



**EMBRACE**  
*the*  
**GRACE**

*LIFEGROUP STUDY & DEVOTIONAL GUIDE*

**October 15 - November 19, 2017**

*[creeksidechurch.ca/lifegroups](http://creeksidechurch.ca/lifegroups)*



# Introduction

Welcome to Creekside's LifeGroup study, "EMBRACE THE GRACE"! Over the next six weeks, you and your friends in group will explore 6 key areas where God's grace radically impacts our lives. Grace is a constant theme in the Bible and it culminates with the coming of Jesus. John puts it this way - "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) The topic of grace isn't just something we read about. Your LifeGroup is the ideal place to explore how God's grace shows up in our everyday lives. Together, you'll explore how people experienced God's grace in the Bible, you'll share together about how you've experienced His grace and you'll pray for each other to grow in God's grace. Your group members also will have opportunity to dig in deeper each week through a devotional guide in this study on grace. May God richly bless you as you "EMBRACE THE GRACE" together this Fall!



Jeff Austen  
*LifeGroups and Adult Ministries Pastor*  
*Creekside Church*

## MY GROUP INFORMATION

This booklet belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader/Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Our first meeting)  
Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

# Table of Contents

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDY GUIDE .....	5
SESSION 1 .....	6
WEEK 1 DEVOS .....	12
SESSION 2 .....	14
WEEK 2 DEVOS .....	19
SESSION 3 .....	21
WEEK 3 DEVOS .....	26
SESSION 4 .....	28
WEEK 4 DEVOS .....	34
SESSION 5 .....	36
WEEK 5 DEVOS .....	41
SESSION 6 .....	43
WEEK 6 DEVOS .....	49
LIFEGROUP GUIDELINES .....	51
LIFEGROUP ROSTER .....	52
GROUP CALENDAR .....	53
LIFEGROUP PRAYER & PRAISE REPORT .....	54
LEADER TIPS .....	56

# Understanding your Study Guide

Here is a quick explanation of the contents of your study guide.



**CATCHING UP:** Each week you'll start your time together by briefly discussing a question or two that will help focus everyone's attention on the session subject.

An orange sticky note with the words "Memory Verse" written in black, sans-serif font.

Memory Verse

**MEMORY VERSE:** In each session you'll find a Bible passage for your group to memorize together. Have your group read it out loud together from the book, then have everyone close their books and quote it out loud together.



**VIDEO TEACHING:** There is a video teaching for the group to watch together each week. There is a space to take notes as you watch the video.



**DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:** Each video segment is complemented by several questions for group discussion. Please don't feel pressured to discuss every single question. There is no reason to rush through the answers. Give everyone enough time to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all the questions, that's OK!



**LIVING IT OUT:** This section helps your group members think about how to apply what they've been learning. You'll find some practical application questions that will guide you to live out the truths and instructions we find in the Scriptures.



**MEETING WITH GOD:** At the end of each session, you'll find 5 devotional readings with questions, journal space and a place to write out a prayer to God. These five readings are designed for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of each week of this series. This regular habit of meeting with God is crucial for God to work in your life in this experience. When you meet for group, ask at the beginning, "How did your meeting with God" time go this week?"

# Session 1

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - Bankrupt



- NEW GROUP: Have everyone take a moment to share your name, how long you've been at Creekside and what you enjoyed about where you lived when you were 10 years old.
- CONTINUING GROUP: How are you feeling about the next couple months of life? Can you describe your feelings in a word? (Excited, Stressed, Hopeful, etc.) Why are you feeling this way?

What are you hoping to experience from this study, "EMBRACE THE GRACE?"

---

---

---

---

---

**Key Question for this Session:**  
Why is spiritual bankruptcy such a blessing?

**Memory Verse**

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."  
John 1:17 NIV



VIDEO TEACHING: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



What was a highlight for you from the video teaching? This can be something that challenged you or a question you have.

## **PART 1**

### **WE ARE BANKRUPT WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE**

*All of us are bankrupt without God's grace. Without His grace, we'd live for ourselves and never seek God. Without God's grace, we'd be condemned to hell, forever separated from Him.*

*To fully understand and experience God's grace, we need to remember who we were without Christ. As a group, take some time to look at the following passages and talk about the questions that follow.*

1. We were born in SIN. Read Psalm 51:5

***"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."***

- When we see a cute baby, smiling at us and gurgling, it's hard to imagine that baby is a sinner!
- What do you think this passage means when it says that we were sinful at birth?

READ Romans 5:12-14

*In this passage we read that all of us have inherited our sin nature through Adam, the first man. Genesis 3 tells us the story of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. They chose to disobey God and in that act they brought sin and death into the world. Every human being who has been born since that time has inherited a sinful nature. Sin is not just something we engage in at some point in our lives, and before that we were sinless. Sin is in us.*

- How does Romans 5:12-14 help you understand our need of God's grace?

2. We are guilty of breaking God's LAW.

READ Romans 3:9-20.

*How does Paul describe us as lawbreakers? (vv. 10-18) List out our actions and attitudes below.*

### **Our ACTIONS and ATTITUDES as LAWBREAKERS**

#### **Romans 3:10-18**

READ 1 John 1:8-10

***“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”***

- In what ways do we deceive ourselves about our sin? (e.g. I’m not as bad as the next guy!)
- What might you say to a friend who says, “I don’t believe I need God’s forgiveness.”

3. We were ENEMIES of God.

READ Romans 5:6

***“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”***

- What does Paul mean that we were “powerless”?
- What does it look like to be ungodly? What traits or habits can you remember from your own life before Christ that showed you experienced this?

READ Romans 5:10

***“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life?”***

- At Creekside we see a lot of testimonies. Some of these testimonies seem to imply that the person has always been a follower of Jesus. For the person who has grown up in a Christian home, how might we help them reconcile their experience of following Jesus for as long as they can remember with this teaching that once we were God’s enemies?

4. We were UNRIGHTEOUS and without means of JUSTIFYING ourselves.

READ Romans 3:10

***“As the Scriptures say; ‘No one is righteous – not even one.’”***

READ Romans 3:20

***“For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.”***

- What are some ways that we try to justify ourselves before God?
- How do the passages we’ve looked at so far help you understand your need for God’s grace?

***“The gospel is addressed to those who have no money or good works. It invites us to come and ‘buy’ salvation without money and without cost [Isaiah 55:1]. But note the invitation to come is addressed to those who have no money—not to those who don’t have enough. Grace is not a matter of God’s making up the difference, but of God’s providing all the ‘cost’ of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.”***

**Jerry Bridges Transforming Grace**

## Part 2

### HOW MY NEED FOR GOD’S GRACE IMPACTS MY LIFE

The fact that we all need God’s grace has huge implications on the way we see ourselves and each other as well as on the way we live as followers of Jesus. As a group, look at the statements below. Read the Scriptures that go with each statement, then talk together as a group about how you are feeling about living out what you’re learning.



I am someone who desperately needs God's grace - therefore ....

1. There is nothing I can do to impress God.

READ: Ephesians 2:8-9

***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”***

- How do you feel about this reality that there's nothing you can do to impress God? (relieved, disappointed, confused ...)
- Would you describe yourself as a person with a natural bent to try to impress God? Why or why not?

READ: Isaiah 64:6

***“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”***

Our righteous acts have never been enough to earn favour with God. In fact, compared to His holiness, our righteous acts are like filthy rags!

- How do you balance this truth with the reality that we should do good things for God?
- How do these verses help you understand that no human being can impress God by the way we live or what we do?

2. There is nothing I can do to make God love me more.

READ: Jeremiah 31:3

***“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”***

God loves us in spite of who we are, not because of who we are.

- How does this verse speak to the futility of our trying to do things to make God notice us or love us?

READ: Romans 5:8

***“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”***

God saw us as we truly were, weak and helpless, sinners without hope. But, He chose to love us.

- How does this truth make you feel about God's love for you?

3. I am no better or no worse than anyone else. If everyone is bankrupt then we are all on a level playing ground. There is level ground at the foot of the cross.

READ: Romans 3:23-24

***“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”***

To have a healthy perspective of myself, I need to see myself as God sees me. I am no better than anyone else. I am also no worse than anyone else.

- Which end of the spectrum would you tend toward – seeing yourself as better than others or seeing yourself as not measuring up compared to others?

- What does being on level ground with everyone else mean to you?

4. My security is not found in whom I am or what I do but is found in God's grace.

READ: Philippians 3: 4-9

- Why might Paul have been tempted to find his security in his credentials?

- What did Paul say had become his new source of security and hope?

- In what ways does God's grace give us a new sense of security?

5. I am in Christ all I ever could hope to be.

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:17

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”**

- How does seeing yourself complete in Christ change the way you live?

- What could you do to live in this reality of being complete in Christ?

**All that I have is because of Christ whether that be  
my skills, my possessions, my relationships and so on.  
I am wealthy beyond imagination because I have the grace  
of God in my life.  
If forgiveness is mine then it is a gift and I need then to  
give it freely to others.  
My whole existence becomes one of incredible  
thankfulness**

The goal of this study has been to grow in our understanding of our need for God's grace. The following questions can help you to evaluate how this applies to you. Take a few minutes to rate yourself with this evaluation, then share your thoughts with the people you meet with to pray. Ask God to help you grow closer to His Son, Jesus, as you receive His grace.



I know that I am bankrupt without God's grace.  
 I struggle to accept this      I'm growing in my understanding of this      Yes!  
 1                                  2                                  3                                  4                                  5

I regularly ask God to help me see my sin and then confess that sin to Him.  
 I struggle to do this      I need to work on connecting more with God.      Yes!  
 1                                  2                                  3                                  4                                  5

I know that Jesus' death on the cross has made the way for me to be completely forgiven by God.  
 I struggle to accept this      Sometime yes, sometimes no      Yes!  
 1                                  2                                  3                                  4                                  5

**CREEKSIDE'S PRAYER SUMMIT** | Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.  
 This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to pray as His church!  
 Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

# Week 1 Devotionals



# DAY 4

**READ Romans 1:7, Ephesians 1:2**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

We never stop needing God's grace. The Apostle Paul opened many of his letters with this greeting - "Grace and peace to you in Jesus". Although the followers of Jesus that Paul wrote to had already received God's grace when they were saved, Paul wanted them to continue to receive God's grace. Every step of our walk with Jesus is made possible because of God's grace. Any desire you have to seek God or motivation you have to serve Him is evidence of God's grace at work in your life. God's grace to us is what gasoline is to an engine. We need a continual top-up if we're going to run! Take some time today to ask God to make you aware of His ongoing grace in your life. It's there every moment, every day, and you'll see it when you stop to look.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 5

**READ 1 Corinthians 15:9-10**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Grace is God's greatest gift to those who least deserve it - you and me. The Apostle Paul did great things in his life. As a young man he studied to be a Pharisee - an expert in religion. Then, after he became a follower of Jesus, he became a leader in the church. In spite of all of his accomplishments, here was Paul's assessment of himself - I don't deserve God's grace. Paul believed this so strongly that he said of himself - "I am the worst of sinners and the least of the apostles." All of us are on an even playing field when it comes to God's grace. None of us deserve it. But, like Paul, God has chosen to pour out his favour on us. How amazing is that? !

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Session 2

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - Getting off the Performance Treadmill



- How has your “Meeting With God” time gone this past week? What do you feel God is teaching you from this experience?
- Have you ever owned a treadmill, run on a treadmill or seen a treadmill? Share your best treadmill story with your group.



Read this verse out loud together as a group, then see if you can quote it together without looking.

**Memory Verse**

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

**Key Question for this Session:** How can I move from the “Performance Treadmill” to resting in God’s grace?



VIDEO TEACHING: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What was a highlight for you from the video teaching? This can be something that challenged you or a question you have.

### How to Know if You're on the Performance Treadmill

When it comes to your relationship with God, are you on the "Performance Treadmill"? Are you depending on what you do to please God, or do you rest in the assurance that you are already fully pleasing to Him? Take a moment to evaluate yourself on the following 5 statements.

1. I picture God as a tough dad or coach. When I don't do what I should, He gets upset with me.

1

2

3

4

5

Doesn't describe me

Sometimes describes me

This totally describes me

2. I just wish I knew where I stood with God. Is He pleased with me or not?

1

2

3

4

5

Doesn't describe me

Sometimes describes me

This totally describes me

3. When I give money at church I think, "Is this enough, God? Are you going to be ticked if I don't give more?"

1

2

3

4

5

Doesn't describe me

Sometimes describes me

This totally describes me

4. I often wonder if what I'm doing for God is really making Him happy. I think He's comparing me with other people and I don't measure up.

1

2

3

4

5

Doesn't describe me

Sometimes describes me

This totally describes me

5. I want to do everything perfectly for God but I always seem to fall short. I want to get an "A" grade with God but I keep letting myself and Him down.

1

2

3

4

5

Doesn't describe me

Sometimes describes me

This totally describes me

- Take a moment to share your responses with your group. Based on your answers, would you say you're on the Performance Treadmill? Why or why not?

## How to Move off the Performance Treadmill

1. PERSONALIZE God's grace. A key way to move off the performance treadmill is to personalize God's grace. Take a moment to write your name in the blanks below.

**READ Ephesians 2:8-9 again but this time, put your name in the verse.**

"God saved \_\_\_\_\_ by his grace when \_\_\_\_\_ believed. And \_\_\_\_\_ can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things \_\_\_\_\_ has done, so none of us can boast about it."

- Why do you think we tend to get on the Performance Treadmill?
- How do these verses help you see that there's nothing you can do to earn your relationship with God?

2. STOP the comparison game. God doesn't compare us with each other and neither should we.  
READ Romans 3:23-24

**"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." NLT**

- How do these verses impact your value of the Performance Treadmill?
- Imagine you are talking with a friend who is feeling they never measure up in their walk with God. How might you use the truths of these verses to encourage him or her?

3. REST in God's grace. Jesus calls us to stop performing and simply rest in Him.  
READ Matthew 11:28-30

**"Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.'" NLT**

- The key to getting off the Performance Treadmill is resting in God's grace. What does it look like to do this? As a group, see if you can think of three things you might stop doing and three

Three Things I Should Stop Doing in Order to Rest in God's Grace.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three Things I Should Start Doing in Order to Rest in God's Grace.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## Stepping Off the Performance Treadmill and Living in God's Grace - A Story.

During high school, Robin was enrolled in an honors English class. The first day of class the teacher talked about her expectations and handed out an overview of what they'd be studying.

Robin was completely overwhelmed. She came home and told her father he had to go talk with the teacher to get her out of the class. He agreed to set up a conference during which he and the teacher struck an agreement. The teacher wanted Robin to remain in the class, so she offered to give her an "A" from the very beginning, with the understanding that Robin still do the work and participate in class discussion. Robin agreed to the arrangement. And do you know what the teacher found? Robin turned in "A" work anyway. The teacher removed the threat of failure, and in its absence, Robin excelled.

Our addiction to the Performance Treadmill often comes from our fear of failure. Like Robin with her English class, we panic when we think of all the work the Christian life seems to demand. How could I ever make a passing grade? Thankfully, just like Robin's teacher, God gives us an "A." Knowing that gives us a freedom from the Performance Treadmill. I am what I am (a new creation) not because of anything I've done, but because of what God has done for me. Understanding that we don't have to work for God's approval doesn't mean we stop doing good things like reading our Bible or memorizing Scripture. It should actually give us a passion for it!. He removed the threat of failure. Now we can relax and enjoy getting to know him.

Adapted from the article - What Does it Take to Please God? [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com)

- In what ways can you relate with Robin?
- What can you do this week to rest in God's grace?

For this part of our study time, take a few minutes to think about how your group members can pray for you to step off the Performance Treadmill and rest in God's grace. Then get together with 3 or 4 people in your group to pray for each other.

When it comes to stepping off the Performance Treadmill, here's what I'd like prayer for this week.

---

---

---

When it comes to resting in God's grace, here's what I'd like prayer for this week.

---

---

---

**CREEKSIDE'S PRAYER SUMMIT** | Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.  
This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to  
pray as His church!  
Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

## Week 2 Devotionals

# DAY 1

**READ: Zephaniah 3:17**

“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

**REPHRASE**

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

God, your Heavenly Father, is fully delighted with you. One of the key lies that keeps us on the Performance Treadmill is this - “I’ve got to perform to please God.” So we do good things in an effort to please God, to somehow earn His favour. But the truth of the Gospel is this. God has already done everything for us. There is nothing you can do to please God more. There is nothing you can do to please God less. God takes great delight in you, not because of anything you have done, but just because He loves you. God’s saving act in your life of giving you His Son, Jesus, means that you don’t have to run on the Performance Treadmill to please Him! Take some time today to thank God for taking great delight in you.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 2

**READ Ephesians 2:10**

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

**REPHRASE**

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

I don’t do good things to please God. I do good things because God is pleased with me. When God made you a brand new person in Jesus, He gave you a brand new purpose for your life. That purpose is to do good things for Him. Getting off the Performance Treadmill doesn’t mean we stop doing good things like reading and living by the teachings in the Bible. The good things we do show the transforming work God has done in our lives. We no longer do good to try and earn God’s favour, rather, we serve Him as the greatest expression of our thanks to Him for what He has done. What good things do you sense God is calling you to do for Him today?

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 3

**READ: Galatians 2:20**

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

**REPHRASE**

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

How do people become acceptable to God? What do people need to do to earn God’s favour? How do people become members of God’s family? These were key issues that people in the church of Galatia were wrestling with and to answer them they jumped on the Performance Treadmill. For these Jewish people who were new followers of Jesus, their Performance Treadmill was circumcision and keeping the Old Testament Law. Although they believed in Jesus, they also believed they must follow the traditions of their fathers to be right with God. Paul’s response was this. There is nothing you can do or need to do. Only Christ could do - and has done - what must be done to make you acceptable before God. Just as these new believers needed to embrace this incredible new message of God’s grace, so we need to embrace it and live in the reality of our new life in Christ. Thank God today for making you fully acceptable in His sight. No Performance Treadmill needed!

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 4

**READ: Colossians 3:1-3**  
**“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

God is infinitely pleased with you not because of what you do but because of who you are. Many of us get stuck on the Performance Treadmill because of guilt. We think that when we sin, God loves us less, is pleased with us less, and maybe even rejects us as His child. When you sin, there is a way out, but it’s not the Performance Treadmill. 1 John 1:9 says that when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and then make us right again with Him. When you sin, God doesn’t kick you out to the curb. God has hidden you in the righteousness of His Son, Jesus. You don’t need to fear being rejected or condemned by God. The price has been paid for you. Forgiveness is just a prayer away. Rest today in the truth that your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# DAY 5

**READ: Galatians 5:22-23**  
**“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

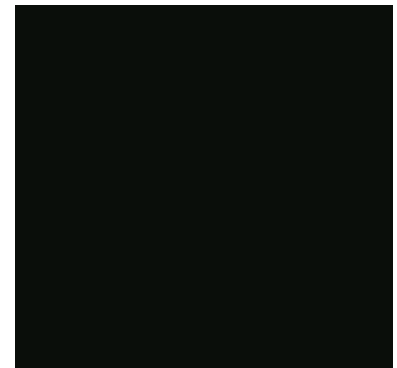
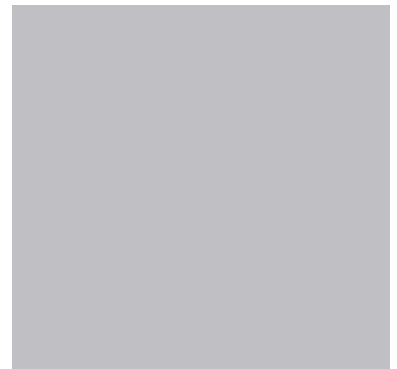
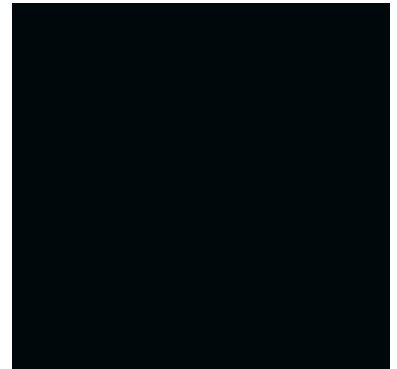
---

---

The Holy Spirit gives you the power you need to live for God. The reason we always fail on the Performance Treadmill is we try to run on our own power. We think - “I” need to live for God. “I” should serve more. “I” should do more good deeds. The key to living the Christian life is this - God gives me the power to live for Him. Paul writes, “Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” Following Jesus is about cooperating with the work of God’s Spirit in my life. The more I follow the Spirit’s leading through reading the Bible, meeting with other followers of Jesus and praying, the more He will help me to live the way He wants me to. You don’t have to live the Christian life on your own power. Thank God today for giving you His ultimate power source, the Holy Spirit!

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Session 3

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - When You've Got It, You Want to Give It.



- How has your "Meeting With God" time gone this past week? What do you feel God is teaching you from this experience?
- How have you experienced God's grace this past week?

Read this verse out loud together as a group, then see if you can quote it together without looking.

### Memory Verse

"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."      *Philippians 2:13 NLT*

Key Question for this Session: How does God's grace motivate me to show His grace to others?



### VIDEO TEACHING:

---

---

---

---

---

---

## VIDEO TEACHING (CONT'D)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



What was a highlight for you from the video teaching? This can be something that challenged you or a question you have.

### PART 1

#### GOD'S GRACE - THE BEST MOTIVATOR

Have you ever asked yourself, "Why do I do what I do?" That can be a tough question to answer, right? Even the Apostle Paul said that only God ultimately knew his motives. When it comes to serving God, we can't be properly motivated by our willpower or compelled by following rules. Only God's grace is enough to motivate us to live for Him! As a group, look at the following 3 truths about our motivation to live for God.

I. **RULES can't motivate us to live for God.**

READ: Romans 7:5

***"When we were controlled by our old sinful nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death."***



Have you ever seen a speed limit sign and thought - "No way! I'm not going to drive that slow!" This is exactly what Paul describes in Romans 7:25 as a limit to the law. On its own, the law points out what's wrong in our lives and actually motivates us to sin! Why do you think God would give us His law if this is what it does?

READ: Romans 7:24-25

***“Oh what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is. In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.”***

- According to Paul, how does our sin nature motivate us when it comes to rules?
- Why is our sin nature such a powerful motivator?

## II. **God’s Grace COMPELLS us to Live for Him**

READ 2 Corinthians 5:11-15

-In these verses, Paul outlines a number of motives we have for serving God. See how many of these motives you can come up with as a group.

Motives for Living for God
----------------------------

- What other motives can you think of for living for God?
- If someone has wrong motives but they still do the right things, do you think God is pleased? Why or why not?

## III. **God’s grace should motivate our ATTITUDE as well as our ACTIONS.**

READ: Matthew 10:8

“... Give as freely as you have received!”

- Have you ever served at church or in another setting where you were supposed to be serving God, but your attitude about it was wrong? How did your attitude impact your experience of serving?
- We have freely received God’s grace and we are to freely give it! How does this truth shape the way we show God’s grace to others?

READ: Romans 2:4

***“Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?”***

- Your decision to turn from your sin and to follow Jesus was motivated by God’s grace. Why is it important to remember that God’s grace is what brought us to Him in the first place?
- How would you explain God’s grace to someone who is not yet a follower of Jesus?

READ: Titus 2:11-14

- As a group, look through these verses and list the actions and attitudes Titus says should be a result of God’s grace.

<p>ACTIONS that come from God’s Grace.</p>          <p>ATTITUDES that come from God’s grace.</p>
--

- Why is it important for us to realize that God’s grace gives us the power to live out these attitudes and actions?
- How does Jesus’ death on the cross impact our ability to live for Him? (see v. 14)

## **PART 2**

### **GRACE in ACTION - A CASE STUDY**

Dave and Lisa have been good friends of yours for about 10 years. You go to the same church and over the past three years have been in LifeGroup together. You have done lots of social things together and you’ve even vacationed together. About six months ago, Lisa let you know that she and Dave have been struggling in their marriage. Then, about three months ago, you found out that Dave has been seeing another woman and has asked Lisa for a divorce. Since that time, Dave has called on the phone but your conversation has been awkward. Dave seems to want to connect with you, but Lisa has angrily let you know that she doesn’t want you talking with Dave. Lisa has distanced herself from you and does not seem open to coming to church or LifeGroup. How might you show God’s grace to Dave and Lisa over the coming months? Do you think you need to forgive Dave? Why or why not? How will you know if your actions are motivated by God’s grace or by something else?



# LIVE IT OUT

For this part of our study time, take the opportunity to get into smaller groups of 3 or 4 people of the same gender.

Take a few minutes on your own to assess where you are in your understanding and experience of God's grace.

When it comes understanding God's grace, I ...

Have a long way to go	Am just beginning to comprehend it	Am living in it each day!		
1	2	3	4	5

When it comes to showing God's grace to others, I ...

Don't know how	Am starting to learn	Regularly do it		
1	2	3	4	5

When it comes to understanding the source of my motives, I ...

Am in the dark	Am beginning to see God	Regularly experience God's leading		
1	2	3	4	5

## PRAY

Spend some time now, asking God to help your fellow group members grow in God's grace. Tell your group members specific ways they can pray for you in this area.

**CREEKSIDE'S PRAYER SUMMIT |** Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.

This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to pray as His church!

Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

# Week 3 Devotionals

# DAY 1

## READ Ephesians 1:6-7

**“So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

When you became a follower of Jesus, God poured out his grace on you. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is packed full of thanks for the saving grace that God has shown to us who believe in Jesus. Because of God’s grace, we have been chosen, forgiven, called into his family, made his children, promised his eternal blessings, and given his Holy Spirit. Have you ever been to a waterpark and stood under a huge bucket of water as it gets poured over you? This is a small picture of what God wants us to understand about how He has poured out his grace on us! To give God’s grace to others, we’ve got to think about and thank God for these incredible gifts of his grace. The more we understand and experience His grace, the more we will be able to pour out His grace into the lives of people we meet with each day.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 2

## READ Acts 20:32

**“And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

The core of the Christian message and Christian experience is God’s grace. When Paul shared some final words with his friends from Ephesus, he ended by entrusting them to the message of God’s grace. He told them that this message was able to build them up and give them an inheritance in God. This message of grace is centred around the person and the sacrifice of Jesus. Embracing this message when we are saved is only the beginning of our experience. To truly receive God’s grace, we must live in it and be built up in it each moment. We do this as we grow our trust in and love for Jesus. As we read His Word, ask Him to guide our life and meet with His people, we are embracing the grace He longs for us to have. Thank God today for the incredible message of His grace for you.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 3

## READ Acts 20:24

**“But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned to me by the Lord Jesus - the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

God has an incredible purpose and assignment for you. This assignment is the work of telling others about His grace. Every follower of Jesus is an ambassador of this Good News. Each one of us has the privilege of sharing God’s grace with the world! How important is this task? Paul said, “... my life is worth nothing unless I use it for finishing the work assigned to me ...” Paul’s life purpose was centered around this task of sharing God’s grace. Can you imagine getting up each morning and thinking - today I am on assignment from God! My assignment is to share the Good News of God’s grace! That was Paul’s mission and this is your mission as well. So wherever you are today and whatever situation you find yourself in, live it in God’s grace. Use every opportunity you have to give God’s grace to others. This is how you can live out the incredible purpose and special assignment that God has given you.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 4

**READ Acts 13:43**  
“Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the grace of God.”

**REPHRASE**

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What do you rely on to get you by in life? For many people, that morning coffee gets them by until about 10:00 am, then a snack, a quick peak at Facebook and then it's lunch! All of us have little things that we rely on, things that get us by in our day - but what we ultimately rely on should only be the grace of God. When Paul and Barnabas urged these new believers to continue to rely on the grace of God, they wanted to make sure these men and women understood and lived continually in God's grace given to them through Jesus. They wanted to be sure that these men and women didn't go back to their old ways of living and thinking and back to their old sources of what they used to rely on before Jesus. What we rely on is what we have embraced. What does it mean to rely on the grace of God? It means that we look to Jesus as our only source of hope for this life and for eternity. In a day when it's tempting to rely on all kinds of other things, let's continue to rely fully and only on God's grace!

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 5

**READ 2 Peter 3:18**  
“... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.”

**REPHRASE**

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

God wants us to grow in His grace. Just as a healthy child grows physically each day, so we are to grow each day in God's grace. You may not always notice the small changes that take place in your life, but as you look back over time, you should see the evidence of growth! Each day is an opportunity to know more about God's grace and to grow your experience of God's grace. The key to this is our relationship with Jesus. Do you want to be effective and successful in sharing God's grace with others? Focus on growing your trust and faith in Jesus. This takes daily discipline, dependence on God and community with His people. As you grow your relationship with Jesus, you'll see Him use you to share His grace with others and He will receive the glory!

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

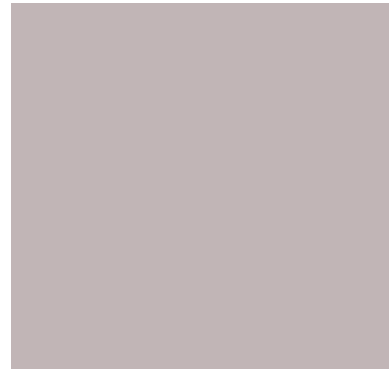
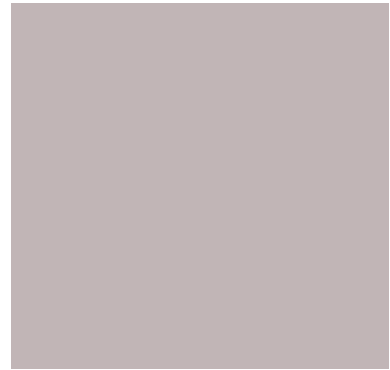
---

---

---

---

---



# Session 4

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - Grace Seems So Good it Can't Be Legal, Can it?



- How has your "Meeting with God" time gone this week?
- In what way have you experienced God's grace this past week?

Read the following verse out loud together as a group, then see if you can quote it without looking.

**Memory Verse**

*"For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13*

**Key Question for this Session: How do I grab onto God's grace by breaking free of legalism?**



VIDEO TEACHING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What was a highlight for you from the video teaching? This can be something that challenged you or a question you have.

## **PART 1**

The word “legalism” does not appear in the Bible. It is a term used to describe the position an individual or group of Christians live by that emphasizes the necessity of following a system or rules or regulations in order to be a true follower of Jesus. Legalism is the opposite of grace. Those who hold to legalism rely on Old Testament law, or man-made rules and regulations, rather than the grace of Jesus, to be saved.

READ Galatians 3:24

**“The Law was our guardian until Christ came: it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.”**

- The law was like a guardian or tutor. In Greco-Roman culture, a guardian was a faithful slave responsible for training and protecting the heir until he came of age. What insights does this give you into why God gave us the Law?

READ Galatians 3:25

**“And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.”**

In Greco-Roman culture, a freeborn child who came of age was no longer under the discipline of a guardian, but was free to rule himself. In our day, those who are “of age” through our faith in Jesus are free from the guardianship of the law. We now serve Christ directly as he leads by his word and Spirit.

- Why is it important that we emphasize living by faith rather than by the law?
- Jesus said, “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.” Matthew 5:17
- How does Jesus’ statement here help you understand the purpose of the Law?

Augustine was a philosopher and theologian who lived in the 4th century and had a profound impact on Christianity. One of Augustine’s famous sayings speaks to how to live by grace rather than by the Law. He said, “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, freedom. In all things, love.”

- How might you rephrase this to make it even more understandable?
- What is the difference between an “essential” and a “non-essential?”
- What do you think Augustine meant by saying, “In all things love”?

## **ESSENTIALS - WHAT WE BELIEVE**

As a church, we have essentials that we are unified on. We call these essentials “what we believe”. As a group, read through the following list of essential beliefs of Creekside Church.

### **THE BIBLE**

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the unique and final authority for what one believes and how one lives. As originally written, the Scriptures were entirely free from error. Every word and all parts were inspired by God.

### **GOD**

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, who is holy, sovereign and perfect in all He is and in all He does. He eternally exists in three equal persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **GOD THE FATHER**

We believe God the Father gives oversight to the ministries of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. He has laid down a plan for the ages and is working all things together to fulfill that plan.

### **GOD THE SON**

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is God the Son. We believe in His complete deity and humanity, His virgin conception, His sinless life, His death on the cross for the sins of the world and His bodily resurrection from the dead. He actively intercedes on behalf of the church and is preparing for His personal return to earth.

### **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that God the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. He gives spiritual life, baptizes, indwells, seals and sets apart for holy use everyone at the moment they become a child of God. He bestows spiritual gifts upon believers, and empowers them for daily living.

### **SATAN**

We believe Satan is a created spirit being, the originator of sin, who revolted against God and now works in opposition to the people and purposes of God.

### **PEOPLE**

We believe the first couple, Adam and Eve, were divinely created in the image of God. Originally innocent, pure and in fellowship with God, they fell from that position through the sin of disobedience. Their sin has left all people separated from God, condemned to physical and spiritual death and helpless to restore the original state.

### **SALVATION**

We believe every person needs to be restored to life with God. Salvation is a gift from God graciously offered to humanity. It cannot be earned by any human effort. To receive this gift a person must repent, which involves turning from one’s own way to God’s way, and place their faith in the person and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. By placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ a person becomes a child of God and begins a new, eternally secure relationship with God. Salvation will be evidenced by a changed life.

## THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is composed of all who have become children of God. The local church is a gathering of believers, organized to do God's will through worship, teaching, fellowship, evangelism and ministries of compassion and conscience. The local church observes two ordinances: Baptism is the immersing of believers in water to signify their relationship with and commitment to Christ; Communion is the partaking of bread and wine by believers as a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ. The leaders of the church are Elders, who are responsible to give oversight to the church.

## THE FUTURE

We believe in the visible and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. Those who are children of God will receive a resurrected body and live in the full enjoyment of God's presence forever. Those who are outside the family of God will be resurrected to spend eternity in everlasting punishment.

- Is there anything about this list of essential beliefs that surprises you?

- Is there anything you would want to add to this list? Why or why not?

## PART 2

### NON-ESSENTIALS - GRABBING ONTO GOD'S GRACE

In our spectrum of church groups today there are many beliefs and practices people have around matters we would consider non-essential. For example, some Christ followers believe that for them it is absolutely wrong to ever consume alcohol. Others believe that they have freedom in this area to choose to consume alcohol. How do we show grace to other followers of Jesus who believe differently than we do about these non-essential areas?

For this part of our study, we're going to focus on Romans 14. Let's take a look at this passage together to learn more of what it means to live by grace.

READ Romans 14:1-4

- As a group, see if you can brainstorm a list of 5 non-essential issues that are potential areas of disagreement in the church today.

### NON-ESSENTIALS THAT ARE RELEVANT TODAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- What does it look like practically to show grace to someone who is sensitive about a non-essential area?
- What examples can you think of where you have encountered this? Did you see grace in those encounters? If so, what did it look like?
- Why is it important to leave these matters of conscience up to God rather than trying to convince others to see things the way we do?

READ Romans 14:5-9

- Paul writes, **“You should be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable.”** v. 5 What have you found can help you become convinced about where you land on a non-essential issue?
- What is our ultimate goal when it comes to how we live? (see vv. 8-9)

READ Romans 14:10-12

- Why is it important to remember that it is God, not other Christians, who is our Judge?
- What is the difference between condemning and speaking out of conviction on a non-essential area?

READ Romans 14:13-18

- How do these verses help guide you in thinking of how to respond with grace to those who believe something different about a non-essential area than you do?
- If you are aware of a Christ-follower whose actions may be causing another Christ-follower to stumble, do you think you should approach that person? Why or why not?

READ Romans 14:19-23

- Why is unity so important as an end goal for showing grace toward others? V. 19
- Why is it so important to be certain of where we land on non-essential issues?
- What are some key insights you’ve gleaned from Romans 14 about how to show grace to others who land in a different spot than you do on non-essential matters?





For the “Living it Out” part of our study, take a few moments to respond to the following three statements about breaking free from legalism and embracing God’s grace. Then get together with two or three other people from your group to pray. Ask God to help you to really grab onto God’s grace, to be free from legalism and to live for Him.

I feel like I’m depending too much on following the rules to make myself right with God.

Doesn’t describe me		Sometimes this is me		This is exactly me
1	2	3	4	5

When it comes to the essentials, I’m not sure what I believe.

Doesn’t describe me		Sometimes this is me		This is exactly me
1	2	3	4	5

I rely on God’s Spirit to help me figure out how to live in the area of non-essentials.

I’m struggling to do this		I’m starting to learn		Yes, I’m doing this
1	2	3	4	5

**CREEKSIDE’S PRAYER SUMMIT** | Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.  
 This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to pray as His church!  
 Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

# Week 4 Devotionals

# DAY 1

## READ Colossians 2:20-23

**“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: Do not handle! Do not touch! These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

Following Jesus, not legalism, is the way to please God. At the time of Jesus and in the early church, certain sects of Jesus made following rules central to what it meant to grow closer to God. While rules, in and of themselves, are not inherently bad, many Jews believed that following rules would automatically endear them to God. This belief moved the Jews away from seeing that they needed Jesus to be their Saviour. In Colossians 2, Paul argues that in Christ we have died to this world. Included in that is our need to follow rules to be right with God. Paul points out the rules fall short when it comes to living for God. They have no power to restrain us from indulging our sinful nature. Rather than relying on rules, we depend fully on Jesus for making us right with God. Thank God today for Jesus, your Saviour. He is the One who has set you free from legalism so you can follow Him.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 2

## READ Romans 14:4

**“Who are you to condemn someone else’s servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord’s help, they will stand and receive his approval.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

It’s up to God, not us, to judge whether or not someone else is truly following Jesus. In Romans 14:4 Paul warns that we are not to try and take God’s place when it comes to evaluating how someone else is living. Showing grace to other followers of Jesus begins with accepting them, not judging them. Remember, we’re talking here about non-essentials. If you know of a fellow believer who is living in a pattern of sin, you are responsible to lovingly confront them. But if the matter is a non-essential, we are to leave the judging to God.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 3

## READ Romans 15:1-2

**“We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We should not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Living in grace means being considerate of those who are sensitive about non-essentials. When we are around people who believe differently than we do about non-essentials, we should do what we can to help them grow in the Lord. Paul says that we should not just please ourselves. Sometimes this will mean that we don’t live out the freedom we have in Christ when we are with other believers who respond differently than we do in areas that are non-essential. For example, if you feel a freedom to consume alcohol, but you are with another believer who does not feel that same freedom or has a weakness in that area, it is best not to consume. Paul himself lived by this rule. Though he felt a freedom to live outside of the Jewish regulations he had grown up with, he still went back to some of those regulations when he was with the Jews. Why? Paul wanted to do everything he could to win them to Christ. As you meet and interact with other believers, ask God to give you the wisdom you need to be considerate and help them to grow. This is a powerful way to live out God’s grace.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 4

## **READ Romans 15:5-6**

**“May God who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together in one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Our goal in accepting one another is unity and harmony in Jesus. As God’s people, we are created to be one. One people, one family, one body of believers, unified together as one voice, praising God together. Accepting one another’s differences when it comes to non-essentials helps pave the way for this harmony God longs for us to have together. So many of our differences as believers are really about trivial things, what we wear, what we eat, who we vote for. As followers of Jesus, we must see beyond these trivial things and realize that in Jesus, we are one.

What can you do this week to move toward harmony and unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ?

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# DAY 5

## **READ Romans 15:7**

**“Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.”**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

When we accept each other, God gets the glory. The reason why I need to accept other followers of Jesus is because Jesus has accepted me. Think about this. When we were far from God and our backs were turned to Him, He chose to accept us. Jesus’ acceptance of us has nothing to do with what we have done for ourselves, but it has everything to do with what He has done for us. Jesus died on the cross in our place so that we would be acceptable to the Father. If this is the price He has paid to accept us, surely we can pay a much smaller price to accept our brother or sister in Christ who lives their faith in a different way than we do in a non-essential area. When we do, God gets the glory!



# Session 5

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - When I Look in the Mirror



- How has your "Meeting with God" time gone this week?
- What is the first thing you think these days when you look at yourself in the mirror? (possible answers - "Wow, I am a good looking dude - or dudette!" "Oh my goodness, what happened to my face?" "Oh Lord, please help me!")

Read the following verse out loud together as a group, then see if you can quote it without looking.

**Memory Verse**

*"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17*

Key Question for this Session: How do I grab onto God's grace in the way I see myself?



VIDEO TEACHING - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What was a highlight for you from the video teaching?

## **PART 1**

As followers of Jesus, we get our self-worth and esteem by having a right relationship with God. We are valuable because of the high price God paid for us through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Even though these things are true, many followers of Jesus still struggle with low self-esteem or a low sense of self-worth. For this first section of our study, we're going to look at what gets in our way of having healthy self-esteem. For some of us, our pride in our own accomplishments, skills, possessions or even focusing on our appearance can misdirect where we get our sense of self-esteem. For others, a sense of guilt, self-condemnation or listening to the critical voices of people rather than the affirmation of God, can give us an unhealthy sense of self. Let's take a look at some of these wrong sources of self-worth and talk about how we can grab onto God's grace by focusing instead on Him.

READ: James 4:6

**“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”**

- One way we can define unhealthy pride is “seeing myself as the world sees me” – measured by accomplishments, position and so on. Why is measuring our self-worth in this way so compelling?
- Why do you think God opposes us when we try to get our sense of self-worth from sources other than Him?
- Humility can be defined as “seeing myself as God sees me”. As a group, see if you can come up with 3 practical examples of how we might experience God's grace when we are humble.

### **Ways We Experience God's Grace When We Are Humble**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

READ: Romans 7:18 - 8:1

Many of us have a low self-esteem because we use our failures and short-comings to measure our self-worth. In these verses, Paul recognizes his shortcomings, but he also looks beyond them to the hope we have in Jesus. Paul grabs onto God's grace to fully understand who he is in Jesus.

- How does acknowledging our sinful nature help us have an accurate view of who we are? (see v. 18)
- In what ways can you relate to the battle with sin Paul describes in verse 19?
- Why is what Paul says in Romans 8:1 crucial to having a healthy view of ourselves?

## **PART 2**

To be used by God to serve others, I must be in a place where I have healthy self-esteem. A sense of healthy self-esteem and self-worth will spill over into my relationships with other people and allow God to use me to be a blessing in other people's lives. A powerful way to grow our self-worth is to understand and live in the truth of who God says we are. As a LifeGroup, check out Neil Anderson's "Who I Am in Christ". Read out loud through each statement in this list and have someone in your group read the Scripture that goes with the statement. Then as a group, brainstorm together - how can we live to a greater degree in the truth what God says about who we are?

## WHO I AM IN CHRIST

Source: Neil Anderson Who I Am in Christ

### I AM ACCEPTED...

John 1:12	I am God's child.
John 15:15	As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.
Romans 5:1	I have been justified (declared righteous).
1 Corinthians 6:17	I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20	I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.
1 Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
Ephesians 1:3-8	I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.
Colossians 1:13-14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Colossians 2:9-10	I am complete in Christ.
Hebrews 4:14-16	I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

### I AM SECURE...

Romans 8:1-2	I am free from condemnation.
Romans 8:28	I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.
Romans 8:31-39	I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Corinthians 1:21-22	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.
Colossians 3:1-4	I am hidden with Christ in God.
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

### I AM SIGNIFICANT...

John 15:5	I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
1 Corinthians 3:16	I am God's temple.
2 Corinthians 5:17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

As a follower of Jesus, each one of these statements is absolutely true about you. There is nothing you can do to make them any less true. There is nothing you can do to make them any more true. Key to our healthy self-esteem is to grab onto the truth of these statements by living in the reality of who God says we are.

- What are the top three truths that you'd like to grab onto in a more significant way?
- What might you do to begin to live more and more in the truth of these statements?
- How might your LifeGroup help you grow in the truth of what God says about you?



For this part of our study time, use the following statements to help you think further into how you might grab onto God's grace in the area of your self-worth.

When it comes to where I get my sense of self-worth these days, I would say it comes mostly from ...

The world (accomplishments, money, etc)		Myself (self-talk, good or bad)		God
1	2	3	4	5

I would say that at this point I have a fairly low value of myself.

Yes		Sometimes		No
1	2	3	4	5

I have grabbed onto the truth of who I am in Christ.

No (please pray for me)		Sometimes, but I still doubt		Yes!
1	2	3	4	5

**CREEKSIDE'S PRAYER SUMMIT** | Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.  
 This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to pray as His church!  
 Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

# Week 5 Devotionals



# DAY 1

**READ Psalm 16:2**

**“I said to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.’”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

Healthy self-worth begins and ends with God. This is what the authors of the Bible modelled for us. In this passage, David expresses confidence. He is confident in God as His Lord, the One who keeps him safe. He is confident in himself because of what God has done for him. David had many other areas of his life he could have gone to in search of self-worth. He was a musician, a poet, a warrior, a king! But David knew this – “...apart from you I have no good thing.” No matter how much, or how little, we have going for us in other areas of life, our self-worth and self-esteem should come from God alone. To grab onto healthy self-worth, seek God. Call out to Him and ask Him to grow you in your confidence in Him. In that process, you’ll find your confidence in yourself will grow as well.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God. “God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 2

**READ: Jeremiah 1:4-5**

**“The LORD gave me this message: ‘I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.’”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

Your self-worth was set by God before you were born. Before you took your first breath here on earth, God already knew you and loved you. Not only did God know you, but before you were even born, God already had a wonderful plan for your life! You’re not here by accident. Your parents may not have planned you, but God did. God’s knowledge of you and plans for you give you every reason to find yourself fully confident and fully alive in Him. Don’t let anything or anyone hold you back. Rejoice in your Creator, the One who formed you in your mother’s womb, the One whose purposes for you will prevail. Grab onto his grace and live for Him today.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 3

**READ: Jeremiah 1:6**

**“O Sovereign LORD, I said, ‘I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!’”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

Is your low sense of self-worth impacting your ability to serve God? You’re in good company! Jeremiah said – “I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!” When God called Moses to lead his people, Moses said, “Please find someone else!” Saul, when it was time to be appointed as king, hid himself under some luggage. Jonah, when God called him to preach to the Ninevites, bought a ticket for a boat going the opposite way! It’s natural to be afraid or to feel unprepared. Don’t worry. God is patient with you. He will work with you. As you grow your confidence in Him, He will grow your self-worth. As your self-worth grows, your confidence that He will use you will grow as well. Wait for Him and trust that He will fill you with His Spirit and give you what you need to serve Him well and bring glory to Him.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DAY 4

**READ Jeremiah 1:7-8**  
**"The LORD replied, Don't say, 'I'm too young', for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken!"**

**REPHRASE**  
Rewrite these verses in your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Fear gets in the way of self-worth. Jeremiah looked at what God was calling him to do and he felt afraid. He focused in on other people and the situation he was facing, and he felt he wasn't up for the task. His low view of himself got the best of him. This is when God stepped in and refocused Jeremiah's gaze on Him. God told Jeremiah - "... don't be afraid." Did you know that "Don't be afraid" is the most frequent command in the Bible? Why? Because we're afraid! Then God follows up his command with the reasons why we don't have to fear "... for I will be with you and protect you." My self-worth and self-esteem aren't based on what I can do for me, but what God does for me. God says, "I will be with you and I will protect you." Knowing and believing this is key to having healthy self-worth

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DAY 5

**READ Jeremiah 1:17-18**  
**"Get up and prepare for action. Go out and tell them everything I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, or I will make you look foolish in front of them. For see, today I have made you strong like a fortified city that cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall." NLT**

**REPHRASE**  
Rewrite these verses in your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Low self-esteem fades away when we take action for God. A danger of low self-esteem is spiritual inactivity. We feel bad about ourselves and berate ourselves and this takes all of our time and energy. Rather than being caught up in ourselves, God wants us to serve Him! God said to Jeremiah, "Get up and prepare for action." Part of the Christian experience is stepping out in faith and watching what God does in our lives. God gave Jeremiah this promise, "... today I have made you strong like a fortified city ... like an iron pillar or a bronze wall." Our God who calls us to serve Him is the same God who equips us for the task. Are you feeling weak? He will make you strong! Are you feeling like you have too little to offer? He will equip you with everything you need! Ask God where He wants you to get involved and then get ready to be used by Him. You'll be amazed at how your self-worth will grow.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Session 6

## EMBRACE THE GRACE - When My View of You is True



- How has your "Meeting with God" time gone this week?
- Who is someone you would describe as a gracious person? Describe that person to the group.

Key Question for this Session: How do I apply God's grace to my view of and relationship with others?

Read the following verse out loud together as a group, then see if you can quote it.

Memory Verse

*"Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone." Colossians 4:6*



VIDEO TEACHING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



- What was a highlight for you from the video teaching? This can be something that challenged you or a question you have.

## **PART 1**

READ: Acts 6:8

***“Stephen, a man fully of God’s grace and power, performing miracles and signs among the people.”***

Stephen – A Man Full of God’s Grace (Acts 6:8 – 7:60)

Stephen is a wonderful example to us of a man who showed God’s grace to others. As a result of his bold witness for Jesus, Stephen was arrested and killed by Jewish authorities. He is known as the first Christian martyr.

When Stephen is accused by witnesses of speaking out against the Temple and law of Moses he defends himself before the Jewish high council. He speaks of Israel’s long history of resisting God and his servants, from Moses to the Prophet (Jesus) whom Moses had predicted. The Jewish authorities, infuriated by Stephen’s bold accusations, dragged him outside the city and stoned him to death.

Stephen’s life is an example to us of a follower of Jesus who lived out God’s grace. In his speech and actions, Stephen balanced grace and truth. Even in his death, Stephen showed God’s amazing grace to those who killed him as well as those who witnessed it. Let’s learn from Stephen about how to show God’s grace to others.

Have your LifeGroup subgroup into 2 teams. Have each team read the Scriptures below and reflect on the questions that follow. Then come together as a whole group and share your findings with each other.

**TEAM ONE:** READ Acts 6:8-15

- Why do you think Stephen would be described as a “man full of God’s grace and power”? (see Acts 6:1-7) for more insights on Stephen.
- How do you see Stephen balancing God’s grace and truth in his life? (note – this balance is a key trait of Jesus as well – see John 1:17)
- How is serving others in Jesus Name a powerful example of God’s grace? (See John 13:1-17)
- How do you think someone might earn the reputation of being “full of God’s grace and truth” today?
- How might Stephen’s example help us know how to show grace to others?

**TEAM TWO:** Read Acts 7:1-60 – Stephen’s testimony before the Council

(You guys have more verses to read than team 1, but you also have the more dramatic part of the story. You can do it!)

- Do you think Stephen’s testimony demonstrates God’s grace, truth or both? Why?
- Stephen’s words in Acts 7:51-53 are pretty confrontational. How is it possible to be full of grace, yet speak in this way?
- Stephen’s last words are, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” How do you see God’s grace shining through in this prayer?
- What life lessons can we learn from Stephen about how to show God’s grace to others?

## Part 2

### Extending God's Grace to Others

Although we all want to be people who extend God's grace to others, because we are broken people, many times we end up doing the opposite. We judge people in our hearts and notice their shortcomings rather than encourage them in what they're doing right. We get impatient with a grocery store cashier who seems to be slow in serving us. We point out faults in our spouse and kids. We talk negatively about other people behind their backs. Extending God's grace to others is hard, especially in the context of our everyday world where we have few positive examples. As a group, take a look at the following ways we can show God's grace to others. What does it look like to grab onto God's grace in a way that shows His grace to the people we see each day? This exercise is meant to help explore this in a practical way.

Here are 3 options for your group for going through the following material:

1. Create 2 or 3 teams. Have each team take on a few of these 10 ways to extend grace. Bring your teams back together to share their insights on the ways they have studied.
2. Go through the whole list together as a whole group. You'll need to go quickly!
3. Go through half the list as a whole group then take time for prayer on the ways you've studied together.

### **10 Ways to Extend God's Grace to Others.**

1. **Speak words that are intended to build up, not bring down.**

READ Ephesians 4:29

*"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who listen."*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*"... encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing."*

- As a group, see if you can come up with 5 examples of encouraging phrases. These should be phrases that you could use in your everyday world.

- What are some contexts where it can be especially challenging to live this out?

2. **Focus on the needs of others, rather than your own.**

READ Philippians 2:3-5

*"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."*

- Why is humility such an important part of showing God's grace to others?

-As a group, see if you can come up with 2 or 3 contexts where you could see this kind of grace lived out. What does grace look like in these contexts? (for example, what does it look like to live this out as a family?)

3. **Freely Forgive**

READ: Colossians 3:13

***“Make allowances for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”***

READ: Matthew 6:12

***“... and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”***

- What does it mean to “freely” forgive?

- When we think of forgiveness, we often think forgiving for a big offense. While this is important, most of us have many more opportunities throughout our week to forgive “small” offenses. As a group, see if you can come up with 3 examples of these kinds of small offenses. What does it look like to forgive in these situations?

4. **Swallow your pride and say, “I’m sorry” or I was wrong”.**

READ: James 5:16

***“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”***

READ: Matthew 18:15

***“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.”***

- In what ways might we experience healing when we confess our sins to each other?

- Sometimes it is the most difficult to say “I’m sorry” or “I was wrong” to those we are closest to. Why do you think this is?

5. **Live your life with a goal of “no regrets”.**

READ: Psalm 101:2

***“I will be careful to live a blameless life - when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my home.”***

READ: Galatians 2:20

***“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***

- According to these verses, what does it look like to live a life with no regrets?

- What would you say to a follower of Jesus who seems stuck in their walk with God because of regrets?

6. **Don't keep score of what is fair.**

READ: Matthew 5:38-41

***“You have heard the law that says the punishment much match the injury. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. “***

- This teaching from Jesus turns upside down our natural desire to be treated fairly. Rather than going after retaliation, Jesus offers us his way of suffering and the cross. Have you seen this lived out recently? What were the results?

- The way of the cross doesn't mean we become everyone's doormat. What is the difference between responding Jesus' way and allowing ourselves to be walked over?

7. **Don't condemn or give up on people.**

READ: John 7:24

***“Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.”***

READ: Colossians 3:13

***“Make allowances for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”***

- It's easy to write people off, but God never does. How do these verses help us know what it looks like to not give up on people?

- Using these verses as a guide, what would you say to a parent who has “given up” on their adult aged child who is not following God?

8. **Emphasize mercy, not judgment.**

READ: Matthew 18:21-35 The Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor

- What does Jesus tell us is the reason why we should emphasize mercy in the way we relate with others?

READ: Romans 12:19

***“Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say: ‘I will take revenge; I will pay them back, says the LORD.’”***

- God is merciful and God is the Judge. We are to be like God in showing mercy to others and we are to leave judgement to him. How does God judge people?

9. **READ 1 Corinthians 13 regularly.**

- 1 Corinthians 13 is the “Love” chapter. In this passage we are reminded of what it looks like to love each other in practical ways. Why is this passage so important for us to circle back to regularly?

- What key word or phrase from this passage reminds you of what love looks like?

10. **Always remember that it is God’s Spirit within us that gives us the power to show grace to others.**

READ: *“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”* Galatians 5:22

- How does our awareness of God’s presence and power help us to treat others with His grace?
- Share a time recently when you were especially aware of God’s Spirit guiding your conversation with someone else into this area of God’s grace.



For this part of our study time, take the opportunity to get into smaller groups of 3 or 4 people of the same gender. Before you talk together, take a few minutes for some self-evaluation.

When I think about how I’m doing with showing God’s grace to others, I ...

Definitely have some work to do                      I’m doing OK                      With God’s help, I’m doing well

1    2    3    4    5

One area where I could really use God’s help in showing His grace is ...

---



---



---



---

**CREEKSIDE’S PRAYER SUMMIT |** Sunday evening, November 26, 2017 at 6:00 pm.

This is going to be a time to see God do great things as we gather together to pray as His church!

Make plans to attend together as a LifeGroup.



The following 5 devotions are meant for you to do on your own, as a way of meeting with God 5 days of the coming week.

# Week 6 Devotionals



# DAY 1

**READ Mark 12:31**  
**“Love your neighbour as yourself.”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_ Showing God’s grace to others is all about love. When Jesus was asked what the most important commandment is, Jesus answered, “... love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength.” Then he followed with this command – “Love your neighbour as yourself.” What does it look like to love others? We are to love other people in the same way that God has loved us – unconditionally, sacrificially and lavishly. Jesus reminded us of an important standard when it comes to loving others – love them as you would love yourself. Just as you think of your needs each day and live by your priorities each day, Jesus says, think of the needs of others. Think of what is important to others. When you do these things, you are showing other people God’s grace and you are living in the way of love

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God. “God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

# DAY 2

**READ: John 13:14-15**  
**“And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

---

---

---

---

True grace is not about power, but in service. It was the night before Jesus was to go to the cross. He gathered the 12 disciples in a room to share a meal, the last meal he would eat with them before He died. In those final moments, Jesus wanted to teach his followers a vital lesson about what it means to live out His grace. Jesus got up from table, wrapped a towel around his waist and began washing the disciples’ feet. To give us some context for this – imagine the top leader in your work environment, or a top political leader in your community, ringing the doorbell of your home tonight and holding a toilet brush. They are there to clean your toilet. What an example of grace! In Jesus’ Kingdom, grace shows itself in service. When Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, He gave us an example to follow. Now it is up to us. Serve others, and when you do, remember, you are following the example of your Master and you are showing those you are serving what God’s Kingdom is all about. It’s grace!

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

“God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 3

**READ: Ephesians 4:2**  
**“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”**

## REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

We live out God’s grace when we are humble and gentle with others. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul says, “ ... I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.” How do we do that? Paul goes on to say that the way that we relate to each other is key. Our relationships are to be characterized by humility and gentleness. Humility is putting the needs of others before my own. Gentleness is choosing to treat others with kindness and graciousness. Living God’s grace is about choosing to set aside our power, position or strength to get our own way. Grace is about bearing with the shortcomings of other people and choosing to forgive or oversee things that naturally offend us in others. Living out God’s grace is hard work! It often goes against our natural bent. But it’s the best way to thank God for the incredible grace He has shown to us.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DAY 4

**READ Ephesians 5:21, 22, 25**  
**"... submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For husbands, his means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ..."**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite these verses in your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Living out God's grace is about submitting to one another. The word, "submit" isn't popular in our culture today. We negatively associate the word with losing our rights and giving in to the selfish desires and priorities of someone else. We think of a head bowed down in shame, a person who can't or won't think for themselves but rather allows themselves to be ruled by others. But this is not biblical submission. The key to submission in Jesus' kingdom is mutuality. This is why Paul said - "Wives, submit to your husbands." "Husbands, love your wives." The closer our relationship is with another person, the more difficult it can be to live out God's grace. The advice Paul gives in Ephesians 5 is the best marriage counseling ever. Do you want a successful marriage or any other close relationship? Then learn what it means to submit to one another. This is key for living out God's grace.

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DAY 5

**READ Galatians 5:25**  
**"Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."**

### REPHRASE

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We need God's power to live out His grace. God wants us to live out His grace in our relationships with other people. As we've worked our way through what that looks like in our "Meeting with God" time this week, you may be thinking - this grace thing is really tough! I'm not sure I can do this! Here's the good news. God doesn't ask you to do this on your own. He has given you His Holy Spirit to give you the power to live out His grace. In Galatians 5:22, we read - "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." These are the marks of God's grace, the outcome of His Spirit at work in you. Allow God to speak to your mind and heart today about how to live out His grace in your relationships with other. He will give you the power you need to live for Him, to live out His grace

**RESPOND** - write a prayer of response to God.

"God, thank you that ... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# LifeGroup Guidelines

In your first meeting together, go over the following guidelines as a group. These guidelines will help lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to add or modify these guidelines to what will be suit your group experience.

**We agree to the following values:**

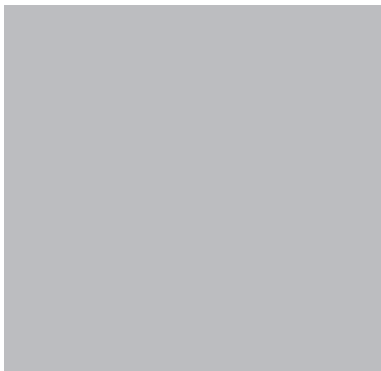
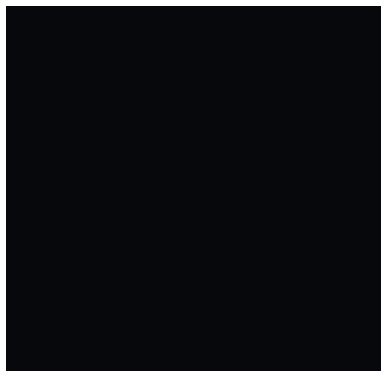
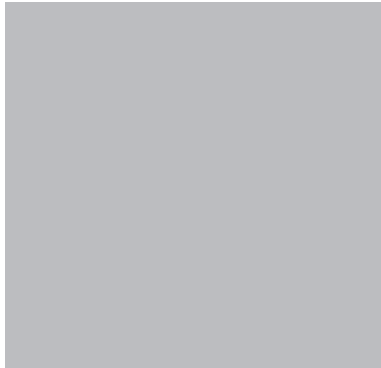
- Clear Purpose:** To FOLLOW JESUS, LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE together.
- Group Attendance:** To prioritize our group meeting and let the group know if I'm going to be late or absent.
- Safe Environment:** To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments or simple fixes).
- Confidentiality:** To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.
- Conflict Resolution:** To avoid gossip and immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15-17.
- Spiritual Health:** To give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.
- Welcome Newcomers** To invite friends who might benefit from this and warmly welcome newcomers.
- Building Relationships:** To get to know other members of the group and pray for them regularly.
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**We have also discussed and agree upon the following items:**

Child Care: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Time: \_\_\_\_\_





# Group Calendar

The best group experience will happen when everyone shares responsibilities and roles. This is also a key way for each of us to grow through the experience! Take a few minutes to outline a plan for the next six weeks. Feel free to add other roles and events as you see fit.

DATE	LOCATION	FACILITATOR	SNACK/MEAL
------	----------	-------------	------------

**session 1**

---

**session 2**

---

**session 3**

---

**session 4**

---

**session 5**

---

**session 6**

---

**Group party**

---

# *Prayer & Praise Report*

Use this space to write each other's prayer requests. You can also note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests. If you're new to group prayer, it's OK to pray silently or to pray by just using one sentence.

**session**

**requests**

**praises**

**1**

**2**

**3**

# *Prayer & Praise Report (cont'd)*

**session**

**requests**

**praises**

**4**

**5**

**6**

# Leader Tips

CONGRATULATIONS! As the leader of a short-term LifeGroup, you are agreeing to lead your group for the six weeks of this series, EMBRACE THE GRACE. Your role as a leader is to encourage your group members to grow their relationship with Christ through your love, your prayers and your example. Remember this – God doesn't expect you to be perfect! Jesus loves you and He will be with you in this experience. God promises, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." (Hebrews 13:5 TEV) As you trust in Him, He will give you what you need to have a fantastic LifeGroup experience.

## Top 10 Ideas for New Leaders

1. **Don't try to do it alone.** Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy team. God's plan is that each of your group members would have an active role each week in the group. Don't miss this opportunity. This is a key way your group members can learn Relational Intelligence. So set the tone in the first meeting by using the group calendar to plan your roles in group. Roles can include hosting the group, leading the study, leading the prayer time, leading a worship experience, coordinating the food, group communications and whatever else your group sees as important to function well.
2. **Be friendly and be yourself.** God wants to use your unique gifts and temperament. Be sure to greet people as they arrive with a big smile ... this can set the mood for the whole gathering. The more true you can be to who you really are, the more your group members will see that, although you're not perfect, God is at work in your life.
3. **Prepare for your meeting ahead of time.** Take time to watch the video and review the questions before the group meets. Allow God to get the material into your heart and He will use you to inspire the rest of the group.
4. **Pray for your group members by name.** Before your group arrives, take a few moments to pray for each member by name. Ask God to use your time together to speak to each person in the group. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge. When we ask, He works!
5. **When you ask a question, be patient.** Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. That's OK! When someone does respond, affirm the response with a simple, "thanks" or "great answer". Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or "Would someone who hasn't shared yet like to add anything?" For people who are new to a group experience, it can be hard to share. You can let them know how glad you are they are a part of the group. Over time many people become more comfortable and willing to share if they know they are accepted and loved.



6. **Provide transitions between questions.** Ask if anyone would like to read the next sentence or Scripture passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, then be patient until someone jumps in. Be sure to thank the person who reads.
7. **Break into smaller groups occasionally.** Consider grouping men with men and women with women for the prayer time, or study time. Smaller groups allow for everyone to share more and get to know one another more. Same gender groups will grow the comfort level for many to share their stories and struggles.
8. **Use smaller same gender groups for your prayer time.** People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable if they are with just two or three others. Fewer people allows for more sharing time and prayer for each request. This smaller group setting also helps new leaders develop as your group members develop confidence to lead others.
9. **Rotate facilitators.** The beauty of this study is the teaching is on the video! The facilitator simply plays the video and then asks the questions in the book. This study is intentionally created to help people who are new to facilitating a study to gain confidence and learn "on the job".
10. **One final challenge.** Before your group meeting, read through each of the six passages below. Allow these passages to speak to your heart about your role in the group and your ministry to help others in your group grow closer to Jesus. As you do this, God will prepare your heart for your first meeting.

Matthew 9:36-38

***When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'***

John 10:14-15

***I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep.***

1 Peter 5:2-4

***Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the glory that will never fade away.***

Philippians 2:1-5

***If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.***

Hebrews 10:23-25

***Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.***

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12

***... but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us ... For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.***