

Why You Need the Apostolic Grace

When apostolic believers gather for a late night breakfast after a long day of church-building, there are a few threads that tend to get woven through almost every conversation: warfare, work and, if there's a prophet in the mix, perhaps casting out devils.

But seriously, even though one can't separate warfare from the apostolic—if we had a Christianese thesaurus these two words would surely be synonymous—apostolic living is not *only* about fighting principalities and powers over territories. (Really!)

So you don't have to be a skilled warrior to cross over to the apostolic. Your local apostolic church will equip you to submit yourself to God and resist the devil. You just have to possess a determination to be all you can be in Christ.

Doubtless, the warfare will come just as sure as Jesus will come for a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. But it's not always the sharpest sword that wins the fight. The victor is just as often the one that can endure the longest. The apostolic grace is an enduring grace and apostolic living is a life of endurance. Jesus said he who endures to the end would be saved (Matt. 10:22).

For those of you who are already living the apostolic life, this may not be a new revelation, but it should be a welcome reminder. And for those who are entering into the apostolic, I want to emphasize that we do more than fight the good fight of faith. We also take coffee breaks, vacations and enjoy popcorn and a good, clean movie when we need a quick breather from taking the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Apostolic living means working hard, but it also means balancing that work with healthy fun because we know that our

adversary the devil is roaming about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The apostolic brings with it an endurance-boosting grace that will carry you through the most trying times if you follow the Spirit of God. Brother Webster calls this inner grit a “firmness of mind and spirit, an unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.” Excuses are your enemy and in the Church of Jesus Christ there is no such thing as instant grit.

Excuses or “excusions” as a German minister I know calls them, are not tolerated. I tried every excusion in the book during my first year or so in an apostolic church. No matter how well I pled my case, the leadership wasn’t swayed by my full symphony orchestra with its classical reasoning tunes. That’s not to say that there is no compassion in the apostolic church. Just like God, apostolic leaders love you too much to leave you the way you are. They know that in order to be more than a conqueror you need to graduate from the milk to the meat of the Word, from bacon and eggs only to apostolic grit.

Apostolic living requires dedication and commitment to searching one’s own heart and allowing leadership to speak into your life. Every maturing Christian (and we’ll all be maturing until Jesus comes back to get us!) should have those they minister to and those that minister to them. Don’t hesitate to get feedback from both sides. I recently asked one of my leaders what was the biggest flaw in my mindset that was holding me back. She said, er, I won’t tell you what she said. What I will tell you is that she spoke the truth in love, I received the truth that is setting me free and I am thankful for it (and a little grittier, too).

Remember, apostolic living is a life of endurance. We endure spiritual attacks. We endure hard truths. We endure growing pains. We endure, endure and endure some more. And we have the grit necessary to do it.

Whenever my emotions begin to rage against thoughts of the discipline required to till the ground of my soul and plant seeds of change so that God can bring a supernatural harvest of spiritual growth, I read the Apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy and the sage advice it contains to a young believer embracing the first apostolic reformation.

"When the going gets rough, take it on the chin with the rest of us, the way Jesus did. A soldier on duty doesn't get caught up in making deals at the marketplace. He concentrates on carrying out orders. An athlete who refuses to play by the rules will never get anywhere. It's the diligent farmer who gets the product. Think it over. God will make it all plain" (2 Timothy 2:3-7 MSG).

Somehow that always straightens me right out. Apostolic believers aren't perfect. They stumble and fall just like everybody else. The difference is that they get right back up and get right back into the fight. They are ready to take it on the chin for Jesus. They are ready to strain to reach the end of the race and receive the crown that God, through Christ Jesus, has for us. They are willing to endure to the end for the sake of the lost souls that have not yet heard the Good News.