

THE FREEDOM STUDIES | Part Two | Receiving Grace | STUDY 04

# Grace That Finds Us

Sin, separation, God's mercy, and salvation as His gift-not something we earn.

A Grace-Centered, Spirit-Led Journey with Jesus

## KEY SCRIPTURES | NIV

Ephesians 2:1-10 | Luke 15:11-32 | Romans 5:6-11 | Titus 3:3-7

About 50-65 minutes | Individual or group study

## AN INVITATION

# Before We Begin

Grace is not God lowering His standard or pretending sin does not matter. Grace is God moving toward people who cannot rescue themselves and giving what could never be earned.

Before we consider our response to the gospel, we begin with God's initiative. He seeks, loves, awakens, forgives, and makes alive. Our faith does not persuade a reluctant God to love us; it receives the love He has already revealed in Jesus.

### Opening Prayer

Father, help me understand grace beyond familiar religious words. Show me both the seriousness of sin and the greater power of Your mercy. Free me from trying to earn what You desire to give, and help me receive Your love with humility and faith. Amen.

## MADE ALIVE BY MERCY

# Saved by Grace

Read Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)

Paul describes humanity as spiritually dead and following destructive ways, but God-rich in mercy-makes us alive with Christ. Salvation is by grace through faith, not from ourselves or our works.

Dead people cannot make themselves alive. Paul places the decisive action with God: God loved, God made alive, God raised, and God saved. Faith is the open hand that receives His gift.

Good works matter, but their place is important. We are not saved by good works; we are recreated in Christ for them. Obedience is fruit growing from grace, not payment offered in exchange for acceptance.

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. Which actions in this passage belong to God?
2. Why can salvation never become a personal achievement?
3. How is being created for good works different from being saved by them?
4. Where are you tempted to prove that you deserve God's love?

# The Father Runs Toward Home

Read Luke 15:11-32 (NIV)

Jesus tells of a younger son who wastes his inheritance and returns home, an older son who resents the father's generosity, and a father who goes out to meet both sons.

The younger son prepares a speech that would reduce him from son to hired servant, but the father interrupts the attempt to negotiate a lesser place. He restores his son before the son can prove a changed life.

The older son is physically near yet relates to the father through performance and comparison. Grace confronts both rebellion and self-righteousness. The father goes out to each son and invites both into relationship.

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What do the father's actions reveal about God?
2. Which son's struggle feels more familiar to you?
3. Have you related to God more like a beloved child or an anxious worker?
4. What makes grace difficult to receive-or difficult to extend to someone else?

## LOVE BEFORE IMPROVEMENT

# Christ Died While We Were Still Sinners

Read Romans 5:6-11 (NIV)

While humanity was powerless, ungodly, sinful, and even described as God's enemies, Christ died for us. Through Him we are reconciled to God.

The cross is not God's response to our successful reform. It is His action while we are powerless. The order matters: divine love moves first, reconciliation is accomplished through Jesus, and a new life grows from being restored to God.

This does not make sin harmless. It reveals that shame and fear cannot accomplish what grace does. God's kindness brings us into the safety where truth can be faced and transformation can begin.

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What words describe humanity's condition when Christ died?
2. What does this reveal about the timing of God's love?
3. How can grace create greater honesty about sin rather than less?
4. Where might you need to believe that God moves toward the powerless?

## NOT BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUS THINGS

# He Saved Us Because of His Mercy

Read Titus 3:3-7 (NIV)

Paul remembers humanity's former condition, then points to God's kindness and love. God saves not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy, renewal, and grace.

Grace leaves no room for superiority. Everyone who belongs to Christ stands there because of mercy. Remembering our dependence on grace changes how we treat people who are still confused, bound, or far from God.

The Spirit's renewing work is not a precondition we complete before God will save. Renewal is part of the salvation God pours out generously through Jesus Christ.

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What contrast do you see between our former condition and God's action?
2. How should mercy affect the way believers treat those who are struggling?
3. What does the passage say about renewal by the Holy Spirit?
4. What would receiving grace more deeply change in you?

## NO PRESSURE - ONLY HONESTY

# Your Response

Grace can be difficult to receive when we have learned to measure worth through performance. Sit with the truth that God's love is not a prize for the strongest disciple. It is the source from which faith, repentance, obedience, and transformation grow.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Which picture of grace affected you most deeply?
2. Where have you confused spiritual fruit with the price of God's acceptance?
3. Is there failure, shame, or self-righteousness you need to bring into the Father's welcome?
4. How might receiving grace change the way you extend it to another person?

## A PRAYER YOU MAY MAKE YOUR OWN

# Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for moving toward me in mercy. I cannot make myself alive or earn a place in Your family. Help me receive salvation as Your gift through Jesus. Free me from both rebellion and performance, and let the grace that welcomes me also transform the way I live and love. Amen.

## A Note for Anyone Walking Alongside Another Person

Resist turning the reflection into an evaluation of whether someone has shown enough change. Keep the order of the passage intact: God's mercy and grace save; good works follow as the life He prepares. Make room for people who struggle to believe they can be loved without performing.

Continue when you are ready: The Cross: Love That Saves

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