



PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

WORKSHOP: GRACE EXTENDED

by Cinky Jones

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: God's grace is consistent and dependable and is absolutely unrelated to our consistency or dependability. On our best days and on our worst, His grace is there to supply what we lack. His great heart is ever-inclined toward us. This lesson explores the definition of grace, especially what it looks like in our everyday lives. When we truly get a grip on the lavish gift of grace that God has given to us, we are better able to extend grace to others around us.

INTRO: We all have good days and bad days, some days are better and others worse. There are also great days and the worst days. And there are all those shades of days in between. What would a good day for a PWOC sister look like? What would a bad day for a PWOC sister look like? Work with a partner and record your thoughts on the "Good Day/ Bad Day" chart.

Good Day	Bad Day



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Bottom Line: It is important to understand that no matter what we do, we cannot earn more grace than what Jesus already offers us nor can we lose His mercy or grace because of sinful choices. He is absolutely consistent; His love endures forever. Because of His love and mercy, He has a way of “amping up the grace” on your bad days to see you through, and it is His grace that fosters your good days.

I. THE APOSTLE PAUL'S TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

Look at these passages written by Paul in 2 Corinthians 11 starting with the second half of verse 23:

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? (continuing on in chapter 12 the second half of verse 7) ... there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 11:23b-29, 12:7b-9; NIV)

"We are pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Paul has a not-so-secret weapon. In response to him asking the Lord to take away his thorn in the flesh, the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." God's power is perfected in our weakness through His grace.

How do you define grace?



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ACTIVITY: Read and underline what speaks to you in this quote by John MacArthur:

Perhaps the best translation of 2 Timothy 2:1 is, 'Be strong by means of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' As believers we exist in the sphere of grace through our union with Christ. It's the grace of God that empowers believers. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8).

Grace is the undeserved favor of God extended through the gift of salvation--it can't be earned. Once grace is extended to us it's always ours. That's important because if God withdrew His grace, our present sins would condemn us. By living in the sphere of Grace we are continually cleansed of our sins (1 John 1:9).

II. GOD'S GRACE EXTENDS FORGIVENESS AND POWER

God's grace not only extends forgiveness to us, but also divine power. Romans 5:2 speaks of "this grace in which we stand." The Greek word translated "stand" – histémi (his'-tay-mee) means "to be fixed." It is by God's grace that we are both forgiven and have the power to stand in the sphere of grace.

It's God's grace that enables us to extend grace and serve God when we humble ourselves and walk in His forgiveness and His power--otherwise we can do nothing. He gives more grace. (James 4:6) That's the kind of grace Paul spoke of in 2 Timothy 2:1.

III. A GRACE-FILLED HEART

Eric Elder, of The Ranch Fellowship Ministry, offers *5 Ways to a Grace-Filled Heart*:

1- Practice Continual Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is the heart of the gospel, as Jesus forgave us even while we were still sinning against Him. It's the heart of showing grace towards others as well. As Paul said, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)
- By choosing to forgive others, as God has forgiven you, you'll be well on your way towards having a grace-filled heart.

2- Fill your Mind with the Things of God

- Paul wrote to the Philippians: "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)



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- By reading God's Word daily, memorizing verses of Scripture, and meditating on what you're reading, you'll find that God will begin to fill your mind with His thoughts, His ideas and His point of view on whatever you're facing. Keep filling your heart and mind with the things of God as much as possible, every day, several times throughout the day. This process will pay off with huge dividends for you and for those around you, both in the short-term and in the long-term.

3- Keep Asking Yourself, "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD)

- This question is a simple, but helpful reminder to try to think and act and speak as Jesus would. It's not just an intellectual exercise. It's a practical way to accomplish God's work here on the earth. When Jesus went back to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to live inside us so that we could be His body--His hands, His feet, His eyes and ears and voice to those around us. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27) As a believer in Christ, God wants to work through *you* as if Jesus Himself were doing the work--because He is!

4- Pray at All Times.

- As Paul said to the Ephesians, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." (Ephesians 6:18) By praying throughout the day, seeking His will and listening for His voice, you'll be able to stay focused on what God wants at all times. It's like walking through the day with a friend--and even better--because Jesus is a friend who knows everything! So as you walk or sit or talk or think, keep on praying and talking to God at all times. It'll be both a joy to you and a practical help to those around you.

5- "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"

- This practical reminder from James will help you to spiritually "count to 10" before responding to others. While it doesn't say you can't get angry, or you can't ever say anything with which others might disagree, it does say to wait to speak until after you have listened carefully--meaning "with care" and "fully." When you do this, your words will simply come out better, expressing more love and grace, even when speaking things that may be hard to hear.

ACTIVITY: Take a few minutes to answer the following questions on your own. Then partner with someone new and take a few minutes to share your answer to one of the first 4 questions. Share the one that challenged you the most.

1. Which one of the five ways to a grace filled heart is the most challenging for you? Describe why.



APPLY IT TO LIFE: Consider the following quotes regarding grace:

- "Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits on the undeserving." ~ A.W.Tozer
- Hendrikus Berkhof defined grace as "the unmerited operation of God in the heart of man, effected through the agency of the Holy Spirit."

What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to do? Do you need to receive grace from God or others? Do you need to extend grace?



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