

If We Only Knew...

Grace is a Gift

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV) *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

KEY THOUGHT – If we only knew that grace is a gift to receive and not a standard to earn.

The gift of grace includes the following:

1. Grace that calls us to _____
2. Grace that forgives and cleanses us at _____
3. Grace that enables us to live the _____ life
4. Grace that empowers us to do _____

1 Peter 1:2-4 (NIV) *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

Luke 15:11-32 *We all need God's grace...and He will give it to us, IF we are willing to receive it.*

James 4:6 (NIV) *...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

IF WE ONLY KNEW ...

Wk 1 - Grace That Accepts

Getting Started:

1. What do you think is the most graceful sport in the Winter Olympics?
2. Have you had an embarrassing moment where you absolutely lacked grace that caused you to fall or spill something? How did others respond to your blunder? How did you feel?
3. When was the last time you exhibited grace on someone who did not necessarily deserve it?

Going Deeper:

Grace is a term that is used in everyday life. It is used to describe a simple elegance or refinement of movement. It is also used to describe the free unmerited favor of God. Even though we often talk about grace in church, many people are not fully aware of the power of the gift that is offered to each of us. Let's look at what this gift of grace offers each of us:

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. What do these verses tell us that grace offers us? How do we receive this gift? Why does the verse stress the importance that we understand it is a gift?
2. Read John 1:16-17. What do these verses say that we receive as a result of His grace? Do you believe this? Do you live in such a way that you expect one blessing after another? What types of blessings do you think this passage is referring to?
3. How do you know when you have forgotten that grace is a gift? What do you feel like? Does it change how you approach things?
4. How do you treat others when you have forgotten that you have been given the gift of grace freely?
5. Do you believe that you have been offered the gift of grace freely? Do you believe that you have been accepted by grace regardless...

Acting Out:

1. Make a list of things in your life that God has offered you the gift of grace to cover.
2. Next to each item in the list, write how your view of that situation changes when you remember that grace has been offered to that area.

Further Reading This Week:

John 1
Romans 5
Ephesians 1
Ephesians 2