

# AUGUST 2013 FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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## *Beginning thoughts...*

Sometimes I am my worst enemy. I rush ahead of God when deciding how to best handle a situation. The thoughts get all scrambled in my head and I tend to forget that I have another person who will guide me in my decisions and problems. Those are the times that I realize I must depend on God for everything. He is my friend so why wouldn't I consult Him with my needs? His grace will sustain me and guide me back to where I can let Him carry the burdens on His shoulder. He is after all the one who created the universe!

Question: Would Adam and Eve have been better off if they had trusted God instead of the devil? Most of us would answer "yes." So why didn't they? Was it because they had not grown in God's grace? Certainly they didn't recognize the knowledge and truth of God even when He was right there with them walking in the garden. Sadly, they let Satan steal everything they could have had in Eden. They allowed greed, curiosity and sin entangle them like poison ivy climbing one of the trees—poison in the form of the serpent. He filled their minds and hearts with enticing lies of something better than God had shared. Or, so they thought. Look where that thinking got them.

Grace is for everyone. God is not a respecter of persons. He wants everyone to dwell with Him someday. Study hard this month; there are conditions which we must follow or accept. That's why we have to grow in knowledge and truth, in holiness, through our suffering and in the hope of His coming. If we do these things, our lives will be filled with gratitude for what Jesus has done for us. When the world is closing in all around us, we can rely on Him—with every aspect of our lives, without fear of reprisals. We can give Him complete control, realizing He will carry us to stand on the Solid Rock of Grace, wrapped in the strong arms of Peace.



# GROW

## *In Knowledge and Truth*

**HANDWRITING ON THE HEART:** “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2-3).

**HANDPRINT:** We grow in grace as we study God’s Word and embrace Truth. Knowing truth helps us identify false teachers and prevent destruction caused by their lies.

- ✳ Write the Handwriting on the Heart verse in your journal.
- ✳ Go over the questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 37.
- ✳ Do you enjoy or appreciate being told a lie?
- ✳ Do you think everything you hear or read is true? How can be sure that what we learn is truth? (*Check it out: follow up, research, investigate, study*)
- ✳ When a preacher is expounding on the Word of God, do we know enough about the Bible to know if they are telling us the truth? How can we know? (*By doing what you are doing right now—a Bible Study and by letting the Holy Spirit guide you.*)
- ✳ Peter wrote his epistles because he loved these people. Read 2 Peter 3:1-18. What does he call the readers? (*beloved*)
- ✳ Then what is his final instruction in verse 18? (*Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*)
- ✳ How do we grow? (*1. Through the Word—1 Peter 2:2; 2. In love—1 Thesalonians 3:12; 3. Into Christ—Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:10; 4. In fruitfulness—2 Corinthians 9:10; 5. Unto perfection—Hebrews 6:1.*)
- ✳ What is the opposite of growth? (*Immaturity—1 Corinthians 3:1-3*)
- ✳ What are some signs of immaturity in a Christian? (*1. Instability of faith—Ephesians 4:14; 2. Need to be taught—Hebrews 5:12; 3. Bondage to the world—Galatians 4:3.*)
- ✳ Is there hope for the immature? (*Definitely—2 Timothy 2:15 tells us they can grow in spiritual maturity.*)
- ✳ Find Scriptures concerning spiritual maturity and record in your journal. (*For starters: 1 Corinthians 13:11, 14:20; Hebrews 5:14; 1 John 2:14.*)
- ✳ According to Ephesians 4:13, 15. will we ever grow completely mature or be perfect while we are here on earth?

**DISMISSAL PRAYER:** Ask God for grace to study and become spiritually mature in the faith.



# GROW

## *In Holiness*

**HANDWRITING ON THE HEART:** *“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16).*

**HANDPRINT:** We grow in grace as we answer God’s call to holiness. Holiness involves yielding ourselves to the Spirit and following Christ’s example.

- ✱ Write the Handwriting on the Heart verse in your journal. Try to memorize this verse.
- ✱ Go over the questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 39.
- ✱ Compare your definitions of holiness. (*Write a few of them on a whiteboard if you have access to one.*)
- ✱ What does “conversation” refer to in 1 Peter 1:15? (*Conduct or behavior—Philippians 1:27; James 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:12.*)
- ✱ Who is Holy? (*God—Exodus 15:11; Psalm 99:9; Isaiah 6:3; Leviticus 19:2*)
- ✱ How can we be holy? (*By accepting Christ and living for Him—Colossians 1:22.*)
- ✱ Do you consider yourself holy? Do you get frustrated by thinking you have to be holy? (Read Romans 7:19. Even Paul didn’t understand.)
- ✱ The word “holiness” is derived from the Old English word “holi” where we get “wholeness.” (*You can find variations/translations in different languages.*)
- ✱ Who did God command to be “holy” in Leviticus 20:26? (*The people of Israel. God wanted them to be complete/whole because He is perfect [complete].*)
- ✱ Is there anything wrong or blemished about God? (*No, He is beautiful—what a person should be—Matthew 5:48; Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31.*)
- ✱ What about me or you? What is God’s purpose in our lives? (*To change the brokenness into wholeness.*)
- ✱ How will He do that? (*Calling us—Isaiah 42:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 4:4; Hebrews 3:1*)
- ✱ To understand holiness (wholeness) look at these four elements:  
(1) *Blood*: Jesus died and gave His life so we can give up the old for the new—Ephesians 4:24; (2) *Love*: family, friends, society in general—Hebrews 12:14; (3) *Relationship to God*: worshipping, knowing the God of everything—1 Chronicles 16:29; (4) *Awareness of issues at stake*: to accept or reject Christ—1 Peter 3:11-12.)
- ✱ Does God want us to be His? (*Psalm 4:3, 100:3; Ephesians 1:4; James 2:5*)

**DISMISSAL PRAYER:** Ask God to help you turn your brokenness into wholeness and give you strength to live a life of holiness.



# GROW

## Through Suffering

**HANDWRITING ON THE HEART:** *"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).*

**HANDPRINT:** We grow in grace as we follow the example of Christ in our response to persecution and suffering.

- ✱ Write the Handwriting on the Heart verse in your journal.
- ✱ Go over the questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 41.
- ✱ Have you ever heard anyone say, "Oh, I just love to suffer!" (*I don't think so.*)
- ✱ Why is suffering a necessary part of our growth? (*1 Peter 3:17, 4:13; Romans 8:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:12*)
- ✱ Have you ever been defined by your suffering? Share when and how.
- ✱ Why is fire a proving factor of Christians? (*suffers affliction—Isaiah 48:10; refines and purifies—Malachi 3:3.*)
- ✱ Have you been "through the fire" so to speak? Did you turn or get burned?
- ✱ Look at Job in the Old Testament. Why did the Lord allow Job to suffer so much when he was a man who feared and loved God? (*Job 1:8*)
- ✱ Things got really bad for Job. What did his own wife want him to do? (*Curse God and die—Job 2:9-10.*)
- ✱ What did he tell her? (*You talk as a foolish woman.*)
- ✱ Did he feel that way all the time? (*No, Job 10 shows he was weary of life and wanting comfort before his death. Note verse 1 and 20 particularly.*)
- ✱ Did Job renounce his faith at any time? (*Not that we know of—Job 13:15-18.*)
- ✱ How did Job feel about his suffering? (*He would come forth as gold—Job 23:10.*)
- ✱ Did Job grow as a result of his experience? (*Yes. He acknowledged God as omnipotent—Job 42:1-3.*)
- ✱ What other Biblical characters can you think of who suffered for their faith? (*Stephen—Acts 7:55-58; John the Baptist—Matthew 14:10; Paul—2 Corinthians 11:23-27*)
- ✱ Are you thankful Christ suffered in your place? (*Hebrews 2:9*)

**DISMISSAL PRAYER:** Ask God to give you grace in times of suffering and to help you grow through those times.



# GROW

## *In Hope of His Coming*

**HANDWRITING ON THE HEART:** “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

**HANDPRINT:** We grow in grace as we diligently live and serve in anticipation of Christ’s return.

- ✱ Write the Handwriting on the Heart verse in your journal.
- ✱ Go over the questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 43.
- ✱ Do you possess a spiritual hope that you share with others? (1 Peter 3:15)
- ✱ What does hope give us? (1. An anchor—Hebrews 6:18-19; 2. Heavenly treasure—Colossians 1:5; 3. Immortality—Acts 24:15; 4. Anticipation of Christ’s return—Titus 2:13; 5. Strength—Psalms 31:24.)
- ✱ There is such a thing as false hope. What would a false hope be? (Job 8:13; 11:20 Proverbs 10:28) Do you know anyone with false hope? Are they living wicked lives, being a hypocrite, having the wrong expectations?
- ✱ Will Jesus return to this earth someday? (2 Peter 3:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
- ✱ Read Hebrews 10:36-37. This is considered “The Promise” of the Lord’s return. Read these words aloud together. “He that shall come will come.”
- ✱ Look at some examples of the Messianic hope. (Anna—Luke 2:38; Simeon—Luke 2:26; Woman of Samaria—John 4:25; Abraham—John 8:56.)
- ✱ Who has hope in Christ’s death? (the righteous—Proverbs 14:32)
- ✱ Do we know when Christ will return? (No man knows the day or the hour—Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:35)
- ✱ When did Jesus first mention He would come again? (John 14:2-3) Why did Jesus tell His disciples this? (So they would hope for His return—John 14:28-29)
- ✱ Later John would write about this return. Read Revelation 1:7.
- ✱ What are we, as Christians, suppose to do until Jesus comes back? (Work and watch with an attitude of hope and waiting—Matthew 24:43-47)
- ✱ Will everyone be excited when Jesus returns? (Matthew 24:40-41; 25:31-34; 41-46)
- ✱ Do you have the hope of the Lord’s return in your heart? Can you say with full confidence, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus?” (Revelation 22:12-14, 17, 21)
- ✱ Make an acrostic out of the word HOPE. (Example: **H**eaven **O**ffers **P**erfect **E**ternity)

**DISMISSAL PRAYER:** Ask God to strengthen the hope you have in the Lord’s return and renew your enthusiasm to tell others before it’s too late.

### *In closing...*

The summer studies on Grace have been like a cool breath of fresh air. Sometimes the heat of this world's trials and tribulations can get us weakened down and smothered. But knowing God's grace is with me has given me new resolve to continue on this journey of life doing everything I possibly can until His return. Just because the years go by faster than I would like, the gray hairs become too numerous to count, and the bones and joints ache is no reason to stop serving the Lord. He has a plan and a purpose for my life and yours. I pray that each of you have studied until the sweat ran on these studies. They have allowed us to Know Grace, Show Grace, and to Grow in Grace. It's truly been a blessing for me to share some thoughts to hopefully stimulate you to greater heights with our Lord and Savior.

—Carolyn