



# Grace

*And from his fullness we have all received,  
grace upon grace. John 1:16*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT - SPRING QUARTER  
NORTHWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST

# Schedule

<b>#1: THE GOD OF ALL GRACE</b>	<b>MAR 6</b>
<b>#2: THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS</b>	<b>MAR 13</b>
<b>#3: CALLED BY GRACE</b>	<b>MAR 20</b>
<b>#4: SAVED BY GRACE</b>	<b>MAR 27</b>
<b>#5: STRENGTHENED BY GRACE</b>	<b>APR 3</b>
<b>#6: FALLING FROM GRACE</b>	<b>APR 10</b>
<b>#7: MORE GRACE</b>	<b>APR 17</b>
<b>#8: GROW IN GRACE</b>	<b>APR 24</b>
<b>#9: THE WORD OF HIS GRACE</b>	<b>MAY 1</b>
<b>#10: THE THRONE OF GRACE</b>	<b>MAY 8</b>
<b>#11: SUFFICIENT GRACE</b>	<b>MAY 15</b>
<b>#12: STEWARDS OF GRACE</b>	<b>MAY 22</b>
<b>#13: THE GRACE OF LIFE</b>	<b>MAY 29</b>

# LESSON 1: The God of All Grace

*And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

*1 Peter 5:10*

What is grace? Most commonly we define grace as “unmerited favor,” and when we think of the gift of grace we associate it with salvation. But grace is used in the Bible in so many different contexts. We are “stewards” of grace (1 Pet 4:10). We are to “grow” in grace (2 Pet 3:18). We approach the “throne of grace” in prayer (Heb 4:16). The scriptures are described as the “word of his grace” (Acts 20:32). And we anticipate a day when we will share in the “grace of life” (1 Pet 3:7). The purpose of this class will be to flesh out the full picture of how grace is described and pictured in scripture.

To introduce this subject of grace, it’s important that we understand the One who is the source of grace: God! And to understand God’s grace we are going to turn to an ancient narrative taken from the Old Testament in the story of Jonah.

## **The Book of Jonah:**

1. What was Jonah told to do (1:2)? What did Jonah do instead (1:3)?
2. At the end of the book we discover the real reason why Jonah disobeyed God. What is that reason (4:1-3)?
3. What are the five descriptions of God listed in 4:3? How did Jonah know that this was how God was like (Exodus 34:6-7)?
4. Why do you think it is that Jonah didn’t want for Nineveh to be saved? How does the attitude of Jonah compare with the attitude of all of us in general? How does Jonah serve as a kind of representative for humanity? How does this attitude of justice contrast with God’s nature and character?

### **Other Characteristics of God that Help Us Understand His Grace:**

5. **Transcendence or Holiness.** Read Isaiah 6:1-3 and briefly describe what God's holiness means. How does this relate to the attribute of God's grace?
  
6. **Immutability or Unchangeableness.**
  - a. Read James 1:17 and talk about what it means for God to be "light" with no "variation or shadow of turning." What is the point of this description in the context (Jas 1:13-18). How does this contrast with our nature (Jas 3:9-10)? How does this characteristic of God relate to his grace?
  
  - b. What does Isa 40:6-8 say about God's word? How does this relate to God's character? How does that relate to grace?
  
7. **Love.**
  - a. What does 1 John 4:8, 16 tell us about God's character? How has this characteristic of love been expressed to us (1 John 4:9-10)?
  
  - b. How can the statement that "God is love" not contradict the earlier statement that "God is light" (1 John 1:5; see also Ex 34:6-7)?
  
8. **Jealousy.**
  - a. What does it mean when God describes himself as a "jealous" God (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 6:14-15; 32:21)? Isn't jealousy a bad thing? How can this be a positive description of God?
  
  - b. How does God's jealousy actually underscore his grace (Jas 4:5-6)?
  
9. **Wrath.**
  - a. To what is God's wrath a response (Rom 1:18; 2:5-6; 5:9)?
  
  - b. How does God's wrath accentuate and give meaning and depth to his grace (Rom 3:24-25; 5:6-9)?

## LESSON 2: The Grace of the Lord Jesus

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen*

Revelation 22:21

How appropriate it is that the last verse of the Bible is a prayer for the grace of Jesus to be with us! Where would we be without it? It seems it would be impossible to have a thorough study of the subject of grace without considering the grace of our Lord.

But what is the grace of Jesus? The purpose of this lesson is to explore this rich and meaningful topic. We will look at an example of his grace as displayed for us in Luke chapter seven. Then we will consider what his grace means to us, and how we should imitate his grace in practical ways.

### The Sinful Woman and Jesus (Luke 7)

1. Why do you think this woman felt the need or the desire to anoint Jesus feet (vs 36-38)? Why such emotion and devotion from a woman who has lived a life of sin toward a man who is sinless (and would be intimidating to most of us for that reason)?
2. What was the attitude of the Pharisee toward this woman (vs 39)? What do you think was his concept of forgiveness?
3. Why did Jesus tell the parable of the two debtors (vs 40-43)? How does Jesus' interpretation and application of this parable help us to understand the nature of grace (vs 44-48)?
4. What does Jesus say to the woman in verse 49? What does he say to her in verse 50? What does this teach us about grace? What are the conditions of grace? Upon what does grace NOT depend?

### Different Ways the Grace of Jesus Was Expressed

7. **Compassion.**
  - a. How do these verses help us to see the compassion of Jesus (Mt 9:36; Mark 1:40-45; 6:34)? Can you think of other stories that illustrate this characteristic?
  - b. What is compassion and how does grace relate to it? What makes compassion difficult? For what types of people do we most struggle to feel compassion?

**8. Sacrifice.**

- a. How do these verses help us to better understand and define the sacrifice Jesus made for us (2 Cor 8:9; Jn 10:11; Phil 2:5-8; 1 Jn 3:16)?
- b. How does sacrifice uniquely relate to the concept of grace? If grace is defined as a gift, would just any gift constitute true grace in your mind? How costly does a gift have to be for it to qualify as a true act of grace?

**9. Impartiality.**

- a. How does the calling of Levi and the subsequent meal he had with the tax collectors and sinners demonstrate the way Jesus looked at others (Mark 2:15-17)? How does Jesus' attitude contrast with the scribes?
- b. What is the connection between impartiality and grace? What is the opposite of this characteristic? How does that reveal a lack of grace? Why do we treat (and judge) people in this way?

**10. Mission.**

- a. What did Jesus say his mission on the earth was (Lk 19:9-10)? How did Jesus' mission naturally grow out of his grace?
- b. What is a mission statement? How does it help define and direct an organization? How does it reveal the true character of an organization? Thinking in the other direction, how does the mission statement help to define and reinforce the character an organization wants to possess? How can we learn and grow in grace by adopting the same mission Jesus had?

**11. Mercy.**

- a. How does Jesus' conversation with the thief on the cross demonstrate his mercy (Lk 23:34)? What is the (obvious) connection between mercy and grace?
- b. It's easy sometimes to overlook the obvious because it is so obvious. But what is the opposite of mercy? Why is this the easier and more natural thing to do?

**The Grace of Jesus Applied**

- 11. What good is a discussion on the grace of Jesus if we do not seek to apply it? Go back and think about each one of these characteristics (compassion, sacrifice, impartiality, mission, & mercy) and think about specific ways that we can practice each of these and thus be filled with the grace of Jesus. What are some specific areas where you need to make a change? What practical steps can you take to make a change?

## LESSON 3: Called by Grace

*But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace...  
Galatians 1:15*

The next five lessons will all touch on different aspects of grace as it relates to our salvation: our calling; our salvation; our sanctification (or spiritual growth in Christ); and our restoration after we fall back into sin. Of course, this is the most common way in which we think about grace and there are many false teachings that are associated with each of these topics. Our purpose is not to go into detail about these specific false teachings (i.e. Calvinism), but rather to look at all the Bible says about these various topics related to our salvation.

In the first lesson in this series on salvation, we are going to examine the gift of God's calling us to salvation. This is something that is easy to overlook and so it may be something we take for granted. There is much the Bible has to say about this and there is much for us to study and meditate upon. We will begin with the call of Saul of Tarsus as an example and then look at aspects of God's call as described for us in the rest of the New Testament. The focus of this lesson will be upon building gratitude and a sense of responsibility for us to share this gift of grace with others (i.e. evangelism).

### **Saul of Tarsus**

1. What was the intended purpose of Saul's trip to Damascus (Acts 9:1-2)?
2. What event interrupted this trip and changed the course of Saul's life (Acts 9:3-6)?
3. What was Saul's handicap for the next three days (Acts 9:7-9)? Is there a possible intended symbolism in this?
4. Who did the Lord send to speak to Saul (Acts 9:10-12)? Why did this man hesitate when told to speak to Saul (Acts 9:13-14)?
5. According to Acts 9:17, what did Ananias say to Saul?
6. Read Paul's reflection on this event (written 20-25 years later) and be prepared to discuss the deep impression God's grace in this event left on Paul's heart (1 Timothy 1:12-17).

## Different Aspects of God's Call as Described in the New Testament

### 6. The Eternal Purpose of God.

- a. When did God decide he would call us out of our sins (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:10-12, 20; see also Lk 24:44-47)?

### 7. Initiated by God.

- a. Who initiated the relationship we share with God (Jn 6:44)? How does the Father draw us (Jn 6:45)?

### 8. Universal.

- a. What did Jesus commission his disciples to do (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:16; Lk 24:47; Acts 1:8)?
- b. Who does God want to save (1 Tim 2:3-7; 2 Pet 3:9)? Does this mean that everyone will be saved (Mt 22:14)?
- c. Who is particularly (and, perhaps, surprisingly) singled out by the universal call of the gospel (1 Cor 1:26; Jas 2:5)? Is this a contradiction? Does this mean the call is not universal?
- d. What other group was surprisingly called (Acts 13:44-47; Eph 3:1-6; 4:4; Col 1:24-29)?

### 9. Undeserved.

- a. What was the condition of the believers in Corinth before they were called (1 Cor 6:9-11; 1:1-9)?
- b. How is our former state described in 1 Pet 2:9-10?

### 10. Glorious.

- a. What did the gospel call produce in Colossae (Col 1:3-7)?
- b. Describe briefly the incredible effects of the gospel call from the following passages: Rom 8:30; 2 Thess 2:14-15; Eph 1:18; Phil 3:14; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:3-4.
- c. What should be the natural response to this glorious call (Eph 4:1)?

## What This All Means for Us

11. Lest this be a mere academic exercise, we need to think about what specific applications we should make. How should the call of God change our morality and behavior? How should it influence our prayer life and worship? How should it affect our evangelism?



## LESSON 4: Saved by Grace

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.*

*Galatians 2:4-5*

The basic meaning of the New Testament word for grace, *charis*, is “a gift that brings joy.” It can refer to any gift, including God’s gifts of creation, his providential blessings, the gifts of the Spirit, etc. Sometimes, it refers to saving grace. This grace is simply God’s desire (because of his nature described in lesson 1) to reach out to and to forgive sinners who have wickedly rebelled against his divine will. This salvation, of course, came at a great price. As we are told in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son...” Or as 1 Peter 1:18-19 says that we were not redeemed with “perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

As we continue to work through this series of five lessons on our salvation, in this lesson we will look at the core of the gospel of Jesus Christ: ***our salvation by God’s grace!***

### Barabbas

1. How is Barabbas described in the following passages: Matthew 27:16; Mark 15:7; Lk 23:18-19?
2. How is Jesus described in these verses: Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22, 41, 47?
3. How does Barabbas perfectly represent us in this narrative (1 Pet 3:18)?

### No Grasp of Grace

3. In J.I. Packer’s book *Knowing God* he suggests four reasons why the average Christian fails to appreciate grace. Look at the four reasons listed below and explain why this is so. Try to think of scriptures to support your answers. I’ve italicized the phrases Packer uses and then given my own description in parentheses.
  - a. ***The moral ill-desert of man*** (or how sinful we are).
  - b. ***The retributive justice of God*** (or God’s wrath against sin).
  - c. ***The spiritual impotence of man*** (or our inability to save ourselves).
  - d. ***The sovereign freedom of God*** (or God’s right to not save us at all).

### **Grace: Not Earned or Deserved**

4. Grace is the foundation and the source of our forgiveness. It is sometimes defined as “unmerited favor” but that phrase may miss the mark a little bit. A better definition is that grace is “favor bestowed where wrath is owed.” God’s nature is not to be compared to the doting grandfather who lets bad behavior slide. Remember lesson one. God is a holy and just God who hates sin! Look at the following four passages and briefly summarize each of them and use these to demonstrate how wonderful and amazing God’s grace is.
  - a. Romans 3:21-26
  - b. Romans 5:6-11
  - c. Ephesians 2:1-10
  - d. Titus 3:1-8

### **What This All Means for Us**

6. Read Titus 2:11-14 and Romans 6:1-23 and explain what our response to God’s grace and our salvation ought to be. How does this contrast with the popular notion of salvation and sanctification?

## LESSON 5: Strengthened by Grace

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus...*

2 Timothy 2:1

We sing those old familiar hymns that speak of God's grace in this way:

*"Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come. T'was grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home."*

*"Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee. Never let me wander from Thee, never leave the God I love. Here's my heart; O take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above."*

We sing those hymns at church, but do we believe the sentiments of those words in our hearts? Ask most Christians if they believe in God's grace and they will undoubtedly say, "YES!" But if you listen to how they talk about their expectation of going to heaven, they sound much less convincing.

Why is this? There are many possible reasons, but perhaps the beliefs many Christians have about grace have been shaped by lessons taught against the false doctrine of "Once Saved, Always Saved." Because of the efforts made to prove that salvation **CAN** be lost, the false impression many might have is that salvation will **USUALLY** be lost. The unintended consequence of affirming and stressing the **POSSIBILITY** of falling from grace might have been that after we're saved we're on our own with **NO GRACE** at all! (And a side note here: we must be cautious about overcorrection when refuting false teaching!)

We're in the middle of a five lesson series looking at grace as it relates to our salvation. In the first lesson we looked at the call of grace. In the last lesson we examined our being saved by grace. Both of these lessons focused on the grace of God in our being saved initially. In the next three lessons we'll look at the Bible's teaching about what happens after we are saved. Does God's grace end at the cross? Are we on our own after our baptism into Christ? What is the role of God's grace after we are saved? Does God promise any help at all after we begin our life and journey as a newborn babe in Christ?

In this lesson we will answer those questions with a strong affirmative: Yes, Yes, and Yes! God does not leave us without help! We couldn't make it without grace! God's grace will lead us home!

In the next lesson we will refute the false teaching of "Once Saved, Always Saved," and show how grace can be forfeited by us when we refuse to follow Jesus in our lives. We will demonstrate how the Bible doesn't present this possibility as a denial of God's grace but actually as an affirmation of God's love and desire to be freely loved by those whom he calls.

Finally, the third lesson will look at "more grace" (Jas 4:6) and how we serve a God of second chances. Even after we fall (and fall miserably) God continues to extend his grace to us!

### **Finishing What He Started**

1. One of the comforting thoughts you have as a parent is knowing that when you pray to God about your kids, you're praying to One who loves your kids more than you do! As our Heavenly Father, we can take heart that God loves us and is on our side. He desperately wants us to see us finish the race that we started.
2. Read the following verses and comment on how each of these reinforces the idea that God is our Father and wants to see us succeed.
  - a. Phil 1:6
  - b. Rom 8:28-32
  - c. Eph 1:13-14
    - i. Also note Eph 1:3-9 where the Father planned our redemption (3-6) and the Son executed that plan in giving his blood (7-9)
  - d. 2 Tim 4:18
  - e. 1 Cor 1:8-9 (and consider the background of those he is addressing, 6:9-11!)
  - f. 1 Cor 15:10
  - g. 1 Thess 3:12-13

### **The Devil is No Match**

3. We are taught to have a healthy respect for the Devil (see 1 Pet 5:8), but we should know that our adversary is limited in what he can do to us (see Job 1:12; 2:6). Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the temptations around us and a sense of helplessness can paralyze us in our struggle against sin. We might feel it is just a foregone conclusion that we are going to sin and that there is no hope.
4. Look at the following verses and be prepared to talk about how the Bible gives us assurance that, by God's grace, we can overcome the Devil.
  - a. 1 John 4:4
  - b. John 10:27-30
  - c. 1 Cor 10:13
  - d. Rom 8:38-39
  - e. Eph 6:10-13
  - f. 2 Thess 3:3
  - g. Luke 22:31-33

### **Keeping and Being Kept**

5. Who is keeping and what is being kept in the following verses?
  - a. John 8:51; 14:21-23; 15:9-10; 17:6
  - b. John 17:11-12, 15
  - c. 1 Thess 5:23-24
  - d. 2 Tim 1:12-14
  - e. 1 Pet 1:3-5
  - f. Jude 1:24-25
  - g. Rev 3:10

## LESSON 6: Falling from Grace

*You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.*

*Galatians 5:4*

“Once Saved, Always Saved” is a pretty widespread doctrine. Many of us have heard friends defend this doctrine at one point or another. What is rare is to find someone who holds to the Calvinist doctrine of “Perseverance of the Saints.” A true Calvinist would scoff at the idea that someone could persist in rebellious sin against God and still be saved. That clearly goes against the idea of holiness and sanctification in the life of a believer. What a Calvinist would argue is that those who are truly saints will persevere to the end of their journey because God’s grace continues to work in their life till the end. (And they would point to a lot of the passages we looked at in the previous lesson to establish their point.) So, while a believer might sin, they will not persist in that sin. They will repent and return to God because God’s grace is “irresistible.”

Is this what the Bible teaches about grace? Is God’s grace truly irresistible? Is it possible for one who begins the journey of faith to turn from that and to go back into the world? Or does God’s grace eliminate that as a possibility? We hope to explore biblical answers to these questions in this lesson.

### The Parable of the Sower

1. The Calvinist argues that those who appear to fall away did not fall away, in fact, because they were not true believers in the first place. They were believers only from outward appearance. A true believer, the Calvinist would argue, will never fall away. However, the Parable of the Sower would seem to suggest otherwise.
2. Read Luke 8:11-15 and answer the following questions:
  - a. What are the four groups in this parable?
  - b. What kind of faith does the first group NOT have? What does Jesus say about this faith? In what does it result?
  - c. How does Jesus describe the faith of the second group (“the ones on the rock”)? (And note that this is the same word for faith used in the first group)
  - d. What can happen to our faith according to these passages? (Heb 3:12; 1 Tim 4:1)
  - e. What is the significance of those represented by the good soil who take the word into their heart and “hold it fast” and therefore bear fruit with

“patience?” (Consider also Jn 8:51; Lk 11:28; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Col 1:21-23; 2 Tim 3:13-14; Jas 1:21; 1 Jn 2:24-25)

### **The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**

3. Read Matthew 18:21-35 and answer the following questions:
  - a. What did the king do for the one who owed 10,000 talents?
  - b. What did the forgiven servant do to the one who owed him 100 denarii?
  - c. When the king found out about this, what did he do to this servant who was unwilling to forgive a debt?
  - d. Is our sin a debt we can ever pay off? What is the point of this parable and how does it help us answer the questions in this lesson about God’s grace?

### **The Vine and the Branches**

4. Read John 15:1-6 and answer the following questions:
  - a. Who is the Vine?
  - b. What are the branches?
  - c. What happens to fruitful branches? What happens to unfruitful branches?
  - d. Were the unfruitful branches really connected to the Vine?

### **Paul’s Perspective**

5. What did Paul say about those who depended on the Law in Galatians 5:4?
6. What did Paul say about himself in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27?

### **Hebrews**

7. How does the Hebrew writer describe the ones who have “fallen away” in Hebrews 6:4-6? Were they “really saved?”
8. What does the Hebrew writer say is the expectation for those who “go on sinning deliberately” (ESV) after receiving the knowledge of the truth (Heb 10:26-31)?

## LESSON 7: More Grace

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*

*James 4:6*

To recap the last three lessons, we are saved by grace (lesson 4), strengthened by grace (lesson 5), yet we still have the ability to fall from grace (lesson 6). God’s boundless grace not only gives us freedom from the guilt of sin, it gives us freedom from the power of sin. But his grace is certainly not a license to sin; neither will it compel us to do what is right. We still have the freedom to walk away from and to refuse God’s grace.

In the final lesson in this little four lesson miniseries, we will examine the free grace that is offered to us after we have fallen. Though we may have sinned and “trampled underfoot the Son of God,” and “profaned the blood of the covenant,” and even “outraged the Spirit of grace,” (Heb 10:29) there is still “more grace” that God offers (James 4:6). We serve a God of second chances. Let’s look at some passages that should give us hope when we have fallen back into sin.

### Grace to the Humble

1. Read James 4:1-10 and answer the following questions:
  - a. When we become friends with the world, what happens to our relationship with God (Jas 4:4)?
  - b. What else are we called in James 4:4?
  - c. What kind of adultery is this describing (see Jas 4:5)?
  - d. Why does James 4:6 say we are offered “more” grace? This makes it sound like we have already received grace. When did we receive this grace?
  - e. To whom is this grace offered (Jas 4:6)?
  - f. What specific steps are given for us to restore our broken relationship?
    - i. Verse 7
    - ii. Verse 8
    - iii. Verse 9
    - iv. Verse 10
  - g. If we follow all of these steps have we earned or deserved the relationship we have once again with God? What does it say at the end of verse 10?

### **The Lost Sheep**

2. Read Lk 15:3-7 and answer the following:
  - a. How many sheep does the shepherd have in Jesus' parable?
  - b. How many of those sheep have gone astray?
  - c. What does he do with the rest of the sheep? Would there be an argument to say that this doesn't make sense? Why does it make sense to the shepherd?
  - d. What happens when the lost sheep is found?
  - e. What does this teach us about God's willingness to show grace a second time?

### **Our Advocate**

3. Read 1 John 1:5-2:2 and answer the following:
  - a. What do we learn about the nature of God from 1 Jn 1:5?
  - b. So much of this passage is about the things we say (either to others or to ourselves). What is the lie we tell in 1 Jn 1:6?
  - c. What is the foundation of our fellowship with the Father according to 1 Jn 1:7 (two things)?
  - d. What is another lie we tell according to 1 Jn 1:8?
  - e. What happens when we confess our sins (1 Jn 1:9)?
  - f. Is this grace to be treated as a license to sin (1 Jn 2:1)?
  - g. What do we have with the Father when we sin (1 Jn 2:2)? (Look this word up in a Greek dictionary)
  - h. What is Jesus called in 1 Jn 2:2?

### **The God of Second Chances**

4. There are so many examples of God offering "more grace" in the Bible: David's sin with Bathsheba; Manasseh's repentance in captivity; Hosea's redemption of Gomer; Simon the Sorcerer; etc.
5. List below some of your favorite redemption stories in the Bible and be prepared to discuss them in class.



## LESSON 8: Grow in Grace

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18

The last five lessons have been about salvation. This is what most of us think about when we consider God's grace because most of the references to grace in the Bible pertain to our being forgiven of sin. However, there is much more to the subject of grace. In the next three lessons we will look at God's grace as it relates to our spiritual development and growth. In this first lesson we will look at a specific passage in Titus where Paul shows a clear connection between grace and spiritual growth. Then we will consider the spiritual disciplines of Bible study ("the word of his grace") and prayer ("the throne of grace").

### **"Sound Doctrine" (Titus 2:1-10)**

1. What was Titus to teach (2:1)?
2. List what Titus was to specifically teach each of the following groups:
  - a. Older men (2:2)
  - b. Older women (2:3)
  - c. Young women (2:4-5)
  - d. Younger men (2:6)
3. Of what was Titus to be a model (2:7-8)?
4. What was Titus to teach bondservants to do (2:9-10)?

### **"The grace of God" (Titus 2:11-15)**

3. "What in the world does all of this have to do with grace? I thought this was a class on grace, not a class about personal character!" If you read the first half of Titus 2, you might think this way. However, as you see how Paul closes out chapter two and the rest of the letter it becomes clear that the "sound doctrine" and "good works" emphasized in the first half of the letter have everything to do with grace. In fact, it's impossible to separate the two!
4. What serves as the foundation for "sound doctrine" and "good works" (2:11)?
5. What does the grace of God teach or train us to do (2:12)?
6. What is the end goal of this grace (2:13)?

7. Why did Jesus give himself for us (2:14)?

### **“Ready for Every Good Work” (Titus 3:1-11)**

8. Note that in 2:15 Paul seems to shift back to “sound doctrine” and “good works” which may indicate that 2:11-14 is a kind of parenthetical thought. Grace is the reason or motive for the sound doctrine and good works he is encouraging Titus to teach. But he is not finished with grace. He’s about to go much deeper into the subject!
9. Of what is Titus to remind them (3:1-2)?
10. Once again, what is the motive (3:3-7)?
11. Why do you think it would be important for Paul to state the obvious in 3:5? If the audience already understands that grace (by definition) is an undeserved gift (Rom 11:6), then why did he feel the need in this context to spell this out?
12. Once again, why is Titus to “insist” on these things about God’s grace (3:8)?
13. What are the kinds of discussions that Titus is to avoid (3:9)?
14. What should be done with the one who would stir up these kinds of discussions (3:10-11)?

### **What This Means to Us**

15. Though this letter obviously has a broad application (instruction for old, young, men, women, bondservants, etc.) this letter is primarily for a young preacher on the kinds of things he should preach (“sound doctrine”). Let’s first think about how this should influence those of us who occupy the pulpit.
  - a. Based on this text, what would be the consequence of teaching works without grace?
  - b. What would be the consequence of teaching grace without works?
16. Now, what is the application for those of us sitting in the pew?
  - c. When older men and women are not living “dignified, self-controlled” lives that are “sound in faith, in love, or steadfastness”... Of what is that a symptom?
  - d. When younger women do not love their husbands or children or when younger men and women are not showing self-control, kindness, or integrity... What is the problem?
  - e. What is the impact on the gospel (2:8, 10, 11; 3:2-3)?

## LESSON 9: The Word of His Grace

*“And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace...”*

Acts 20:32

In the last lesson we saw the tight connection between our spiritual growth (“sound doctrine” and “good works”) and grace found in Paul’s letter to Titus. In this lesson we want to explore one of the main conduits of God’s grace to accomplish this goal of spiritual growth: **God’s Word!** We will look at this connection as it is presented in Paul’s letter to the Ephesian church.

### “The Fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

1. Paul begins his prayer at the end of chapter three with the words, “For this reason” which points back (at least in part) to the ministry that he had among the Gentiles. Write down all of the times Paul uses the word “grace” in 3:1-13 and explain how and why he uses the word grace.
  
2. Paul prays for the strength of God’s power through the Spirit to be given to them.
  - a. What part of our being needs this strength (3:16)?
  
  - b. Where does he pray that Christ might dwell (3:17)?
  
  - c. What do we need strength to do (3:18)?
  
  - d. What will be the end result of knowing the love of Christ (3:19)?
  
  - e. How much is God’s power able to accomplish in us (3:20)?

### “The Fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7-24)

3. After going through the seven “ones” that bind us together, Paul then shifts to the diversity of gifts (grace!) given to the church. What are the specific gifts listed in 4:11? What do all of these have in common?
  
4. What do all of these gifts help the church to attain (4:13)?
  
5. What do they help prevent (4:14)?
  
6. How do we grow (4:15)?

7. How are the minds of the Gentiles described (4:17)?
8. What has happened to their understanding (4:18)?
9. How does this picture of the Gentiles contrast with us (4:19-24)? How did this transformation take place?

### **“Christ Will Shine On You” (Ephesians 5:1-21)**

10. After praying for strength to be filled with God’s fullness; and then describing how Christ’s gifts in the various apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers fills us with Christ’s fullness; Paul then gets into some of the details of what this looks like in real terms at the end of the letter. What we want to highlight here is how Paul continues to stress the importance of knowledge!
11. What are we to imitate (5:1)?
12. How can we be deceived (5:6)?
13. What is the before and after picture in 5:8? How are we to walk?
14. What is the fruit of light (5:9)?
15. What are we to try to discern (5:10)?
16. What are we to expose (5:11) and how is it exposed (5:13)?
17. How are we to walk (5:15)? What are we to understand (5:17)? With what are we to be filled (5:18)?

### **What This Means to Us**

18. We have been given a high calling! We are called to be “filled with all the fullness of God,” to “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” and to be “imitators of God!” Obviously, this process is not going to be easy. Let’s make this lesson as practical as possible and consider how we can make meaningful changes in our lives.
  - a. First of all, what are some of the influences in our world that serve to deceive us (5:6) and pull us back into darkness (4:17-19; 5:8)?
  - b. What are some ways we can take advantage of the gifts Christ has given to us (5:11)? In other words, if the gifts of the “apostles and prophets” represent the New Testament, how can we utilize this gift in practical ways?
  - c. What about the “evangelists, pastors, and teachers”? What are some specific things Northwood offers that you could more take advantage of?

## LESSON 10: The Throne of Grace

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

*Hebrews 4:16*

It is beyond amazing that the Creator of the world and universe wants to listen to us! There is perhaps no other way that God’s grace is more personally felt than when we approach the throne of grace in prayer. It is before this throne that we experience forgiveness of sins; that we receive the peace that passes understanding when undergoing specific trials; that we receive wisdom to deal with problems in life; that we receive the courage and power we need to accomplish God’s will for our lives.

### Forgiveness

1. 1 John 1:5-2:2
  - a. This passage in 1 John assures us that we can receive forgiveness when we confess our sins to the Father.
  - b. What are the conditions of receiving forgiveness? (Look carefully at the text)
  - c. What are some reasons why we don’t take advantage of this blessing? (Begin with the text)
  
2. James 5:16
  - a. This passage is similar to the one in 1 John in that it reassures us of forgiveness (called “healing” here). But there is an added dimension in this passage.
  - b. What is different in this passage when compared to 1 John? Who else is involved in the confession and conversation in this passage?
  - c. How is this done? Is this merely talking about “walking down the aisle” after an invitation is given? What is the context of this confession? Is there something from the immediate context that might provide some insight into what James had in mind?
  - d. What is the benefit of going to the throne of grace with someone else in a situation like this?

### Peace

3. Phil 4:6-7
  - a. What are we told to NOT do? How hard is it to obey that command? What are we told to do instead?
  - b. Is there a promise in this passage that our problems will be taken away when we pray to God? What is promised? What is promised for our hearts and minds?
  - c. What are some of the practical benefits you have personally experienced in this area of prayer?

4. Jas 5:13
  - a. What is the appropriate response to suffering? What about when we are sick?
  - b. What happens to us emotionally when going through a season of suffering and/or sickness?
  - c. Similar to our discussion above on forgiveness... is this something we should do by ourselves? Who does James tell us we should call upon?
  - d. What is the value of involving others (elders, trusted mentors, friends, etc.) in our periods of suffering and/or sickness?

## Wisdom

1. James 1:5
  - a. Of what kind of wisdom is James speaking? (for contextual clues look at how “wisdom” is used in James 3:13-18, noting that the answer to this question is not necessarily limited to this but it should certainly be considered)
  - b. What are some specific situations where we might seek wisdom from God in prayer?
2. Daniel 2:17-23
  - a. Naturally, this narrative is stepping outside of what we could properly apply to ourselves. God does not give us wisdom and insight concerning dreams as he did to Daniel. However, there are some principles that do apply to us and so I wanted to direct some questions for our discussion.
  - b. Why do you think Daniel asked his friends to pray with him concerning this matter? (Do you see a theme? See James 5 above!) Again, what would be the value of seeking God’s wisdom in prayer with other people praying with you and for you?
  - c. What does Daniel confess about God in verse 20? What did God give him according to verse 23? What’s the application for you and me?

## Courage

3. Acts 4:23-31
  - a. What is the context for the prayer in Acts 4? What kind of situations might we find ourselves in where this kind of prayer is needed?
  - b. Who do the disciples call together for this prayer? Why is it important for us to approach the throne of grace together when facing adversity?

## Power

4. Eph 3:21-22 & Phil 4:13
  - a. How much power is available to us in prayer according to these two passages? In what kinds of circumstances should we seek God’s power? When do we need to go to the throne of grace in search of power?

## LESSON 11: Sufficient Grace

*“Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”*

2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Up to this point in our class we have talked about the deep and boundless grace that is offered to us in Christ Jesus. Most of our discussion about grace has been how it relates to our salvation from sin. However, in the last lesson we looked at the help we receive in when we approach the throne of grace in prayer. While it is true that God’s power is limitless and that God responds to our prayers by giving us beyond what we can ask or even imagine (Eph 3:20-21), the Bible also makes it clear that God sometimes limits his grace to us as he responds to our prayers. In this lesson we will explore why that is and why suffering and trials fit into God’s will and plan for our lives.

### Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh

1. 2 Corinthians 12:1-7
  - a. What do we learn in this passage was going on in Paul’s life? What was tempting Paul to pride and arrogance?
  - b. Whose “messenger” does Paul credit with sending this thorn?
  - c. What does Paul say was the purpose of this thorn? Does that make sense given who sent the thorn? How do you reconcile this?
2. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10
  - a. How many times did Paul pray about this thorn? What is the word Paul uses for prayer in verse 8? What can we assume about these prayers? Would you assume they were they casual or intense? Were they short or long?
  - b. Who else in the Bible prayed for something to be removed from him three times?
  - c. What was God’s response to Paul’s prayer? How do you explain this response? How did Paul interpret this response in verses 9-10? How did it shape his perspective about suffering and trials in general?

### Israel in the Wilderness

3. Deuteronomy 8:1-10
  - a. According to verse two, what was God’s purpose in leading Israel for forty years in the wilderness?

- b. According to verse three, what did he let them experience in the wilderness? Why did he feed them with manna?
  - c. What were they to know in their heart (v 5)? And what is the purpose of that (v 6)?
  - d. What kind of response should the abundance of the Promised Land produce in them (v 10)?
4. Deuteronomy 8:11-20
- a. What is the danger of the abundance of the Promised Land (v 11-14)?
  - b. What is the implied blessing of the “fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water” (v 15)?
  - c. According to verse 16, what was the purpose of God humbling and testing them in the wilderness?
  - d. What were they warned to not say in their heart (v 17)?

### **Job & the Prophets**

5. James 5:7-11
- a. What is this passage all about? How does this compare with similar exhortations in chapter one of James?
  - b. How are the prophets an example of patience?
  - c. Summarize the following prayers of Jeremiah and think about how they are similar to prayers you have prayed (or loved ones you know):
    - i. Jeremiah 9:2
    - ii. Jeremiah 15:18
  - d. How is Job an example of steadfastness?
  - e. Let’s look at two prayers from Job: one at the beginning of the book and the other from the end. What can we learn about grace from each of these prayers?
    - i. Job 1:21
    - ii. Job 42:1-6



## LESSON 12: Stewards of Grace

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace...”*

1 Peter 4:10

One way God’s grace is given to us is through the various gifts and talents we possess. Jesus used the Parable of the Talents to emphasize for us the responsibility we have to use these gifts as good stewards. Paul does something similar for us in Romans 12 where, after talking about the general grace given to all of us in salvation for 11 chapters, he discusses the specific grace that has been given to each one of us in the unique characteristics and talents God has gifted us with. We will basically stay in Romans 12 for our lesson on “Stewards of Grace.”

### A Living Sacrifice

1. Romans 12:1
  - a. Upon what foundation does Paul base his appeal?
  - b. When Paul speaks of presenting our bodies as a sacrifice, what do you think that means? How did Paul use this word to “present” our lives in Romans 6?
  - c. How does Paul describe this sacrifice?
2. Romans 12:2
  - a. To what are we to not be conformed?
  - b. What does it mean to be transformed? How does this transformation happen?
  - c. What are we to “discern” (ESV) or “prove” (NKJV)?

### Our Gifts & the Body

3. Romans 12:3
  - a. What are we to not think? What is the opposite of this way of thinking? Or, to put it another way, how are we to think?
  - b. What has God “assigned” (ESV) or “dealt” (NKJV) to each one of us?
4. Romans 12:4-5
  - a. In Paul’s analogy, what do the members of the body (hand, foot, mouth, etc.) represent in the church? Why does this analogy work for the church?
  - b. How does this analogy stress both the uniqueness of members of the body as well as interdependence?

5. Romans 12:6-8
  - a. What is said about our gifts in verse 6? (I count three things – two statements of fact and one conclusion)
  - b. Below is a list of the gifts mentioned here. Give a brief description of what you think each of these means. Also describe the inherited (genetic?) personalities these might be describing as well as ways that these gifts are enhanced and developed through environmental factors or through training.
    - i. Prophecy
    - ii. Service
    - iii. Teaching
    - iv. Exhortation
    - v. Contribution
    - vi. Leadership
    - vii. Acts of mercy

### **The Gifts in Action**

6. Romans 12:9-13
  - a. Both verse 9 and verse 10 begin with an exhortation to love. How does he qualify both statements about how our love should be characterized?
  - b. There are three statements in verse 11. How does this trio of exhortations work together? Is he saying three separate things or just one thing?
  - c. There are three statements in verse 12. Same as the previous question, how do these three admonitions work together?
  - d. How are the two commands in verse 13 similar or different? What is “hospitality”? What are different ways that hospitality can be expressed?
7. Romans 12:9-13
  - a. Paul seems to turn his attention more toward loving our enemies in this paragraph. How would you sum up the basic message?
  - b. What is the relationship of this section to the discussion of offering ourselves as a living sacrifice at the beginning of the chapter? How does Paul’s discussion of God’s grace given to us through these gifts help change our perspective about loving our enemies?

## LESSON 13: The Grace of Life

*“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life...”*

1 Peter 3:7

“The grace of life...” This has been variously interpreted. Some believe this is speaking of the “good life” that comes to those who follow God’s rules for the home. While that is certainly a possibility, I prefer the idea that the grace of life is actually eternal life with the Father in heaven. That is our inheritance (Mt 6:19-21; Lk 12:33-34; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 2 Cor 5:1; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 6:17-19; 1 Pet 1:3-4). And this inheritance is neither earned nor deserved at all by us (Jn 3:16; Lk 12:32; Rom 5:6-11; Phil 3:20-21). Without question, when we speak of heaven we must surely think of grace. It is only by God’s grace that we have this glorious hope. So, it seemed appropriate to conclude our study of grace with some thoughts about heaven!

### The New Heaven & the New Earth

1. Revelation 21:1-4
  - a. What is new and what is old in verse 1?
  - b. What did John see coming down out of heaven in verse 2?
  - c. What is the stunning announcement in verse 3?
  - d. What is taken away in verse 4?
2. Revelation 21:5-8
  - a. What do you think is meant by the statement, “Behold, I am making all things new” (v 5)?
  - b. How much does the water of life cost in verse 6? Does this phrase “water of life” make you think of any other passages in the Bible?
  - c. What does the one who conquers receive (v 7)?
  - d. What is the “second death” (v 8)?

### The New Jerusalem

6. Revelation 21:9-14
  - a. Who is the Bride and who is the Lamb in verse 9?
  - b. To where was John taken in verse 10?

- c. How many times is the number 12 found in verses 12-14? What do you think is the significance of this number?
7. Revelation 21:15-21
- a. What shape is this city (v 16)?
  - b. How large is this city (v 16-17)?
8. Revelation 21:22-27
- a. What is missing from this city (v 22)?
  - b. What else does the city not have (v 23)?
  - c. What does this city illuminate (v 24)? What will kings bring into it (v 24)?
  - d. What do the gates never do (v 25)? What does this city never have (v 25)?
  - e. What will never enter this city (v 27)? Who are the only ones who may enter (v 27)?

### **The River of Life**

8. Revelation 22:1-5
- a. What flows through the middle of the street (v 1)? From where does it flow (v 1)?
  - b. What is growing on either side of this (v 2)? What purpose do the leaves serve (v 2)?
  - c. What will God's servants see (v 4)? What will be on their foreheads (v 4)?
  - d. What will happen to the night (v 5)? For how long will they reign (v 5)?