

GRACE

FOR BEGINNERS

MIKE MAZZALONGO

TEACHER'S GUIDE

bibletalk^{TV}



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Grace for Beginners

Mike Mazzalongo

This 6-part series explores the meaning and value of God's grace expressed in Jesus' cross as well as some common misconceptions concerning this blessing.



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**Teacher Guide created by
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Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement with their own questions.

It is recommended that teachers have students view the associated video or read the text for the lesson. This helps students come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a brief summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing or having students summarize the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action by applying this information to their lives in order to help them grow spiritually and help others to do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking students how this information relates to their spiritual development at this time and moving forward.

For more information on teaching adults, please visit:

<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>

A student workbook is also available for this series:

<https://bibletalk.tv/workbooks/grace>

Lesson #1 – Introduction

The focus of this lesson is to introduce the concept of God’s grace. Of special note is the mistaken idea that some have concerning the concept of grace as well as the core reason why the “good news” is truly good.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend the concept of God’s grace and its importance for our salvation.
- **Feel:** Appreciate the value of God’s grace.
- **Do:** Use grace as the foundation of our spiritual growth.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 1 – What’s So Good About the Good News?)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 1

Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Grace is amazing
- 1.2 The essential meaning of grace
- 1.3 The danger of grace
- 1.4 The essential teaching
- 1.5 Grace is free
- 1.6 Where does human responsibility fit in?

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. How do you define grace and what is another word you might use instead?

The intent of this question is to establish what students understand grace to be. Do not seek to correct students if they have a perspective that does not agree with the lesson, or if they don't have an understanding.

Gently, lovingly and dare I say, graciously lead them through these lessons to the understanding God wishes for us to have. As they provide words to describe grace, look for terms such as kindness, love, mercy, generosity and forgiveness.

2. Where do we first read about God's grace in scripture?

We can anticipate that grace was first seen when God did not destroy Adam and Eve after their sin. One can argue that grace began when God decided to create our world and mankind.

3. What makes grace so amazing?

God did not have to offer forgiveness for our sins or to make a way for us to return to Him. It demonstrates His deep love for His creation by offering forgiveness. It is also amazing that the offer of forgiveness is there before we ask for it and even when we reject it. When we repent and seek to return to God, His grace is there.

4. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. How does this explain the relationship between grace and faith?

Grace by its very nature is something that we cannot possibly earn. It is granted freely by God. Faith represents the method of our salvation (found only in Jesus – John 14:6). This faith in Jesus is demonstrated by our obedience seen through repentance, baptism, and faithful living.

5. Explain God's grace in the following examples from scripture and what they mean to us.

Genesis 3 – Adam and Eve's sin

Adam and Eve deliberately sinned against God. God could have destroyed them and started over. Instead He chose to put into place a plan to reconcile man back to Himself that would eventually play out in the sacrifice of Jesus. This plan is now in place for all of us. It clearly demonstrates God's spirit of love and forgiveness.

II Samuel 11 – David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah

David deliberately used the power and influence granted to him by God to sin. He compounded the sin by trying to cover it up by lying and having Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, killed. When confronted with his sin he immediately repented. As a result, God forgave him and continued to keep the promise of the Messiah coming through his lineage, unlike King Saul who refused to repent and lost the kingdom. This demonstrates the willingness of God to forgive us when we repent. It further illustrates the grace that God desires to extend to us.

Luke 22:54-62 - Peter's denial of Jesus

Peter denied Jesus in the same time period of his declaration to follow Him to the death if necessary. When he became aware of his denial, he deeply regretted his sin and sought at the first opportunity to reestablish his relationship with Jesus. When we sin, we are also showing rejection of our Lord. Jesus reinstates our relationship with Him when we repent.

All three of these examples, and many others from scripture show that God is indeed patient towards us in our weakness and seeks to save us rather than destroy us (II Peter 3:9).

6. How can a misunderstanding of grace be dangerous?

Many misapply grace because they misunderstand what it is and its role in our salvation. They feel that grace is offered at no cost or no commitment on their part. If one misunderstands grace, then there is the potential to miss out on its full benefits for the guilty sinner. There is also the danger that in one's misunderstanding we are likely to perpetuate our error as we teach others.

7. What makes grace a difficult concept to grasp?

Many feel they are unworthy of God's love due to their sinful life. Many misunderstand the nature of grace and how it demonstrates God's love. There may also be a lack of trust in God.

8. Explain how grace is free but compels action on our part.

This is perhaps at the heart of why we might misunderstand grace. It is not something we can possibly earn. We feel however that we must do something to earn it. God already paid the price for our sins and offers us the way back to Him. That way is only through faith in Jesus (John 14:6), expressed in repentance and baptism (Acts 2:28).

9. Read I John 1:5-9. Based on this passage state your understanding of the difference between the effects of the principle of Law and the principle of Grace and give an example.

John is communicating to us that God's grace is extended to those in Christ. God recognizes that we cannot live perfect lives and will have those times of sin. If a child of God is honest with him or herself and sincerely repents, then the blood of Christ that brought them to God continues to wash away sins. This is an example of continued grace. On the other hand, law demands obedience, sometimes to a strict set of rules. A violation of any one part of a rule undermines the obedience of other parts of the law. Law demands strict compliance and associated punishment, but no remedy for failure. Its purpose is twofold: 1. To reveal sin and 2. to condemn and punish guilty sinners (Romans 3:19-20).

Examples will vary but look for examples of grace that include an honest and sincere effort to obey.

10. Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15:11-32 and answer the following questions.

What action did the younger son take that shows his rejection of the father?

He demanded his inheritance and left the father. Then when things inevitably turned bad he continued the rejection by not coming back to the father but rather sought to remedy things himself.

At what point did the father's grace become evident in this parable?

The grace (willingness to forgive) was always there. It became visible when he saw his son from a distance.

How did the father in this parable demonstrate forgiveness?

He wouldn't even let the son complete his statement of repentance. The effort of the son demonstrated the son's humility and repentance. He called for his son to be fully reinstated into the family by giving him the robe, ring, sandals and celebration.

Read verse 32. What in this statement shows why God grants us grace?

Sin truly creates death in the form of separation from our Father. When we accept grace, rather than reject it, we embrace God's love and are reborn (John 3:16). We come from the death of separation to the renewed life of reconciliation to God.

11. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Grace is everything in our relationship with God. When we fully understand the role it plays in our salvation it should cause us to move towards God and make the effort to remain faithful.

Lesson #2 – The True Plan for Salvation

The focus of this lesson is to introduce the concept of God’s grace. Of special note is the mistaken idea that some have concerning the concept of grace as well as the core reason why the “good news” is truly good.

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to clarify the relationship between grace and faith and their impact on our salvation.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the role of grace and faith in our salvation.
- **Feel:** Defend the importance of grace in our salvation.
- **Do:** Teach others the role of grace in salvation.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 2 – The True Plan of Salvation)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 2

Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Explaining how we are saved by grace through faith.
- 1.2 Grace and faith
- 1.3 Those who have a problem with Grace

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 and answer the following questions.

What does Paul mean in the first three verses?

Paul is addressing the Christians at Ephesus that once lived sinful lives but were now free from the eternal consequence of separation from God. If we continue in life away from a relationship with God, then there is no hope of eternal life. If we are not in that relationship with God, then we are in a relationship with Satan.

How does God make us alive? (Verses 4-7)

We are made alive through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is done by God’s grace. He did not have to make a way available but did so by offering Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. As Jesus was raised from the dead, so are we.

What is your reaction to verse 7?

Answers will vary but look for responses that indicate that the more we realize what God has done for us, the more we should feel compelled to respond as He desires and to remain faithful.

2. Why is it sometimes difficult to accept the gift of love and mercy from God?

Perhaps we don't truly believe or understand how God would offer such a gift. We know our guilt and feel that there should be a price we pay for such a wonderful gift.

3. What can we possibly give in exchange for our salvation that God would consider worthy?

There is nothing we can give. The common misconception is that we obey some sort of plan or steps and at the conclusion we have now earned God's forgiveness.

4. Why is the "Plan of Salvation" (Hear, believe, confess, repent, baptize) not a valid formula to achieve salvation?

There is no formula that brings about salvation. That is a misunderstanding of the plan of salvation revealed by God. Although these elements of our relationship with God are important, it does not represent a formula. These elements are our biblical response to God's plan (which is that God selected vicarious atonement as the method, and Jesus as the One who would carry it out with His own life offered). The danger is that one might believe that since he or she has done these steps then salvation is owed. The true plan is that God saves man through His Son Jesus (John 14:6). He did not have to, but He chose to because of his deep love. The actions of believing, repenting, confessing and baptism are expressions of faith in response to God's free gift of salvation.

5. What is the ultimate choice we make regarding God's grace and what our actions represent?

We must either believe or not. If we choose disbelief, then we reject God's grace. By rejecting, we choose to remain in our lost condition. If we choose to believe, then we will seek to obey God's will. This is at the heart of the response of the crowd when Peter preached his first sermon in Acts 2 (Acts 2:37-38). Our belief is our confession of who Jesus is, our need for him, our dedication to following His teaching and our obedience (i.e. repentance and baptism).

6. What is meant by the phrase "faith in faith"?

It means that if I have a strong enough faith then I can be saved. Although Ephesians 2:8 does state that we are saved by grace, through faith, it is not the faith that saves us. God's grace saves us. It is our faith in Jesus Christ, and it is He who has saved us. Jesus is the object of our faith. We believe He will save us.

7. Comment on the following statements:

“We are saved by grace but not grace alone.”

God’s grace is His love, compassion, kindness, and mercy. These character traits compelled him to do something. That something was to make a way for us to come back to Him. That way involved sending Jesus to teach us about the true nature of God and to die for our sins. He also established the Church as a way for us to continue to serve Him and remain faithful.

“We are saved by faith but not by faith alone.”

We meet God’s grace by accepting the gift. This is done through our faith. It is not through actions our part to earn it. This type of faith goes beyond simply believing. It is alive and seen by how we respond to God’s grace (with obedience)
– James 2:17-18.

8. What is the danger of trying to earn God’s grace?

A wise person once said, “We do not work to earn our salvation. We work because of our salvation.” If we try to earn God’s grace then it keeps the power with us. Our power is never enough to save us, or even keep us faithful as God would require. It is only through grace. Throughout history men have tried to establish a relationship with God by striving to be good enough. Although we do try to live pure lives as God would have us to do, we fail. Therefore God’s grace is needed and ever present.

9. How is God's grace demonstrated in Luke 7:36-50 – Simon the Pharisee?

Simon thought that if he associated with Jesus then he would be a part of Jesus. Yet the one who truly had a part with Jesus was the woman that showed her belief, humility and submission to Him by washing and kissing His Feet. Jesus demonstrated grace by forgiving her. He stated in verse 50 "your faith has saved you; go in peace." She acted upon her faith. Jesus acted through His grace.

10. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

We must realize that grace is everything in our relationship with God. When we fully understand the role of grace in our salvation it should cause us to move towards God and make the effort to remain faithful. It should also move us to extend God's grace to others by helping them understand the gift that is available to all.

Lesson #3 – God’s Most Precious Gift

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on the benefits we receive from God’s grace. Of special note is how we are blessed and how we should use these blessings to help others discover God’s grace.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend the benefits to one’s life produced by God’s grace.
- **Feel:** Value the benefits produced by God’s grace.
- **Do:** Demonstrate our knowledge of grace by living faithfully and helping others discover the benefits produced by God’s grace.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 3 – God’s Most Precious Gift)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 3

Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Grace as a gift
- 1.2 The value of this gift
- 1.3 The expression of grace
- 1.4 What the gift gives us
- 1.5 Falling from grace

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. Summarize what you know about the power of grace and how that makes you feel.

Answers will vary but look for responses related to our obedience, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, our service and relationship with God. Also, the idea that grace empowers me to want what God's wants more than wanting what I want.

2. Cite some examples of God's grace from the Old Testament.

Look for responses where God expressed His love for humanity seen through forgiveness and salvation. Some expected examples include David, Adam/Eve, Moses, the Israelite nation, God's plan to redeem mankind through Jesus, etc.

3. Summarize the four main gifts described in the text and state the importance of each.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

Two types of gifts from the Holy Spirit: **Empowerment** – given to those in the early church to help make their witness confirmed with miracles, and to strengthen and encourage the church.

The other is the **Indwelling** of the Holy Spirit in each convert (Acts 2:38). This gift helps guide and encourage us to faithfulness and will one day raise us from the dead.

The gift that God gives to the church

God equips individuals in the church to strengthen and help guide us. These are in the form of prophets, teachers, elders, evangelists and such. These individuals are valuable in that we learn God's will from them and how to remain faithful.

The spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gives to individuals in the church (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12).

Each of us are gifted by the Holy Spirit so that we can not only learn and remain faithful, but so we can show others the way to experience God's grace and salvation. These are important because they are there to help serve the Lord and each other.

The gift of grace

The gift of grace is seen in our salvation. God did not have to redeem man but He chose to do so. Grace and the salvation it brings is a gift because we cannot earn or qualify for it. It is given freely by God through Jesus Christ. This is important to us because without it we would have no hope for salvation and eternal life after death.

4. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. List the gifts God has blessed us with.

Paul states we've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

These include:

God choosing us from the beginning, predestining us for adoption, redeeming us through Jesus, forgiving our sins, lavishing grace upon us, making known His will for us, giving us an inheritance and guaranteeing our hope.

5. Share a time when you've received a gift that left you breathless with joy and appreciation. How does this compare with the gift of grace?

Answers will vary but look for responses that relate to an overwhelming sense of gratitude and love for the one giving the gift. Also note that without the gift of grace, all other gifts would not be possible or hold value.

6. How is grace expressed in our lives?

Grace motivates us to obey God. Faith is only a concept that becomes real through our repentance, baptism, service, faithfulness, pure living and other expression of submission to God. Paul expressed this in Ephesians 2:7 "so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."

7. What does the gift of grace give us?

Responses will vary and come each student's perspective but look for the following responses: produces our salvation, produces righteousness, produces life, produces gratitude which moves us to seek righteousness.

8. Provide an explanation of the following gifts given by grace.

Our salvation

We have no hope of salvation without grace. Like Paul stated in Romans 7, we know what to do but don't do it and we know what not to do, but do it anyways.

This summarizes why we need God's grace for our salvation.

Produces righteousness

Righteousness is defined as the quality of being morally right or justifiable.

We cannot achieve righteousness by ourselves. God grants us righteousness through His grace. He did this through the gift of Jesus Christ. There is another concept describing how righteousness is obtained, it is the word, "imputes." This term means to credit or ascribe something to a person. In our relationship with God, we stand before him unrighteous because of our sins (Romans 3:23). God, through His grace imputes, or ascribes righteousness to us. To put it all together, God justifies us through His Son, Jesus. We cannot possibly earn or justify ourselves, but He grants salvation to us. Paul explains this in Romans 3:21-23. Through our faith in Jesus, the righteousness of God is given to us (or ascribed to us). See also II Corinthians 5:21.

Produces life

Grace not only produces life everlasting but produces life now. It adds the quality of blessedness to our lives as we work and exist as God's children today. We see this as "fruit of the Spirit" outlined in Galatians 5:22-24. These should not only be seen by us, but should be evident to others as our witness of being God's children.

9. What is meant by falling from grace and what is the tragedy of it happening?

Falling from grace is the result of one who is saved but rejects God's gift. The tragedy is that once redeemed and saved from eternal punishment, this person turns back to sin and disbelief. In doing so they reject God's gift and thus have no hope of salvation.

10. How can we keep from falling from grace?

Answers will vary but look for expressions related to working out our salvation (faithful living), respect and deference to God seen as "fear and trembling" keeping focused on our Lord Who guarantees salvation (Ephesians 1:14; Hebrews 12:1-2).

11. Read Romans 6:1-11. How does Paul explain the idea that we should no longer sin deliberately?

Paul states that we must not sin so that grace abounds. He states that because of our salvation we are dead to sin. We are a new person (newness of life). Our old person dies when we are raised as Christ was, symbolized through our baptism. In verse 11 Paul completes this thought by comparing that as Jesus was buried and raised a glorified being, we too are dead to sin through repentance and, buried and raised to a new life with Christ through baptism.

12. How does this lesson help you and others build a greater relationship with Jesus and grow spiritually?

When we fully understand the nature of God's grace and what He does for us through it, this should compel us to obey His will as a demonstration of our faith, as well as love and gratitude for His gift. Part of our gratitude is seen as we help others learn of God's grace and salvation.

Lesson #4 – No Grace – No Gospel

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to further our understanding of God’s amazing grace. Of special note in this lesson are mistaken concepts of grace and a review of examples that demonstrate how God’s grace works.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend the benefits to one’s life produced by God’s grace.
- **Feel:** Value the benefits produced by God’s grace.
- **Do:** Demonstrate our knowledge of grace by living faithfully and helping others discover the benefits produced by God’s grace.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 4 – No Grace – Not Gospel)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 4

Body of the Lesson

1.1 What grace is not

- 1.1.1 Grace is not a dividing line
- 1.1.2 Grace is not a thermometer
- 1.1.3 Grace is not a free ticket

1.2 What grace is

- 1.2.1 Old Testament word meaning
- 1.2.2 New Testament word meaning
- 1.2.3 Definition

1.3 Examples of grace in action

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. Sometimes it helps to understand what something is by looking at what it is not. Summarize each mistaken view listed below and why it is incorrect:

Grace is not a dividing line.

This idea is contrary to the concept of grace and what is stated in I John 1:5-7.

Grace is not a thermometer.

God supplies all we need for us to be saved by his grace. There is nothing we supply. We do, however, respond to His grace through our faith in Jesus and obedience to his teachings. This obedience is not an exchange for salvation but rather an expression of our faith. We are saved by God’s grace.

Grace is not a free ticket.

This thought is inconsistent with what Paul teaches us in Romans 6. We are dead to sin so how can we continue in sin? Notice Paul’s use of “in”. If we live “in sin” then it is what we allow to dominate our lives. This is not inconsistent with 1 John 1 regarding walking in the light. All of us sin but God’s grace seen in the blood of Christ covers our sins as we repent and live faithfully (walking in the light). One cannot possibly “walk in the light” while living “in sin”. They are diametrically opposed of each other.

2. Compare the use of the word grace from the Old Testament to that of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament the word grace meant to bend or stoop, showing how God bends down in kindness. In the New Testament, grace is used in a similar way but communicates a cheerful attitude showing God's motivation of love and kindness. In either use the word indicates favor as the attitude of God towards us. God loves His creation and desires all persons to come into a relationship with Him (II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:3-4).

3. Use your own words to define grace and what it means to you.

Answers will vary but look for an expression of deep love from God, His willingness to save us, and our response by expressing our faith and obedience in Jesus.

4. Explain the expression of God's grace in the following situations from scripture:

David and Bathsheba – II Samuel 11

God could have immediately destroyed David but forgave him upon his repentance. God chose to continue His promise through David because of David's repentance. David still suffered the consequences of his sin but not the eternal consequences.

Paul the Apostle – I Corinthians 15:9-10

God could have destroyed Paul because of his deliberate and cruel actions taken against Christians. But God had a plan for Paul. Paul repented of his actions and spent the rest of his life serving as one of God's messengers. Even today we are taught by Paul through his writings in the New Testament.

5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

When we understand the depth of God's love as demonstrated by His grace, we should feel compelled to respond as He wills through our Lord Jesus. This includes our faith in Jesus, our repentance and baptism. We do this because of our understanding and not to earn favor from God. God has already expressed favor to us by His grace. This understanding also includes our role as messengers to carry the good news of God's amazing grace to others so they too may come to that saved relationship with God.

Lesson #5 – My Grace is Sufficient

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to further our understanding of God’s amazing grace. Of special note in this lesson is how God’s grace empowered Paul to deal with issues in his life and how we are also empowered.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend the benefits to one’s life produced by God’s grace.
- **Feel:** Value the benefits produced by God’s grace.
- **Do:** Demonstrate our knowledge of grace by living faithfully and helping others discover the benefits produced by God’s grace.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 5 – My Grace is Sufficient)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 5

Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Background of Paul’s situation
- 1.2 Paul’s prayer
- 1.3 Paul’s submission
- 1.4 Paul rising above his situation
- 1.5 Lessons for us

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. Discuss how your understanding of God’s grace has changed from your previous understanding.

Answers will vary but look for responses that indicate God’s grace is granted to us by the deep love of God. God’s grace is the source of our salvation. There is nothing we can offer in exchange for it. We respond to God’s grace by faith in Jesus expressed in repentance, baptism and faithfulness (Acts 2:38; Matthew 24:13).

2. Describe a time when everything seemed to be going well in your life but there was a hesitation or foreboding of something about to happen that would cause problems. What causes us to feel this way?

Look for this as a natural feeling experienced by many. Causes for these feelings might be that things are too good to be true. We often feel that we don’t deserve good things to happen to us or that there is always a price to pay when good things happen.

3. What was the impact of Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” as he states in II Corinthians 12?

Paul recognized that no matter how good or wonderful his experience as God’s servant after witnessing a heavenly vision, he was brought to humility by personal suffering that God would not remove (II Corinthians 11:16-ff).

4. Paul's prayer in II Corinthians 12:8 and his request for prayer in Ephesians 6:18-20 and what does it teach us?

Although it is not specifically stated in II Corinthians 12:8, Paul desired relief from these situations so he could continue in his service to God. He states this as such in Ephesians 6:19. He doesn't pray to be released from prison but that he will be successful in his mission.

5. What was Paul's reaction to God's answer to his prayer for relief and what can we learn from this?

The answer was that God will grant relief that He deems sufficient and for His purposes. This is not to punish Paul, but to teach him and keep him from sin. Paul's reaction was total acceptance. From this we learn that although we might not get the immediate response from God we wish, we can learn humility in the face of suffering. God promises to answer the prayers of His children and, as our creator, knows what we need most. Paul's response teaches us submission to God in all things. This is shown by Paul's response in II Corinthians 12:10.

6. Explain the paradox that the weaker we are the stronger Christ becomes, and how this relates to grace.

When we rely solely on our own resources while ignoring God's power in our lives we are doomed to failure. In our prayers we ask for God's will in our lives, and wisdom in making decisions to deal with life's situations. God does not promise a life free from trials, storms or challenges, however, he does promise that He will be there to help us through them.

Grace is at work in situations when He does not have to grant our prayers but chooses to do so. We respond by recognizing God's answer and giving Him glory while maintaining faithfulness.

7. How does this lesson help you and others come to a greater relationship with Jesus and to grow spiritually?

Relying on God's grace in all aspects of our lives helps us grow spiritually. Spiritual growth is about becoming more focused on Jesus and less concerned with ourselves. Those seeking a relationship with God are often doing so to gain relief from life's difficult situations. We can help them understand the nature of God seen in His grace working to solve our greatest need, salvation.

Lesson #6 – The Impact of Grace

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to further our understanding of God’s amazing grace. Of special note in this lesson are mistaken concepts of grace and a review of examples that demonstrate how God’s grace works.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Comprehend the benefits to one’s life produced by God’s grace.
- **Feel:** Value the benefits produced by God’s grace.
- **Do:** Demonstrate our knowledge of grace by living faithfully and helping others discover the benefits produced by God’s grace.

Support

- Text – Grace for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Grace for Beginners – (Lesson 6 – The Impact of Grace)
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 6

Body of the Lesson

- 1.1 Grace makes us eager to obey
- 1.2 Grace makes us work hard
- 1.3 Grace makes us thankful
- 1.4 Lessons learned

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

1. Look back at a significant event in your life. How do you see God's grace working in that event?

Answers will vary but look for responses that show how we look back on the events of life and see that where we are now was made possible by God guiding us as we have learned to turn our lives over to Him. It may not have been apparent at the time, but as we have matured in Christ and learned to follow His will, God has directed our lives for good and for blessings.

2. What are some scriptures that promise God's involvement in our lives?

There will be many varied scriptures. In the event students have difficulty recalling passages, here are some examples. It might be helpful to have students read these verses and state what each says using their own words.

- Ephesians 2:10
- Ephesians 1:3-10
- Romans 8:28-39
- John 15:5
- I Corinthians 10:13
- Matthew 10:29-31
- Hebrews 13:5
- Romans 5:8
- Philippians 4:19
- II Timothy 2:11-13

3. How does God's grace make us eager to obey?

God humbles and remakes us according to His will as we continue to turn more of our lives over to Him. It should be a natural reaction that when we understand what God has done and continues to do for us that we seek even more to do His will.

We might not realize this in the beginning of our relationship with Him but as we grow spiritually, we enter into a positive cycle of discovery, obedience to His will and personal growth which moves us to repeat this cycle.

4. Explain the paradox that we do not have to work for our salvation, but grace moves us to work even harder for the Lord.

Paul explains in I Corinthians 15:9-10 and other places that when we are impacted by grace we are added to a workforce that eagerly seeks to do God's will.

Paul even describes us as "slaves" (Romans 6:15-23).

As Paul states in Ephesians 2:8-9, we cannot possibly work hard enough or be good enough to earn salvation. It is given as a gift by our loving Creator and Father.

God created us to do good works. These works include the service we offer to God, our fellow Christians and our neighbors. Works are not limited to a physical service only. They also include the good "works" of responding as God wills in faith and obedience. Consider that among the works God prepared for us beforehand, our faithful response to the grace of God by faith in Jesus, repentance and baptism are included in that number.

5. Explain how grace makes us thankful.

It is common to feel grateful for a gift. The greater the value of the gift the more thankful we become. Nothing is greater than the gift of God's grace. Through it we have the hope of eternal life and a rich and full life now. As we grow closer to God by becoming more like Jesus, our gratitude naturally grows as well. Our faith is strengthened, as is our resolve to remain faithful and our desire to express our deep thankfulness grows. This cycle repeats itself and will continue to do so until the return of our Lord.

The Apostle John recognized this and longed for it as he penned his final words at the conclusion of Revelation, "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

6. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

We recognize how God's grace continues to impact our lives and the lives of those around us. Our role is to ourselves do and help others do what our Lord desires. Grace compels us to dedicate our time and resources to God's service. We seek to communicate with God through studying His word and prayer. We seek to be a part of His Kingdom both physically and spiritually. We seek to bring others into the Kingdom by helping them find God's grace.

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