

100 BIBLE LESSONS

Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 21 – CHARIS

Grace in Greek is “charis” and it is very important to have some idea of what grace means. I have given you here an accepted definition. *Grace: the free, unmerited favor of God toward the undeserving and the ill-deserving.* It is not merely that we didn't deserve good – we actually deserved evil. In place of evil, God offers us good, and the only explanation is grace. There is nothing in ourselves for which we can find any reason for God's offer of love, mercy and favor. It is God's grace that causes Him to do it.

There are two great facts about the grace of God. First of all, it's free. It cannot be earned. No one ever earns the grace of God.

Secondly, it is sovereign. God is absolutely entitled to do what He will with His grace. He owes no one any account or explanation of His grace. And, really the gospel is the manifestation of the grace of God – His free unmerited favor toward those who didn't deserve favor but did deserve judgment and condemnation.

I believe Christians do not dwell nearly enough on this wonderful word *Grace*. The trouble with most religious people is that first of all they think they must do something to earn God's grace; and, even worse, most of them think they have done something that earns them God's grace. They are totally wrong in both respects. You can never do anything to earn the grace of God. If you've earned it, it isn't grace. See, if you talk to the average religious church-goer, they have the impression that because they have been to church so long and sat so many hours in Sunday School and offered so much to the church, that God owes them some grace. He doesn't. Now, God faithfully rewards those who do good, but that's not grace. Grace is on a different plane altogether, and I don't believe we can please God better than by being willing to accept His grace without trying to earn it.

I do believe God is continually looking for people who will just accept grace without trying to be good enough to earn it. He usually has to find those people outside the ranks of professing religionists, because, the hardest thing for a religious person to realize is that he has no claim on the grace of God whatever.

There are certain facts about grace that are clearly revealed in the New Testament, and I would like to go through these briefly with you. First of all, grace has only one channel. There is only one way that grace comes to the human race and that channel is Jesus Christ. In John 1:17, it says, “*The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*” Apart from Jesus Christ, God offers grace to no one in any situation or circumstance. The only channel of His divine grace is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, grace is offered to only one kind of person, and that is the humble. Both James and Peter in their epistles quote Proverbs 3:34 – “*God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble.*” So there is only one kind of person that can receive the grace of God and that is the humble. You understand, if we think we have earned it, we can’t receive it. We have to receive it on the basis of humbly acknowledging that we haven’t earned it.

Then again, there is only one means by which grace is appropriated – by which you can actually appropriate grace and have it in your life and your experience – and that means is “faith.” There is a very well known scripture in Ephesians 2:8 which says this: “By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that no of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” Even the faith is given you by God. You can’t even boast of having the faith because until God gave you the faith, you didn’t even have that. So, God offers you His grace only through Jesus Christ, it is offered only to the humble, and it is appropriated only by faith.

Notes adapted from the teaching ministry of Derek Prince. For Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “Charis” is the Greek word that is translated into English as the word _____ .
2. What is an accepted definition of grace?
3. What phrase does Paul call the gospel in Acts 20:23-24?
4. What can we learn about grace from reading Luke 23:39-43?
5. (a) What was the professing religionists prayer in Luke 18:11-12? (b) What was the tax collectors prayer in Luke 18:13? (c) Whose prayer did God answer according to Luke 18:14?
6. In Luke 18:14, God justified (declared righteous) the tax collector. According to this verse why did God do so?
7. (a) What is Jesus claim in John 14:6? (b) According to Scripture do you see any other way to heaven accept through Him?
8. According to Ephesians 2:8-9, how are we saved?