



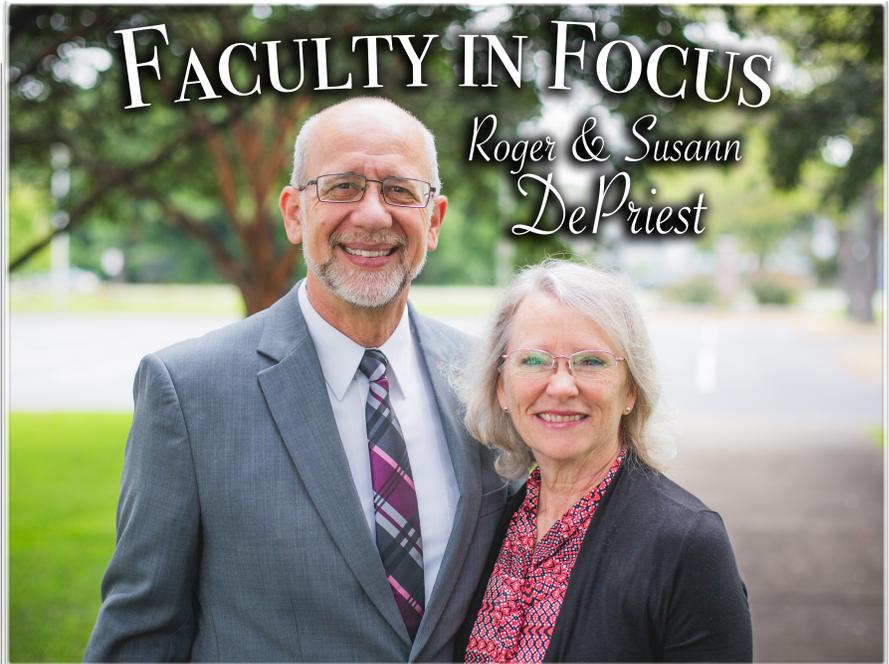
EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



From My Window

What are Sunday mornings like in your home? Do you find that Satan seems to work overtime to keep you and your family distracted—even frenzied—so that your Sunday mornings feel like “rush hour traffic”? Let me share a few suggestions that helped in our home. First, **plan** your Saturday nights to be *unlike* any other night of the week. If you go out, you must plan to be home as a family by early evening (7 pm!). Share with your children “why” you are limiting your evening activity. Second, **prepare** for what is going to happen early Sunday morning. This includes your clothes and your food. Third, **pray** that God’s word will “run swiftly” to your heart and to the hearts of your children (2 Thess. 3:1). Finally, **program** your time so you are at church early to encourage others. Such intentionality will reap great rewards for all the family.



Dr. Roger and Susann DePriest have been married 40 years, and God has blessed them with 5 sons and 10 grandchildren. They have been model believers and have been used of the Lord to lead significant ministries as a pastor and missionary. Susann has also faithfully worked as the library assistant at VBTS for 16 years. In 2013, Dr. DePriest founded *Grace Biblical Counseling Ministry* whose mission is fueled by Christ’s great commission (Matthew 28:19-20)—using biblical counseling to disciple hurting people. He says, “People need to know that Christ is sufficient for what they are facing.” God has used his ministry as a certified ACBC counsellor to impact many people and church leaders in the Hampton Roads area. It is a privilege for VBTS to have Dr. DePriest oversee and teach our core counseling courses. Thank you Dr. and Mrs. DePriest for your ministry and example of grace to all of us.





Truth for the Agora: *The God of Grace in the Old Testament*

Guest Author: Eric J. Lehner, VBTS Academic Dean

Many believers associate the grace of God *only* with the New Testament. Passages in the NT (i.e. John 1:17, Gal. 2:21; 5:14) draw such a clear distinction between the Law of Moses and the grace of God in Jesus Christ that one might mistakenly conclude that the Old Testament God was not a God of grace.

When we recall that grace is God's kindness to those who are undeserving, it is not difficult to see the grace of God throughout the storyline of Old Testament. God's acts of kindness give the reader clear indications of His grace, but the most compelling testimony to His grace in the OT is found in His description of His own character. Consider how God responds to the intercession of Moses and renews the covenant with Israel in Exodus 34:

⁵ The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. ⁶ The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.... (Exodus 34:5-7, ESV)

The power of this proclamation reverberates throughout the OT. The writers of the OT who follow Moses repeatedly employ the language of this promise to motivate intercession, repentance, courage, and praise. Here are several examples:

God's grace in the OT compelled the righteous to intercede for others. Shortly after receiving the Law, Israel disobeyed the Lord's command to enter Canaan. Moses interceded, recalling the promise that "The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression..." (Num. 14:18). Daniel and Nehemiah also made appeals to God's gracious character (cf. Dan. 9:9; Neh. 1:4-5).

God's grace in the OT led sinners to repentance. When Hezekiah exhorted Israel and Judah to repent from their sin and observe the Passover in Jerusalem, he invoked the promise of God's grace revealed first to Moses (2 Chron. 30:9). Joel likewise called for repentance by recalling the promise: "Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster" (Joel 2:13). Even Jonah, who wanted Ninevah to suffer justice, knew that God was gracious and would forgive them if they repented, citing God's grace in Exodus 34 (Jonah 4:2).

God's grace in the OT encouraged the fearful to have courage. When God commanded Israel to enter Canaan, the people yielded to fear and disobeyed God. After 40 years in the wilderness, Moses prepared the next generation to have the courage to complete this task, reminding them that "the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations..." (Deut. 7:9). Jeremiah (32:18), Nehemiah (9:17), and David (Ps. 86:5) also look to God's grace revealed in Exodus 34 for hope and encouragement.

God's grace in the OT inspired His people to praise Him. David blesses the Lord for His forgiving grace, recalling the time when He declared to Moses that "the LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Ps. 103:8). Elsewhere the psalmist praises the name of the Lord for the goodness that He shows His people, explaining that such goodness is in keeping with the promise that "the LORD is gracious and merciful . . . abounding in steadfast love" (Ps. 145:8; cf. 111:4).

Our great God is gracious! His grace is the fabric of his character and this has never changed (cf. Mal. 3:6). May His grace empower us to respond with intercession, repentance, courage, and praise today!