GIACE SAY TACE

Grace.

Amazing grace. Unmerited and unearned. God's gift to us all. The early Christians were struggling with this free gift. Everything else in life needed to be paid for or earned. There was a price to pay. To be honest, we easily slip back into this mindset. If we're good enough, God will love us. If we're not, we're not so sure of God's love. Paul wrote this letter to remind the early Christians, and now us, of God's grace–Jesus.



LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

Author: Opening verse identifies the author as the apostle Paul

Occasion and Purpose: Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, that a number of ceremonial practices of the Old Testament were still binding on the New Testament church. Paul responded by clearly establishing his apostolic authority and thereby substantiating the gospel he preached. By introducing additional requirements for justification, his adversaries had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring Paul's converts to the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified, and it is by faith alone that he is to live out his new life in the freedom of the Spirit.

Theological Teaching: We are sanctified not by legalistic works but by the grace of God and obedience that comes from faith in God's work for Him, in Him and through Him by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was the rediscovery of the basic message of Galatians that brought about the Reformation. Galatians is often referred to as "Luther's book," because Martin Luther relied so strongly on this letter in his writings and arguments against the prevailing theology of his day.

Live in the grace of Christ.

God does not coerce us from without, but sets us free from within.

Grace vs. Law

The word 'grace' appears 7 times in 6 chapters.

Considered Luther's book - jump-started the Reformation

The Question we hope you explore in this series: How can you use the dinner table and family prayer as a foundation for gratitude in your life?



EUGENE PETERSON'S INTRODUCTION ON GALATIANS

When men and women get their hands on religion, one of the first things they often do is turn it into an instrument for controlling others, either putting or keeping them "in their place." The history of such religious manipulation and coercion is long and tedious. It is little wonder that people who have only known religion on such terms experience release or escape from it as freedom. The problem is that the freedom turns out to be short-lived.

Paul of Tarsus was doing his diligent best to add yet another chapter to this dreary history when he was converted by Jesus to something radically and entirely different—a free life in God. Through Jesus, Paul learned that God was not an impersonal force to be used to make people behave in certain prescribed ways, but a personal Savior who set us free to live a free life. God did not coerce us from without, but set us free from within.

It was a glorious experience, and Paul set off telling others, introducing and inviting everyone he met into this free life. In his early travels he founded a series of churches in the Roman province of Galatia. A few years later Paul learned that religious leaders of the old school had come into those churches, called his views and authority into question, and were reintroducing the old ways, herding all these freedom-loving Christians back into the corral of religious rules and regulations.

Paul was, of course, furious. He was furious with the old guard for coming in with their strong-arm religious tactics and intimidating the Christians into giving up their free life in Jesus. But he was also furious with the Christians for caving in to the intimidation.

His letter to the Galatian churches helps them, and us, recover the original freedom. It also gives direction in the nature of God's gift of freedom--most necessary guidance, for freedom is a delicate and subtle gift, easily perverted and often squandered.



χάρις - charis - grace

n. undeserved, unearned and unmerited favor; goodwill

"Divine influence upon the heart and its reflection of life. Gift. Benefit. Favor of God."

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

"Grace, my friends, dem<mark>an</mark>ds n<mark>othing fro</mark>m us b<mark>ut that</mark> we shall await it with confidenc<mark>e a</mark>nd a<mark>cknowledge</mark> it in g<mark>ratit</mark>ude."

Philip Yancey



Grace Challenge

During the month of November, use your dinner table and/or family prayer to thank God for who He is, all He has done, and the blessings He's given you.

EXAMPLE:

"Father God, tonight	t we are thankful for	Your grace th	iat we kn <mark>o</mark> w	v
through Jesus. We a <mark>r</mark>	e thankful for			
			y	
And we're thankful f	for our food			

Amen.



SERMON NOTES | INSIGHTS | THOUGHTS | SCRIBBLES



GROUP QUESTIONS

What's your favorite part of fall: the weather, the baked goods, pumpkin spice lattes, or football?

What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?

Why is freedom such an important topic in faith?

How do we experience freedom in Christ? What does that look like?

As a group, read Galatians 2:19-21. What do you think it means to say that Christ "lives in me?"

How is a life in Christ/grace different from a life of law/ rule-keeping? Which one is more challenging?

In your family, friends, and/or peer-groups, how can a follower of Jesus model a life of grace? How does this look different than the world?

Take some time to pray together as a group.

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MONDAY

I, Paul, and my companions in faith here, send greetings to the Galatian churches. My authority for writing to you does not come from any popular vote of the people, nor does it come through the appointment of some human higher-up. It comes directly from Jesus the Messiah and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. I'm God-commissioned. So I greet you with the great words, grace and peace! We know the meaning of those words because Jesus Christ rescued us from this evil world we're in by offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins. God's plan is that we all experience that rescue. Glory to God forever! Oh, yes!

GALATIANS 1:1-5 (MSG)

Paul tells us in his introduction to the Galatians that we know the definition of grace because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. What does the sacrifice of Jesus mean to you? How does grace change your relationship with God?

TUESDAY

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

GALATIANS 1:6-7 (NIV)

I can't believe your fickleness—how easily you have turned traitor to him who called you by the grace of Christ by embracing a variant message! It is not a minor variation, you know; it is completely other, an alien message, a no-message, a lie about God. Those who are provoking this agitation among you are turning the Message of Christ on its head.

GALATIANS 1:6-9 (MSG)

Refer to page 54 and the definition of grace. Did anything stand out to you? What does it mean to 'live in the grace of Christ'? Conversely, how might we be susceptible to 'turning the Message of Christ on its head'?

READ MEDITATE PRAYED CONTEMPLATE

WEDNESDAY

As for those who were considered important in the church, their reputation doesn't concern me. God isn't impressed with mere appearances, and neither am I. And of course these leaders were able to add nothing to the message I had been preaching. It was soon evident that God had entrusted me with the same message to the non-Jews as Peter had been preaching to the Jews. Recognizing that my calling had been given by God, James, Peter, and John—the pillars of the church—shook hands with me and Barnabas, assigning us to a ministry to the non-Jews, while they continued to be responsible for reaching out to the Jews. The only additional thing they asked was that we remember the poor, and I was already eager to do that.

GALATIANS 2:6-10 (MSG)

It is often tempting in our lives to put up an appearance of following Jesus. How have you done this in your own life? Why do you think God is not impressed by our attempts to act like someone we're not?

PRAYER

Who breaks the power of sin and darkness? Whose love is mighty and so much stronger? The King of Glory, the King above all kings. This is amazing grace, this is unfailing love: that You would take my place, that You would tear my cross. You lay down Your life, that I would be set free. Oh, Jesus, I sing for all that You've done for me.

Phil Wickham

WEEK ONE I DAILY READINGS

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THURSDAY

What actually took place is this: I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn't work. So I quit being a "law man" so that I could be God's man. Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God.

GALATIANS 2:19 (MSG)

Jesus' great invitation is for us to take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). What does it mean to be crucified with Christ? What part does our ego play in that equation? What do you think impresses God the most?



FRIDAY

Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that. Is it not clear to you that to go back to that old rule-keeping, peer-pleasing religion would be an abandonment of everything personal and free in my relationship with God? I refuse to do that, to repudiate God's grace. If a living relationship with God could come by rule-keeping, then Christ died unnecessarily.

GALATIANS 2:20-21 (MSG)

Has religion or religious ritualism hurt you in the past? How? Spend some time in honest prayer with God today. Be honest and vulnerable about the ways you have been hurt by rule-keeping or peer-pleasing in the past. Invite God to be in a relationship with you, to dine with you at the table of life.

God, as I focus on grace this week, give me eyes to see others the way You see them, and to see the world with the possibility that You see in it.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving.

Ephesians 2:7-9 MSG







SERMON NOTES | INSIGHTS | THOUGHTS | SCRIBBLES



GROUP QUESTIONS

Do you most enjoy being generous to others out of your time, energy, creativity, or resources? Why?

What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?

As a group, read Genesis 12:1-3. What is the end goal of the promise God made to Abraham?

Now, read Galatians 3:23-29 together. Did God fulfill His end of the bargain? How?

Did the 'Law' or old covenant promise have a purpose for a time? What was it?

If God's generosity through Christ made us part of Abraham's family, how then should we be generous?

Who is someone in your life to whom you could show generosity and grace to this week? How?

Take a few minutes to pray for one another. Ask God to make His grace known more and more this week.

WEEK TWO I DAILY READINGS

Lectio Divina is a classic spiritual discipline of engaging Scripture. **READ** the passage–slowly. **MEDITATE** on the passage as you read it again. Put yourself in the passage/story. **PRAY** as you read the passage once more, listen to and talk with God about the passage. And then, **CONTEMPLATE** what the Spirit is moving in you. Circle or underline a word or phrase that jumps out at you. Take the passage with you throughout your day. (for more on this discipline, see page V)

MONDAY

Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God's Message to you? Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God. If you weren't smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it? Did you go through this whole painful learning process for nothing? It is not yet a total loss, but it certainly will be if you keep this up!

GALATIANS 3:2-4 (MSG)

What is your story of faith? Or as Paul asked it, how did your life in Christ begin? What benefit might your story or encounter with Christ have for others? Have you shared your personal faith story with anyone lately?

TUESDAY

Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving or because you trust him to do them in you? Don't these things happen among you just as they happened with Abraham? He believed God, and that act of belief was turned into a life that was right with God.

GALATIANS 3:5-6 (MSG)

Paul is asking the question here about the difference between moral striving and an ability to trust God. Which side of that spectrum do you typically find yourself? Is there a correlation between grace and trust?

READ MEDITATE PRAYED CONTEMPLATE

WEDNESDAY

In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

GALATIANS 3:6-9 (NLT)

What are some gifts have you received from God? How might you turn blessings around to bless others?

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER

Father,	these people	are	on
my heart	today:		

I ask that You are present with them and that they sense Your still, quiet voice. As I prepare for Thanksgiving and the season of Advent, I ask that You help me to be generous, gracious, and thankful each day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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WEEK TWO I DAILY READINGS

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THURSDAY

Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. Dear brothers and sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—and that, of course, means Christ.

GALATIANS 3:15-16 (NLT)

What are you grateful for today? Make a list of 5-10 things. How are the things on that list enhanced or seasoned through a relationship with Jesus?



FRIDAY

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

GALATIANS 3:26-29 (NLT)

The heir of an estate or kingdom has responsibility to continue or pass on what they've received. What are some ways you can be generous to others through the gifts and blessings you've received from Christ?

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER

Lord, I'm thankful for Your faithfulness and grace toward me. May I echo Your love in my everyday interactions. Here are some other things I'm thankful for:

Amen.

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Hebrews 4:16 NLT



SERMON NOTES | INSIGHTS | THOUGHTS | SCRIBBLES



WEEK THREE I GROUP QUESTIONS **GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS GROUP QUESTIONS** In your opinion, which of these is the most essential food to have on the table for Thanksgiving: turkey, stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, or something else? Why? What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you? As a group, read Galatians 5:16-25. What are the two opposing forces described in this passage? How are these two different forces 'motivators' or sources of action in everyday life? Does grace play a role in this? Do you think any fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) can be

forged apart from the Spirit? If so, how can you tell the difference in what that looks like?

What does it mean to 'walk' or 'keep in step' with the Spirit?

What is one practical way you can practice walking with the Spirit this week?

Take some time to pray together as a group.

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MONDAY

But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law. Thus we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage. You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, "Papa! Father!" Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance.

GALATIANS 4:4-7 (MSG)

You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as God's own child because He sent ______. Jesus even said that He must go so that the Advocate would be with us (John 16:7). How would you describe your relationship with the Holy Spirit?

TUESDAY

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day.

GALATIANS 5:16-18 (MSG)

What does it mean to be animated or motivated by the Spirit? What sorts of things does the Spirit want to stir up in our lives?

READ EDITATE PRAYED CONTEMPLATE

WEDNESDAY

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.

GALATIANS 5:19-21 (MSG)

Which of the things Paul lists here can you most identify with in your life? Why has that been a struggle for you? In the first line, he indicates these are developed from what? Does that ring true for you?

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER

Jesus, I thank You for giving us Your Spirit to lead us, comfort us, and protect us. May my life become like a tall, flourishing tree planted near streams of water and nourished by Your words. May my life bear fruitfulness as I learn to abide in You. And may I live every day by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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THURSDAY

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom. But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

GALATIANS 5:22-23 (MSG)

Paul describes here the 'fruit' of a life led by the Spirit. Which of these things do you see most evident in your life? Which of them do you see the least evident? What is one thing you can do this week to work on cultivating that kind of fruit in your life?



FRIDAY

Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

GALATIANS 5:23-24 (MSG)

What does the word legalism mean to you? How can legalism become a temptation or distraction in your pursuit of growing 'Spirit-fruit'? What does a Spirit-motivated life look like in your everyday life (career, family, friend-groups, calendar, etc.)?

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER

Holy Spirit, I want to be led by Your voice, empowered by Your presence, and prompted by Your love. Thank You for being with me. May I keep in step with You today.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

SERMON NOTES | INSIGHTS | THOUGHTS | SCRIBBLES



GROUP QUESTIONS

If you were hosting an evening of dinner and conversation, who is one friend, one celebrity, and/or one historical figure (dead or alive) you would want to attend?

What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?

As a group, read Galatians 6:9-10.

Why do you think Paul links together acts of goodness with healthy community?

Refer back to page 54 and the definition of grace. What does grace look like when it is lived out in community?

What are some other character traits of a healthy community?

Is there one of those things you would like to work on personally or you think your group can grow in together?

Spend some time praying for your group members and about the next season of community together.

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MONDAY

Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.

GALATIANS 6:1-3 (MSG)

What practical advice do you see in this passage for living in community with others? When this verse says to 'live creatively,' it's encouraging you to be thoughtful and considerate of people's differences. Why is this important?

TUESDAY

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

GALATIANS 6:4-5 (MSG)

In a world that is immersed in the comparison game, how can you keep yourself from falling for that trap? Take a few moments to think about 'who you are and the work you have been given.' Do you sense the Spirit stirring anything in you?

READ MEDITATE PRACTICAL CONTEMPLATE

WEDNESDAY

Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience.

GALATIANS 6:6 (MSG)

The table is the epitome of a common, shared life with others. Eat food with someone you don't normally eat with this week. Make a plan to call or text them, today. As you eat, share with them the good things you've experienced lately and ask about what's going on in their life.

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER

Lord, I want my home and my table to be a place where people can experience community. Help me to create the kind of heart and environment that models what Jesus intended for each of us.

Amen.

WEEK FOUR I DAILY READINGS

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THURSDAY

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

GALATIANS 6:7-8 (MSG)

According to this passage, who does the planting in our life? Who does the growing? Where do the seeds come from? Okay, now think into the future–describe what you think God would want your future harvest to look like. Who are the people in that picture?

READ MEDITATE PRAYED CONTEMPLATE

FRIDAY

So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

GALATIANS 6:9-10 (MSG)

What are the most important relationships Paul encourages us to work on? Why? How does grace play a role in our journey of cultivating healthy relationships?

PRAYER

Jesus, here are some people on my heart today:

May I show them Your grace and love. Here are some things that are on my mind:

I trust You. Help me experience Your grace in ever-deepening ways.













EGAN ROAD CHURCH

















