



## Grace Means Growth

By Chaplain Jim Salo, Executive Director, APCA

**The unmerited favor of God has been deposited into us because of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Grace means that we are secure in Christ and as a result of that security, we are called into **holiness** and are challenged to LIVE a holy life that reflects the character of Jesus *For it is written "Be Holy, because I Am Holy"* (1 Peter 1:16). Holiness leads us into FEAR, fear of a holy God! This fear is not the same as that hot 911--Code 3 call, rather, this fear is a wholesome dread of displeasing Him. The continuing result of this grace is that we are to **GROW**. That's where we pick up the text in 1 Peter 2: 1-10. I encourage you to grab your copy of our Peacemakers NIV New Testament and read those verses.



First, we see a prerequisite to growth. The apostle Peter tells us to "put aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and all slander." We are to put away **malice**, that spirit of doing harm, always thinking the worst of other people. This is often the way we cops feel as we patrol, take 911 calls and see life at its worst. Even as a child of God, distrust of people can so easily creep back into our lives and we can come to that place where we are the ones who truly have the vicious spirit.

Another key to our growth is not engaging in hypocrisy. **Hypocrisy** is an outward show, masquerading as something you are NOT. Now, let's be completely honest with one another! There have been times when we all have been the hypocrite, saying one thing and doing another; condemning an action and then finding ourselves doing the exact same thing! Peter tells us to stop doing this. I faced this as a new cop in Loveland, Colorado. I was told that the afternoon shift all met at this one bar to drink after work, and to not patrol there. Why? Because hypocrites were inside drinking, after just arresting drunks on the road and throwing them in jail a few hours before! Talk about hypocrisy! I said NO, I would patrol that bar at 2 AM and see if any of my fellow officers were going to drive. I was there the very first night—my patrol car parked right in front of the bar's front door! As they came out, I told them, anyone driving, I would pull over, administer a breathalyzer and call our CHIEF OF POLICE! Needless to say that stopped immediately and never did reoccur! You cannot serve others and employ the same laws you are not living yourself!

The next prerequisite for growth is not **slandering** others, which means to defame or give an evil report. These are negative things that need to be removed from our lives if, as the children of God, we are going to grow.

Romans 13 gives us God's authority to govern until He comes again. The task of reaching a lost generation is at stake. If we are going to see our communities reached for Christ, then we must be renewed by seeking His face and learning to grow into a deep, mature faith! Keep telling your fellow officers what Christ has done for you! Two years after I left Loveland P.D. our Chief of Detectives called me to say "Do you remember those times in the hallway after shift, you answered all the questions I had about God? Well today, my whole family and I got saved!" Grace ALWAYS works!

*"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."* 1 Peter 2:1-3 NIV