

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of God's grace, showing how we are not only the undeserved recipients of His grace, but also how His grace towards us is what motivates us to extend grace toward others.

Essential Doctrine: God is Gracious

God's nature is to delight in giving unmerited favor to those who are undeserving (Eph. 2:8-9). His grace toward sinners is found most clearly in the salvation He has provided through Christ. Because of sin, humanity is undeserving of salvation: all of us have turned our backs on God, and as a result, we deserve death (Rom. 6:23). However, instead of leaving people in their sins, God has demonstrated His graciousness by providing atonement and forgiveness for our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21).

1 God's grace is a gift (Isa. 64:3-4).

- ▶ Have you ever had a summer job? If so, when you received your paycheck at the end of the week, was that grace? Why or why not?
- ▶ Imagine your boss from a summer job called you at Christmas and said he was sending you a Christmas bonus. Would that bonus be grace? Why or why not?

Read Isaiah 64:3-4.

- ▶ Were the people speaking this text surprised or not? Why do you think they reacted this way?
- ▶ Why do you think they did not expect God to come down and do "awesome works" (v. 3)?
- ▶ Why do you think God came down to save them?
- ▶ How does this text show us grace is a gift we don't deserve?

2 God's grace is a gift to sinners (Rom. 5:8).

- ▶ What was the most surprising kind thing someone has done for you? What made it surprising?
- ▶ Who are some people you would never expect to do something kind to you? Why wouldn't you expect them to be kind to you? What would you think if they were kind to you?

Read Romans 5:8.

- ▶ While the word grace doesn't occur in this verse, the concept is here. How does this verse show us tremendous grace?
- ▶ How is the grace in this verse even more powerful (perhaps) than the grace shown in Isaiah 64?
- ▶ How did you react to God's grace knowing you deserve wrath instead of kindness?

3 We ought to emulate God's graciousness (Luke 7:47; 2 Cor. 8:1).

- ▶ Under what conditions are you more likely to be kind to people? When are you more likely to be hateful to people? Explain.
- ▶ Imagine you just won the lottery. Do you think you would be more or less kind to those around you?
- ▶ Imagine your teacher just dropped your lowest grade. Would you be more or less likely to be kind to others the rest of the day?

Read Luke 7:47.

- ▶ According to this text, why was this woman so gracious? (Incidentally, you may need to clarify that this woman was not forgiven because of her kindness toward Jesus. Her kindness showed she knew she was forgiven).

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4.

- ▶ According to this text, what did the Macedonian churches do that was so good? Why did they do it? According to verse 1, what was this called? (The grace of God.)
- ▶ What parallel do you see between the woman in Luke 7 and the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8?
- ▶ So how should people who have received grace act toward others?
- ▶ How does showing grace toward others display God's beauty to them?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How can we treasure grace this week? What are some specific examples of people you can show grace to this week, knowing you have been forgiven much? What are some specific examples of actions you can take toward these people?