



The Glory of Grace

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Focus Christianity is set apart from all other religions because we can have a personal *relationship* with a loving and gracious God. The primary virtue God wants to be known for is grace.

Fun If you were a piece of furniture, what would you choose to be?

Review Key Scriptures: John 1:14–18; Exodus 35:5–7

1. Reasons God chooses to be known by grace first:

- It makes God desirable because grace is attractive. The devil wants us to see God as holding the Ten Commandments and a rod, but God wants us to see His grace and mercy first.
- It makes truth bearable. Truth without grace is mean. Grace without truth is meaningless. Grace and truth are medicine, with grace being the anesthesia before the surgery.
- It makes the Word understandable. Without grace, the Bible is a dangerous book. Grace is the interpretive key of the entire Bible.

2. Learning to Spell G.R.A.C.E.

G—Giving away something undeserved. There are only two things we can do with grace: accept it or reject it. Nothing we receive from God is earned.

R—Redemptive love, or righteous, purposeful suffering for the sake of another person's salvation or redemption. Jesus doesn't use a point system for us, and we shouldn't use one for others.

A—Accepting and befriending people who are unlike us, reject us, or are unkind to us. Christians should be kind and gracious people.

C—Creating a safe atmosphere for people who are weak or hurting. Jesus is our example. He is our safe place. We can boldly enter His presence because He will never take advantage of any weakness.

E—Extending forgiveness and seeking peace and reconciliation, whether it is deserved or not. Mercy means not giving people what they deserve. Grace means giving people the good they don't deserve.

Group Dynamics Idea Often, we think of helping food pantries during the holidays. Contact a local food pantry to find ways your group can serve together throughout the year.

Discuss

1. Read Exodus 35:5–7. What seven virtues of Himself does God tell Moses? What are the first two? Why do you think God says these first?
2. God built a piece of furniture to represent Himself in the Ark of the Covenant. Find a picture of the Ark of the Covenant. What is seen first, the mercy seat or the law?
3. In John 13:34–35, Jesus gives a new commandment. How do others know we follow Jesus? What are some practical ways we can show His love each day? Share an example of a time you received love and grace instead of what you deserved.
4. According to Ephesians 2:4–9, how are we saved? Can we ever do anything to earn this gift?
5. List the ways we are to treat one another given in 1 Peter 3:8–9.
6. Read Luke 6:36–37. What are the four things Jesus commands us to do? In verse 38, what truth does Jesus convey?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- If we're loving and gracious, we represent God accurately. It is better to be wrong and gracious than right and mean.
- Jesus doesn't treat others the way He was treated. In the same way, we should not respond in kind to another person's behavior when they are mean toward us.
- The way we love and treat those who don't have a relationship with Jesus is a window to see His wonderful love.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for being gracious toward me. Teach me how to show Your grace to others as an extension of You. Teach me how to be more like Jesus each day in every way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Ask the Lord to highlight a group member to pray for each day and pray for them by name. For resources on prayer, visit gatewaypeople.com/prayer-resources.