



GOD'S ABUNDANT

GRACE

"...The grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus." – 1 Timothy 1:14

CLASS OBJECTIVE: To help students gain greater clarity and comfort in God's grace.

- To develop a well-rounded concept of God's grace including His character, actions, and purposes.
- To understand the cost that Jesus paid and the conditions that God set for receiving His grace.
- To avoid false teachings that distort God's grace.
- To rejoice in God and the blessings He grants us by His grace.
- To imitate God's grace by showing grace to others who disappoint or hurt us.
- To renew our hope in God's grace.

CLASS SCHEDULE

LESSON	TITLE	KEY TEXT
1	The God of All Grace	1 Peter 5:10
2	Grace In The Life & Teachings of Jesus	John 1:14
3	Grace In The Sacrifice & Victory of Jesus	Titus 2:11
4	Grace In Our Salvation	Ephesians 2:8
5	We Are Living Under God's Grace	Romans 6:14
6	We Are Laboring With God's Grace	1 Corinthians 15:10
7	We Are Praying For God's Grace	Hebrews 4:16
8	We Are Growing In God's Grace	2 Peter 3:18
9	We Are Continuing In God's Grace	Galatians 5:4
10	We Are Respecting God's Grace	Jude 1:4
11	We Are Thinking & Speaking With Grace	James 4:6, Colossians 4:6
12	We Are Spreading God's Grace	2 Corinthians 4:15
13	We Are Fixing Our Hope On God's Grace	1 Peter 1:13



God's Abundant Grace



1. THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. – 1 Peter 5:10

WHAT IS GRACE?

The Greek word most commonly translated as "grace" is "charis." It occurs 156 times in the New Testament and is broadly defined as: that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, or charm. This word is frequently used in three ways.

First, the Bible uses grace in the general sense to describe a quality associated with a person. For example, in Luke 4:22 people recognize that the words of Jesus are "gracious."
"And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, 'Is this not Joseph's son?'"

Second, the Bible uses the term grace to refer to the actions taken to benefit others. For instance, 2 Corinthians 8:9,
"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

Third, the Bible connects the term grace very closely to the accomplishments of God's actions. This is especially the case when describing results that people cannot accomplish alone, such as our justification in Romans 3:24.
"being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;"

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

God is gracious, so He is worthy of Admiration. He possesses an attractive quality of loving-kindness, generosity, care, helpfulness, and protectiveness.

God is gracious, so His Actions are better than we deserve. We do not merit His goodness, but He chooses to deal favorably with us.

God is gracious, so He Accomplishes what we cannot. God acts to overcome our insurmountable barriers, most obviously seen in physical healings and spiritual salvation.

With these three ideas in mind, God's grace can be described as: God's admirable character, to act with kindness we do not deserve, to accomplish what we cannot alone.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Look for expressions of Admiration, Action, and Accomplishment in Ephesians 2:4-10

What does Paul admire about God in vs 4?

What actions of God are mentioned in vs. 5?

What did this accomplish according to vs. 6-8?

2. In Ephesians 2:9-10, we see that God saves us by grace to accomplish two additional purposes. What are these two purposes?

3. Look for expressions of Admiration, Action, and Accomplishment in Titus 3:4-7

What does Paul admire about God in vs 4?

What actions of God are mentioned in vs. 5?

What did this accomplish according to vs. 7?



2. GRACE IN THE LIFE & TEACHINGS OF JESUS

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14

JESUS SHOWS US GRACE

Jesus never uses the word grace, but his life and teachings are saturated with the concept. The apostle John recognizes this when he describes Jesus providing “grace upon grace” in John 1:16.

The parables of Jesus are filled with pictures of God’s grace. Read and reflect on...

- The Unforgiving Debtor, Matt 18:21-35
- The Marriage Feast, Matt 22:1-14
- The Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37
- The Prodigal Son, Luke 15:1-32

“But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate’”

The miracles of Jesus are filled with actions of God’s grace, often connected with faith. Consider His grace in...

- Healing The Paralytic, Mark 2:1-13
- Healing Two Blind Men, Matt 9:27-31
- Feeding The 4,000, Mark 8:1-9
- Sending Out The Twelve, Matt 10:1-8

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.” Matt 10:7-8

The promises of Jesus overflow with grace, as He offers what we most need...

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.” John 10:27-28

“And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43

JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS GRACE

Grace is more than a sermon topic for Jesus. It is how He lives. When others are unforgiving and cruel, Jesus is kind and helpful. In Luke 7:36-50, a woman anoints his feet with her tears and perfume. Jesus does not push her away, but instead commends her love and humility. After this, He even forgives her sins. Throughout His life, Jesus treats those around him with an abundance of grace to help in a variety of situations...

- Calming The Storm, Luke 8:22-25
- Restoring Peter, John 21:15-22

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In addition to the miracles mentioned in this lesson, what other miracles of Jesus demonstrate God’s amazing grace?
2. What does Jesus teach us about God’s grace in the Parable of the Laborers in Matthew 20:1-16?
3. How is grace described in Jesus’ childhood in Luke 2:40,52?
4. There is an abundance of evidence of God’s grace in Old Testament events such as saving Noah or the Exodus, so how does Jesus give us a superior understanding of grace?



3. GRACE IN THE SACRIFICE & VICTORY OF JESUS

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, – Titus 2:11

THE HIGH COST OF GOD'S GRACE

The death and resurrection of Jesus are the ultimate demonstration of God's grace. Jesus' sacrifice was an act of grace because He freely gave His life to pay for our sins. John 10:18 puts it this way.

"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

Jesus accomplished what we could never do for ourselves. With grace and love Jesus provides...

- Peace, Justification, & Entrance into Grace (Rom. 4:23-5:2)
- Redemption & Forgiveness (Eph 1:7)
- The Free Gift of Eternal Life (Rom. 6:23)

JESUS LIFTED UP

Jesus told Nicodemus that he would be "lifted up" like the serpent. In Numbers 21:6-9 the Israelites were freely offered a solution to the poisonous snake bites, if they would choose to trust God and turn to Him for life. Likewise, the salvation we receive is not a result of our law-keeping or good deeds. Jesus is the source of our salvation. We must fix our eyes on Him, trusting in God's gracious kindness to save.

GRACE AVAILABLE TO ALL

Jesus' sacrifice makes God's grace available to all people. This is clear in passages like...

- 1 Timothy 2:3-6, Titus 2:11, 1 John 2:2, and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Even when we agree that God's grace is available to all, there can be much debate about what conditions must be met to receive God's grace.

If there are NO conditions to receiving and benefiting from God's grace, then universalism (the idea that absolutely everyone will be saved) would be true. This is clearly false because of all that Jesus teaches about Hell (Matt 7:13-14, 25:31-46).

If there ARE conditions to receiving and benefiting from God's grace, then we must understand that these conditions are determined solely by God. He is the gracious one, who is acting with kindness we do not deserve, to accomplish what we cannot alone. Notice the word "receive" in Rom. 5:17.

In Acts 15:5 some Pharisees were teaching, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses." In Acts 15:10-11 the elders and apostles firmly establish that the conditions for being saved are NOT met by practicing circumcision or keeping the law of Moses. God's grace is for those who "hear the word of the gospel and believe" (15:7). Peter gives God the credit for "cleansing their hearts by faith" when Cornelius and his household were baptized (15:9). Therefore, the apostles and elders boldly declare in verse 11,

"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. According to Hebrews 2:9, what did Jesus do by God's grace?

2. In John 11:25, how did Jesus describe Himself?



4. GRACE IN OUR SALVATION

*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,
– Ephesians 2:8*

THE PROBLEM & THE SOLUTION

To truly appreciate the amazing grace of God, we must first admit that we have a severe problem: the problem of sin.

Paul devotes three chapters at the beginning of Romans to explain that all people, both those near and far from God, are in the same condition. We have “all sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Ephesians 2:1-3 makes the same point by describing us as “dead.” We are separated from God because of our sins. Not the sins of an ancestor (Ezekiel 18:1-32), but our own violation of God’s will.

Because God is so gracious, He determined to rescue us from the penalty of our sins. He determined to “be just and justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:26) He demonstrated “His own love towards us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

GOD’S GRACE & MAN’S FAITH

The condition God has established for receiving His saving grace is best summed up in the word: faith. Without faith, everything else we do in response to God is empty. (Heb. 11:6)

Romans 3, 4, and 5 are the most extensive passages describing the means and methods of our salvation. Romans 3:24 calls our justification “a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 4:16 explains that God’s grace is widely available to all of those who will trust and respond to Jesus Christ with faith like Abraham’s.

“For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,”

Romans 5:15-17 compares and contrasts the sin of Adam with the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul shows that Adam brought sin and death into the world, but Jesus brought grace and life into the world!

“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

SAVED BY GRACE

In a powerful summary of these concepts, Ephesians 2:4-10 teach that we are saved by grace, and that this gift is provided to those who accept it through faith in Jesus Christ.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to recognize that grace not only saves, but removes all boasting on our part? (Rom. 3:27, 4:2, Eph. 2:9, Gal. 6:14)
2. How is faith in Jesus developed? (Rom 10:14-17)
3. Is faith in Christ presented as a challenging condition to be met, or an easy condition? How do you feel about this condition?
4. According to Romans 6:1-7, what action did those who put their faith in Christ take and what did God accomplish for them?



5. WE ARE LIVING UNDER GOD'S GRACE

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. – Romans 6:14

GOD'S SYSTEM OF GRACE

In light of God's willingness to forgive all our sins, Christians might respond in two different ways.

Option one would be to commit many more sins, so that the world could witness God's incredible compassion to forgive again and again.

Option two would be to recognize the pain and suffering sin brings, and determine to move away from evil and towards good. This option allows the world to witness the light and love of God in us.

In Romans 6, Paul helps explain God's purposes for His grace. When we consider WHY God shows such abundant grace, we realize that option two is the only acceptable response. Verse 1-11 reminds Christians that our baptism is a sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. God planned for His grace to not just pay a penalty, but to direct us into a new life in Christ.

Verse 12-23 describe God's grace in terms of buying a slave in order to set them free from an evil master. God planned for His grace to take us out of a household of sin and death, and move us into a household of righteousness and life.

Peter makes the same point in 1 Peter 2:24-25, *"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."*

OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS

Because of God's grace, Christians begin a new life full of different choices. There are bad habits

to break, daily temptations to deny, and personal idols to abandon. Thankfully, not only does Jesus show us the way, God graciously provides help in a variety of forms. Consider a few of the blessings Paul mentions in Ephesians 3 and 4...

- Meaningful Work (3:7)
- Daily Prayer (3:14, 20-21)
- Spiritual Strength (3:16)
- Immeasurable Love (3:18)
- Church Family (4:2-3)
- Church Leadership (4:11)
- Renewed Minds (4:20-24)

THE FLESH & THE SPIRIT

Paul is grateful for every blessing in our battle with sin, but in Romans 7 and 8, he goes even further to describe the conflict between "the inner man" (7:22) and the desires of the "flesh" (7:25). In these chapters, we learn that certain sins may always tempt our flesh, but there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (8:1) In Christ, we respond to more than just the desires of the flesh. We set our minds on the Spirit (8:6), and we follow the Spirit of God as children of God (8:14-16).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How is living under a system of grace different from living under the Law of Moses? (Rom 6:14-15, 20-23, Rom. 7:6-13)
2. When living under grace, what should a Christian do when they have committed a sin?
3. What other forms of help and blessings can you find in the book of Ephesians for overcoming sin?



6. WE ARE LABORING WITH GOD'S GRACE

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. – 1 Corinthians 15:10

GOD'S GRACE TO BRING US IN

Receiving eternal life as a free gift by God's grace is such an impressive blessing, it would be easy to think this is the final outcome. But Peter and Paul both tell us in multiple passages that God isn't done yet. By grace...

We are recruited into the Lord's Army.
We are adopted into the Lord's Family.
We are made servants in the Lord's Kingdom.
We are members of the Lord's Body.

The fact that God makes a place for us among His people and His mission needs to be explored. This begins by acknowledging that we could never force our own entry into any position or group governed by God's authority. We don't have the power or the credentials to enter on our own. In fact, Paul realizes that if anything, we are unworthy and unqualified to hold such honorable roles in the work of a holy God. Please read 1 Tim. 1:12-17.

GOD'S GRACE TO TRUST US WITH HIS WORKS

Proverbs 26:10 warns us that hiring a random person who happens to be passing by is foolish. This passage even compares such recklessness to an archer whose arrows constantly miss their target and instead hit other people!

In light of this principle, it's even more impressive to realize that God is entrusting us to carry out portions of His eternally significant work! It's such an unbelievable "job opportunity" that in Ephesians 3:1-9, Paul credits this directly to God's grace not just once, but three times!

This grace is not limited only to apostles. Consider Ephesians 4:7 and 1 Peter 4:7-11

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." (Ephesians 4:7)
"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

Every member of the body contributes to the health and growth of the body. It is an act of God's grace to add us into such a wonderful fellowship!

GOD'S GRACE TO EQUIP & CONNECT US

God's favorable actions don't stop with bringing us on board and assigning us significant work. He provides the training and team we need to be more successful than we could ever accomplish alone. (Eph. 4:11-16)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Read Romans 1:5 and 12:3-6. By God's grace what role was Paul entrusted with? For what purpose?
2. In Romans 12:6-8, what is the purpose of these roles and abilities?
3. In Romans 12:9-21, how do these "job assignments" build up the local church?
4. How does the relationship to God's grace make you feel about carrying out these instructions?



7. WE ARE PRAYING FOR GOD'S GRACE

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. – Hebrews 4:16

GRACE TO HELP IN THE TIME OF NEED

We often sing, "I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord..." This song captures the plea of our hearts whether we are facing the daily ups and downs of life, or are facing intense, personal challenges that weigh us down.

Hebrews 4:16 teaches us to approach God in prayer during these times so that we would find "grace to help." The big idea is this: In our prayers we are speaking to our gracious Father, who is inclined to respond favorably. We are not speaking to a Father who ignores our needs or is powerless to help. He listens to every prayer, and responds in our best interest to provide the specific help that our need most requires!

Paul's words in Romans 8:18, 31-32 all reinforce this great confidence:

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (8:18)

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (8:31-32)

GOD'S GRACE IN ACTION

The lives of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and of course, Daniel are powerful examples of God's gracious response to the prayers of His people. Reflect on...

- Ezra's Need for Favor, Ezra 8:21-23
- Nehemiah's Need for Favor, Neh. 2:4-5
- Esther's Need for Favor, Esther 5:1-3
- Daniel's Need for Favor, Dan. 1:8-9

Each of these heroes of faith turned to God in their time of need. God specifically blessed them with safety and helpful relationships that made it possible for them to succeed.

CHRISTIANS PRAYING FOR GOD'S GRACE

Today, we still need God's providential care to protect us from our spiritual enemies and to "open doors" (Rev. 3:7). He provides the opportunities and relationships that help us grow personally, serve others, and carry the gospel to all nations.

In Paul's epistles we find greetings, prayers, and closing regards seeking God's grace. These teach us to pray for God's grace...

- In the lives of fellow saints. (Rom 1:5-7)
- To bring comfort. (2 Cor 1:2-7)
- To endure a thorn in the flesh. (2 Cor 12:9)
- Upon those who love the Lord. (Eph 6:24)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In 2 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, and 2 John 1:3 we see "grace, mercy, and peace" mentioned together. What is meant by each term, and how are they related?
2. How is Paul's prayer for Timothy especially personal in 2 Tim. 1:1-4?
3. In Numbers 6:22-27 God gives Aaron and his sons a specific prayer for grace. What do we learn in this prayer?
4. How does understanding God's grace make Matthew 6:8 even more comforting?



8. WE ARE GROWING IN GOD'S GRACE

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. – 2 Peter 3:18

A "NOT...BUT..." CONTRAST

Like many Bible authors, Peter uses "not...but..." statements to contrast ideas. This type of contrast is used to emphasize the importance and truth of the final phrase. Jesus uses this in Matt. 10:28, and Peter uses it in both 1 and 2 Peter. For instance,

- "did not spare angels...but cast them" (2:4)
- "not slow about His promises...but is patient toward you" (3:9)

The exhortation "but grow in the grace...of Jesus" is given in this same format. In 2 Peter 3:17, he concludes the epistle by telling Christians to avoid a dangerous, two-part threat. They must not...

- Be carried away by the error of unprincipled men and
- Fall from your own steadfastness.

Instead, Peter is urging us to pursue a beneficial, two-part direction. He encourages us to...

- Grow in the grace
- and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By using a "not...but..." statement Peter helps us see both what to avoid, and what to pursue.

GROW IN GRACE

In people or in plants "to grow" is to continue towards maturity and fruitfulness. Peter used this term in 1 Peter 2:2 to describe a growing child. Likewise, to grow in "grace" is to continue along the path we began when we first accepted the grace of God and were saved! Peter does not want us to abandon God's grace. He wants us to understand the "true grace of God" and "Stand firm in it!" (1 Peter 5:12).

Remember that the most general meaning of grace is that which brings pleasure or delight. We "grow in grace" by continuing to live in a way that is pleasing in the eyes of God. In 2 Peter this specifically includes...

- Continuing to Develop Virtues, 2 Pet 1:5-11
- Remembering His Eyewitness Testimony, 2 Pet 1:16-21
- Resisting the Enticement of Error, 2 Pet 2:1-16
- Avoiding Entanglement in Unrighteousness, 2 Pet 2:17-22
- Preparing for Jesus' Return, 2 Pet 3:10-14

Both Ephesians 2:9-10 and Titus 2:12-14 show us that humility, godliness, and good works are the purposeful outcome of God's grace. Peter wants us to press forward towards the results God has always intended for His grace to produce.

GROW IN KNOWLEDGE

Peter also wants us to increase in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is of course found in the "gospel of grace" Acts 20:24 which is able to "build you up and give you the inheritance..." Acts 20:32. See also 2 Peter 1:2-4, 3:1-9.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Jesus frequently taught about growing. What examples of this can you find?
2. In 1 Peter 1:14, 22 what outcome of obedience is Peter hoping to see?
3. In 1 Peter 5:5-6 what outcome of grace did Peter want us to put on?



9. WE ARE CONTINUING IN GOD'S GRACE

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. – Galatians 5:4

A PLACE TO STAND

In Acts 13:43, Paul and Barnabas urged the people in Pisidian Antioch to “**continue** in the grace of God.” The Greek word translated “continue” was a common term for travelers to express staying in one location.

- “And finding disciples, we **continued** there seven days...” (Acts 21:4)
- “And landing at Syracuse, we **continued** there three days.” (Acts 21:10)

Luke and Paul also use this term to describe our spiritual status...

- “If indeed you **continue** in the faith firmly established and steadfast...” (Col. 1:23)
- “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; **continue** in these things...” (1 Tim. 4:16)
- “...Shall we **continue** in sin that grace may abound?” (Rom. 6:1)

Continuing in God's grace means that we abide in and remain in the grace of God. Thus Paul can write in Romans 5:1-2,

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”

WALKING AWAY FROM GOD'S GRACE

Sadly, much of the letter to the Galatians deals with the critical choice of abandoning God's grace. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-7,

“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only

there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”

The warning not to depart from God's grace only increases in urgency throughout the epistle. In Galatians 2:16, 21 Paul reminds us that our salvation cannot be attained by trusting in something or someone other than Jesus, even if that is the works of the Law of Moses, “*nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*”

“I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

Finally, Paul declares the tragic result of following the distorted teachings confronting the Galatians: “**...you have fallen from grace.**” (5:4).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How would explain the importance of continuing in God's grace to someone who thinks it is impossible to depart from God's grace?
2. According to Hebrews 6:4-12, what can we do to continue in God's grace?
3. Some fall from grace because of false teaching, but according to Hebrews 10:26-39 what is another way people fail to continue in God's grace?



10. WE ARE RESPECTING GOD'S GRACE

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. – Jude 1:4

GOD'S GRACE IS NOT A LICENSE TO SIN

The book of Jude helps us see that abusing God's grace is a departure from "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." We must avoid the erroneous mindsets that lead to disrespecting God's grace:

#1. The Mindset of Low-Value. When we receive something for free, sometimes we associate it with being less valuable. We must remember that God's grace came at the highest possible cost: Jesus Christ suffered in our place. (Isaiah 53)

#2. The Mindset of Surplus. When there is a seemingly unlimited supply of something, many people are less careful to think about how they handle it. Because God's grace is abundantly available, many disrespect Him by acting like the prodigal son, and wasting His goodness.

#3. The Mindset of Carelessness. When we know something can be quickly repaired, we are less careful to avoid breaking it. However, this should never be the way we think about relationships. Just because forgiveness is possible, does not make it okay to hurt the ones we love.

#4. The Mindset of Minimal Consequences. Satan's original temptation was not to deny that God's spoke, but to deny that we would suffer any consequences for breaking His laws. (Gen. 3:4) Likewise, a mindset that views grace only as a superficial means of avoiding punishment is dangerously wrong. Sin always brings painful consequences, even when we seek forgiveness.

#5. The Mindset of Pride. When we think too highly of ourselves and the position we have been given by grace, we will fall! (Jude vs. 5 and Romans 11:18-21)

#6. The Mindset of Disconnection. We cannot completely separate "who we are" from "what we do." Those who claim we can delight in sin, while claiming loyalty to God are wrong. The apostles did NOT preach a cheap grace that covers over sin, but never effects the heart of the sinner. God's grace brings forgiveness and freedom so that we will actually follow the Lord. (Jude vs. 7)

#7. The Mindset of Denial. Jude specifically connects abusing God's grace and denying the authority of Jesus. Those who deny God's position of authority will eventually respond like Korah, in open rebellion. (Jude vs. 11)

GOD'S GRACE IS A REASON TO BE RIGHTEOUS

Biblical Grace is rooted in the love and sacrifice of Jesus. Biblical Grace calls for lifelong discipleship. Rather than live in sin, God's grace is instructing us to live righteously. (Titus 2:11-12)

God's grace makes it clear that He wants what is best for us. Thus, it motivates us to pursue what He says is right and holy. And, it does this without inviting legalism! God's grace offers hope and joy for imperfect people and gives us a jaw-dropping reason to love our Lord and Savior!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How do Jude vs. 16-21 help us live with respect for God's grace?



11. WE ARE THINKING & SPEAKING WITH GRACE

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." – James 4:6

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. – Colossians 4:6

HUMILITY & GOD'S GRACE

In Scripture, grace and humility are connected in a beautiful and intentional relationship. Where God sees humility, He gives grace. And where God gives grace, He fosters humility.

God gives grace to the humble...

- "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (James 4:10)
- "He regards the lowly..." (Ps. 138:6)
- "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life." (Pr. 22:4)

God gives grace, which encourages humility...

- "not to think more highly..." (Rom 12:3)
- "to me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given..." (Eph 3:8)

ENCOURAGING GREATER HUMILITY

It's true that in some circumstances God promotes greater humility by stripping us of the position or power we might boast in. (Daniel 4:33) However, this is usually only the case when His grace and teachings have been ignored.

Magnificently, God often helps us develop humility by first being gracious. He is so loving, so helpful, and so kind towards us that His glory and blessings eclipse the insignificant sources of pride that Satan tempts us to dwell on. Paul captures this perspective in Gal. 6:14, *"But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."*

TRUE HUMILITY

True humility comes when we see ourselves as God sees us. When we know the great value God places on us, as His children, and we also know how dependent we are on Him for every good gift, then humility can grow in our hearts.

In light of God's grace, we become motivated to...

- Reject self-righteousness (Titus 3:4-7)
- Look at our good works with greater humility. (Eph. 2:9, 3:7-8)
- Deal more graciously with those who have hurt or disappointed us. (Matt. 18:28-33)

SPEAKING WITH GRACE

God expects His grace to not only encourage a humble heart, but also gracious speech. After James tells us to be humble in 4:10, the very next verse says, "Do not speak against one another, brethren..." (James 4:11)

When reflecting on the grace God has shown us, we will realize that we have no standing to speak with others in a demanding, prideful, angry, or judgmental manner. (Eph. 4:29-32)

Jesus is the perfect model of speaking with grace and humility. (Luke 4:22, Matt. 5:1-3, 6:1-4, 7:1-5)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How can we speak with humility, even when giving a correction? (1 Timothy 5:1-2)
2. What qualities of gracious speech do you find in Colossians 3:5-10, 15-17, and 4:1-6?



12. WE ARE SPREADING GOD'S GRACE

For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. – 2 Corinthians 4:15

A HARD SECRET TO KEEP

Some news is so good, that it's hard not to tell others. When expecting a baby, receiving a promotion, or accepting a gift, there are often reasons to keep the news private for a while. But it can still be hard. So imagine how the deaf man in Mark 7:31-37 must have felt! After being healed by Jesus, this man and his friends were so full of joy and amazement that they continually announced what Jesus had done!

Thankfully, we don't have to keep God's grace a secret. You and I have been sent out to tell others not just what Jesus has done – but what Jesus has done for us!

- By grace Jesus took my place! (1 Pet. 3:18)
- By grace Jesus makes me truly rich! (2 Cor. 8:9)
- By grace Jesus intercedes for me! (Heb. 4:14-16)

When we reflect on the blessings God has provided by His grace, we are moved with joy to tell others about all that He can accomplish for them as well!

PAUL'S HEART FOR THE LOST

In 2 Corinthians 4 we find a wonderful description of Paul's heart for spreading the gospel. He wasn't motivated to carry out the Great Commission by shame or guilt. Paul preached because he was so aware of God's mercy! (vs. 1)

- He wanted to bring truth (vs. 2) and light (vs. 4) to those who were lost.
- He was full of humility. Describing himself as a "bond-servant" (vs. 5) and "earthen vessel" (vs. 7).

- He spoke up because he believed (vs. 13) in the resurrection and return of Jesus.
- He endured despite difficulties by focusing on things that are "eternal." (vs. 18)

As the news of God's grace spread to "more and more people" then the number of thankful and grateful hearts was multiplied (vs. 15).

God's abundant grace produces a people who are overflowing with the desire to praise and glorify Him. Ephesians 1:6 describes it this way, *"to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."*

SHOWING GRACE TO OTHERS

In addition to God's grace spreading through the gospel, we can also imitate God's grace through our generosity. In 2 Corinthians 8:1,9 and 9:8,11-15 Paul explains how our generosity towards saints in need produces even more praise and thanks to God for His grace.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In your own words complete the following sentence: By God's grace I am...
2. What event from the life of Jesus do you find so wonderful, that it is easy to talk about?
3. How does the parable of the sower prepare us for people's responses when we are spreading the news of God's grace?



13. WE ARE FIXING OUR HOPE ON GOD'S GRACE

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 1:13

GRACE BRINGS THE GREATEST HOPE

Eph. 2 and Titus 2 both explain how those in Christ can now enjoy a confident and joyful hope! Eph. 2:11-14 describes it in terms of a radical reversal. Paul contrasts five aspects of our hopeless condition with the new position we've been given by God's grace! We were...

- Separate from Christ,
- Excluded from Israel
- Strangers to God's Promises
- Having No Hope
- Without God in the World

But God refused to leave us in this sad condition! Verse 13, 14, and 19 boldly declare, *"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace...So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household"*

By grace, everything is different! Titus 2:13 adds that because of God's grace, not only is our relationship with God transformed, but so is our outlook. Now we are, *"looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,"*

HOPE THAT DOES NOT DISSAPPOINT

We have all hoped for things that didn't work out in our relationships, work, or goals. But our hope for heaven is not anchored in our abilities or circumstances, but in God's grace. We have...

A Victorious Hope (Romans 5:1-5)

The Greek word translated as "exult" or "rejoice" comes from the root word for boasting! It's the

same word Paul used in 2:17 and 2:23 (as well as Eph. 2:9 and Gal. 6:14.) His point is that our salvation by God's grace is something to actually celebrate in triumphant victory!

A Prayerful Hope (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)

Here Paul acknowledges two things our loving God has already given to us, and prays for two things God will continue to do for us... *"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word."*

A Just Hope (Titus 3:7)

The legal penalty for our sins has already been paid by Christ. In Him, there is nothing to prevent us from receiving the promised inheritance. Therefore, Paul can describe us as people who are JUSTIFIED by grace and HEIRS "according to the hope of eternal life." Like the prodigal son, God is aware of our failings, but He chooses to look upon us favorably. He is determined to give us a wonderful inheritance we do not deserve!

A Hope That Looks Ahead (1 Peter 1:13)

1 Peter 1:13 calls us to think clearly about the extraordinary reward that awaits us, rather than the discouraging hardships we face in this life.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. According to Hebrews 6:18-19 and Titus 1:2, what makes our hope sure and steadfast?
2. How important was hope in Paul's defense in Acts 23:6, 24:15, 26:6-7, 28:20?

