

Protégé: "With Great Power"

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ ***Respect undergirds everything*** - Every person, regardless of age, status, or position, deserves honor and respect in the kingdom of God.
- ✓ ***Compassion means "to suffer with"*** - True compassion involves coming alongside people in their need, not just feeling sorry for them from a distance.
- ✓ ***Grace always comes with a command*** - Jesus never gives grace so we can remain idle; He saves us with a mission and purpose in mind.
- ✓ ***Healthy support empowers, not enables*** - The church's role is to help people in ways that restore their dignity and engage them in kingdom work.
- ✓ ***"To whom much is given, much is required"*** - We have been given immeasurable grace; what are we doing with it?

Discussion Questions:

1. ***What surprised you most about the qualifications and conditions Paul placed on the widow support system in the early church? Why do you think these guidelines were necessary?***
2. ***The sermon mentioned three core principles: respect, compassion, and responsibility. How do these three work together? Can you have one without the others?***
3. ***Paul says that elders deserve "double honor" but also face "double scrutiny" (verses 17-20). What does this teach us about leadership in the church?***
4. ***The pastor said, "If all you do in the kingdom is come here weekly to feed, you're missing out on real kingdom life." How does this statement challenge you personally? Be honest about your current level of engagement.***
5. ***Jesus always gave grace WITH a command (go and sin no more, go show yourself to the priest, go and tell others). What command or mission do you sense God has given you along with His grace?***

6. *The sermon warned about becoming "idle" in our faith—having too much time and getting distracted by things that don't matter (gossip, preferences about carpet and paint colors, etc.). Have you seen this happen in church communities? How can we guard against it?*
7. *Read 1 Timothy 5:8 again: "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." This is strong language. How does this verse speak to our responsibility toward family members in need?*
8. *The early church had a system where those who received help were also given meaningful work to do. How might this principle apply to how we help people today? What's the difference between enabling and empowering?*
9. *What does "putting your religion into practice" (verse 4) look like in your daily life? Share one specific way you've done this recently or want to start doing this.*
10. *Pastor emphasized that we should "be quick to pray for others" rather than saying "I'll pray for you later." How can we implement this practice in our group and in our daily lives?*

Practical Applications:

Individual Actions:

1. **Identify your assignment:** Ask God to show you one specific way He wants you to serve in His kingdom this week. Write it down and share it with an accountability partner.
2. **Pray immediately:** When someone asks for prayer this week, stop and pray with them right then instead of promising to pray later.
3. **Check your idle time:** Evaluate how you spend your free time. Is any of it being wasted on things that don't matter for the kingdom? Replace one idle activity with one kingdom-focused activity.

Family Actions:

4. **Have a family conversation** about how you can "put your religion into practice" by caring for relatives who may be in need (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.).

5. **Teach the "grace plus command" principle** to your children by helping them see that God's gifts always come with purpose.
6. **Group Actions:**
7. **Identify someone in need** in your church or community and develop a plan as a group to support them in a way that also engages them in meaningful work or community.
8. **Establish accountability:** Commit to asking each other, "What are you doing with God's grace this week?" at your next meeting.

PRAYER FOCUS:

- **Thanksgiving:** For God's limitless, unending grace toward us
- **Confession:** For times we've received grace but remained idle in kingdom work
- **Intercession:** For those in your church/community who are truly in need
- **Commitment:** That God would show each person their specific assignment in His kingdom
- **Leaders:** For church leaders to lead with integrity under both honor and scrutiny

QUICK-HIT Questions (for less formal discussion)

Pick and Choose from any questions that might fit your discussion

1. How does the practice of feeding wildlife parallel the way churches sometimes create unhealthy dependency rather than empowering people to use their God-given abilities?
2. In what ways might modern churches struggle to balance compassion for those in need with the biblical principle of encouraging responsibility and purpose?
3. Paul emphasizes that those who receive aid should also contribute through prayer and service. How does this challenge our contemporary understanding of charity and welfare?
4. What does it mean to 'put your religion into practice' by caring for family members, and how might neglecting this responsibility demonstrate a denial of faith?
5. How can idle Christians with all their needs met become susceptible to gossip, division, and trivial conflicts rather than focusing on kingdom work?
6. The sermon states that Jesus always gives grace with a command. How does this truth challenge the idea that salvation is simply about receiving forgiveness without transformation?
7. Why do you think Paul required widows to have demonstrated a history of good deeds and service before being placed on the church support list?
8. What are the dangers of a church culture where people only come weekly to 'feed' spiritually without actively serving or advancing the kingdom?
9. How does the principle of 'double honor, double scrutiny' for church leaders create healthy accountability while maintaining respect for their calling?
10. In what specific ways are you currently using the limitless grace you've received from Jesus to serve others and advance His kingdom?