

Celebrate Recovery

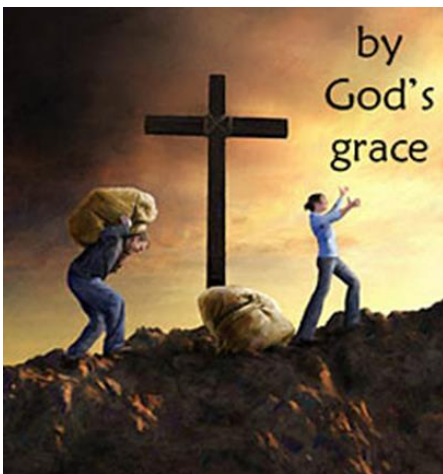
Lesson 18 Grace

Principle 6: Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

“Happy are the merciful.” (Matthew 5:6) “Happy are the peacemakers.” (Matthew 5:9)

Step 9: We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23 –24)



Introduction

Tonight, we are going to finish discussing Principle 6. We have talked about how to evaluate all our relationships, **offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us**, and **make amends for the harm that we have done to others**, when possible, without expecting anything back.

As we grow as Christians and as we grow in our recovery, we want to follow the guidance and directions of Jesus Christ. As we get to know Him better, we want to model His teachings and model His ways. We want to become more like Him. Honestly, if we are going to implement Principle 6 to the best of our ability, **we need to learn to model God's grace. But how?**

Grace

The key verses of Celebrate Recovery are *2 Corinthians 12:9–10 (NCV): “But he said to me, ‘My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you.’ So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me. For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles for Christ. Because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.”* (see pg. 6)

Celebrate Recovery is built on and centered in Christ's grace and love for each of us.

Let's look at tonight's acrostic: **GRACE**.

God's gift

Received by our faith

Accepted by God's love

Christ paid the price

Everlasting gift

The G in grace is GOD'S gift.

Grace is a gift. Grace cannot be bought. It is freely given by God to you and me. **When we offer (give) our amends and expect nothing back, that's a gift from us to those whom we have hurt.**

Romans 3:24 (NCV) tells us, "All need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ."

First Peter 1:13 (NCV) says, "Prepare your minds for service and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ is shown to you."

If my relationship with God was dependent on my being perfect, I would have trouble relating to God most of the time. **Thank God that my relationship with Him is built on His grace and love for me.** He gives the strength to make the amends and offer the forgiveness that Principle 6 requires.

And how do we receive God's gift of grace? That's the **R in grace: RECEIVED** by our faith.

No matter how hard we may work, we cannot earn our way into heaven. **Only by professing our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior can we experience His grace and have eternal life.**

Ephesians 2:8 – 9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —not by works, so that no one can boast."

Let me share another verse with you. *Philippians 3:9 (TLB) states, "No longer counting on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God's laws, but by trusting Christ to save me; for God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith —counting on Christ alone."*

You and I tend to be more interested in what we do. God is more interested in what we are.

Romans 5:2 says of Jesus, "Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God."

Just a word of warning: Our walk needs to match our talk. Our beliefs and values are seen by others in our actions. And it is through our faith in Christ that we can find the strength and courage needed for us to take the action Principle 6 requires: making our amends and offering our forgiveness.

The next letter in grace is **A. We are ACCEPTED** by God's love.

God loved you and me while we were still out there sinning. Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

We can, in turn, love others because God first loved us. We can also forgive others because God first forgave us. *Colossians 3:13 (TLB) says, "Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."*

Ephesians 2:5 (NCV) reminds us, "Though we were spiritually dead because of the things we did against God, he gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God's grace."

I don't know about you, but I know that I do not deserve God's love. But the good news is He accepts me in spite of myself! He sees all my failures and loves me anyway. And the same goes for you.

*Hebrews 4:16 (NCV) tells us, “Let us, then, feel very sure that we can come before God’s throne where there is grace. There **we can receive mercy and grace to help us when we need it.**”*

Let’s move on to the **C in grace: CHRIST** paid the price.

Jesus died on the cross so that all our sins, all our wrongs, are forgiven. He paid the price, sacrificed Himself for you and me so that we may be with Him forever.

When we accept Christ’s work on the cross, we are made a new creation. We can then rely on God’s strength and power to enable us to forgive those who have hurt us. We can set aside our selfishness and speak the truth in love. We focus only on our part in making amends or offering our forgiveness.

Ephesians 1:7 (NCV) says, “In Christ we are set free by the blood of his death, and so we have forgiveness of sins. How rich is God’s grace.”

The last letter in grace is **E: God’s grace is an EVERLASTING** gift.

Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, God’s gift of grace is forever.

Let me read a quote from the Big Book of AA, pages 83 –84: “Once you have completed Step Nine, you will know a new freedom and a new happiness.... You will comprehend the word serenity and know peace.... **You will suddenly realize that God is doing for you what you could not do for yourself.**”

And here’s a quote from the real Big Book — the Bible: *“And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns” (Philippians 1:6, TLB).*

Also, *2 Thessalonians 2:16 (NCV) states, “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father encourage you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us, and through his grace he gave us a good hope and encouragement that continues forever.”*

My life verse is *1 Peter 2:9 – 10 (TLB), where God says, “For you have been chosen by God himself—you are priests of the King, you are holy and pure, you are God’s very own—all this so that you may show to others how God called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were less than nothing; now you [John Baker] are God’s own. Once you knew very little of God’s kindness; now your very lives have been changed by it.”*

I stand before you as a product of God’s grace. Everyone here this evening who has let Christ into his or her life is also a product of God’s grace. As we model this grace, we will be able to do the work that Principle 6 requires.

Let’s close tonight with *Colossians 1:6: “The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.”*

Prayer of Salvation

Dear Lord Jesus, I love you, I need you, I ask you to please be my Lord and Savior. Come into me and be my friend. I know what you did for me that I may have eternal life, how you died for my sins that I may be forgiven. Please forgive me of my sins.

I Repent and turn away from my sins Lord. For this I will need your help, please help me. I ask that you send the Holy Spirit to live in me as my friend, to guide me in my life.

I trust you Lord Jesus, my thirst is to follow you, please lead me. Lord, give me a new heart, and put a new spirit within me.

(Ezekiel 36:26)

I pray in your name Lord Jesus. Amen

Name _____

Date Saved _____

Where Saved _____

Lesson 18 Grace

Think/write/discuss

1. How has Jesus Christ used your weaknesses and turned them into strengths?

2. How can you receive God's gift of grace (Romans 5:2)?

3. How can you model God's gift of grace in making your amends?

4. In what ways have you experienced God's grace in your recovery?

5. God loved and accepted us while we were still sinners (Ephesians 2:5). How can you model that acceptance to those to whom you need to offer forgiveness or make amends

6. In Principle 6 we are not trying to get even. Christ paid the price for all of our wrongs. What does, "speaking the truth in love", mean to you?

7. Why is it important that you focus only on your part in making an amends or offering forgiveness?

8. List some of the things that God has shown you through working Principle 6.

Principle 6b Verses

“So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your sacrifice to God” (Matthew 5:23-24, TLB).

“If anyone says ‘I love God,’ but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn’t love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God whom he has never seen?” (1 John 4:20, TLB).

“Love your enemies! Do good to them! Lend to them! And don’t be concerned about the fact that they won’t repay. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as sons of God: for He is kind to the unthankful and to those who are very wicked” (Luke 6:35, TLB).

“There is a saying, ‘Love your friends and hate your enemies.’ But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!” (Matthew 5:43-44, TLB).

“Never pay back evil for evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest clear through. Don’t quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible” (Romans 12:17-18, TLB).

“Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others – never finish paying that! For if you love them, you will be obeying all of God’s laws, fulfilling all His requirements” (Romans 13:8, TLB).

Prayer

“Dear God, thank You for Your love, for Your freely given grace. Help me model Your ways when I make my amends to those I have hurt and offer my forgiveness to those who have injured me. Help me to set aside my selfishness and speak the truth in love. I pray that I would focus on my part, my responsibility in the issue. I know that I can forgive others because You first forgave me. Thank You for loving me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 Although God did not remove Paul’s affliction, he promised to demonstrate his power in Paul. The fact that God’s power is displayed in our weaknesses should give us courage and hope. As we recognize our limitations, we will depend more on God for our effectiveness rather than on our own energy, effort, or talent. Our limitations not only help develop Christian character but also deepen our worship, because in admitting them, we affirm God’s strength.

12:10 When we are strong in abilities or resources, we are tempted to do God’s work on our own, and that can lead to pride. When we are weak, allowing God to fill us with his power, then we are stronger than we could ever be on our own. God does not intend for us to be weak, passive, or ineffective—life provides enough hindrances and setbacks without us creating them. When those obstacles come, we must depend on God. Only his power will make us effective for him and will help us do work that has lasting value.