

Sweet Pocket of Grace

Many of us awaited our turn at the Post Office counter. The man currently at the window made no secret of his displeasure with the clerk, by his tone and facial expressions. People in line were getting fidgety because this was taking so long.

Finally, the angry man stepped aside as the clerk went to look for his package. A new clerk stepped up to the window and called for the next customer in line. A young college student squirmed shyly and stepped up to the counter.

He placed an engineering textbook in front of the clerk and looked at him expectantly. The clerk looked at the textbook and back at the young man. "How can I help you?"

The young customer blushed and stammered. "Uh, well, I need to return this textbook. My professor said it is not the right one. The place I bought it from said there is a money back guarantee." He sucked in a deep breath at the effort of trying to explain, painfully aware that everyone in the small lobby was now watching him, even the angry man.

The clerk looked quizzically at the book for a moment: Principles of Engineering.

A young woman behind me stifled a giggle she tried to disguise as a cough.

The young man barely whispered, "I have never had to mail anything myself. This is my first semester away from home. My grandma used to take care of it all for me."

The clerk did not hesitate. Flashing a smile, he told the student, "No problem. Grab one of those mailing envelopes and I will show you what to do."

By the time my turn came to approach one of the windows, the clerk was carefully showing the young man how to package and address it.

The angry man had watched this whole exchange. The creases in his face relaxed as he mumbled an apology to the clerk who finally found his package.

The people waiting in the long line quit fidgeting and several smiled admiringly as the clerk patiently walked the young man through each step, kindly encouraging him, even though it probably was not part of his clerk job description.

That is a good thing to remember about Grace. It usually requires us to go outside of our job descriptions.

Practical Applications

2 Corinthians 9:8 *God is able to make ALL Grace abound to you, so that ALWAYS having ALL sufficiency in everything, you may have an ABUNDANCE for every good deed.*

In *LifeChangers*, the middle session taught by Graham Cooke is entitled *Understanding True Grace*. To understand Grace, it is good to know the definition of Grace. Looking in Webster's Dictionary, you will find that Grace, by the world's standards is defined as *unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration or salvation*. Unmerited means undeserved, unwarranted, unearned, not justified. This is NOT a definition of the Grace that God gives.

Graham defines Grace like this. *Grace is the empowering Presence of God that enables you to become the person that God sees every time He looks at you*. You MUST see yourself as God sees you so that you relate to others out of that identity. We encourage you to commit this definition of Grace to memory.

In the real-life story in this Chat, the clerk that helped the young man mail his package was living from a place that released peace to all those waiting in line who had been tense because of what the first customer was releasing. As your Aglow group moves about your community corporately or individually, be those who release Grace so powerfully that atmospheres shift for good as you walk down the street, shop, play in the park, visit shut-ins, hold story times at the library, walk around schools, and so on.

1. Take a spiritual temperature check around your community. Thinking back on events that have taken place or news stories, identify 'hot spots' that need His Presence to come on the scene. List them.
2. Looking at the list that you made in #1, ask God to show you how to go to these places and release His Grace so that it shifts the atmosphere. Consider simply taking a deck of Grace cards and reading them out into the atmosphere.
3. Share a story where the atmosphere shifted when you spoke out words of life.
4. We can all remember stories where we didn't release Grace into the atmosphere. Take a private moment now to ask God to forgive those times Holy Spirit is highlighting to you and to give you new opportunities to be a Grace giver, not a Grace grower.
5. Grace is a lifestyle that we practice every day. It is a place where we stand. Think of the Peanuts character, Linus. Linus always had a little cloud that followed him wherever he went. That is how Grace is for us. Grace is like the glue that holds all God is together. So when you show God's love, you also release His Kindness. As you release His Kindness, eyes will be opened to see His Goodness. And as they see His Goodness, they will be surround by His Mercy and praise will begin to flow out. List a few situations where you can release Grace.