything reminiscent of your pain)

“Unhealthy shepherds fleece unsuspecting sheep, and the cycle continues...”

TEACHING GRACE:

Teaching Grace stirs you with **HUNGER** to fully **DISCOVER** God and to **DEVELOP** into your Destiny!

Definition:

Teacher: 1) An **explainer**, bringing understanding to difficult concepts; **2)** An **equipper**, showing you how to do something for yourself.

*“A **Teacher** is one who takes what is perplexing and makes it palatable; what is confusing, clear; what is difficult, desirable; and what is inaccessible, an inspiring invitation. **A teacher takes bread from a high shelf and distributes it so even the smallest child can take and eat.**”*

Why Teaching Matters:

1. **Teaching was 1/3 of Jesus’ Ministry He called us to continue.** (See Matt. 4:23, 5:2, 7:29, 9:35, 11:1, 13:54, 21:23, 26:55; Mk. 1:21-22, 2:13, 4:1-2, 6:2, 6:6, 6:34, 8:31, 9:31, 10:1, 11:17, 12:35, 14:49; Lk. 4:15, 4:31, 5:3, 5:17, 6:6, 11:1, 13:10, 13:22, 13:26, 19:47, 20:1, 21:37, 23:25; Jn. 6:59, 7:14, 7:28, 7:35, 8:2, 8:20, 8:28, 18:20; Acts 1:1).
2. **Teaching is at the HEART of the Great Commission:** *“Teaching them to obey all I have commanded you”* (Matt. 28:18-20).
3. **Teaching has been a Foundational Activity from the Early Church to present day.** (See Acts 1:1, 2:42-46, 4:2, 5:21, 5:25, 5:42, 11:26, 15:35, 18:11, 18:25, 20:20, 21:28, 28:31)

3 Defining Marks of Teaching Grace:

1. **Teaching “Develops” Your Life and Calling:** *It forms and shapes the spiritual ‘house’ of how you see God, life, sin, hope, redemption, and your specific place in the world.*

“God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. He is the one we proclaim, **admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.**” **Col. 1:27-28**

Key Scriptures: Deut. 6:4-9, Ps. 119:64, Ps. 143:10, Is. 48:17, Matt. 28:18-20, Jn. 8:31-32, Rom. 6:16-18, Col. 1:27-28, Heb. 5:12,

2. **Teaching “Defines” Healthy Spiritual Muscles:** *It strengthens and refines your heart to continually mature in Christlike surrender and obedience.*

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, **continue** to live your lives in him, **rooted** and **built up** in him, **strengthened** in the faith as you were taught, and **overflowing** with thankfulness.” **Col. 2:6-7**

Key Scriptures: Prov. 1:8-9, Rom. 15:14, Php. 4:9, Col. 2:6-7, 1 Thess. 5:11, 2 Tim. 1:13-14, 4:2; Titus 2:1

3. **Teaching “Directs” Your Path:** *It anchors your hope, settles your soul, and orders your path to walk confidently in step with God.*

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Col. 3:15-16

Key Scriptures: Ps. 25:4-5, Ps. 34:11, Prov. 3:1-2, 6:20-23, Jn. 14:23, Rom. 15:4, Col. 3:16, 1 Tim. 4:15-16, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 1 Jn. 2:27

What happens wherever we lack teaching grace:

Immaturity & Impotence: We fail to grow up in obedience and holiness. We suffer a lack of the transformational love and power of God in our midst in favor of man-made pursuits. *We lean on our own understanding and perish for a lack of knowledge (Prov. 3:5-6, Hosea 4:6).*

Emotional Wandering & Entitlement: Failing to trust God as our authority, we allow our own emotions to take the throne, trading holiness for the haughty and hollow chasing of our own whims. We become self-important, impatient, easily offended, and obsessed with our supposed ‘rights,’ trading **good news** for **spiritual gluttony and grumbling**.

8 Indicators You are Strong in Teaching Grace:

1. You love **understanding** how things work and **explaining** them *for as long as someone is willing to listen.*
2. You see **lessons** in **EVERYTHING** and regularly transform mundane moments into teaching opportunities.
3. You love **“story”** and understand imagery deeply. You can’t watch a movie or read a book without sharing how it reflects larger realities of God and life, *for better or worse.*
4. You get MOST excited when you are leading people into a **new realm** of hunger or discovery. *You love watching the “lights turn on” in people’s souls.*
5. You respect the deeper nuances of complex issues, and struggle when others respond in **apathy** or premature judgment, driven by **ignorance**.
6. You think **deeply**. Your convictions are the result of detailed analysis, study, and reflection.
7. You love to study and discover. You are prone to read, write, and consume educational media (*podcasts, documentaries, etc*).
8. You are a **natural “trainer”** and are sought to help individuals or teams in your area of expertise through presentation and/or practical workshops.

Misuses & Abuses of Teaching Grace:

4 Warnings for Teachers:

1. Misrepresenting the Gospel Due to **Pride or the **Pursuit of Praise****

*“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. **For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will***

gather around them a **great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**” **2 Timothy 4:2-3**

“God’s Word is inspired. Your interpretation of it is not.”

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ***Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them,*** because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” **1 Timothy 4:15-16**

See also Matt. 5:19, Matt. 15:9, Rom. 6:17, Jn. 14:23, 1 Tim. 4:1-6, 1 Tim. 6:3-6, Titus 1:11, James 3:1.

“If you live by men’s praise, you will die by their criticism.”

2. Relational/Emotional Disconnection

It is easy to LOVE study, solitude, and teaching and to place too little emphasis on seeking a depth of relationship to walk WITH those you are seeking to teach. We must remember the only “law” of the Gospel is to love...and that means vulnerability and connection!

3. Impatience/Frustration

As a teacher, you can often SEE things that many others miss...and it can be easy to grow impatient or frustrated with people for not immediately jumping in enthusiasm about what you are sharing. Please keep in mind two things: a) It took you a good deal of time in awakening and study to see as you presently see and they JUST heard it. b) There are plenty of places where others can presently see and embrace realities of God that you have a hard time seeing. Extend the same grace you wish to be extended to you.

4. Hypocrisy

Knowledge, in and of itself, puffs up. It is not what we understand that Jesus is most concerned about, but rather what we will OBEY. Let us never forget that God gave us His Word not to satisfy the curiosities of our minds, but to transform our hearts!