

## ***The Grace of God***

*Where does one begin in order to understand the grace of God? I ask this question because it is something so beyond the scope of human invention that we must back up and begin with God Himself.*

*The glory of God is the first principle in the universe. God created everything for His glory, and He does not share His glory with anyone. (Isaiah 42:8) The follow-up question, "Why is this the first principle of the universe?" is answered, "Because God Himself is the greatest Being, the Creator of all things which exist; He is of greater worth and value than all things. Therefore when His beauty, worth, and value are recognized and honored, the order is established for the proper ascribing of worth and value to everything else which exists in reference to Him."*

*That God would create Man in His image is the highest honor imaginable; and thus our worth and value are derived from His worth and value. Our "glory" comes from relating properly to Him. When we violated "our place," we "exchanged the glory of God" intended for us. (Genesis 1:27 and Romans 1:23) Man's nature became deeply marred, and he now lives under a sentence of God's just wrath. (Romans 1:18)*

*The grace of God begins with the desire of God to restore Man to his former place as His sons and daughters. Such a desire can only come from a love that originates in the Godhead, for nothing like it exists in humans. It might be compared to expecting the Jews of the holocaust to desire the best of all things for their Nazi tormentors. This desire on God's part comes from something within His nature; and He calls it, "grace."*

*The grace of God's desire must issue forth in another aspect of grace that fully satisfies the justice of God, in that His nature cannot but hate all that contradicts His nature, for this is the definition of evil. His just wrath must be propitiated; thus it is God's grace that creates the only way possible for God to extend a "just mercy" to those whose nature only fits them for rejection, alienation, condemnation, hostility, and judgment.*

*Grace is something that God Himself initiates in both His desire to recover His children and in all that He does in active ways to bring His redemption to completion. In all of this, God alone receives the credit, for Man does not add a single ingredient to the saving process. It is truly said, "Salvation belongs to the Lord," or "Salvation is of the Lord."*

*Thus, only what comes into a person's life from grace will be admitted into God's heaven.*

*The only cure for sin (the source of all Man's problems) is the grace of God. Welcome to a month of pondering this great topic: the grace of God.*

# Lesson 1

The greatest obstacle to your experiencing the grace of God is the desire to find something good within yourself.

For this reason, the doctrine named “Total Depravity” is the place to begin our study. It was the study of this doctrine that liberated me from condemnation, for I suddenly realized that I was “normal.” For years I had instinctively hoped that I might find something good in me, and I was always disappointed and condemned. It is this truth that sets the Believer up to not draw the card that reads, “Go directly to jail; do not pass Go, do not collect \$200.00.” It is this truth that points you directly to trust Jesus Christ alone for your adequacy (righteousness).

“Total Depravity” declares that fallen Man is corrupt or sinful throughout his being. It does not mean that he is as sinful as he might be, but it does mean that no part of him is exempt from the effects of sin. His mind, his heart, his will, his inner spirit man, his imagination, his memory, his longings... all have lost their essential goodness. Every aspect of his being and nature are hostile toward God’s authority over his life. Thus all men are totally unable to judge truth or seek God.

“Total Inability” is another name for this doctrine, and it declares that the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good.

Not only is this doctrine taught in Scripture; it ministers humility to us and prepares us to look only to Christ for anything that measures up to God’s definition of “good.”

Scripture Study: Examine each little piece of Ephesians 2:1-3, and you will discover some “need-to-know” information about yourself. *(10 minutes)*

When God says that you were “dead in your sins,” what do you think He meant? You weren’t dead in your body, so what was dead?

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What does God mean when He says that you were formerly among “the sons of disobedience?”

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What does God mean when He says that you formerly “were by nature children of wrath”?

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Scripture Study: Think through 1 Corinthians 2:14. *(5 minutes)*

Has it been your experience that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit? Why do you think this is?

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If this is true, then how do you expect a “lost man” to understand the good news about Christ, much less receive Christ when he is dead to God and does not accept the things of the Spirit?

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Of course, you realize that I am setting you up to grasp something further about the grace of God that we will study in the days ahead.

Prayer Time: *(15-30 minutes)*

Bow deeply before God in humility and just acknowledge Him as Absolute God, The Ruler of all things, and The Creator of all things.  
Quietly wait upon Him for a little period.  
Tell Him that He is right, and that you are relying upon Christ alone for your righteousness, your goodness, or your adequacy.  
Ask the Holy Spirit for more insight into the grace of God.

## Lesson 2

All men are born in sin (Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12), and therefore all men are deceived about both God's nature and their own nature.

It is absolutely shocking to learn that we do not have the capacity to desire God or to seek for Him much less to recognize the truth when it is presented.

God brought His people into covenant fellowship with Himself by grace, and He gave them His laws so that they would realize that they could never live up to His righteous requirements. The law was to establish the standards and to help men understand their total inability before God.

Men may do many religious things, but they are dead in their sins. They are called "sons of disobedience." They are "by nature the sons of wrath." They hate the light. They cannot understand spiritual things. They are depraved in their minds. They actively suppress the truth about the real God. They have no fear of God. They do not seek the real God, although they do worship things that they themselves invent. They are under the power of the Evil One.

It is certainly every parent's shocking experience to discover how quickly the "innocent" child becomes willful, disobedient, selfish, prideful, and vindictive! We wonder, "Who taught this child to lie, to blame another, and to hide from the truth?"

In order to appreciate the grace of God, you must first learn how desperately you need Him in order to do anything that will last.

Scripture Study: Read Romans 3:9-18 as if you had never read it before. Look with new eyes, and allow yourself to grasp man's hopeless position apart from God's initiatives of grace. (10 minutes)

Examine Romans 3:9b where it says, "are all under sin." What it means is that all men are under the power and dominion of sin, with the following verses spelling out the consequences of how sin has affected all men.

Romans 3:10 may not surprise you, but look at verses 11 and following, and list the effects of sin upon men. Make a list using the implied format, "None \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_,"

Next, list what God says about man's throat, tongue, lips, mouth, and feet.

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Journal: Having freshly encountered God's thoughts about man's nature, express your thoughts to Him on this subject. (5 minutes)

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Realizing the spiritual poverty of your own being, bow low before the Father who loves you.

Rest quietly in His presence and let Him minister to you.

You are safe in one place only: in His hands.

Commit your day to Him and rest in the assurance that He will be with you all the day, no matter what.

### Lesson 3

How is it that non-Christians cannot do good works? Do we not see some noble deeds done by those who do not know God? Of course the answer is, “Yes.” There are many ‘good things’, right things, admirable things done by people who are not trusting in Christ, but they are not done for God nor by His grace; instead, they are done for their own honor or to preserve their own sense of well-being. For these reasons, they are not good in the sense that God counts good.

There is an old illustration of a band of pirates living on an island. They are in rebellion against the crown of England, but they have a community on this island where they maintain their families. Here they farm a bit to sustain themselves, and they do acts of kindness or bravery to aid one another; but unfortunately the motivating force behind it all is to make their lives successful in their rebellion against the crown.

The Proverb says it well when it describes “good things” done to strengthen us in our rebellion against God as still being sin. “The plowing of the wicked is sin.” (Pr 21:4 KJV)

A good work is something which is done out of relationship with God through faith in His Son. It is done in accordance with His nature; and it is accomplished by grace, for only then does the credit go to God and not to man.

Scripture Study: Jesus assumed that His followers understood that all men in their natural state are evil. Read a comment you may have overlooked in Matthew 7:11. (*5 minutes*)  
What does Jesus say about the condition of man?

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Yet, what kind of gifts does He say they give their children?

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But in this context Jesus is not saying that their gifts are good in the same sense as the good that His Father gives. He is using an example to help them understand something about the generosity of God taken from their limited experience with human fathers. We sometimes say, “He is a good man,” by which we mean that compared to others, he is good. We do not mean it in a theological sense.

Scripture Study: Review Romans 3:9-18, but continue and carefully examine Romans 3:19-20 as you discover how God uses the Law to prepare us to experience His grace. (*10 minutes*)

It is the fallen nature of man to boast, to depend upon himself, to evaluate his standing by comparing himself to others around him (selectively), and to be accountable to no one higher than himself. What does Romans 3:19 say is God’s purpose in sending the Law?

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What two important things does God tell you in Romans 3:20?

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Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Read Romans 3:19 to the Lord. Tell Him that His Laws have authority over your life so that your mouth will not boast, and submit yourself as accountable to the Lord.

Read Romans 3:20 to the Lord. Tell Him that you are depending upon Jesus Christ alone for your righteousness.

Thank Him for sending His Word and His Laws to reveal to you your need for Christ as your Savior.

Ask God to give you His heart for those who are resisting the Gospel of Grace.

## Lesson 4

The opposite of sin is the righteousness of God; and your freedom, your joy, your happiness, your well-being, indeed your very salvation is a matter of how to make a sinful man righteous.

Jesus taught that it was the person with the appetite for righteousness that would be satisfied, and He said that it was righteousness that we should seek. (Matthew 5:6 and Matthew 6:33)

So, what is the righteousness of God? It is often explained as having a right relationship with God, but this describes the results of righteousness rather than defining the term. Righteousness is the character of God. Think about it, and you will begin to grasp the enormous implications of God communicating His character to you: His wisdom, His patience, His purity, His courage, His endurance, His zeal, His compassion, His mercy, His long-suffering, His servant nature, His understanding, His values, His loyalty, His integrity, His love, His humility, etc. The power of the Gospel, the result of His grace, is to first declare you righteous (justification) and then to impart His righteousness to you (sanctification).

Scripture Study: Continue your study of grace by examining Romans 3:21-25. (15 minutes)

The Laws of God describe how God, in His righteousness, thinks and acts in various situations; but when Jesus came, then God's righteousness was demonstrated in a man's life.

"The law and the prophets" is a euphemism for the whole of the Old Testament. They have been looking forward to the Messiah who would explain Romans 3:22.

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Explain Romans 3:23 in your own words.

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Reread Romans 3:23-24, understanding that "justified" means "to declare righteous." Explain why righteousness has to be a free gift if it is to be by grace.

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We will come back to this word, "redemption," tomorrow.

Romans 3:25 - "Propitiation" means, "to satisfy God's wrath." Why do you think the blood of Jesus Christ satisfied the wrath of God?

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Why do you think it had to be done publicly?

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Prayer Time: (25–30 minutes)

This morning come to Jesus Christ. Bring your foolishness, your impatience, your fears, your unforgiveness, your lusts, your selfishness, your pride, your condemnation, your confusion, etc., and give these things to Him as you by faith partake of His free gift of Righteousness!

If it seems too good to be true, well, it's the Good News, the Gospel of Christ, and the grace of God!

Tell your Savior that He is your only Righteousness today!

Go into your day clothed in His Righteousness.

## Lesson 5

What is meant by “Redemption?” We speak of redeeming something from the pawnshop because there is a debt owed. The object cannot be reclaimed until the debt has been paid.

But before we think in terms of the redemption of men, let’s first consider the necessity of redeeming the glory of God, because His glory has been damaged as men created to reflect His glory instead chose to pursue their own.

When men rebel against lawful authority, they discredit and dishonor that government or ruler. They attempt to take from him what is rightfully his. It is their intention to steal from him his authority, his right to rule, and the honor associated with that position. In times of war a traitor is normally sentenced to death in order to “make up for” the extreme loss of honor that was due to the damage done by the act of treason.

When the ruler in question is God Himself, then the dishonor to God must be required of those who committed the treason. Redemption addresses first of all the need to restore the glory of God by paying back something of sufficient value so that the balances of justice are satisfied, which is the very definition of “propitiation”: to satisfy the wrath of God.

Scripture Study: Take Romans 3:23-28 apart, for there are some of the deepest concepts that underlie the grace of God found in this passage. *(15 minutes)*

Review Romans 3:23-24 and list the topics mentioned so that you will be clear about what the author is discussing.

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In Romans 3:25, God displayed the sacrifice of Jesus publicly because the offenses against His glory were done publicly, and thus the satisfaction must also be accomplished before the witnesses of heaven and earth: angels, demons, and humans.

Reading 3:25-26, what was it that God was demonstrating by putting His Son to death?

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Reading Romans 3:26-28, why was this so important?

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When we try to justify ourselves (even as Christians), what are we saying about the worth of God?

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Why does the experience of God’s grace require you to use your faith in the person of Christ?

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

This morning come to your Savior and contemplate His love for you.

Be His son or daughter this morning and express your love to Him.

Pray for His glory in the circumstances of your brothers and sisters.

Pray for the revelation of His grace to come to those who seem to not understand.

## Lesson 6

There are degrees of crime (sin), and therefore there are appropriate degrees of punishment that befit justice. The punishment never restores the lost eye, hand, or life; but there is the attempt to restore justice by requiring something of equal value.

The damage to the glory of the Almighty, Holy God requires much more than the life of a man, because there is no equal value, yet his life is all he has. However, when God became a man, He “found” a man (the Son of Man) whose life was of a value that could be fairly offered to replace the damage to the Glory of God.

Christ’s death involves four aspects: (1) Sacrifice, (2) Propitiation (satisfying the wrath of God), (3) Reconciliation, and (4) Redemption. His sacrifice propitiated God’s righteous anger toward us, brought us together in reconciliation, and redeemed us from the control of Satan! This is the Gospel of His grace.

Sacrifice: Read Hebrews 9:26-28. What did His sacrifice accomplish according to this passage?

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Propitiation: Read 1 John 4:10. According to this verse, what does this propitiation communicate to you?

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Reconciliation: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. According to this passage, what has this reconciliation accomplished for you?

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Redemption: Read Colossians 1:12-14 and 1 John 5:20. According to these passages, what has Christ’s redemption accomplished for you?

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Your life has been bought at a tremendous price. Surrender yourself to Him as worship!

Yield to Him all your fears, your concerns, and your future as the appropriate response to His love for you!

Contend in prayer for His glory (Hallowed be Thy name) and His will in the situations in which you find yourself!

Pray for your Church to be the effective witness for Christ that He intended.

## Lesson 7

What would God be like if He did not hate sin? Think about it. What would the world be like if God were not angry about everything which opposes His moral character? When His righteous anger boils over, it is called the wrath of God; and the fact that it exists guarantees the moral order of the universe and thus our own sanity! (Suppose evil was rewarded)

Hell will be the place where God's full anger toward that which is opposed to His nature (the definition of evil) is forever expressed.

The fact that God would pour out His wrath upon His Son in such a complete judgment that His justice is satisfied should establish in us a great respect for His holiness.

The wrath of God awaits all who are not right with God at the moment of their death or at the moment of His appearing.

Scripture Study: Read John 3:36. You may be surprised to hear the Apostle of Love, John himself, speak so plainly about the wrath that awaits those without a Savior. (*5 minutes*)

In this verse, the opposite of "believe" is

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In this verse, the opposite of "life" is

\_\_\_\_\_.

What do you think John means by "abides on him"?

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

Scripture Study: A foretaste of God's wrath is even now being expressed as God allows men to have what they want so that they go deeper and deeper into the sin that causes death, and thus they reap what they sow. Read Romans 1:18–32, looking for how God's wrath works now at a certain level and answers some of the questions about why there is so much suffering on the earth today. (*10 minutes*)

When men exchanged the glory they might have had by honoring Him as God, what did God do?

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

What are some of the results of man's intentional disregard for God's glory?

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

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Agree with God in His hatred for sin, beginning with your own, but then come quickly under the shelter of His forgiveness and mercy in the sacrifice of His Son.

Join the angels as a redeemed sinner, saved by grace, and worship Him! Declare Who He is to the entire spiritual world!

Wait upon Him, for He is worthy of your undivided attention.

Let Him quiet your soul, or speak to you, or whatever He wishes

## Lesson 8

We have considered man's Total Inability to desire God or seek Him; and we have considered the beautiful effects of Christ's sacrifice. We have not asked the question which begs to be asked: "If man is so drastically affected by sin so that he does not seek God, how does any man ever come to repentance and faith (called Conversion)?"

If you are a Christian, you can be certain that you can take no credit for being smarter or more sensitive than some other who has not come to Christ. God alone must receive the glory for your turning away from your unbelief, willfulness, disobedience and rebellion. So, what changed you from being under Satan's authority, being a son of disobedience, and being a child of wrath like all the rest?

The answer is that God sovereignly called you to Himself; and when God really calls, the person comes. After all, He merely whistles for an entire nation, and they come swiftly. (Isaiah 5:26)

Who makes the final choice, God or man? If it's man, then the fate of the world and some of the glory or credit, too, rests with man; but Jesus clearly contradicts this by saying, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain" - John 15:16. There is a "call" which is a general invitation; but there is a much different "Call" which comes from God and compels a man to come.

Scripture Study: Review man's spiritual condition as a sinner who loves sin, is totally deceived, is dead in trespasses, is bound as a slave to sin and Satan, loves the darkness, and is ruled by the lusts of his flesh. Given a choice, such a man cannot choose God. *(15 minutes)*

Read John 3:19. Men love \_\_\_\_\_. They hate the

\_\_\_\_\_.

Read John 6:37. Who are those who actually come to Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

Read John 6:39. What is the role of the Father in those who come to Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

Read John 6:44. What has to happen in order for a person to come to Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

Read John 1:12-13. Whose will is it not? \_\_\_\_\_ Whose will is it when a person believes and receives Jesus Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Time: *(15-30 minutes)*

Contemplate being so loved by God the Father that He personally summoned you to Himself.

Rest in His love this morning, for His grace found you.

Open your Bible to Psalm 23 this morning and say it from you to God.

Pray however He leads you.

## Lesson 9

Your flesh will resist the grace of God, because with grace God receives all the glory. Human pride and human willfulness are not compatible with God's grace. Therefore the natural man will refuse the kindest offers on God's part unless the Spirit of God changes the natural will of man. Paul says: "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able to do so" - Romans 8:7.

Probably one of the most dramatic pictures of how the grace of God changes the human will in an instant of time is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. At one moment he is filled with hatred toward Jesus Christ, motivated to kill His followers, and at the next moment he is filled with awe and reverence toward the Savior! Notice that God did not ask Saul's permission to come perform this transformation! He took His prerogative as God to renew Saul's will that had been dead toward God. Instantaneously, Saul received Jesus as his Lord!

Did Paul come to Christ against his will? No, God renewed Saul's will so that the new Saul (Paul) greatly desired to know and follow the Savior. Doctrinally this is called The Effective Call, and it is all of grace. No man can take credit for turning to Christ.

Scripture Study: Read the exciting story of Saul's conversion in Acts 9. (*10 minutes*)  
If you were converted as an adult, you can probably remember when the things of God made no sense to you and did not attract you. At some point, something turned inside you, and you began moving toward the Lord. This is God's Effective Call.  
Describe how you have experienced God's grace in becoming a Christian:

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Journal: Have you had instances in which you have recognized your own pride, your desire to depend upon yourself, or your own stubborn will, causing you to resist the grace of God? Talk this over with your Heavenly Father. Pour out your heart to Him. (*5 minutes*)

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Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Forsake your self-dependence.

Embrace the free gift of Christ's righteousness by receiving His humility by faith.

Call God your Father this morning.

Ask Him into all the places where you are experiencing difficulties. Trust Him to provide in each situation.



Go straight to worship!

Bow, kneel, or stand; but do something to express your adoration for such a glorious God who has taken such notice of you!

Enjoy Him this morning. "At His right hand there are pleasures evermore," so enjoy Him.

Submit your needs to His loving care.

## Lesson 11

Americans tend to think about their “rights,” whereas Scripture assumes that God has all the rights that exist. As you explore the Doctrines of Grace, you will discover that your worldview shifts toward seeing the “Rights” of God as opposed to asserting your own so-called “rights.”

The Universe is not about us. It is about God. Because of Adam’s sin, every child is born into this world assuming that everything revolves around him. Those who focus upon their “rights” frequently battle all their lives with insecurity and frustration, whereas those who focus upon the “Rights” of God live in a freedom that experiences a bold joy!

The Christian has been crucified with Christ, and thus our “rights” (so-called) have all been surrendered. We have privileges. We have the privilege of being His children. We have the privilege of being His inheritance. (Ephesians 1:18) And we have the privilege of being given an inheritance in Christ. Remember that an inheritance is something you neither earn nor deserve, for it is earned and given by another. All such are expressions of the grace of God.

Scripture Study: Let us examine a familiar verse this morning. Perhaps you may gain fresh insights into how the study of God and of His grace changes your view of everything that happens to you. Perhaps you are beginning to recognize that your Father is in full control. This is the viewpoint you live out in Jesus. Read Romans 8:28. (*15 minutes*)

In thinking about some of what Paul has said prior to this verse, why do you think he could say, “We know”? How do you think he expects us to “know”?

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Read, “God causes all things to work together” as if you had never noticed it before. How might seeing life this way change your viewpoint?

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What do you think God means by “good”? You may want to read the next verse to help you answer this question.

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Notice that “those who are called” are assumed to be those who are predestined in Romans 8:29.

The word “foreknew” does not mean that God saw into the future and saw who would come to know Him. It is a relational term. Adam “knew” Eve and produced a child. The word “know” can mean “know about,” but it often means the relational sense of “to know intimately ahead of time.”

In light of Romans 8:29, what is the highest purpose God could assign to you?

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Confess Romans 8:28 before the Lord of Heaven and earth this morning.

Tell your Father that you embrace His purpose for your life.

Now, look over the problems you are facing and “see” them in the light of God’s causing all things to work together for your good.

Pray a promise from God over the things you are facing for His glory.

## Lesson 12

God never gave His people the Law in order for them to earn His love or acceptance. His moral Laws express what the person does who lives in the grace of God. We do the same with our children, for they do not earn their way into our family. Rather they are born into our family, and then we have some rules that reflect our values. When they keep the rules there is peace and order, but they never earn our love by keeping them.

The world knows nothing of transformation so it can only think in terms of improving oneself. But you cannot train your flesh to know and love God or obey Him from the heart, for the flesh despises God's authority. "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" - Galatians 3:3. "...the flesh profits nothing" - John 6:63.

God takes the initiative to begin the transformation process by giving you a new birth: a spiritual beginning that allows you to begin developing as a spiritual person.

Scripture Study: God does not lead us into a self-improvement program. Instead He gives us a new birth. Think about being born all over again so that your inner, spirit man is born.

Read John 3:3-8. (10 minutes)

Considering John 3:3, if you cannot "see" or perceive the Kingdom until you are first born again, how could a man who is all flesh and hates the light ever hope to choose to renounce his self rule and embrace the Kingdom until God does something inside him?

Your thoughts:

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Considering John 3:6, how could a person who is unregenerate and dead in trespasses and sins (flesh) ever cross over to be born of the Spirit?

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Considering John 3:8, explain why you think Jesus used this illustration of the wind blowing "where it wishes" without anyone knowing where it came from or where it was going. What is His point?

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Scripture Study: The sovereign nature of God's inner Call was predicted by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 36:26-27. Examine this passage carefully and see the necessity of God changing our heart and spirit before we are able to respond to His love and come for forgiveness. (5 minutes)

Prayer Time: (15-30 minutes)

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 before the Lord and make this your confession!

Acknowledge that, "...it is of God that you are in Christ" - 1 Corinthians 1:30 KJV.

The Father's will was Jesus' food. This morning use your faith to eat the Father's will and

feed on Him.

Believe that His promises are for you today as you face trials for His glory!

## Lesson 13

A common misconception is that all people are born with faith, and that all anyone need do is decide to use it in order to trust in Christ. But the sin of Adam and Eve was a decision to not trust God but instead to disobey Him. Thus the Fall of Man and the consequent curse specifically removed from Man the ability to believe or trust God.

You may have heard Romans 12:3 misinterpreted in an attempt to say that: “God has allotted to each a measure of faith.” But here Paul is writing to Christians, and his point is that God has allotted to each Christian a particular type of faith as it relates to his gifting. Study the context.

Elsewhere in Scripture, faith is attributed to God as a unique gift that was purchased by the work of Christ on the cross. In theology such “faith” is designated as “saving faith” in order to distinguish it from the type of faith we may have in things other than God. The natural man easily trusts his own reason or the reason of another; but to trust in the living God takes a unique miracle of grace.

Scripture Study: Ephesians 2 begins with a terrible description of our former condition before the grace of God changed us. Then Ephesians 2:4-10 introduces God and describes His actions upon us who are saved! *(15 minutes total)*  
Ephesians 2:4: God’s motivation to save us is

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:5: God made us alive when we  
were \_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:5: This making us alive when we were dead is called,

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:6: What did He do of His own doing?

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:7: How does all this glorify Him?

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:8: His method of accomplishing all this is called

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:8: What is called “the gift of God”?

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Ephesians 2:9: What is God’s purpose in using His grace?

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Ephesians 2:10: Why are we described as “His workmanship”?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.  
Ephesians 2:10: When did God plan the works He has for your life purpose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Journal: How does this make you feel?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Express your heart to the Lord in whatever way comes after studying His grand endeavor!  
Thank Him for giving you saving faith.

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into the “good works which God prepared beforehand.”  
Jesus promises “grace upon grace” so ask Him for more grace by which you can serve Him  
today and bring glory to Him.

## Lesson 14

What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is know God and to enjoy Him forever!

And it is God's good pleasure to secure this for His people, because the chief end of man is none other than the purpose for which He created us. Paul says of the converted: "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" - Philippians 2:13.

It is the grace of God that accomplishes this. Remember, nothing will enter Heaven that is not the product of grace.

Grace is the only cure for sin.

The grace of God satisfies God, and it satisfies your spirit man. God gives you grace because grace is what you need.

Scripture Study: God is designated, "The God of all grace"; and thus He is the only source of His life and divine nature. *(10 minutes)*

Read Acts 18:27. Apollos arrived to help those who had believed. What gave them the ability to believe?

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Read 2 Thessalonians 3:2. Does the Bible teach that all men have faith?

Read Acts 16:14. What enabled Lydia to accept the Gospel of Christ?

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Scripture Pondering: Read Matthew 1:21 as if for the first time. *(5 minutes)*

Is this a prophecy?

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Is it a promise?

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Is it conditional?

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Who are "His people"?

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Why didn't the angel say "all people"?

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Hold the promise given in Matthew 1:21 before the Lord for your own life!

Trust the Savior to deliver you from evil, the love of evil, or the deception of evil.

Wait upon God this morning until you realize God is your Father, monitoring your day and caring for you in every moment.

Cast your cares upon Christ so that He bears your burdens today, for grace glorifies Him

## Lesson 15

There is a triune blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:14 which clarifies how we experience God differently in His three Persons. It is the Father who is identified with the source of all Love; but He manifests this through His Son, and by Jesus Christ we experience grace. Then it is the Holy Spirit who allows us to partake or share in the life of God.

Jesus is everywhere associated with the grace of God; and the Gospel is frequently called, “the grace of God.”

What is the grace of God? It is God giving you help that you do not deserve, which is why the issue of your humility is so important. It is God giving you His ability to do what you should do in order to be thinking, acting, or willing the same way He does.

The grace of God does not relieve you of the responsibility to obey; it gives you both the desire and the ability to obey God.

Scripture Memory: Read 2 Corinthians 13:14 over and over, trying to say it to yourself. Keep looking back at the verse, and then look away and repeat it until it sticks. *(5 minutes)*

Scripture Meditation: Read 2 Corinthians 13:14 slowly, letting God’s life-giving words enter into your soul. Just allow the words of God to do their work. Let His words go into your mind, but also let them simply go into your inner man. *(5 minutes)*

Finish these sentences: *(5 minutes)*

I experience God’s grace

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I experience God’s love

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I experience God’s fellowship

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Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Can you sing a tune that simply comes out of you this morning using whatever words and sounds that come? Give Him an offering of your individual worship.

Raise your hands to Him in adoration.

Lift your soul unto the Lord this morning.

Let Him minister to you.

## Lesson 16

If your father had died before you were conceived, then you would not exist; so it can justly be said that you were “in your father” which is to say that what was happening to him was having a direct bearing upon you. Scripture recognizes a much closer connection to your forefathers than does our modern culture. If your father had AIDS when you were conceived, then you might have been born with AIDS also; thus we can see how this same principle is applied biblically to the transmission of spiritual conditions.

Your first forefather was Adam and what he did, as well as the consequences of his actions, affected all who are descended from him. Adam’s disobedience to God changed his nature, and all his descendants inherited this nature rather than the original, sin-free nature with which our first forefather was created.

This is what the Bible means when it refers to you being “in Adam.”

Scripture Study: Carefully examine 1 Corinthians 15:22. *(15 minutes)*  
Who does Paul think are “in Adam”?

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Does a man have to do anything in order to be found “in Adam”?

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Then you will have to wrestle with two issues in the rest of this verse. First, does this verse lead you to believe that a man has to do anything to be found “in Christ”?

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Then there is the problem of the “all.” If “all” means “each and every one of its class,” then it would seem that Paul is here teaching Universalism: i.e. that all people are automatically saved in Christ, which we know from the rest of Scripture is not Paul’s belief.

A few have chosen to believe that no one is born a sinner but is one by choice, for then they can apply the same condition of choice to becoming in Christ. However, much Scripture contradicts this also.

The correct interpretation is that Paul uses “all” to first mean “each and every human” whereas the second “all” refers to every person Christ represented. Thus we had no choice in becoming sinners, for we were represented by our forefather and, in the same manner, Christ represented all who were to be given saving faith and the ability to repent of their sins.

These concepts are foreign to most Americans today, so tomorrow we will examine more verses in order to see if indeed the Bible does teach these things.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Humble your understanding before your Great God and ask Him for revelation in considering how He makes His decisions.

Open your Bible to Proverbs 2 and read Proverbs 2:1-7 before the Lord.

Tell the Lord, “Lord, I receive Your Words, and I am treasuring Your commandments within me.”

Then wait upon Him in quiet worship and adoration.

## Lesson 17

Adam was created in the image of God, but when he had children, they were in his image. (Genesis 5:1, 3) He was our “federal head” in that he represented us all; and all that he did for good or ill was directly passed on to us.

President Roosevelt represented us when he accepted the unconditional surrender of the Nazi government at the conclusion of WWII, and thus we participated in the results just as if we had personally been there ourselves conducting the business. Notice that he represented you without your consent and in most cases before you were born.

Jesus Christ is the “federal head” or representative of all who shall ever be saved; and it is of grace in that it is entirely a free gift given as a result of God’s actions, some of which took place before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

Scriptural Study: Romans 5:12ff is certainly not the easiest passage to follow Paul’s train of thought, but give it a try. (*15 minutes*)

Reread Romans 5:12-14 and answer the questions. Death spread to all men. Why?

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When Paul said, “because all men sinned,” he could mean that every man was born as innocent as Adam and (like Adam) chose to sin, or he could mean that all men sinned in that we participated in Adam’s original sin and so inherit the nature of sin. Which do you think Paul meant?

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Yet until the Law came, sin was not counted as sin (transgression), and still all men died. Romans 5:14 says that “death reigned from Adam until Moses” which was a time before the giving of the Ten Commandments.

The idea here is that even though men sinned throughout the period, they were suffering the consequences of sin brought on by Adam rather than their own personal guilt, which would come through disobeying the commandments.

Look at Romans 5:17. “By the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one.” Here Paul means for us to understand that we were born with a sinful nature and under the sentence of condemnation and death even apart from our personal decisions to sin, which have been plenty.

Romans 5:17-19 - Paul contrasts the two: how “we” (Roman Christians) were affected by what Adam did with all its consequences upon “us” versus how “we” (Roman Christians) are similarly affected by what Christ did with all its consequences upon “us.” Finish this sentence, “What this says to me is:

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Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 before the Lord and tell the Lord that you are now “in Christ.”

See your identity in Him and receive Him and all His benefits as belonging to you.

As one of His very own, pray His will into the circumstances surrounding your life.

Pray for your Church to be used to express His Gospel to your community.

## Lesson 18

There is only one place where God blesses a man, and that place is called “in Christ.” This term occurs over ninety times in the New Testament and a similar term, “in Him,” occurs ninety-seven times.

If there is to be any experience of the Grace of God, it must be in connection with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are one of His, it means that He placed you in a special relationship with Christ long before you were born; and this connection He designates with the phrase, “in Christ.” Being “in Him” means that you are united with Him in a spiritual unity and oneness, which allows the Father to treat you as He treats His Son, the Lord Jesus, for He officially represents you. This is a shorthand covenant phrase that refers to the covenant cut between God the Father and God the Son whereby the Son would personally agree to represent all who would ever be saved.

Scripture Study: Watch carefully for the words, “in Christ,” “in Him,” “His grace,” and the benefits which are yours due to the fact that you are “in Christ” as you examine Ephesians 1:4-7. (10 minutes)

In Ephesians 1:3, what blessings have been given to you?

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And how are these blessings being given to you?

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In Ephesians 1:4-7 look at the “sentence” structures which have God as the subject and those who are “in Him” as the object. List the verbs (the action words or what God did). Use this structure: “He \_\_\_\_\_ me.” “He \_\_\_\_\_ me.” “He \_\_\_\_\_ me.” “He \_\_\_\_\_ me.”

Scripture Memory: Review or learn Ephesians 2:8-9 by reading it slowly and then saying it aloud to yourself as you look away. Allow the Holy Spirit to write God’s thoughts upon your mind as you do this. (5 minutes)

### 3. Prayer Time: (15 – 30 minutes)

By faith, identify yourself as one who has been placed “in Christ” by the love of the Father. Call God your own Father.

Let Him delight Himself in you.

Raise your hands and extol Him for all that He is!

## Lesson 19

The Unconditional Grace of God chose you, placed you “in Christ” before the foundation of the world, regenerated your inner spirit man, and gave you saving faith so that you could repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

There is also “Conditional Grace,” for now your will has been released from the Curse and made new by the work of Christ. You have the ability to trust Him for His life to flow through you, enabling you to rely upon Him for all that you need to obey Him and carry out His will.

He gave you “Saving Faith,” and now you are to steward what He calls “your faith.” You can choose to trust Him, or you can neglect to trust Him, and thus attempt to succeed in life by your own power and ability, which the Bible calls “the flesh.” Your experience of God’s Grace now depends upon your trusting Him according to His promises. This means that you are trusting Him to be according to His true nature, which He has revealed through His promises. Thus the Grace of God which you currently need every day is tapped as you exercise “your faith” in the Person of Jesus according to all that God has revealed about Himself.

Scripture Study: Let’s carefully read Romans 4:16-25, looking for evidences of how the faith God gave you is exercised in a way that gives all the credit to God and thereby reveals His Grace. *(10 minutes)*

Read Romans 4:16 and explain why Abraham did not earn or deserve the blessing which he received.

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How does Paul make Abraham the model upon which he communicates to you today how to operate in the Grace of God?

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Journal: Reread this passage and then share your thoughts with your Heavenly Father as all this is applied to what you are going through in your life. *(5 minutes)*

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

This morning exercise your faith in the Person of Jesus Christ and believe that everything God wants to give you will come through His Son.

Recite some fragments of God’s promises as they relate to your needs today.

Read Romans 4:20 before the Lord. Then give Him the glory and the honor He deserves as it relates to His Promises and His faithfulness.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to your Christian community more about how God supplies through His Son, for this is the Grace of God.

## Lesson 20

One of the most misunderstood phrases is “being under law” versus “being under grace.”

You are “under law” any time you attempt to achieve something in your own strength or ability. You are “under grace” when you place no confidence in your own ability and thereby trust Christ to be your adequacy (your righteousness).

You have “fallen from grace” anytime you have not exercised “your faith” in Him alone as your adequacy. This “fallen from grace” does not mean that you are not saved; it means that you are operating in your flesh or in your own ability, which is prompted by your Unbelief and your desire for feeling worthy in yourself.

Scripture Study: The problem Paul addresses in Galatians troubles us all frequently. It is the problem of legalism. And what is legalism? Legalism is “being under the law” which means that you have reverted to saving yourself from a particular sin. You are attempting to do certain things in order to feel okay about yourself, and you are unconsciously assuming that God will be pleased with you based upon your doing a particular thing. The Gospel produces “the obedience of faith” whereas legalism produces the obedience done in your own strength. *(15 minutes)*

Let’s see how Paul addressed the Galatians on this issue. Read Galatians 5:1-7.

In Galatians 5:1, what do you think Paul meant by “a yoke of slavery”?

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What does Paul mean by “Christ set us free”?

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Take Galatians 5:4 and rewrite it using your own words.

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Paul had Timothy circumcised, so why is he so upset with people being told they must be circumcised in Galatians 5:2-4?

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Christians today who are circumcised are not in legalism, because \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

If you see that you are relying upon something you are trying to do rather than Christ Himself, repent before the Lord and place your full trust in His righteousness alone.

Are you worried? Bring your troubles to your Lord and cast your cares upon Him. One of you is going to carry them, and it is supposed to be Him.

Draw your life from Christ Himself.

Intercede for the lost people surrounding your life.

## Lesson 21

If a Christian is not supposed to “be under law,” what is the purpose of the law today?

All the commandments of God describe how God’s nature acts. Were you to live a life of perfect faith in Jesus Christ, your actions would look just like God’s commands. Therefore, the law tells us how we should think, reason, act, feel, value, etc.; but its purpose is to cause us to rely entirely upon the Person of Jesus Christ for the grace (the ability) to be able to accomplish what the commandments require.

There is a continual discovery of how much we rely upon ourselves and when this is happening, we are constantly failing and feeling bad about our inability to “do it right.” We can get very disappointed in ourselves and discouraged and feel condemned and hopeless. This isn’t all bad, because we are then learning not to trust in ourselves. Some Christians mistakenly try to solve this problem by simply dismissing the commandments of God, but they miss the purpose for which God gave His commandments. There is nothing wrong with God’s commands; the problem is in our flesh, and the law helps us to see how impossible it is without faith in Christ. In this way the law leads us to faith in Him; and then God’s purpose is fulfilled!

Scripture Study: Read Romans 3:19-23. Here is a passage that puts these things into perspective.

*(15 minutes)*

Examine Romans 3:19-20 in order to answer this question: What are the purposes of the law as stated here? (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

A key understanding is given to you in Romans 3:21, for the law reveals the

\_\_\_\_\_. When men do not have the law to reveal this, how do you think they evaluate themselves?

Have you ever talked with someone who said, “I live by the Ten Commandments”? Do they really? So, how do you respond? Probably you begin applying some of these Commandments to their lives and inquiring if they really do live up to this standard. How do you think this prepares them for the Gospel of Christ?

So, without the law of God, what happens to us?

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Thank your Savior, Jesus Christ, for fulfilling all of God’s Commands in your place. Believe that Christ’s righteousness is being applied to you just now as you rely upon Him alone for God’s character.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the areas of self-help inside yourself that keep you from experiencing the Grace of God in Christ.

Yield every care, every worry, and every pressure to Him, for He cares for you.

## Lesson 22

The Holy Spirit applies the Life and Victory of Jesus Christ to you. One way He accomplishes this is by using the Commands of God (e.g. all the commands given at the close of most of the New Testament letters) to show you how the righteousness of God looks and acts. In other words, He uses the Commands to convict you of your lack; but He does this in an encouraging way that is free from condemnation.

The more you understand His grace and how the Gospel meets our continuing need for righteousness, the more you feel uplifted by the high standards of God's Commands. In fact, they seem to almost "pull" you up into higher realms of living all because Christ, who is your ability, is living in you.

God enables all that He Commands of you! Now you are seeing even more of how good the Good News really is! This is how the law leads us to Christ and therefore to the experience of Grace. Truly this is Amazing Grace!

Scripture Study: Here is a great passage which will give you more understanding of how God moves you into more and more of His Grace! Really study Galatians 3:21-24 and be prepared to shout! (*15 minutes*)

Answer Paul's question, "Is the Law contrary to the promises of God?"

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What is right with the Law?

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What can the Law not do for you?

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Look at Galatians 3:24. The Law has now become your tutor. In what way is the Law now your tutor?

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Jesus said that those who had been forgiven much love much. Can you take His statement and apply it to how the Holy Spirit is using the Laws of God to bring you into more and more of His love?

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Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Is there some issue of soul with which you are struggling? If so, let God's Commandment that touches this issue lead you to Christ Himself who satisfied God's requirement just for you.

Draw upon Christ. Receive Him to yourself. Use your faith to drink of His life.

Now boldly pray His will into the situations that surround your life.

Believe God to give you boldness in speaking for Him to others today!

## Lesson 23

The cultures of the world have been variously fashioned by Unbelief, and the “gravitational” pull of the world upon your life stems from the fact that your flesh operates in the very same Unbelief.

But the Grace of God is of another realm: that which is a joyful, faith-dependency upon Him who truly is God!

Learning to live in the Grace of God is quite an education. The less you depend upon yourself, the more you make God the center of your attention and responses; the more you give yourself to Him in simple, child-like faith, the more you will live in that life-giving substance which is called the Grace of God!

When Satan comes to steal your joy, he heads straight for your Faith, because Unbelief (and the accompanying fear) is his chief tool. Jesus saw that Peter was about to be severely tested, and He strengthened His friend by praying for him that his faith would keep him relying upon God!

Scripture Study: Notice how your own society opposes your living by faith in Christ and thereby

operating in the Grace of God. *(15 minutes)*

John 7:7 -Why did the “world” (your culture) not hate you before you were joined to Jesus Christ?

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John 12:31 - Who is the ruler of this world?

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John 14:17 - Why do you think your own culture does not understand the Grace of God?

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John 15:18 - If your own culture hates you, it is a sign \_\_\_\_\_

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John 15:19 - If your own culture approves of you and applauds you, then probably \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think it means that Jesus “chose you out of the world”?

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Jesus loved the world, but it cost Him. What is your experience with loving the world but being opposed to how people think and operate around you?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Perhaps you need to ask for forgiveness for not loving the world of people around you. Or perhaps you need to ask forgiveness for wanting the culture around you to think well of you. Stay here for a moment. Be sure you actually receive His forgiveness, for this glorifies Him.

Look to Jesus to be your righteousness this morning.  
Satisfy the longings and needs of your own soul in Christ this morning.

## Lesson 24

The word “Gospel” is not well understood. Jesus preached the “Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven,” and yet you usually read the shortened version, which is simply “the Gospel.”

It is the Good News about God’s Realm, which originates in and corresponds to heaven itself.

It is also known as the Gospel of the Cross, for it was at the Cross that the Grace of God was fully illustrated and communicated. It is still “at the Cross” where we experience His Grace.

Yet throughout the Acts and the letters, you frequently find another synonym for the Gospel, which is simply “the Grace of God.”

Scripture Study: Watch for the Gospel described as the Grace of God. *(10 minutes)*

Acts 14:3 - What is the Gospel called here? \_\_\_\_\_ Why do you think this expression really is another way of saying, “Gospel”?

\_\_\_\_\_

Acts 15:11 - Why does it appear that Peter is calling the Gospel, “the grace of the Lord Jesus”?

\_\_\_\_\_

Acts 20:24 - What does Paul call his message?

\_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Study: Yet you will often discover that “grace” is also used to refer to God’s Unconditional Grace by which He sovereignly saved us. So you need to observe carefully and see how sometimes the ongoing experience of the Gospel is meant, sometimes the original experience of the Gospel is meant, and sometimes it is the grace that comes and opens our hearts and wills so that we can believe. *(5 minutes)*

Acts 18:27 - Here our faith is attributed to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

By the Grace of God, come to God your Father through Jesus your Savior.

Just be with Him.

Draw near by faith and let His presence “influence” you.

What might God have for you today? What challenges? Dare to believe God to give you His Grace and make you able for these things.

## Lesson 25

The Apostle John, “the disciple Jesus loved,” (John’s name for himself) seems to be the first to recognize the connection between the glory of God and the grace of God. He wrote of Jesus’ displaying the glory of God and being filled with grace. (John 1:14)

The Gospel of John unpacks these two themes within the context of Jesus’ intimate relationship with His Father and, as He does so, we feel the supernatural pull of the Holy Spirit upon us to live in the same grace.

Paul, however, is used by God to put these realities into theological words so that our minds can better grasp these relational experiences. But you can be sure that for Paul, the theological constructs are all relationally lived out in his own life, and he fully expects them to become your daily experience also.

Scripture Study: The Gospel of Grace in Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians. *(10 minutes)*

Romans 1:1 - Your life also is set apart

for \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 1:2-4 - Paul simply describes the Gospel

as \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 1:5 - Paul was receiving “grace” and “apostleship” through \_\_\_\_\_. The pronoun, “whom,” refers

to \_\_\_\_\_.

If Paul was receiving grace and apostleship through Christ/grace/gospel, then what are you receiving?

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Study the content of the Gospel wherein lies all the Grace. *(5 minutes)*

Read Romans 1:15. Why on earth would Paul be so eager to preach the Gospel to people who were already converted? You may not know yet, but at least ask yourself this question.

Read Romans 1:16-17. I think Paul was eager to preach the Gospel to the already saved because he knew there was so much about this Gospel which they did not understand and were not experiencing, even though they were saved.

What about you? Would Paul be eager to be preaching to you also?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher and instruct you more deeply in the Gospel of Christ. Expose your deepest needs, your deepest fears to the Lord this morning.

Use the faith He gave you to draw upon Christ as your only source of help from God in the very areas you so lack.

Pray for your Church leaders this morning. Ask God to protect and lead them!

## Lesson 26

As you make a life study of the grace of God, you will appreciate Paul speaking of his stewardship of God's grace. He always links the experience of grace with the revelation of the Spirit, for it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and reveal them to us.

In both John and Paul there is the closest relationship between the experience of God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. Both are seen as our partaking of the very life of God Himself!

Scripture Study: Let's search out this connection between experiencing the Gospel of grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. *(15 minutes)*

Romans 1:17 - When you receive the character of Christ as a free gift every day, who is revealing this to you? Don't just quote the words. Think about how God causes this to work.

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John 7:37-39: "Thirsty" means needy and eager. "Come to Me and drink" means believe and receive from Me. Relate what Jesus promises to the grace of God. "He promises me

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\_\_\_\_\_."

By Romans 8 Paul equates living in the Spirit as the same as living in the grace, and he contrasts both with living under law or living in the flesh. Read Romans 8:2 and re-write this verse using your own words:

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you this morning.

Just wait upon Him and let Him minister to you. Be receptive, not passive.

Glorify God this morning by worshiping Him.

Believe that Christ is living in you, and His life is powerful to break the habits that frustrate you.

## Lesson 27

Before you were converted, you did not have a will free enough from sin to be able to choose to trust and obey Christ; but now as a new creature, who has been born from above, you do have a will that can always choose Christ no matter how you feel.

This is both a privilege and a responsibility. We can neglect the grace of God. We can be one who neglects to nourish himself in God and grows rather weak in faith. As a result, we are soon attempting to make life work in our own strength even though we have a certain faith in Christ (as far as our salvation goes).

This becomes particularly evident when we are hurt, disappointed, or betrayed by someone, and we do not choose to forgive by coming to the Cross where we receive the help we need to rid ourselves of the sin of unforgiveness. If we neglect to receive the grace that is available, then we will begin to feel the effects of our own sin deadening us. Soon Satan will find in us an accomplice, and he will use us to hurt others! Do not neglect the grace!

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 12:15. This is a verse that should be in your memory bank, but for now we will study it. *(15 minutes)*

What do you think the author means by “comes short of the grace of God”?

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Explain what the author predicts will happen to the person who does not do whatever it takes to experience God’s grace.

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Journal: Talk to God about this verse as it pertains to your own life.

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Meditate upon Hebrews 4:14-16.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Is there unforgiveness in your life?

Lay your soul before the Lord and see if He indicates that there is someone whom you have not released from an “ought.”

Choose to forgive the person even before you have the ability.

Come to the Cross, where Jesus died in your place and forgave you for all your sins against Him.

## Lesson 28

Our message is the Gospel of Grace. The people who live in this Grace on a day-to-day basis are the Church, which is His Body, and His life coming forth from us that is His testimony to the world.

We live by partaking of His grace through our faith in Him, but there are many temptations that come to distract us or derail us, and in facing these things we must make decisions.

We may become lazy. We may become discouraged and withdraw from pressing into God even though we may go through the motions. We may become introspective and soon find that we are feeling that we do not measure up (which is condemnation). We may become envious because someone else is being rewarded while we are going through a testing time. We may become fascinated with some hobby or sport or activity and find that our identity is becoming wrapped up with something that is good but not God!

The book of Hebrews addresses many of these difficulties in order to keep us in that needy-believing place where the grace of God flows. Let's help one another stay in the Grace.

Scripture Study: Check out Hebrews 3:12-14 for developing a strategy for staying in the Grace of God. *(15 minutes)*

Read Hebrews 3:12. What is the warning?

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If God speaks this to you today, how will you apply it to your life?

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Hebrews 3:13 - What if you were to take this and build a ministry for yourself! What would such a ministry look like?

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Hebrews 3:14 - Try rewriting this verse by using your own words to speak it directly to your life situation.

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

If there is hardness in your heart, confess the sin of Unbelief to your Father who loves you and wants to bless you.

If there is discouragement working in your soul, come to Him whose life fills us with the finest of life-giving wines, the wine of Encouragement!

Jesus lifts the weak person when he casts his soul upon the Lord, so do that this morning.

Jesus lifts the heavy burden as you come to Him and allow Him to be the Savior to you so that you are learning from Him.

## Lesson 29

Satan always bets that your discouragement will cause you to drift from the Lord. That is his plan. Fool him! Instead, use your discouragement as a means of grace in that you use it to motivate yourself to draw near, so that He Himself may comfort you! That's His plan.

Busyness. Preoccupation. Worry. Exhaustion. Disorientation. These drag us down in particularly destructive ways so that the feeling itself brings a paralysis and a sense of lethargy. It's another trap from your enemy. Fool him!

Break out! Put on music and sing at the top of your lungs! Get the promises of God and shout them aloud! Be radical by humbling yourself and submitting to another person's ministry of prayer and encouragement! Don't drown out the feelings by some artificial means. Let the bad feelings work for you by going to God. Call self-pity out into the light and speak God's truth to it! Then order it out! This is a fight, and grace delivers us. Every time.

Scripture Study: God sometimes leads us into certain battles, and His grace is always sufficient for us. Let's study more from the book of Hebrews. *(15 minutes)*

Hebrews 5:8-9 - Finish this sentence: "He is training me by \_\_\_\_\_"

Hebrews 5:11-14 - "Discouragement can dull my hearing. As I read these verses, the thing that comes to me is \_\_\_\_\_"

Hebrews 6:12 - How do you get God's promises to operate in your life? \_\_\_\_\_"

If this has been hard for you, then talk to the Lord about it.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Well, talk to Him about your difficulty trusting Him and then having to be patient over a long period of time.

Get still now. Be quiet. Wait upon the Lord.

Let Him say or do whatever He wishes. Let Him take the initiative even though you are not being passive. Waiting and listening are not passive activities.

Begin to give Him thanks for the things about Himself that are ministering to you.

## Lesson 30

Men deeply fear that they are not strong, not adequate; and they desperately long to be both. The longing is of the Lord, but the path men naturally take is not. God takes men who admit their weakness and inadequacy and pours in His Grace. The result: they move in a strength and adequacy that is coming from the Lord and not from themselves! It's wonderful. It's strange. It's Grace.

God works miracles with the humble. Open vulnerability attracts the Spirit of God; but the truly humble man does not wallow in it or call attention to it or even apologize for it. Human weakness is simply truth, and the man who understands the Grace of God lives in the sense of his own inadequacy and the generous, lavish way God loves to pour His undeserved ability (Grace) into him. There comes then a godly confidence to those who live by His Grace.

Scripture Study: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Paul was at the end of his rope when Jesus spoke this wonderful truth into his soul! Let the Lord speak this into your soul as well. *(15 minutes)*  
What is the principle that Jesus wants to brand upon your heart?

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Has this been difficult for you to learn?

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How have you fought God on this?

What is the Lord speaking to you at this time?

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Are you willing to learn how to think a totally different way?

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If so, how shall you begin?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Begin by “boasting of your weakness” before the Lord this morning and then begin to soak up His love and care for you!

Read 2 Corinthians 12:10 before the Lord and absorb the contentment.

Draw heavily upon the life and grace of Jesus Christ.

Now worship Him!

## Lesson 31

John Piper likes to speak of faith as trusting God that He will supply you the grace as you need it, which is why he calls faith “Future Grace.” The more faith you have in God, the more you are able to take the risks that are incurred as you follow Christ into the calling that is upon your life.

Because of God’s grace, you can dream His dream over your life and attempt things that you would never otherwise be willing to address. Without His grace, you dare not go on the adventure that is involved in following the most revolutionary figure on the planet, the Lord Jesus Christ! Because of grace, Paul can command us to “be strong in the Lord,” and this is such great news for us all but especially for men. This strength is found coming from Him. It is His ability, His adequacy; and it is the very essence of Grace.

Thus confidence, strength, and ability flow from the Christian who lives in the Grace of God; and God loves it, for it honors Him.

Scripture Study: The letter to the Ephesian Christians has a lot to say about the grace of God, and Paul begins to conclude his epistle by speaking like a General to his battle savvy troops: “Be made strong, be enabled in the Lord and in the might of His strength” - Ephesians 6:10. Obviously Paul knows that, because of God’s grace, He can charge Believers to overcome sin, Satan, and the world system!

*(5 minutes)*

Are you approaching the tasks God assigns you with confidence?

Why or why not?

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Scripture Study: 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Paul exhorts his own son in the faith, Timothy, and calls him to high adventure and great risk-taking, all because he knows that the grace of God will sustain and enable the man who trusts in God. *(10 minutes)*

How does Paul expect you to be strong?

2 Timothy 2:2 - What things do you think Timothy learned from Paul that he was to pass on to other men?

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Because of grace, what does Paul expect of your life?

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Who can you teach about the grace of God?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Read 2 Timothy 2:7 before the Lord and ask Him to give you understanding about His

grace.

Put your faith in Him right now that He will lead and guide you into more and more experience with receiving His grace.

Accept the high calling of God upon your life to dare things that you sense He desires for your life!

Determine in prayer to depend upon His grace for all the challenging things in your life.

I purpose to meet with God tomorrow morning at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.