



# God's Provision of Grace

Chuck Colson had been in prison for seven months when he hit a low point. He had been convicted in the Watergate scandal and was serving out his sentence. Things on the outside were bad. His father had died. His wife was having difficulties handling their family. His son had been arrested for drug possession. Several believers in the House of Representatives were praying for him. They knew that Chuck felt very downcast. One of the Congressmen phoned not just offering encouragement, but submitting a way out. He explained that he had found an old statute that dated back to pre-Civil War days. One man could serve the sentence for another. On that basis, the Congressman was going to ask President Gerald Ford if he could serve out the remainder of Colson's sentence. Chuck could get out early by having another man taking his place.



Jesus Christ, in His great grace, did that for us. For disobeying God's law, we had rightfully received sentences of death (Romans 3:23; 6:23a). On the cross, Jesus faced the penalty of sin by dying in our places so that we could go free. He who had never done anything wrong served out our sentence for us. He didn't have to go to the cross. He was innocent. However, His love and grace constrained Him to take our places. Grace is simply unmerited favor. We don't deserve it, but He gives it anyway.

For Chuck Colson to get out of prison early, the congressman would have to have suffered through the remainder of Chuck's sentence. For us to be freed from the penalty and curse of sin, Jesus had to suffer the agony of death for us.

## Overview

The word "grace" in the Hebrew language is "chen" {khane}, which means favor, kindness, beauty, or affectionate regard (Zechariah 12:10). The Greek word for grace, "charis" {khar'-eece}, expands the Hebrew meaning to include a free gift which is unearned and undeserved (Ephesians 2:8).

God demonstrates His grace to us through the forgiveness of sins. His grace is granted entirely out of the goodness of God, apart from any merit of the person. The believer's standing in Christ is the result of God's goodness and nothing else (Ephesians 2:7-8).

God showed compassion for us when He granted clemency in spite of our obvious guilt. The grace of God includes these key concepts:

- Grace is a Free Gift.
- Grace is Undeserved Blessing.
- Grace Affects Our Lives.

# DECLARATION OF FAITH

*"We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly through Grace; that we have no righteousness or goodness of our own wherewith to seek Divine favor, and must come, therefore, throwing ourselves upon the unfailing mercy and love of Him who brought us and washed us in His own blood, pleading the merits and the righteousness of Christ the Savior, standing upon His word and accepting the free gift of His love and pardon."*

– Aimee Semple McPherson,  
Founder ICFG



Grace is an expression of God's character which shows how much He cares about people. Even when people choose to live apart from God, He still makes every effort to bring them back to Himself. Grace is a gift of God which results in eternal life for anyone who will receive it (Romans 6:23).

## GRACE IS FREE

A gift ceases to be a gift when we pay for it. If we do anything to earn it, the blessing becomes *wages* for what we do. The Bible, however, does not refer to salvation as compensation. It is the Lord's gift to the believer which cannot be earned, worked for, or paid back. As His amazing grace impacts our lives, we will want to do what He wants us to, not to pay Him back, but because we love Him so much. This new pattern of wanting to please the Lord is a result of the relationship between a gracious God and a grateful Christian (2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 3:7).

deserving person. Surely it is impossible for human logic to understand a righteous man's giving His life for a sinner. But this is the grace of God. God did what was necessary to bring man into relationship with Him.

## GRACE AFFECTS OUR LIVES

In Ephesians 2:10, we learn that the grace of God through Christ affects our thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. The Lord's grace working in us will be obvious to others who observe our lives.

## GRACE IS UNDESERVED

Romans 5:6-8 tells us that we had no ability in ourselves to provide payment for our sin. In our time of need, God demonstrated His great love for us and sent Jesus to die in our places as the penalty for our sin. The Apostle Paul points out that it is rare for people to give up their lives for a more

Furthermore, God's grace in us should produce gracious responses. His gift of mercy should cause us to be more patient and merciful with others. Grace will change us from the inside out if we allow it to. In fact, rather than using grace as a license to disobey, the Bible says His grace will actually help us to be more obedient to God's Word (Romans 3:31; 6:15; Titus 2:11-14).



# Personal Response

Nowhere in the religions of the world do we find such a message of a loving Father who was willing to die to save us. As grace is God's part in salvation, faith is man's part. Salvation is entirely unearned. Faith is simply trusting God to save us because of His great love for us.

Work with one or two partners to look up and read the verses below. Then, match the following summaries with the verse which best fits each verse.

God's grace abundantly covers every human need.

Don't sin merely to prove that God will forgive.

God's defeat of the devil brings us assurance and grace.

Christians have a responsibility to live in God's grace and truth.

Christians should be motivated by grace, not by the Law of Moses.

**Romans 16:20**

**John 1:17**

**2 Corinthians 9:8**

**Romans 6:1-2**

**2 Peter 3:17-18**

Write down one question about God's grace for which you would like an answer. Discuss this question with your partners and determine if the question can be answered by looking again at the Bible verses and explanations in this lesson.

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## HEART PERSPECTIVE

"Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen they cannot help themselves, so corrupt that they cannot change their natures, so adverse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind they cannot see Him, so deaf they cannot hear Him, so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection."

- A. W. Pink

While God bestows His grace upon us freely, saving us from sin's punishment, we must realize that it did not come cheaply. It cost God, in the person of Jesus, His very life. To satisfy justice, He substituted Himself in our place, facing the horrible penalty for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). The fact that our salvation cost God so dearly ought to make us more appreciative. It should also cause us to want to share that amazing love and grace with others.





## Lesson 2 Teaching Outline

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### **REFERENCE POINT**

**(15 minutes)**

Have the students read the first paragraph. Select three students to act out the story. Have one act out the part of Chuck Colson in prison looking dejected and depressed. Have another student play the part of the congressman who takes his place, and still another student who plays the part of President Ford, supposing that the president grants the congressman's request.

Encourage students to give feedback about the story. Remind them that they are objects of both guilt and of grace in this story. Have the students suggest specific similarities between this story and the reality of what God has accomplished in their spiritual lives.

### **OVERVIEW**

**(10 minutes)**

Write the word "grace" on the chalkboard. Ask students to suggest synonyms for grace, and write these on the board. Here are some examples to help: acceptable, favor, benefit, benevolence, honor, mercy, clemency.

Spend a few minutes looking at Ephesians 2:7-10, paying special attention to verse 8. As you teach this lesson, stay focused on the three key concepts listed in this section. More will be said in the next lesson about the issues of redemption and God's continuing work of grace.

### **INSIGHT**

**(25 minutes)**

Take nine or ten minutes of the class time to discuss the information presented in the *Insight* section of the lesson. Then have some of the students share how God's grace has affected them. If the students are slow to respond, be ready with a personal testimony of the grace and goodness of God in your own life.

While the grace of God affects every area of our lives, emphasize its importance in relation to salvation and how that grace should cause us to want to obey the Lord. We abide by God's commands, not out of obligation, but out of love.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

### **PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)**

Listen to the groups as they discuss the verses and summary statements. Pay special attention to the questions that the students write. Provide insight and direction for the students as they attempt to answer the more difficult questions regarding the subject of God's grace.

### **HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)**

This section is intended to encourage and guide the student during the week as a reminder of how much God cares for them. It might be used in personal devotions, as a point of conversation with family members, or simply to build the faith of the student.

### **FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)**

God paid a tremendous price for our salvation by dying on the cross in our places. We can never pay Him back, nor does He expect us to. However, His love for us can cause us to want to share that great grace with someone else.