

In the pursuit of excellence, grace not only guides us through action and perseverance but also illuminates the immense power of the words we speak, both to ourselves and to others. Just as St. Augustine's teachings on grace shape the lives of the elect, so too do the words we choose shape the course of our journey.

“Your word is your *want*”—this simple truth holds immense power. What you declare with your words shapes your reality, creating a foundation for the way you navigate your goals, your challenges, and your achievements. Words are not merely expressions of thought; they are instruments of creation. They can either build the path to success or, if misused, create obstacles along the way.

Speaking Aligned with Grace: Words of Intention and Power

Think of grace as the force that compels you toward your highest potential. It is irresistible, and it will carry you if you allow it. Now, think of your words as *aligning with that grace*. When your words are spoken with clarity and purpose, they become a manifestation of that same irresistible force. They direct your actions, influence your thoughts, and shape your destiny.

Your word is your ***want***—what you declare with conviction is what you will pursue with grace.

- **Declare Your Goals Out Loud:** Each day, speak aloud the goals that matter to you.

For example, if you're working toward completing your dissertation, declare, "*I will finish my dissertation with clarity and excellence.*" Saying this aloud aligns your words with your *want*, and grace will work through that declaration. The more you say it, the more your mind and actions will align with that goal.

- **Avoid Words of Limitation:** Just as grace leads you forward, negative words can hinder your progress. Avoid statements like, "*I can't do this,*" or "*This is too hard.*" Instead, replace them with words that speak to your perseverance: "*I will find a way,*" or "*I am capable of overcoming this challenge.*" Words of perseverance invite grace to help you push through.

- **Affirm What You *Want* Daily:** Every morning, make a list of affirmations that reflect the outcome you desire. Whether it's academic success, personal growth, or professional excellence, your words should consistently reflect those *wants*.

Affirmations such as “*I am worthy of success,*” or “*I am becoming the leader I’m meant to be,*” are declarations that set the stage for grace to flow through your actions.

2. Words and the Power of Persevering Grace: Staying Committed Through Challenges

In the face of obstacles, it's easy to let our words betray our goals. When you encounter setbacks—whether in the form of academic hurdles, personal struggles, or

feelings of isolation—*your words become even more critical*. The concept of *Persevering Grace* teaches us that grace will carry us to the finish line, but only if we remain steadfast. This is where your words can either reinforce or undermine that perseverance.

Your word is your *want*, even in difficult times.

How you speak about challenges will determine how you respond to them:

- **Speak Life Into Your Struggles:** When you face difficulties, speak words that give life to the solution rather than dwelling on the problem. For instance, instead of saying, “*I don’t know how to solve this issue,*” try saying, “*I am open to finding solutions and learning from this challenge.*” This shift in language opens you up to the grace that will carry you through.

- **Words of Encouragement to Others:** Just as your words impact your own journey, they have the power to impact the journeys of others. If you know a peer, a colleague, or a friend who is struggling, offer them words of encouragement. Sometimes, grace is delivered through community, and your words might be the reminder someone needs to persevere.
- **Stay True to Your Word:** Persevering grace means that once you've spoken a goal into existence, you remain committed to it. This requires integrity. If you declare that you will complete a task or meet a deadline, follow through. When your actions align with your words, grace flows more freely. Trust is built not just with others, but within yourself.

3. Words as Tools of Divine Guidance: A Commitment to Your True Purpose

For St. Augustine, grace was an expression of divine will—a guiding force that led the elect toward salvation. In the same way, your words can be expressions of your own divine purpose. Every word you speak should reflect your alignment with the journey you are on and the higher purpose you are pursuing.

Just as St. Augustine taught that God's grace leads the elect to persevere until the end, your words can serve as beacons that guide you through your doctoral journey or any pursuit of excellence. But to do this, you must be *intentional* about what you say. Words spoken carelessly or in a moment of frustration can detract from your divine purpose, while words spoken with intention can keep you aligned with it:

- **Speak Words of Faith and Belief:**

Trust that grace is guiding you, and let your words reflect that trust. In moments of doubt, affirm your faith in the process by declaring statements like, *“I am exactly where I need to be, and grace is leading me forward.”* These words not only calm your spirit but also serve as reminders that your journey is divinely orchestrated.

- **Words of Service and Gratitude:** Augustine’s teachings remind us that grace is a gift, and so are the opportunities we have in life. Speak words of service—both to others and to yourself. Express gratitude for the progress you’ve made, no matter how small. When you say, *“I am grateful for the lessons I’ve learned today,”* you align your words with the flow of grace, allowing it to carry you further.

- **Consistency in Your Declarations:** As you move through your journey, remain consistent in your declarations. Just as Augustine believed that grace will never leave the elect, your words should never stray from your purpose. Make a daily practice of reaffirming your goals, dreams, and faith in the process. Even in challenging times, consistency in your declarations keeps you anchored to the grace that will sustain you.

4. Tying It All Together: Grace, Words, and the Journey to Excellence

So, how do these teachings on grace and the power of words come together to shape your journey to excellence?

- **Grace is the driving force:** It is the irresistible and persevering guide that compels you toward your highest potential. It shows up when you act, and it sustains you through the challenges.
- **Your words are the compass:** Just as grace carries the elect to their destination, your words shape the direction of your journey. They are powerful, creative, and capable of turning grace into action.
- **Together, they create a path of purpose:** When grace and your words work in harmony, there is nothing that can stop you from achieving your goals. Each day, you have the opportunity to declare what you *want*, and grace will ensure that you move toward it.

Your word is your *want*.

Speak what you desire, speak it with intention, and trust that grace will carry you the rest of the way. Every time you declare a goal, every time you speak words of perseverance or gratitude, you are aligning yourself with the divine purpose that will ultimately lead you to success.

On the journey to excellence, whether in academia, personal growth, or any other pursuit, you are never alone. Grace is always at work—irresistible, persevering, and constant. But grace needs your words to guide it. **Your word is your *want***, and through your daily declarations of purpose, faith, and gratitude, you align yourself with the flow of grace that will carry you to your destination.

Remember, the words you speak shape the world you experience. Let them reflect your highest goals, your deepest faith, and your unwavering commitment to the journey ahead. In doing so, grace will continue guiding you toward your true purpose, ensuring you persevere through every challenge and rise to every opportunity. With grace on your side and your words leading the way, excellence is not just possible—it's inevitable.