



STORIES OF GRACE

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Stories of Grace Member Guide

Introduction

In the Christian faith grace primarily refers to the way God treats us: it relates to his unmerited goodness towards undeserving people. It is his kindness towards us in all sorts of ways that we don't earn, we don't deserve and we have no entitlement to. We receive it as a gift with gratitude in our hearts. At least we ought to.

But in the life, death, resurrection and return of Christ there's an edge to God's grace. It not only refers to his goodness in creating humanity and sustaining our existence. It also refers specifically to his kindness in living among us perfectly, dying for us sacrificially and rising again before us triumphantly, so that we look forward to him taking us to be with him in a glorious eternity when he returns.

In this short series *Stories of Grace*, we will investigate people in the Bible who were transformed by the grace of God; people like Abraham, Mary Magdalene, Timothy, Rahab and Hezekiah. To complement those stories we're going to consider this idea of grace more closely across 3 studies.

Use these studies in your group as you see fit, but here's a suggested timetable.

Sunday Sermon Date	Topic	Midweek (growth group)	What?
Sunday 4 September	Abraham	5-8 September	Study 1: The story of Abraham
Sunday 11 September	Rahab	12-15 September	Study 2: Grace & works
Sunday 18 September	Mary Magdalene	19-22 September	Study 3: Prevailing grace
Sunday 25 September	Jazz Church & School holidays		

Sunday 4 September: Abraham

Study 1: The story of Abraham

Start

Abraham is a big deal in the Bible. What do you know about him and his story?

Read, think, talk, etc.

- 1. Read Genesis 12:1-20. What are the important elements in the promises made to Abraham? How is Abraham's response a mixed bag? And how do you think you might have reacted to God's promises?**

- 2. Read Genesis 15:1-16:6. How does God reshape his promises to Abraham here? And what is the impact of Abraham's response?**

- 3. Read Genesis 21:1-7; 22:1-4. How is this a high point in the whole story, for both God and Abraham?**

4. Read Hebrews 11:8-19. Verse 10, 16, say that Abraham considered himself a stranger in the land, and looked forward to a better (heavenly) place built by God himself How does this inform the way we should think about life in this world? In what ways can we practically hold a little lighter to the things of this world?

5. Hebrews 11 also says that Abraham and Sarah considered that God could do what he said (v.11), even when things look unlikely, even if that involved raising Isaac from the dead (v.19). How do we practically trust God to fulfil his promises to us? How do we know when to trust and when to take matters into our own hands?

Pray

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your faithfulness to your promises to Abraham

Even we have been blessed by them, with the coming of Jesus, a son of Abraham and the Saviour of the world.

Please transform us by your gracious promises

So that we respond to them in faith, just like Father Abraham.

For your glory,

Amen.

Sunday 11 September: Rahab

Study 2: Grace and works

Start

Grace can describe a lot of things—the way you talk, the way you walk, the prayer you pray before eating, etc—but how would you define grace in the Christian sense of the term?

Read, think, talk, etc

- 1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10, the archetypal passage on grace. How does it describe God's grace in salvation?**
- 2. Many of us are familiar with the "not by works" bit of v.9. But what else does this passage say about works? And how does the "not by works" connect to the works in v.10?**
- 3. Read James 2:20-26. How does the example of Abraham and Rahab reveal the interplay between God's saving grace, our faith, and our actions?**

4. Read Titus 2:11-14. How does Paul's words to Titus reveal a similar dynamic?

5. How can you tell when someone (or yourself) trusts their works/deeds rather than trusting in the saving grace of God?

6. What would you say to someone who insisted that they trusted in the saving grace of God, but who were disinterested in living for him?

Pray

Dear Lord

Thank you that when we were dead in our sins, you saved us in Christ Jesus.

We recognise that we contribute nothing to our salvation, so we place our trust entirely in the work of your Son.

But we want to live for him, so help us to joyfully respond in doing the good things you have prepared for us to do.

For his glory and not our own,

Amen.

Sunday 18 September: Mary Magdalene

Study 3: Prevailing grace

Start

Would you say that you're more like a sprinter or a marathon runner? Do you prefer a 30 second TikTok or a 3 hour epic film?

What makes it hard to keep going as a Christian believer?

Read, think, talk, etc

We've thought about the saving grace of God in the life of the Old Testament believers like Abraham and Rahab. We've also considered how grace, faith and deeds interplay. In this study we'll investigate how God's grace keeps us going in the Christian life, by reading about 2 of God's great servants—the Apostles Paul and Peter.

- 1. Read 2 Corinthians 11:21b-12:10. How does Paul respond to the boasting of others who have infiltrated the Corinthian church? What could he boast about, what does he boast about, and why?**

- 2. What's the deal with the thorn in the flesh? How can that possibly demonstrate God's grace in operation?**

- 3. What might it mean for God's grace to be sufficient in your life?**

4. Read 1 Peter 5:6-12. What evidence do we see here of God's ongoing grace in our lives?

5. In his closing remarks Peter says that we ought to stand fast in the true grace of God (v.12). What does this mean and how do we do it?

6. What aspect of the little *Stories of Grace* series has made an impact upon your faith? Why?

Pray

Heavenly Father

We praise you for your saving grace, and we praise you for your ongoing grace which helps us persevere throughout the Christian life.

Please keep us humble, so that our weakness might reveal your power.

And help us to stand fast in your grace, always remembering that it is sufficient for us.

For Jesus' sake,

Amen.



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