

THE MAGNIFICENT

grace

OF GOD

SESSION FOUR: LIBERATED BY GRACE

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Galatians 5:1-4

connect Open your group time by creating an environment in which you may begin to develop a community of connection. Get to know one another through sharing prayer requests and experiences that provide members with an opportunity to engage.

CONNECTING IN PRAYER: Begin your time together with prayer and praise.

CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER: As a child, were you the rule follower in your family or the “free spirit”?

grow Watch the DVD for Session 4 now. Use the space below to record your thoughts, key points and questions you would like to either remember or discuss.

GROWTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING: In *Liberated By Grace*, Dr. Evans explains that biblical freedom is the release from illegitimate spiritual bondage, enabling us to experience the benefits of our brand new relationship with Christ. Unfortunately, many Christians choose to live in spiritual bondage even though Jesus in grace has come to set them free. This bondage is rooted in legalism, the practice of trying to use rules to earn a greater level of spirituality. Yet, this cycle of “spiritual achievement” leaves us enslaved, cut off from the benefits of God’s free flowing grace.

God desires for us to obey him out of love, not obligation. It is our relationship with Him that should motivate us to live according to His commands. We are not responsible to earn grace, we are only responsible to position ourselves to receive it. God’s grace is not dependent upon our behavior, it’s a benefit we receive because of Christ’s work on the cross. When we internalize this perspective we are free to experience a loving and grace filled relationship with God. A relationship whose overflow is a life of grateful obedience to the One we love.

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NOTES

GROWTH THROUGH DISCUSSION: As you dive into the heart of Dr. Evans' teaching, utilize the following questions to generate discussion among your group.

1. Growing up in the faith what were your beliefs about when God's grace was available to you? (Fill in the blank: God's love or grace was only available when I _____) Why?
2. How would you have answered this question prior to this session on Grace? Reviewing the illustration Dr. Evans used of a woman being married to two men, which marriage resembles your relationship with God - The marriage to Bill (law) or the marriage to Ralph (love)? Why?
3. How does legalism affect our walk with God?
4. 11. What does it look like for us to be motivated to obey God out of grace and not out of obligation?

serve

Now is the time to apply the wisdom of what you have learned to your life, as you express the depth of your relationship with God through service to Him and others.

SERVING GOD: The stronger our relationship with God is the easier it is to walk in obedience to his commands. What is one thing you can do this week to deepen the intimacy of your relationship with God?

SERVING OTHERS: In what ways have you put conditions on the relationships in your own life (i.e. friends, spouses, family members, coworkers)? Do you withhold love, respect, praise, or encouragement unless that person meets your specific expectations? This week model God's free flowing grace for you by freely offering love and respect to someone you might normally withhold it from.

Grace Guide

Live out God's Kingdom principles here on earth by putting feet to your faith. Over the next 5 days, utilize the Daily Grace Guide to help you meditate on God's word.

DAY ONE

MEDITATE: Read Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect"

MOVE: The scripture informs us that the process by which a believer experiences genuine ongoing transformation is "by the renewing of their mind." The battle over who controls the mind is a daily decision for the believer. Begin, today, to ask the Holy Spirit to shield your mind from any thoughts that would affect your transformation.

DAY TWO

MEDITATE: Read Philippians 2: 12-13 "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure"

MOVE: For believers there is an expectation that we are invested in our own personal spiritual transformation, but God comes alongside us to supernaturally enable that growth. It's a divine work God won't do without us, but one that we can't do without Him! Write out a prayer to God, listing the areas in your life that you need to submit to Him and thanking Him for the supernatural power He provides to help us transform our lives into the likeness of His Son.

DAY THREE

MEDITATE: Read 1 John 4:18-19 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us"

MOVE: The truth is, God is a loving father who seeks the best for His children. Therefore, our relationship with Him and obedience to Him should not be based in fear, but in our response to His unconditional love for us. Sit in silence for 5 minutes and reflect on the ways in which God has shown his love to you in the past few months. End your time in prayer, thanking God for the tangible ways in which He has bestowed His love on you.

DAY FOUR

MEDITATE: Read John 13:24-35 "So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night. Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.'"

MOVE: Our vertical relationship with God should overflow into our horizontal relationships with others. We cannot truly say we love God and fail to love his people. Think of one person you will interact with today and choose one act of kindness you can do to make them feel loved. Then do it!

DAY FIVE

MEDITATE: Read Proverbs 10:12 "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions"

MOVE: In the same way we feel God's love is conditional, sometimes our love is conditional for other people. When we feel offended we can hold on to negative feelings of hate, anger, and unforgiveness, and interact with them from this place of brokenness. Is there anyone in your life who you have not or are unable to forgive? Pray for God to begin to open up your heart to love and forgive and to give you the wisdom to know how best to repair the broken relationship.