

THE GRACE OF GOD

FREE GRACE

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

'By instinct, I feel I must do something in order to be accepted. Grace sounds a startling note of contradiction, of liberation, and every day I must pray anew for the ability to hear its message.'

Philip Yancey - 'What's so amazing about grace?'

Why is it so much easier to 'do something in order to be accepted' than to understand grace as a free gift from God?



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Read Ephesians 2 : 1-10

Verses 1-3

What did our lives look like before we were rescued from our life of sin? .

Why do you think Paul uses such strong imagery as he describes how we lived before God had mercy on us?

Verses 4-5

How were we rescued from this way of life?

Verse 5

What does it mean to be 'alive with Christ'?

Verses 6-7

How do these verses contrast with verses 1-3?

Verses 8-9

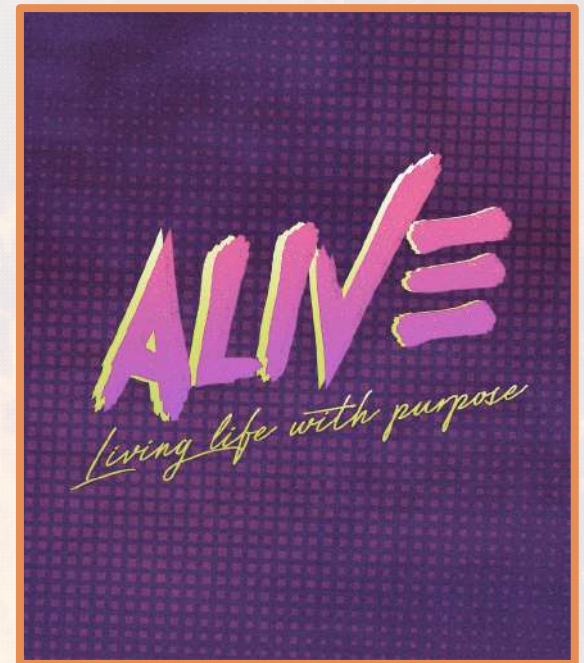
These verses are key to our understanding of grace as 'God's undeserved favour'.

What do they teach us specifically about grace?

Verse 10

Why were we saved by grace?

What might this look like in our daily lives?



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Previously we looked at the first part of the parable of the Prodigal Son. Today we're going to look at his older brother and what we can learn from his reaction in the face of the outrageous grace shown by his father to his rebellious brother.

Read Luke 15 : 25-32

- Why was the older brother so upset with the celebrations?
- What specifically do we learn about his father in this section of the story?
- What has the older son missed through all his hard work?
- When and how do we act like the older son?

Return to Ephesians 2 : 1-10

In one of his reflections on grace, CS Lewis quotes St Augustine who said 'God gives where he finds empty hands'.

Lewis went on 'A man whose hands are full of parcels can't receive a gift'.



- Look at **verses 8 and 9** in particular, and think about the older son in the parable, what 'parcels' do you think we are tempted to carry that mean we miss out on the potential fullness of life that God offers? When might we struggle under a heavy yoke of obligation?
- Look again at **verse 3 of Ephesians 2**, why might we find it so hard to 'put all our parcels down'?

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PRAY

Thank God for his amazing gift of grace and the way that he found us and reached out to us.

Ask him to help you to recognise places in your life which are held as closed fists, so that grace is held at bay.

Pray that as a church we would hold out the gift of grace to those who come through our doors so that their lives are transformed by Jesus

