

“For it is by grace you have been saved ...” Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

# THE GRACE CARD

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## IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

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### Let's Watch ...

Blake and Mac argue at dinner before Blake leaves angrily (Clip 2)



In what has become a rare instance at the McDonald house, Blake joins his parents for dinner in an attempt to connect with his dad. Unfortunately, Blake also needs to break the news to his father that he will not be graduating from high school; in fact, Blake's elite private school has asked him to leave. Mac explodes in rage, screaming at both his son and his wife. "Just once, I want to have a normal conversation with you and not another fight," Blake says before walking out of the house. Mac then storms out of the room, leaving Sara once again to pick up the figurative and literal pieces.

### Let's Read ...

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:13-14

**Other Key Scripture:** 1 John 1:7; Mark 9:50; 1 Kings 11:4

### Let's Consider ...

In 1 John 1:7, we read: "...if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another ..." There are a couple of key words to highlight: *if* and *fellowship*. On a positive note, *if* we are walking with Christ, then we have strong relationships with others, centered on our love for Christ.

On the other hand, *if* our relationship with Christ is non-existent or deteriorating, then that will have a negative affect on every other relationship we have. Mac is a good illustration of this principle. In the aftermath of tragedy, he chose not to turn to God. Instead, he has allowed anger and bitterness not only to impact his life adversely, it has also torn apart the lives of his son and his wife. He is not a person anyone wants to be near.

Our relationship with Christ—or lack thereof—affects every other relationship we have. If we have a strong relationship with Jesus, our relationships reflect that. If we don't, our relationships suffer as a result.

In Matthew 5:13-14, Jesus tells his believers that: “You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world ...” In Mark 9:50, Jesus says: “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and *be at peace with each other*” (emphasis added).

Have you ever thought about how pervasive salt can be? A little salt can totally alter the taste of food that is bland. How about light? In the deepest, darkest caverns of earth, one small flame can pierce the darkness.

News stories are filled with tales of corruption and lack of integrity. Evil is a powerful force. But evil can only operate in the absence of the Holy. Where the Holy One reigns supreme, evil can no longer exist. In the presence of light, darkness flees. With the addition of salt, taste is totally transformed.

## Let's Discuss ...

How does God want us to treat one another? How are you doing when it comes to God's standard in this area?

If you were to take an inventory of your relationships, do you think they would reflect that you are “walking in the light”? Why or why not? Would people close to you agree with your assessment?

Think of a relationship (current or past) that has been adversely affected by you or the other person not walking with Christ. What went wrong? How do you think a relationship with Christ would have helped avert that relational crisis?

Mac's bitterness in the film comes in the aftermath of a terrible tragedy. Do you find it easier or harder to draw near to God when things go horribly wrong? Why do you think that is?

How much is salt and light a natural part of your life and your relationships? Is your heart wholly committed to the Lord? Is your heart at peace? Is there evidence in your relationships with others?

## Let's Not Forget ...

In the Old Testament books of Chronicles and Kings, we find an expression in the original Hebrew that is not used anywhere else in the Old Testament. It is translated to mean: *wholly committed* or *fully dedicated* to God. It's used as a technical phrase, similar to our word conversion. In the literal Hebrew, however, perhaps a better translation would be: *a heart at peace*.

A heart at peace helps transform all of our relationships, so instead of blaming and accusing, we take responsibility and seek reconciliation. Is your heart truly at peace?

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