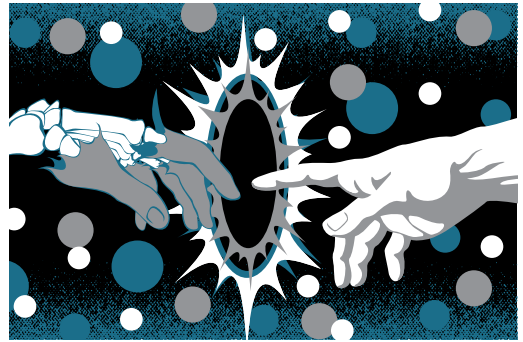


# GOD THE GRACIOUS KING

DOCTRINE SESSION

MAIN POINT

Jesus saves us by His grace.



## ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE **GOD IS GRACIOUS** —————•

God's nature is to delight in giving unmerited favor to those who are undeserving (see Eph. 2:8-9). His grace toward sinners is found most clearly in the salvation He has provided through Christ. Because of sin, humanity is undeserving of salvation—all of us have turned our backs on God, and as a result, we deserve death (see Rom. 6:23). However, instead of leaving people in their sins, God has demonstrated His graciousness by providing atonement and forgiveness for our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

## ESSENTIAL **CONNECTION** —————•

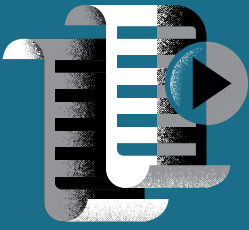
Despite all that God had done for David, we have seen how David could not keep himself from falling in sin. David needed God's grace, and God was ready to show him grace as soon as David turned from his sin. God's grace is available to anyone who will turn away from sin and to the Savior.

## SCRIPTURE **READING** —————•

**EPHESIANS 2:1-3** • GOD'S GRACE IS NEEDED TO SAVE US

**EPHESIANS 2:4-10** • GOD'S GRACE IS POURED OUT IN CHRIST

**PSALMS 51:12-17** • GOD'S GRACE ENABLES REAL CHANGE



## DOCTRINE VIDEO

(Videos available for purchase at [gospelproject.com/students](http://gospelproject.com/students))

Have you ever done anything you need grace for? We need grace daily. And the good thing is that we serve a God who gives us grace and gives it freely. Here's the thing—we've talked about this before—We all sin; we all miss the mark. The Bible tells us that we are dead in our sins. God's grace given to us through faith in Jesus made us alive. God is all about redeeming people; bringing dead things back to life. And it's because of His love for us that He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for that sin. Jesus is the grace that covers our sin, our past sin, our present sin, and our future sin. We've been saved by grace, through faith . . . but that doesn't mean that we can just keep doing whatever we want to do. If somebody was willing to die so that you could have something, why would you be careless with it? In the same way, Jesus died so that you could have life. Why would you be careless with it by doing whatever you wanted to do? Instead, we should realize how important our lives are to God. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:10 that we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do." We've been made alive in Christ not to do whatever we want to, but to do good in the world. We should give of our time and resources, serve our communities, and love our teachers and families. We should live like Christ lived and do the good that God has prepared for us to do.

### SUMMARY

- We desperately need God's grace.
- God is gracious and will forgive.
- God forgives us through the work of Jesus.
- We live in God's grace doing the works He made us to do.

### WATCH & DISCUSS

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE ALL IN NEED OF GOD'S GRACE?**

**HOW HAS CHRIST MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S GRACE?**

**WHAT ARE SOME GOOD WORKS THAT YOU THINK GOD HAS PREPARED FOR YOU TO DO?**



## SCRIPTURE READING

### MAIN POINT

Jesus saves us by His grace.

#### 1. GOD'S GRACE IS NEEDED TO SAVE US

### READ EPHESIANS 2:1-3

In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul explains the gospel in what would become one of his most well-known passages of Scripture. He starts with our condition, then moves to God's redemption. When God's grace is seen in contrast to our desperation, the beauty of the gospel message shines forth.

#### HOW DOES PAUL DESCRIBE US APART FROM CHRIST?

Apart from Jesus, we are spiritually dead. Though our bodies are alive, our spirits are lifeless because sin separates us from the living God. We are animated by the desire for sin.

#### DO YOU VIEW SIN AS A BIG DEAL? WHY OR WHY NOT? WHAT CONSEQUENCES DOES SIN HAVE IN OUR LIVES?

Our disobedience to God places us "under wrath" (Eph. 2:3). Since we naturally live for self and not God, love sin and not our neighbor, and carry out our sinful desires, God would be completely justified to judge us. One of the ways the gospel is so amazing is because it is surprising. When God didn't owe us anything, He gave us everything. When He could have poured out His wrath, He overflowed with mercy.

#### 2. GOD'S GRACE IS POURED OUT IN CHRIST

### READ EPHESIANS 2:4-10

#### WHY DID GOD SAVE US, ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 2:4-7?



## ENGAGE OPTION

Have students split into two even, or as close to even as you can, teams. Have the teams line up in a straight line with their backs turned to you. Next, place an object (a ball, pen, basket, anything will do) somewhere on the ground. Then, have the whole team turn around, except for one student. These selected students must turn around with their eyes closed. The object of the game is for the student with their eyes closed to find the object with the help of their team. Inevitably, the student with their eyes closed will make a wrong turn at some point, slow down, pumped into something, etc. Yet, eventually, they will find the object. In today's session, we will learn God is gracious to save sinners (people who want to go their own way and live however they want to) who come to Him through faith in Jesus.



## EPHESIANS 2:1-3

**2:1-3.** “This passage is one of the clearest, most expressive, and most loved descriptions of salvation in the New Testament.”<sup>35</sup>

**2:1-3.** “Looking back from the perspective of life in Christ, Paul viewed the former life as death, that is, spiritual death, life without God . . . For those who think life comes from God and is experienced in relation to God, separation from God is equivalent to death (cf. 4:18) . . . As a consequence of sin, people have no relation to God and distorted relations with each other. They are powerless to change and are being pulled down to destruction. As in Romans 5:12–21, death is a result of sin. The expression ‘dead in your transgressions and sins’ suggests that sins both cause death and are evidence of death.”<sup>36</sup>

**2:1-3.** “The gravity of their previous condition, however, serves to magnify the wonder of God’s mercy. The past is recalled not because the emphasis falls upon it, but in order to draw attention to God’s mighty action in Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

**2:1-3.** “In summary, before Paul’s readers heard and believed the gospel, they were walking in their own transgressions of God’s law. They also walked according to the standard set by the world around them and according to the norms of the one who rules both the demonic realm and the spiritual force that powerfully pervades that realm.”<sup>38</sup>



## ENGAGE OPTION

Bring an electronic toy with the batteries removed. Because of our sin, we are cut off from God. We are spiritually dead, like a toy you open on Christmas morning that needs batteries.

What is the battery of the Christian life?

God’s grace is what gives us life. Place the batteries in the toy and turn it on at this point. His grace saves us from the power of sin and charges us up with the strength to do the works that He has created us for.





## SCRIPTURE READING

### MAIN POINT

**Jesus saves us by His grace.**

Paul said the reason God saves us is because He loves us. It is truly that simple and remarkable. After reading verses 1-3, one may wonder, “How?” But God is not like us. He has a wealth of mercy. His love for us was great even when we were unlovely. Our salvation was all by grace, and one of the coolest things of all is that for all of eternity, we will never exhaust His grace. We will experience “the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7).

### **WHAT ROLE SHOULD GOOD WORKS PLAY IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER?**

We were not saved by our works. While we were dead in sin, Jesus did it all. We cannot brag or boast that we are saved because we didn’t do anything to earn it. Yet, God’s grace has been poured out in Christ Jesus so that we can now do good works. There are works that God has created us to do; things that you now are able to do because you are alive in Christ.

### **3. GOD’S GRACE ENABLES REAL CHANGE**

## READ PSALM 51:12-17

When David had sinned against God in the story of Bathsheba and Uriah, he eventually turned to God for forgiveness. Psalm 51 records David’s confession and prayer for restoration.

### **HOW DID DAVID RESPOND TO GOD’S GRACE?**

David came before God with humility. Samuel told Saul that God wanted obedience rather than sacrifice (see 1 Sam. 15:22), and here, David brings it. God wanted David to confess his sin and to be broken-hearted over what he’d done. No excuses or hiding or justifying, just humble confession. He also responds with praise. He commits himself to exalt God for his salvation (see Ps. 51:14-15).

### **WHAT DID DAVID PROMISE TO DO AS A RESULT OF GOD’S GRACE?**

David wanted to use his story to help others change as well. He would “teach the rebellious [God’s] ways, and sinners will return to [God]” (Ps. 51:13). He wanted others to experience the joy of salvation, too. We ought to have that same desire. God has given us His grace so that we might be His vessels to bring that grace to others. As the apostle Paul said of his own life and ministry, “Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles” (Rom. 1:5). He received grace to bring that same grace to all people. The same is true of us.



### EPHESIANS 2:4-10

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**2:4-7.** “Paul now begins to describe God’s response to the seemingly hopeless plight into which sin, the flesh, the mind, and the demonic world have plunged humanity (2:1–3). Although Paul and his readers deserve God’s wrath (v. 3), God has made it possible for them to escape this otherwise inevitable destiny and to share Christ’s victory over evil (vv. 5–6). Paul begins by announcing the primary theme of the section . . . God did this because of his overwhelmingly merciful and loving character.”<sup>39</sup>

**2:4-7.** “What prompted God to act so freely and mercifully on our behalf? Using four groups of words, the apostle shows that the origins of God’s saving initiative are to be found in his mercy (v.4), his great love (v.4), his rich grace (vv. 5, 7, and 8), and his kindness to us in Christ Jesus (v.7). The whole paragraph emphasizes that he acted on our behalf simply because of his own gracious and merciful character.”<sup>40</sup>

**2:8-10.** “While the apostle rejects the notion that their change in status from spiritual death to life and exaltation with Christ is due to any human effort. He concludes by stating that salvation is a call to a life of good works.”<sup>41</sup>

### PSALM 51:12-17

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**51:12-17.** “For Israel and the psalmist, confession and restoration are never simply private acts but involve the redeemed in public acts of joyous proclamation and response.”<sup>42</sup>

**51:12-17.** ““What God desires is inward change, marked by truth, wisdom, and a broken, contrite heart.”<sup>43</sup>

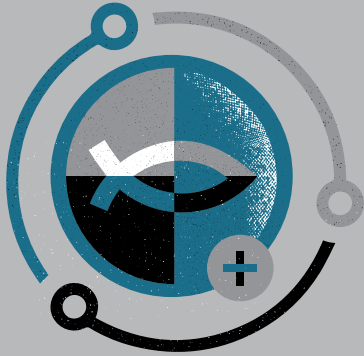


## BIG QUESTION

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**IF GOD’S GRACE IS SO GREAT AND FREE, WHY DON’T MORE PEOPLE RECEIVE IT?**

In Dane Ortland’s book **Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers**, he concludes by asking this very question. Why don’t we come to Jesus if He is so gracious? His answer is that we do not come to Jesus because we misperceive how Jesus feels toward us. If only we knew how great His love is and how available His mercy is, then we would come to Jesus without hesitation. Our own misperceptions of God keep us from running to Him when we sin. We listen to the lie that He doesn’t want us back and is angry with us. But He is not reluctant to forgive. He is ready for anyone who will humble themselves and fall upon His unending mercy and grace.

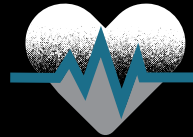


## CHRIST CONNECTION

All are unable to do anything to make right what sin has made wrong. But God has extended grace to sinners so that anyone who comes to Him by faith in Jesus Christ will be saved.



HEAD



HEART



HANDS

### **WHY DO WE STRUGGLE TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS TRULY READY TO FORGIVE US?**

We can struggle to trust the reality of God's grace because we think God is too much like us. We aren't quick to forgive others or ourselves. We carry shame and guilt and think, "How could God forgive someone like me?" It is our own misperceptions of God that keep us from His grace. God's grace is ready to be poured out, and we may be sure of it because of the love He has shown us in Christ.

### **HOW WILL PRIDE KEEP US FROM GOD'S GRACE?**

The prideful heart will not kneel before God. When we stubbornly insist on our own goodness and do not accept our own sinfulness, we cannot experience God's grace. The thing that God wants, and the thing we must have to receive God's grace, is "a broken and humbled heart" (Ps. 51:17).

### **HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR STORY TO HELP OTHERS EXPERIENCE GOD'S GRACE?**

When you share your story with all its ups and downs, God will use it to impact others. David's story was used in his lifetime and in every generation since as a warning against sin and an example of God's restoring grace. It inspires people to avoid his mistakes and to come to Jesus when they fail. Your story can impact others as well. But it all starts by dealing with your own sin first. Don't stay where you are; receive God's grace today.