



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

Lesson: The Gift of Grace

Primary Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-9

Lesson 7: Week of October 29, 2017

### INTRODUCTION

Gift - something given voluntarily without payment in return, as to show favor toward someone, honor an occasion, or make a gesture of assistance.

1. When you give a gift, do you ever hope to receive something in return even though you don't request anything? (Be realistic and honest in your answer.)
2. Have you ever received a gift or multiple gifts that you took for granted and then later regretted it?
3. Do you feel or have you ever felt like you deserved a gift that you received?

Today was **Monday**, and just like every other day when I opened my eyes, there was a gift beside my bed. I picked it up and carried it with me as I journeyed through my day. This gift was special because it seemed to help me to conquer life's daily challenges. Woke up today...check. Made it to work safely...check. Was effective throughout my day...check. Family was safe today...check. Home was safe and secure today...check.

Today was **Tuesday**, and just like every other day when I opened my eyes, there was a gift beside my bed. I picked it up and carried it with me as I journeyed through my day. This gift was special because it seemed to help me to conquer life's daily challenges. Woke up today...check. Made it to work safely...check. Was effective throughout my day...check. Family was safe today...check. Home was safe and secure today...check.

### ***IS IT GROUND HOG DAY?***

I had come to expect these things on a daily basis. What I didn't do is "check" myself on the expectations that God had for me as I journeyed throughout my day. Did I share His "Good News" today? Did I portray the image of Jesus today? Did I speak a kind word or offer a nice gesture to someone that I didn't know? Had I given freely the same that had been given to me?

The point here is that we go through life doing the same things, expecting the same gifts, and yielding the same responses to our Father. Have we ever truly thought about the gift of grace that God has given us on a daily basis? And have we ever truly considered what God wants in return?

Ephesians 4:7 says, "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." Grace is the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. Simply put, GRACE is getting what you don't deserve, and *not* getting what you do deserve.

**DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS**

Ephesians 2:1-10 (MSG Translation)

Principle #1: Apart from God, We Were Spiritually Dead

2<sup>1-6</sup> It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.

1. Paul describes us as one 'dead' in our trespasses and sins. Why does Paul use the term dead, rather than sick, broken or struggling? Do you think 'dead' is a fair description of the human condition without God?
2. What are the implications of spiritual death?
3. What do the above scriptures say about God's character and His intentions for us?

Principle #2: What Did God Really Do For Us?

7-10 Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

Paul, in the above verses, basically tells us that we are totally incapable of doing anything towards our salvation, and that God, in an act of sheer grace, did it all in and through his Son, Jesus Christ.

1. Do you feel that you had any part in your salvation? Please explain. Did you reach this point based upon your own thoughts and desires?
2. Revisiting question #1 from the INTRODUCTION... Although God's gift of grace is free to you, do you think that God has any expectations associated with the gifts that you have received? If so, please explain those expectations. This should be a personal assessment.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

MERCY is what keeps sinful men from getting what they deserve - DEATH.

GRACE is sinful man getting what he does not deserve - SALVATION.

GRACE = God's Riches at Christ's Expense