

1 Corinthians 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

Analysis

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ—Paul's thanksgiving is strategic: before confronting their carnality, he affirms God's grace at work in them. The passive voice given (didomi, δίδωμι) emphasizes divine initiative—grace is gift, not achievement. Paul thanks God for the grace, not for the Corinthians' accomplishments, because all their gifts trace back to unmerited divine favor.

This thanksgiving section (vv. 4-9) functions rhetorically to establish common ground before correction. Paul will soon argue that their spiritual gifts should unite rather than divide them. By thanking God rather than flattering them, Paul models humility and redirects glory to God—a theme that will crescendo in verse 31: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Historical Context

Thanksgiving periods were standard in Greco-Roman letters, but Paul transforms the convention into theological teaching. The Corinthians were proud of their spiritual gifts (especially tongues and prophecy, addressed in chapters 12-14), but Paul recasts these as grace-gifts, not personal achievements. This prepares for his later insistence that gifts are for edification, not ego.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does giving thanks for God's grace in others help combat envy, judgment, and factionalism in the church?
2. What spiritual gifts in your life need to be reframed as grace-gifts rather than personal accomplishments?
3. Why does Paul consistently thank God for people rather than flattering them directly?

Interlinear Text

Εὐχαριστῶ τῇ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ
I thank which God my always behalf your for which
G2168 G3588 G2316 G3450 G3842 G4012 G5216 G1909 G3588

χάριτι τῇ θεῷ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
the grace which God which is given you by Christ Jesus
G5485 G3588 G2316 G3588 G1325 G5213 G1722 G5547 G2424

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:8 (References Jesus): First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

John 14:26 (Parallel theme): But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Romans 6:17 (References God): But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

John 15:26 (Parallel theme): But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 14:16 (Parallel theme): And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

1 Timothy 1:14 (Grace): And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Acts 11:23 (Grace): Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:3 (Grace): Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 10:30 (Parallel theme): I and my Father are one.