

# LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



SECOND SEMESTER  
UNIT 6



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

# **UNIT 6:**

## **God's Glorious Means of Grace (Part II)**



### IN THIS SESSION

- :: Corporate Prayer
- :: Corporate Praise
- :: Church Discipline
- :: Generous Giving

# UNIT 6: God's Glorious Means of Grace, Part 2

## // OPENING SCRIPTURE

"May grace and peace be multiplied to you  
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

2Peter 1:2

## // OPENING PRAYER

## // FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

- Memory Verse :: 2Corinthians 8:9
- Homework :: Did everyone in the group complete this unit's work and activities (if applicable)?

# UNIT 6: God's Glorious Means of Grace, Part 2

## // Means of Grace? What do we mean? [A review from the previous unit.]

:: By “*means of grace*” we are referring to the activities within the fellowship of the church that God uses to give us more grace. As we participate in these activities, functions, ceremonies, God bless us with additional grace for our walk with Christ. They are meant to equip us for fruitful service for God's glory in the advance of the gospel.

:: Again, it is important to note: these means of grace are not ‘salvific’. They do not attribute to our standing with God (our justification). Our participation in these graces does not merit salvation, nor make us more fit to receive salvation. They are simply Gods means of conferring spiritual blessings on His people for their service of the gospel.

:: In the previous unit, we focused on the church gathered, water baptism, and communion. In this unit, we will take a look at God's grace in prayer, praise, church discipline, and generous giving.

## // Corporate Prayer: A Glorious Means of Grace

:: We've already been through an entire unit on prayer (see Semester 2: Unit 3). In this unit, we will focus on God's grace given through corporate prayer, praying together as a church congregation. Certainly there is grace in individual prayer. But God has decided to bestow grace on his people through prayer when His people gather together. We see the early church committed to corporate prayer.

:: In the days following the Ascension of Christ, before the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the early believers gathered together. Read Acts 1:12-14. What did they devote themselves to?

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:: After Pentecost, the church continued to assemble regularly. Acts 2:42 says they were devoted to four things. What were they?

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:: Eventually, the church grew and so did persecution. How did the Apostles respond to persecution?  
Read Acts 4:24-30 and answer below.

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:: What was the effect of this prayer meeting? (see v.31)

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:: At one point, the Apostle Peter is arrested in Jerusalem and sentenced to death. How did the Jerusalem Christians handle the imprisonment of one of their leaders? See Acts 12:1-5.

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:: Clearly, corporate prayer was a priority of the early church. During a particularly difficult time of the Apostle Paul's ministry, he writes to the Corinthian church. Read **2Corinthians 1:8-11** and answer the following questions:

❖ *What did the Apostle ask the Corinthian Christians to do for him?*

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❖ *What does he say will be the effect of them doing so? (v.11)*

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❖ *What does this tell us about the effect of corporate prayer on gospel mission?*

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:: Taken from all the passages above, what would you list as some of the benefits (graces) God gives His people when they participate in corporate prayer?

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## // Corporate Praise: A Glorious Means of Grace

:: Another way the Lord gives grace to His people when they gather is through corporate singing. Singing may not seem like a means of grace, but it is. There are a number of reasons for this. For one: *obedience*. We are told to sing. Thumb through the book of Psalms in your Bible and write down **three** Scripture references in which God's people are commanded to sing. (Example: Psalm 96:1)

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:: Compare the following two passages side-by-side. Write down the similarities below.

### **Colossians 3:16**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

### **Ephesians 5:19-20**

[Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

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:: What are the three "types" of songs the Apostle Paul lists in these two passages? What attitude should accompany corporate singing? Explain.

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:: Look at Colossians 3:16 (above) closely. What does this verse seem to indicate is a result of corporate praise? Based on this, what is lost when we neglect to attend church gatherings?

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## // Church Discipline: A Glorious Means of Grace

:: Church discipline is the process of correcting sin in a congregation and its members. It involves private one-on-one admonition as well as the occasional need to remove an individual from church membership. (A later unit will be devoted to the subject.) Church discipline is the means by which the purity of the church is maintained and holiness is advanced. Therefore, it should be considered a means of grace.

:: Read Matthew 18:15-17. The Lord gives us three steps to dealing with sin. List them below:

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:: Finish the following verses:

❖ Matthew 18:15, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_."

❖ Galatians 6:1, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should \_\_\_\_\_ him in a spirit of \_\_\_\_\_. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

❖ James 5:19, "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the \_\_\_\_\_ and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from \_\_\_\_\_ and will cover a multitude of sins."

:: Based on those verses, what is the intended result of church discipline? How is this a means of God's glorious grace?

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## // Generous Giving: A Glorious Means of Grace

:: It is said that the Old Testament concept of the “tithe”, the giving of 10% of one’s income to God, is not mentioned in the New Testament. That’s true! The only giving percentage mentioned in the New Testament is 100%. See Acts 4:32-37.

:: In our culture, giving all you own to a church may not be wise. But, giving to the local church is a means of grace. Generous giving was the practice of the early church. While 10% is not mandatory, it is a good place to start.

:: Take 10 minutes and read **2Corinthians 8 & 9**. From these two chapters, we can make the following observations about generous giving: (Fill out the verses below)

- Christians give cheerfully, eagerly, and according to their means.
  - 9:7 ESV, “Each one must give as he has \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a \_\_\_\_\_ giver.”
- Christians give generously. It’s not how much *money* you give; its about how much of *you* you give. Giving ought to be felt. This is what Jesus taught us, using the example of the Widow’s Mite (Lk 21:1-4; Mk 12:41-44). The rich gave large sums out of abundance. She gave little out of her poverty. And her giving was more because it meant something. It was from faith.
  - 8:3-4 ESV, “For they gave \_\_\_\_\_ to their means, as I can testify, and \_\_\_\_\_ their means, of their own accord, \_\_\_\_\_ us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints...”
- Generous giving is grace. God will meet our needs. And the more generous we become, the more he give us to be generous with!
  - 9:8 ESV, “And God is able to make all \_\_\_\_\_ abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - 9:11 ESV, “You will be enriched in every way to be \_\_\_\_\_ in every way, which through us will produce \_\_\_\_\_ to God.”

### **BEWARE**

**PROSPERITY GOSPEL:** Some false teachers claim that material wealth and physical health is always God’s will. They teach that God uses their faith, giving, and positive speech to increase His material blessings on their lives. This teaching is out of step with the Scriptures. It’s main problem is that it places man in control and makes God man’s servant. Additionally, the prosperity gospel has no answer for God-wrought suffering that He uses for the good of His people and the advance of the gospel.



# UNIT 6: God's Glorious Means of Grace, Part 2

## PRAYER REQUESTS // PRAISE REPORTS

Go around the room and have each person share a prayer request and/or a praise report. Members should commit to praying for these requests.

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### GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Discuss the following subjects with your group. Keep it respectful!)

:: If God is sovereign, working all things to His purposes, why are we commanded to pray?

:: What style of music is mandated by Scripture for church worship? Is musical style a reason to leave or join a church? Is there any 'musical' reason to leave a church?

:: What sorts of sins would necessitate church discipline? Are some sins too 'little' to warrant the Matthew 18 sort of discipline? Give examples.

:: According to the most recent statistics, American Christians give around 2.3% of their income to their church. Someone with an annual salary of less than \$20k/year is 8 times more likely to give than someone who earns over \$75k/yr. What do you make of these statistics? Why is giving so low?

# UNIT 6: God's Glorious Means of Grace, Part 2

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

**"May grace and peace be multiplied to you  
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."**

2Peter 1:2

:: Plan a get-together with your group during the holiday break.

:: Invite one or two of your group members to your home for coffee, lunch, or dinner.

:: Keep in contact with your group throughout the holiday break. Be sure to ask how you can continue to pray for your brothers/sisters.