

**THE  
GRACE  
OF  
GOD**



**FINDING IT  
LIVING IN IT  
SHARING IT**

## PERSPECTIVES ON THIS STUDY

As we begin this study together about the grace of God, what it really is and what it means for us, I want to start with a few comments about the approach for this class.

- I am thinking about this class as an opportunity for us all to work together to learn more of what the scriptures have to teach us about grace.
- More than an academic study about the facts regarding grace, let's look for what it means to live in it, work with it and share it. Let's allow God's grace to change us.
- There is a lot of wisdom and spiritual experience in this class. We have each learned about grace in different settings, studies, sermons, etc. We each have things to share and questions to explore about grace.
- I believe that some of the things I have been taught in years past or that I have heard or seen written about God's grace don't capture the full sense of what it is all about. Sometimes, the conclusions seem too narrowly defined or overly simplistic. *(That was an assertion on my part. Let's see what the scriptures teach.)*
- These lessons are divided more by topical content than by quantity. As a result some lessons may take only one class period and others may take us several classes to cover.

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# **SECTION 1:**

# **FINDING**

# **THE GRACE**

# **OF GOD**

# LESSON 1 - INTRODUCTION

## THINKING ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD

The grace of God is discussed often in religious discussions and mentioned a lot in the scripture. If you are like me, you have heard many different perspectives about the grace of God.

Let's start out with a general discussion about God's grace.

- 🎤 What do you think about when you hear the grace of God mentioned?
  
- 🎤 How would you describe God's grace?
  
- 🎤 What scriptures come to mind when you think about the grace of God?

## HOW SHOULD WE SHAPE THIS STUDY?

- 🎤 What would you like to see as a part of this study about the grace of God?
  - 🎤 Any particular questions you would like to address?
  
  - 🎤 Any aspects of grace we should make a point to discuss?

## LESSON 2 - WHAT IS GRACE?

### DEFINITIONS

As we study about a topic from the Bible, it would be good to make sure we are thinking of the same thing. So, let's start with defining what grace means. Since we speak English, it makes sense to know what the English language definitions are. We do have to be a little cautious about just using an English language dictionary for a couple of reasons. English is a living and evolving language with words and definitions changing somewhat over the years. Do you remember when being "the bomb" used to mean something that blew up? Also, the English language definition may be a bit different from how the scriptures use the word.

- 📍 What definition(s) for "grace" do you find in an English dictionary?
  
- 📍 What methods can we use to help us know how the scriptures use the word grace or related words?
  
- 📍 What word in the New Testament is often translated as grace? What meanings does that word have?
  
- 📍 Does the word "grace" show up in the Old Testament? What meanings does that Hebrew word have?


- 📌 Thinking of the English, Old Testament and New Testament usages of the word “grace,” what synonyms (words with a similar meaning) are there that we should be watching for in our study?

## SCRIPTURES USING THE WORD GRACE

Let’s look at the scriptures.

- 📌 Provide at least 3 places in the New Testament that use the word “grace” in connection with God. What do they mean? (*Remember to consider possible synonyms and forms for the word grace.*) How do they help us understand grace?



 Let's also consider the Old Testament. Provide at least 3 places in the Old Testament that use the word "grace" in connection with God. What do they mean?*(Remember to consider possible synonyms and forms for the word grace.)* How do they help us understand grace?



## DISCUSSION QUESTION

Think about this question and be prepared to discuss.

 Is our God a God of Grace or a God who occasionally gives grace?




# LESSON 3 - GOD'S GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

## GOD EXHIBITING HIS GRACE

We have discussed the idea of grace and verses that talk about it. Often it helps to understand a concept by seeing it in action. So let's look at grace in action.

Most commonly, I have heard people talk about the New Testament when discussing or studying God's grace. I think that limits the scope of this topic. In this lesson, let's focus on the Old Testament.


 Find 3 examples of how God exhibited His grace to people in the Old Testament. Describe what is going on. What does each example tell us about God?



# LESSON 4 - GOD'S GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

## GOD EXHIBITING HIS GRACE

As I mentioned in the last lesson, it often helps to understand a concept by seeing it in action. Lesson 3 was all about grace in action in the Old Testament. Now let's turn to the New Testament.

 Find 3 examples of how God exhibited His grace to people in the New Testament. Describe what is going on. What does each example tell us about God?



## DISCUSSION QUESTION

- 🗣️ Think back over the examples of God's grace that we have studied in the Old and New Testaments. Is God more gracious in the Old Testament or New Testament? Explain.

## LESSON 5 - GOD'S GRACE IN CONTEXT

### A GRACIOUS GOD

Exodus 34:6 gives part of a statement God made about Himself: *"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,"*

- 🕯 Let me make an assertion related to that verse: **God acts graciously because He is a God of grace. It's who He is. It's His nature. Everything He does toward us is because of His grace.** What do you think about that assertion?

God's grace, like His love, is not fully understood in isolation of just one aspect, but in the richness of all of the facets that make Him God. In this lesson, I want to look at God's grace in the context of other aspects of who He is.

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First, let's consider Grace, Mercy and Love. These are often mentioned together when talking about God.

### GRACE, MERCY AND LOVE

These are three of the attributes of God. No one of them fully describes God. As we'll see in this discussion, they each help us understand God.

- 🕯 Read Ephesians 2:4-10.

📌 Let's concentrate on verses 4-5: *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—"*

I underlined 3 phrases in those verses, that include Mercy, Love and Grace. How does mercy and love help us understand grace?

📌 Can the mercy of God, the love of God and the grace of God really be understood separately? Explain.

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Now let's consider a couple of other contexts for understanding the grace of God. These are less often considered together when thinking of the nature of God.

## **GRACE, JUSTICE AND HOLINESS**

This set of contexts is more challenging. There has been much said and written about the God of justice and vengeance, often associated with the Old Testament, being much different than the God of love and mercy in the New Testament. Christians also sometimes struggle with this. But it is the same God throughout the Bible. Let's see what we can learn from this context.

Remember the passage in Exodus 34:6 that we discussed earlier in this lesson. Now let's consider more of the context by including verse 7 as well.

Exodus 34:6-7 *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, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*

📌 In the same statement in which God says about Himself that He is merciful and gracious, He also says He will be punishing the iniquity of the rebellious. How can both of those things be true?

📌 Let me pose that question in a different way. Our God is righteous and just. Knowing that, I am in a real predicament. I know that I am guilty of sin. (read Romans 3:23) I know that the lawful penalty for sin is death. (read Romans 5:12) I know that I must stand in judgment before the righteous and just Lord. (read 2 Corinthians 5:10).

How can a righteous and just God grant me mercy and grace? Wouldn't that make Him unrighteous to set aside what the law requires?

- 📌 Read the whole context of Romans 3:21-26.
- 📌 Verse 26 speaks of God being both just and a justifier. How can God be both of those things? How does this passage explain how that's possible?
- 📌 How does grace fit into this?

# LESSON 6 - CLAIMING THE GRACE OF GOD

## SALVATION BY THE GRACE OF GOD

As we have seen in our studies, the grace of God is a really broad topic. God Himself is a gracious God. However, the most common thing people think about when discussing the grace of God is probably what He has done to offer us salvation, eternal life.

📌 Before we get into the big discussion of being saved and eternal life, let's remember that Jesus had a really simple definition for eternal life in John 17:1-3. What was His definition for eternal life?

📌 This simple definition is truly profound. What did He mean? (*The key is in the definition of "know"*)

📌 Read Romans 5:2. What is "this grace in which we stand"?

📌 Notice that this verse uses the word "also." To what does that refer?

📌 Find at least one other place in the New Testament that describes "access" to God.



- 📌 It seems that the key to the “access” described in Romans 5:1-2 is faith. Is this simply the acceptance that God exists, or is there more to it? Explain how this faith works? What scriptures help understand this?
  
- 📌 Read Ephesians 2:4-10. Paul mentions grace 3 times in this passage. How does grace connect with being saved?
  
- 📌 Read Romans 5:15-21. Grace is also emphasized in this passage. I counted 5 times grace is mentioned. What is the writer explaining about the role of grace in eternal life?

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

- 📌 We will talk a lot more in the next lessons about how important our attitude and conduct is for living and abiding in the grace of God. Do you think there is any significance in Paul saying in Romans 5:2 that we “stand” in His grace? Explain.

**SECTION 2:**  
**LIVING IN**  
**THE GRACE**  
**OF GOD**

## LESSON 7 - NOW WHAT?




### ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

In the first section of this study, we looked at the nature of the grace of God and considered how we can come to stand in that grace. This section is more about practical applications in the lives of disciples.


So let's think about this. As we become Christians (disciples), we find ourselves in the grace of God...now what? Is our attitude and conduct important in receiving this grace of God and remaining in His grace?

The scriptures have much to say about this. For example, Romans 12:1-2 speaks about a transformation that we are expected to make. Transformations are not easy, nor are they quick. It is definitely a process as we allow God to work on our hearts.


We already studied about the role faith has in all of this. Now let's consider some other attitudes and behavior that the Lord expects of those receiving His grace.


-  Read Romans 6:1-16.
  
-  There are some who teach that the grace of God is irresistible and has nothing to do with our life and behavior. What does this passage teach about that? Can we continue in sin while continuing to be in God's grace? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
-  How do we apply that idea to our lives?

 What does Jude warn about in Jude 1:4?


 A few verses later Jude speaks of the consequences for these people. What is in store for them?

## **BASIS FOR LAW & PROPHETS / NEW COMMANDMENT**

 God has always worked hard to express His grace toward His people. From the very beginning His expectations of His people have been simple, but profound. What did Jesus say was the basis for all the Law and Prophets? Where is that found?

 What is the “new commandment” mentioned in the New Testament? Where is that found? What makes it new?


## HUMILITY

 Another attitude comes to mind that God expects of us. Read Micah 6:8. What does God expect of His people?

 Read also 1 Peter 5:5-6. What does the Lord expect?

 But isn't humility just weakness? Explain.

 Was Jesus humble? Explain.

 How can we practice humility in our lives?

## NOT ALWAYS WHAT IS EXPECTED / ALWAYS WHAT IS NEEDED

This is really challenging concept in our lives. In our very limited perspective, we have a picture of what we need in our lives. God's perspective is different and much bigger.


- 📌 Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
- 📌 What was Paul talking about? What was the grace he was praying for?
- 📌 What was the Lord's answer about the grace He was giving Paul? What was the Lord doing for him?
- 📌 How does faith figure into this?
- 📌 How can we face things like this with the confidence that Paul shows?
- 📌 Can you think of any other passages in scripture that might help?


## LESSON 8 - STEWARDS OF THE GRACE OF GOD


### WHAT AM I TO DO WITH THE GIFTS OF GRACE?


As we have been studying grace in this class so far, we have mostly been considering grace in the broad sense of good will, favor and loving-kindness that the Lord expresses toward those who would come to Him. Now let's consider grace in the sense of more specific gifts that He gives.

 Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

 We have each been given gift(s) of grace. What does Peter say is our responsibility?

 With what purpose?

 Read Romans 12:3-8. This passage has more to say about our responsibility with the gifts we have been given.


 What are we to do with our gift(s)? With what kind of heart and attitude?

 Do any other passages come to mind about this?

## GROWING STRONG IN THE GRACE OF GOD


Standing in the grace of God can at first glance seem kind of passive, but considering the stormy winds of darkness that rage all around us, standing firm requires growth, strength and power (His power).

 Read 2 Timothy 2:1.


 What does Paul instruct Timothy to do?

As in any other area, growing stronger in something requires exercise. You have probably heard it said, “Practice makes perfect,” right? You might also have heard that corrected to say, “Perfect practice makes perfect.” Those things that we practice, we do better and are stronger. But we need to practice the right things in the right way.

 Read 2 Corinthians 8:3-7.

 What was one of the things that Paul had left Titus there to do for them?

 What was Paul asking the Corinthians to do?

 How does this help us to “stand” in His grace?




**SECTION 3:**  
**SHARING**  
**THE GRACE**  
**OF GOD**

# LESSON 9 - LIVING GRACIOUSLY

## BECOMING MORE LIKE HIM

We think most often about receiving the grace of God and that is an amazing fact to contemplate, that He offers His grace to us. We have studied about His grace in many ways this quarter.

I believe we are expected to become more and more like Him as we grow in Him. Here are a few scriptures that teach this.

 What do these scriptures teach us?

 1 John 2:6

 2 Corinthians 3:18

 Romans 8:29

 Ephesians 4:22-24

Remember earlier in the class we talked about Romans 12:1-2. This is the transformation from what we were to what we are becoming.

 Where does that transformation begin?

With this in mind, we need to be walking (living) in Him, in the pattern of who He is. We need to be living graciously, learning to show grace. I'll provide a list of scriptures that teach this and then see if you can think of others.

📌 What do these scriptures teach us about gracious living?

📌 Colossians 4:6

📌 1 Peter 2:19-20

📌 Luke 10:25-37

📌 Mark 11:25

📌 Ephesians 4:29-32

📌 1 John 4:7-12








📌 Are there any other scriptures that come to your mind about living the grace of God?


## LESSON 10 - SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

### LETTING OTHERS SEE & KNOW WHAT GOD'S GRACE IS LIKE


We have studied the grace of God and about the wonderful blessings found in living in that grace and becoming like Him.

It is also part of the expectations that the Lord has of His people to let others see the wonders of those blessings and to be willing to share with others what that means for us, being forgiven and establishing a relationship with Him and His people for the rest of eternity.

-  Read Acts 20:24. How did Paul describe what he was doing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
-  Here are some scriptures that talk about this. What are they teaching?
  -  1 Peter 3:14-17
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  -  Philemon 1:4-7
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  -  Philippians 2:14-16
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  -  Colossians 4:4-6
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  -  1 Peter 2:9

 What are some ways we can share these things with others?

An important thing to keep in mind is that sharing our faith, sharing God's grace and the blessings of the good news is not just toward non-Christians, but for each other, as well. We should be encouraging, inspiring and helping each other to grow in the grace of God.

 Thinking back to the last few lessons in this study, what are some ways we can share the grace of God with each other?