

# CONVERSATION GUIDE:

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What kinds of experiences have led to you feeling like you finally arrived or belonged?
- Have you ever experienced a time when someone showed you unexpected grace? How did it affect you?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the difference between earning something versus receiving it as a gift?
- What makes it hard to accept grace from God (or others)?
- How does grace lead to peace in our lives?
- Do you struggle with any "idols of self-righteousness? (ex. religiosity, ways to perform/earn, etc.)?
- How does grace destroy our self-righteousness?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Is there someone you need to extend grace to this week?
- What practical steps can you take to rest in God's grace rather than striving?
- How can we as a group help each other experience and extend grace?
- What would look different if we lived in true Gospel peace?

## GROUP FOCUS:

- Identify one "idol of self-righteousness" in your life that needs to be confronted.
- Practice extending grace to someone who you find difficult.
- Express thanks to God for the peace that comes through understanding grace



## WEEK 3 A NEW WAY OF LIFE PART 2: GRACE AND PEACE (PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2)

## TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 1:1-2	Ephesians 1:2	Colossians 1:5-6
Hebrews 10:14	1 Thess. 1:1	Judges 10:16
Colossians 5:17	1 Timothy 1:2	Jonah 2:8
2 Corinthians 5:17	Titus 1:4	1 Peter 5:10
Romans 1:7	Romans 5:8	John 14:27
1 Corinthians 1:2-3	Genesis 33:8	Ephesians 2:17-18
Galatians 1:3	Ephesians 3:16-19	John 17:20-21

JANUARY 26, 2025

### WEEK 3

## A NEW WAY OF LIFE PART 2: GRACE AND PEACE

Today we will take another look at a new way of life "in Christ." There is a transformative power that comes from God's grace that results in peace in our lives. Paul's greeting isn't just a formal introduction but encapsulates the essence of the Christian experience. Grace is defined as favor granted to an undeserving person by an unobligated giver, while peace (shalom) represents complete harmony with God, others, and creation. We can understand God's grace by seeing both the depth of our sin and the height of God's mercy. This dual vision creates a spiritual explosion in our lives, breaking down barriers of self-righteousness and enabling us to extend grace to others.

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Paul, throughout all of his letters, reminds us that we are being remade; we are not who we once were. He tells us that when God looks at us, He now sees Jesus because we are found "in Him;" God's view of us is Christ and Jesus is perfect. Paul says we are holy--not we are "going to be holy someday." Holy means pure, without blemish, unstained. Paul insists we are literally, now, a "new creation." **2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** In so many of these passages we are being told who we are now, and we need to learn who this person is that God keeps insisting we already are--those who have been given grace and peace!

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• **Grace to you** – In the new testament the word 'grace' means favor, good will, or even benefit. In the Old Testament it meant favor.

To find favor means to be let in to a place we don't have the right to be. Tim Keller once defined grace as: **Favor granted to an undeserving person by an unobligated giver.** Keller calls it "cosmic hospitality,"

that is grace. God not only let us in but *brought* us in Himself, into His family. We will never be satisfied with anything else because our heart, our being, yearns for God. We are received, not because of good works (payment), not because God is obligated, but because of His own free grace. That grace comes to us because Jesus lived a perfect life and died a perfect death in our place for the punishment of our sins. One person wrote, "*Our most severe problems are caused by an ignorance of the true depths of the meaning of God's grace.*"

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The doctrine of grace reminds us that no human being is so good they don't need grace, and no human being is so bad they can't find grace. It's like looking at the world through two eyes. To walk in grace we need to see **the height of God's mercy** and **the depth of our sin**; when we do we become changed by grace. Grace will not comfort us unless we see what God has done as grace. God's grace is always astounding and unexpected.

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• **Peace** – Peace means harmony between two individuals; in our case, us and God.

Where do grace and peace come from? They come from our triune God. **1 Peter 5:10** he calls God "**the God of all grace**," and rightly so. We have received grace from not only the Father, but the Son, and from the Spirit so we can have His peace. John Wesley wrote, "*Oh what a pearl ... is the lowest degree of peace with God. It is worth selling everything to receive it.*" When we receive peace, it is Jesus' peace, He gives us the peace He has always had.

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