

PROVING MY LOVE & FINDING HIS GRACE

The next step after "A Test of Love." A biblical process of restoring peace to our minds, cooperation within the church and affirming the forgiveness of ourselves and others in Him. This outline leads us through Scripture and enlists the Holy Spirit in the process of church families seeking peace and forgiveness. Reading the Scriptures reminds us of our principles and priorities as Christians.

Key Concepts & Questions:

1. Remember that it is by our love for each other that those outside of Christ may become convinced that we are Christians. Loving people when it is hard is the proof.
2. Jesus' prayer was that we might be brought to "complete unity." Jesus saw us right here, right now.
3. Christian friends have been commissioned by God to help brothers and sisters in Christ during times of struggle. In light of this passage in what ways are peace, rejoicing, and our thinking process interrelated?

Key Scriptures:

John 13:34-35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

John 17:20-23 *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ...May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*

Phil 4:2-9 - *I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be*

Grace in Action:

Individuals should take turn reading the following Scriptures out loud and then pray after each passage for courage and awareness to fulfill each passage. Watch for unique ways to pray for each element in these Scriptures. If it seems appropriate someone might pray after responses are given.

Key Concepts & Questions:

4. In the next three passages of Scripture we see ways that Satan works to deceive, distract, and divide us. What directives are we told and why should we follow them.

Key Scriptures:

anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2 Tim 2:22-26 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Eph 6:11-18 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's

Grace in Action:

Key Concepts & Questions:

Key Scriptures:

Grace in Action:

schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

2 Cor 2:5-11 - If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extentNow instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 ... in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

5. What is the potential risk of not forgiving, or being forgiven?

Key Concepts & Questions:

Now it's time to reflect on your study of "A Test of Love."

6. From question #5, what things did each of you think of during your study about which you both can agree?

7. From question #17, list the individuals that you know are watching the way you handle this situation and are praying for you both to find peace and resolution? How might your reactions to each other cause someone else stumble? To these individuals you both have an opportunity to bring one of your greatest or worse witnesses of Jesus' grace!

8. From questions #4, #8, and #9 (or any others), are there things the Holy Spirit has brought to your mind which you have done, or neglected doing that has added to or complicated this conflict with your

Key Scriptures:

1 Cor 1:10-11 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Cor 10:32-11:1 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Ps 32:1-7 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was

Grace in Action:

What is the list of things you both have identified that you can agree on?

Who are the people that will be effected by your relationship?

What are some actions or reactions that have complicated this struggle?

Key Concepts & Questions:

brother/sister in Christ?

9. Looking at questions #1 & 2, of "The Test of Love" what are the things that your brother/sister may have not acknowledged but you feel needs to be addressed? Can you word this concern in an honest, positive, and loving manner?

10. List the emotions, feelings and thoughts mentioned in this passage to which you can relate.

Key Scriptures:

sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" — and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Gal 6:1-5 *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load.*

Ps 107:15-22 *Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, 16 for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron. 17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. 18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of*

Grace in Action:

List any way that comes to mind in which you might help carry your brother's/sister's burden?

What are some things you have seen recently that reminds you of God's unfailing love.

Key Concepts & Questions:

Key Scriptures:

death. 19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. 20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. 21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. 22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.

Grace in Action:

What are some things for which you can “give thanks” to the Lord.

Key Concepts & Questions:

Key Scriptures:

Grace in Action: