

Qowmemiyuwth," *The NAS Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon* [online] (cited 2 March 2015). Available from the Internet: www.biblestudytools.com.

SESSION 3

LIVING THE GOSPEL

This week is about gospel power. The gospel doesn't just save us from hell. Christ's kingdom is one where the inhabitants' lives are transformed daily to look more like Him. Scripture calls this sanctification. So it's not only by God's grace that we are saved. It is by God's grace that we are changed.

AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE EVERY GRACE
OVERFLOW TO YOU, SO THAT IN EVERY WAY, ALWAYS
HAVING EVERYTHING YOU NEED, YOU MAY EXCEL IN
EVERY GOOD WORK. (2 COR. 9:8)

Definitions matter. Today we challenge you to come up with a definition of grace.

READ [EPHESIANS 2:4-9](#).

The word *grace* is used three times in this passage. The entire passage ties grace and salvation to love, kindness, riches, and God freely meeting significant spiritual needs in our lives that we did not earn or deserve. Using [Ephesians 2:4-9](#), take a moment to quickly craft your own group definition of grace. Let each participant share and then whittle each idea into a single, agreed upon, definition. Record your definition.

Group definition of grace:

Discuss the following to begin your group study today.

Why is it so important to understand God's grace as an unmerited gift of His favor and kindness?

Why is a works-based understanding of salvation wrong?

Why would human pride tend to choose a works-based salvation?

How is a works-based salvation actually oppressive, enslaving, and discouraging?

Salvation by grace through faith separates Christianity from every other religion in the world. However, our understanding of grace should not be limited to the atonement offered us by Christ's death. It should also extend to the change and new life wrought in us by His resurrection and through the giving of the Holy Spirit that follows one's salvation. Even as we relied on God's grace to be saved, we must also rely on His grace daily to freely provide us with everything we need to obey Him and live out His commands.

Now, how does understanding and receiving God's grace cause us to treat others differently? How might God's gifts of kindness to us make us into more giving and kind people? How does being forgiven by grace enable us to freely forgive others?

WATCH

MOVIE CLIP



As a group, take time to view the ["Gospel and Grace" clip](#) (3:51). Read the summary statement below before watching the clip. Then take a few moments to discuss the clip using the questions provided.

SUMMARY

Elizabeth is now growing in a mentoring relationship with Miss Clara. In this clip from the movie *WAR ROOM*, Miss Clara seizes a teachable moment to guide Elizabeth in her understanding of grace. Miss Clara invites Elizabeth to better understand the grace given to her by God. She also alerts Elizabeth to the attacks of her Enemy who wants nothing more than to destroy Elizabeth's understanding and utilization of God's grace.

OPEN DISCUSSION

1. Who has extended great grace to you in the past? Or who has taught you a great deal about how to walk in grace? What have you learned from them?

2. Have you had difficulty in your life forgiving those who have wronged you? If yes, why do you think that is true?

3. How does Miss Clara describe the gospel in this clip?

4. According to Miss Clara, what do we deserve from God? How do you respond knowing He offers grace instead?

5. How aware are you of the real Enemy's attacks in your life?

ENGAGE

Using the [Ephesians 2:4-9](#) passage read earlier, answer the questions below.

What do these verses say about the character and heart of our God?

According to this passages, why has God granted us grace and forgiveness?

What danger is associated with works in [Ephesians 2:9](#)?

Works-based salvation is actually impossible and seeks to honor man. Grace-based salvation is what Jesus offers us and honors God alone. Now read the following passages about living in God's grace. Using the questions provided, discuss what these passages offer regarding sanctification (becoming more like Christ).

[Colossians 3:12-17](#)

[Titus 2:11-14](#)

[Ephesians 4:22-32](#)

Based on these passages, in light of the salvation we have been given, how are believers to live? How are they not to live?

According to [Colossians 3:13](#), we are to forgive as we have been forgiven. Why is that such an important part of grace?

Taking off the old self and putting on the new self is a vivid description of what happens in the life of a believer walking in God's grace. To put on a new self is to take action. We are to walk like Jesus walked. Everything about a person's life after salvation is a work in progress moving the believer ever closer to the image of Jesus.

Have you been trying to work and earn salvation by your religious deeds and performance or have you truly received by faith the free gift of forgiveness and salvation by God's grace and what Christ has already done for you? If you have been trying to earn your way into Heaven, then is anything stopping you from right now trusting Christ and His death on the cross as full payment of your sins? Pray now and receive His free gift of eternal life by faith. (See [Romans 6:23](#).)

How might you pray for one another to experience God's grace and walk fully alive in it this week? Invite volunteers to pray, thanking God for His grace and asking for His help and strength to forgive and extend kindness to others as Christ has modeled for you.

DAY ONE

"HE GIVES US GRACE AND HE HELPS US TO GIVE IT TO OTHERS EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T DESERVE IT. WE ALL DESERVE JUDGMENT. AND THAT IS WHAT A HOLY GOD GIVES US WHEN WE DON'T REPENT AND BELIEVE IN HIS SON."

~MISS CLARA, WAR ROOM

In your individual studies this week, you will first evaluate the power of the gospel in your life. Grace is God's free gift. No one earns it. No one could. That's what makes it good news. The grace of God is not only what saves you. It also sustains you. And you never need it more than when you are faced with your Enemy.

Start today with some gospel exploration.

Read the following verses and describe what each says about grace and/or the gospel.

[Romans 5:8](#)

[Romans 6:23](#)

[Romans 8:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

[1 Timothy 1:15](#)

DIVE IN TO [ROMANS 3:23-26](#).

FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. THEY ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS. GOD PRESENTED HIM AS A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE IN HIS RESTRAINT GOD PASSED OVER THE SINS PREVIOUSLY COMMITTED. GOD PRESENTED HIM TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AT THE PRESENT TIME, SO THAT HE WOULD BE RIGHTEOUS AND DECLARE RIGHTEOUS THE ONE WHO HAS FAITH IN JESUS.

Highlight everything God has done for you in this passage.

Now record everything you have done to earn God's grace, according to this passage.

The Greek word for *fall* is *hustereo* and literally means *behind*. To fall behind means to miss the goal. It also bears the connotation to be inferior or to fail.¹

All we bring to salvation is a life that falls completely behind. Why? Because of sin. What God does, in spite of our sin, is grant grace and righteousness in sin's place. Nothing we do could have ever come close, much less crossed the finish line of salvation. Only by God's grace can we be forgiven.

What is the appropriate response to this passage and to God's gift of grace and love for us?

Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God, thanking Him for His grace and forgiveness.

If you have not yet surrendered your life to Jesus, accepting His gift of grace to cover your sin, seek counsel from your small group leader, a pastor, or another godly friend. Consider praying the prayer below in your own words.

God, I know I am unworthy of Your grace and Your presence. Forgive me for my disobedience. Thank You for sending Your Son to cover my sinfulness on the cross. Thank You for Your gift of grace. I submit my life to You. Help me to live as a new creation. Amen.

1. Thayer and Smith. "Greek Lexicon entry for hustereo," *The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon* [online] 1999 (cited 2 March 2015). Available from the Internet: www.biblestudytools.com.

DAY TWO

"ELIZABETH, THERE'S NOT ROOM FOR YOU AND GOD ON THE THRONE OF YOUR HEART. IT'S EITHER HIM OR IT'S YOU. YOU NEED TO STEP DOWN. IF YOU WANT VICTORY, YOU HAVE TO FIRST SURRENDER."

~MISS CLARA, WAR ROOM

START TODAY BY READING 1 SAMUEL 5:1-6.

Two things from this story are clear.

1. God had no intention of sharing space with a false idol in a temple.

2. God has no intention of sharing space in our hearts with false idols either.

At the core, salvation is a priceless gift from God. It also beautifully leads to the most unnatural action from those who have received it—surrender. Surrender is unnatural because it feels like giving up, giving in.

It's far more natural to fight for control. It's far easier to give in to our flesh and preserve our own ego and status. But it's also far more damaging.

J.D. Greear writes, "The gospel has done its work in us when we crave God more than we crave everything else in life—more than money, romance, family, health, fame—and when seeing His kingdom advance in the lives of others gives us more joy than anything we could own. When we see Jesus as greater than anything the world can offer, we'll gladly let everything else go to possess Him."¹

What do you crave most? List anything and everything you tend to place first in your life ahead of God.

Would you be willing to lay aside these or anything else, even good things, in order to keep Christ first in your heart?

Perhaps Elizabeth was reluctant to offer Tony grace because she didn't understand the fullness of God's grace in her own life. The gospel of Jesus is cheap if those who have received it can't be distributors of it. Only when we come down off the throne of our lives can we truly see how much God has given us. Then, and only then, will we desire Him more than anything else the world offers.

READ [MATTHEW 13:44-46](#).

Summarize the two simple illustrations found in these parables.

What was required of the man and the merchant to gain their treasures? How does that illustrate the kingdom of heaven?

If we want victory, it starts with surrender. Surrender feels unnatural until you understand that what you gain by surrendering to Christ is better than anything you could ever want in His place.

List the ways you need to surrender to God in the following areas:

In your family:

In your marriage:

At your church:

In the way you use your time and resources:

Close today by composing a prayer of surrender. Tell God how grateful you are for grace. Ask Him to help you give Him His rightful place on the throne of your life. Tell Him exactly how blessed you feel to have Him first. Express to Him your desire to keep it that way.

FOR WHOEVER WISHES TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S WILL SAVE IT. ([MARK 8:35](#), NASB)

1. J. D. Greear, *Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 23.

DAY THREE

"YOU NEED TO DO YOUR FIGHTING IN PRAYER."
~MISS CLARA, WAR ROOM

There is perhaps nothing more worshipful than vulnerability. Why? Two reasons. First, being vulnerable indicates trust and humility of heart. Second, being vulnerable before God indicates a truer understanding of who He is—that He is trustworthy. A high view of God in a time of need draws the believer ever closer to the only One who can meet every need.

Start today by taking time to memorize [Hebrews 4:16](#).

THEREFORE LET US APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH BOLDNESS, SO THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND FIND GRACE TO HELP US AT THE PROPER TIME.

To approach God boldly does not mean we can approach Him disrespectfully or pridefully—but as God's children enjoying a "freedom of speech" before our loving Father. Because of what Jesus has done for us we are no longer enemies inhibited by sin, guilt, shame, or doubt. We are beloved children who, by faith, can pray openly and freely with confidence in our Father's care for us and ability to handle any request.

Describe the time in your life when you felt you needed God's help the most.

God is in the business of using the weak for His purposes. One might argue it is the key God uses to unlock His power. Take a look at these examples and note how God uses the weak in mighty ways:

1. Peter's weakness—[John 18:25-27](#)
How God used Peter—[Acts 2:37-42](#)
2. Moses' weakness—[Exodus 3:1-10; 4:10-13](#)
How God used Moses—[Exodus 13:1-16](#)
3. Gideon's weakness—[Judges 6:11-16](#)
How God used Gideon—[Judges 8:22-35](#)

Gideon's legacy wasn't what you might expect. Why?

How has God used weakness in your life to show His power?

How likely are you to seek God's help first when encountering a problem (before exhausting other resources)?

READ [1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31](#).

Fill in the blanks based on the passage.

GOD CHOOSES THE _____ TO SHAME THE _____ AND THE _____ TO SHAME THE _____. (v. 27)

SO THAT _____ . (v. 29)

Take time to confess to God some key areas in your life where you have been trying to use your own strength.

Pray now that God will be made strong in all your weaknesses. Ask Him to remove anything that would hinder you from praying freely, confidently, and boldly. Ask Him to deepen your trust and faith in His love and ability to handle any request.

Now close by lifting up a specific need or concern before His throne that you or your family have right now. Tell Him that you are trusting Him to intervene and do what is best in this situation. Ask Him to give you a story you can share with others that will honor Him regarding how He answers.