

SOME RESOURCES FOR THE BELIEVER

1 CORINTHIANS 01:04–09

Introduction

The name of Jesus Christ is mentioned ten times in the first ten verses. Paul wanted the minds of the Corinthian believers to be immediately centred upon Jesus Christ. He knew this: the answer to the Corinthian problems did not lay in his ability to discuss and reason, nor in his laying down rules and regulations for them, but in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he immediately discussed some of the resources which the believer receives when he accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

- I. Resource 1: the grace of God (v. 4).
- II. Resource 2: the gifts of God's grace and Spirit (vv. 5-6).
- III. Resource 3: Jesus Christ Himself — His security (v. 8).
- IV. Resource 4: God Himself — His call (v. 9).

I. 1 Corinthians 01:04 Grace of God

The believer's first resource is the grace of God. Very simply, grace means the undeserved favour and blessings of God. We do not deserve God looking upon us with favour nor God blessing us with His favour. But God loves us with an unbelievable love, so He favours us with the most unbelievable gifts.

The Corinthian church (the believers) *knew* and experienced the grace of God. They knew what it was to receive the favour and blessings of God (see *Grace*, 1 Cor. 1:4).

1 CORINTHIANS 01:04 GRACE (CHARIS)

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 01:04

The favour and blessings of God; the undeserved and unmerited favour and blessings of God; the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God; the kindness and love that dwells within the very nature of God. God's grace covers all of life.

1. Grace means the kindness and love that God freely gives to those who *have acted against Him*. It is the favour of God showered upon men who do not deserve His favour, men who are...
 - “powerless” (Rom. 5:6). • “ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).
 - “sinners” (Rom. 5:8). • “enemies” (Rom. 5:10).

No other word so expresses the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God. This is the distinctive difference between God's grace and man's grace. Whereas man sometimes does favours for his friends and thereby can be said to be gracious, God has

done a thing unheard of among men: He has given His very own Son to die for His enemies (see notes, Rom. 5:6-11. Also see notes, *Love*, Jn. 21:15-17; *Grace*, Eph. 2:8-9.)

a. God's grace is not earned. It is something completely undeserved and unmerited.

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — Not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Titus 3:4-5 *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

b. God's grace is the free gift of God. God extends His grace out toward man.

Rom 3:24 *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Eph 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

c. God's grace is the only way man can be saved.

Rom 5:15 *But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*

1 Cor 1:4 *I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

Titus 3:6-7 *[Salvation] Whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

2. Grace means all the favours and gifts of God. It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives us and does for us, whether physical, material or spiritual (Jas. 1:17).

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Eph 2:7 *In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

Phil 4:19 *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

1 Tim 1:14 *The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. □*

II. 1 Corinthians 01:05–07 *Gifts of God’s Grace and Spirit*

The believer’s second resource is the gift of God’s grace and Spirit. God’s grace enriched the Corinthian believers “in every way”: they experienced the favour of God in every area of life and were actually blessed with all the gifts and blessings of God’s Spirit.

1. They were *especially blessed* with the gifts of speaking and of knowledge.

=> Speaking: all the spiritual gifts involving speech, which would include gifts such as prophecy, teaching and tongues — all forms of speech needed to praise God and to witness for Christ.

=> Knowledge: the spiritual gift of understanding spiritual truth and doctrine, of having unusual insight into the nature of God and His call and mission in the world.

The church and its believers were enabled by God’s grace to know and understand the truth of God’s Word and to speak the truth to a lost and dying world. The Spirit of God had enriched their lives by giving them all the gifts of spiritual knowledge and spiritual speech.

2. The results of God’s grace and gifts were most wonderful. They show what can happen to our faith when we truly experience the grace and gifts of God’s Spirit. There are three significant results mentioned by the Scripture.

a. The gifts and grace of God *confirmed* “*our testimony about Christ*” in the hearts of the believers. The believers had perfect assurance of their salvation. They knew beyond question that they were saved.

=> Jesus Christ had *testified* (proclaimed) to the truth: He was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

=> The disciples had *testified* to Christ: that He was definitely the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

The Corinthian believers had accepted the testimony of Christ. They had been truly saved, and their salvation was confirmed by the gifts and blessings of God’s grace. God had poured His grace and His Spirit out upon the Corinthian church and its believers. The gifts of the Spirit were their confirmation. Their faith in Christ was confirmed by the gifts of God’s glorious grace and His Spirit. There was no question

about their salvation. The presence of God's Spirit and God's grace bore clear evidence that their salvation and experience with Christ were genuine.

Thought 1. God will confirm the faith of a true believer. He will *seal* a person's decision for Christ with the Holy Spirit. God will pour His Spirit and His grace out upon a person who truly trusts His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The one thing God wants above all else is for the believer to be firmly established in the faith of His dear Son.

2 Cor 1:21-22 *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

Eph 1:13 *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*

Eph 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Gal 4:4-6 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

- b. The gifts and grace of God brought a full provision to the Corinthian believers (v. 7). They lacked no spiritual gifts whatsoever; in fact, when it came to spiritual gifts, they stood equal with the strongest of churches. They experienced not only the personal gifts such as faith and knowledge and tongues, but the public gifts such as miracles, healing and prophecy; and they possessed them in abundance.

Thought 1. The believer is to "eagerly desire the greater gifts" and to "eagerly desire spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). But the believer must always remember that possessing the gifts of the Spirit does not mean that he is necessarily *strong* in the Lord. There were no more carnal believers in the early days of the church than the Corinthian believers. They tragically abused their gifts and their abuse and subsequent judgment serves as a strong warning to all. (See notes, 1 Cor. 12:1-14:40.)

- c. The gifts and grace of God *stirred* a strong longing for the return of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit give us a foretaste of the glories of heaven.

=> The gift of prophecy or of preaching proclaims what heaven will be like.

=> The gift of ministering demonstrates the loving compassion and care that exists in heaven.

=> The gift of healing demonstrates the power and will of God for man to live without corruption and pain.

When the gifts of the Spirit are active among a people, it is only natural that the return of Christ and of heaven is stirred within their hearts, for they are constantly experiencing the presence of the Lord in their midst and receiving a foretaste of heaven.

The more active the gifts of the Spirit are among a people, the more the people long for the Lord's return. The more a people talk and share about the Lord and minister to each other in the Lord, the more they long for the Lord and to be with Him. Whatever we sow, we reap. The more we sow conversation about the Lord and the gifts of the Lord, the more we shall long to be reaped by the Lord. The believer's earnest longing for the Lord's return is clearly understood. Just imagine the glorious expectation he possesses!

=> The believer knows that he will receive a place (a home) or a mansion in heaven.

***John 14:2-3** "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

=> The believer knows that the sufferings of this world do not come close to comparing with the glory of the Lord's return and of heaven.

***Rom 8:18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

=> The believer knows that his corruptible body will be changed into a perfect incorruptible body when Jesus returns.

***Phil 3:20-21** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

=> The believer knows that when Christ appears, he will appear with Christ in glory.

***Col 3:4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

=> The believer knows that he will be reunited with all his loved ones (who were believers) when Jesus returns.

***1 Th 4:14-18** We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

=> The believer knows that he will receive a crown of glory in that day.

1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

=> The believer knows that he will be made in the image of His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

III. *1 Corinthians 01:08 Security and Assurance of Jesus*

The believer's third resource is the security of the Lord Jesus Christ, the assurance which He brings to the believer's heart. The word "strong" (*bebaiosei*) means preserve and establish, make steadfast and firm and secure. Jesus Christ will preserve and secure the believer from falling. Note the glorious reason: that the believer may be "blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The word "blameless" (*anegkletous*) means unreprouvable, guiltless. It means that no one will be able to accuse or bring any accusation against the believer when he stands before Christ in the day of judgment. The "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" will bring about the judgment seat of Christ, and only those who are preserved by the blood and power of Jesus Christ will be counted blameless (v. 8).

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet 1:5 Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 1:24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Rev 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

IV. 1 Corinthians 01:09 God's Call to Spiritual Fellowship

The believer's fourth resource is God Himself, His glorious call. God has called believers for one specific purpose: to be in fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The longing of God's heart is for men to know His Son...

- by becoming personally related to Him through adoption (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:4-6).
- by fellowshiping with Him day by day, all day long.

Note the point: God is not after us to fellowship with His Son only on a temporary basis. When God calls us to fellowship with His Son, He means eternal fellowship. He is adopting us as children so that Jesus Christ will have our fellowship as brothers.

***Rom 8:15-17** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

***Rom 8:29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers.*

***Gal 4:4-6** But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

***1 John 1:3** We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

***Rev 3:20** Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. ■*