

Life Group Leader's Guide

For the week of Sept. 24, 2017

Quick Review

In his sermon Nat defined justice, mercy and grace. **Justice** is getting what we deserve: You run a red light; you get a ticket. **Mercy** is not getting what we deserve: You're clocked going 50 mph in a 35; instead of getting a ticket, the officer gives you only a warning. **Grace** is getting something you do not deserve: You're clocked going 50mph in a 35; instead of getting a ticket, the officer gives you only a warning. Not only that, the officer also hands you a \$100.00 Amazon gift card for being his 10th stop of the day!

How else would Biblical grace be defined? Biblical grace is God's unmerited favor, acceptance and love to the completely undeserving. We cannot earn God's grace and can never repay it.

One pastor said this about God's grace: "God spreads grace like a four-year-old spreads peanut butter. He gets it all over everything." What limits you in seeing grace in this way?

Digging Deeper

Cultural background to the Luke 15:11-32 passage: For the younger son to take his inheritance early before his father's death, would have been a cultural affront to his father. A father would have been considered to be undignified if he ran, but this father did it anyway in his haste to get to his son and extend him forgiveness and grace.

1. How did the father demonstrate sincere/genuine love and grace in this passage? Leaders, please be sure to bring out the father's compassion; his forgiveness of his son and his extravagant celebration (great grace) in seeing his son return. What keeps us from celebrating the new direction we see people taking spiritually (either in coming to Christ for the first time? Or turning from specific sin and turning to God wholeheartedly)?
2. How do the actions of the three main characters in this passage mirror today's culture (father, older son, younger son)? The older son reflects the world's thinking of earning our own way, withholding forgiveness and grace from others because it isn't deserved; becoming angry and thinking "I deserve better". The younger son reflects today's culture of selfishness, greed, wanting what we want when we want it, etc. But the father, of course, is counter-cultural; extending great grace to one who has brought shame on his family.

Warren Wiersbe said of this passage (paraphrase): "The real prodigal is the son who never left home." Have the group share their thoughts in response to that quote.

Taking it Home

1. Take a couple of minutes and thank God individually for extending you His grace and forgiveness that you did not earn nor could ever repay. [Leaders, maybe allow of few minutes for your members to talk with God personally before gathering them back in to wrap-up.](#)
2. As believers, we're called to be faithful stewards of God's grace to others. How is God calling you to extend His grace to those in your sphere of influence: family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.? From whom are you withholding forgiveness and grace because they have not asked for it or you think they do not deserve it? [Leaders, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to do His convicting work in hearts. Prayerfully consider if God is calling you to share first to encourage other's authentic sharing. How can our group pray for one another to be obedient to what God is calling us to do \(forgive, extend grace, put sincere/genuine love into practice, etc.\)?](#)

[Colossians 3:13](#) "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the LORD forgave you."