Level 3 Lesson 9

NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE
Don Krow

Last night I dreamed about a woman who kept being punished for all the things she did wrong (her sins). A man followed her around, and whenever she would make a mistake, he would shake his head in disgust, take off his belt, and beat her. If she said a wrong word or did something wrong, he'd punish her. She was limping around trying to smile and have a good attitude, but she kept on doing things that would get her in trouble. They were not big things, but every little thing that this man saw her doing wrong would get her a beating. It seemed hopeless. She couldn't keep from doing things that got her in trouble. I remember feeling sorry for her. I wanted to help her get away from the mean man who always beat her. And then I woke up.

I started thinking about God's grace, the unearned, undeserved favor and ability of God. When the heart is established in grace, we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our performance or by trying to keep His Law in our own strength and ability. We are finally able to get away from the beatings we earned from breaking the Law of God. We are rescued by Jesus.

Think about favor. It means getting someone's approval, support, or blessing. When you want someone's favor, what do you do? You try to do and say everything that would please them, and nothing that would displease them. It's acting right all the time. Is that really possible to accomplish? It's like defying gravity. You can do it for a little while, but in the end, you will fail. It's stronger than you are.

I related to the woman in my dream. I've felt like that when I've tried hard to do everything right but missed one little detail and failed. I thought that if only I could make it through the day without messing up, I would've accomplished something. But no, my shortcomings always caused me to be imperfect. I thought that not only had I disappointed my heavenly Father, but I would condemn myself and beat myself up. I was self-defeated. I was focused on my abilities and inabilities. Never measuring up, never good enough to make the grade, I needed someone to rescue me!

God in His mercy sent us help; His name is Jesus. God sent Him to deliver us from ourselves and our powerless attempts to fulfill His Law. Jesus took the punishment for the Law we could not keep, so we wouldn't have to die, but could go free and have eternal life with Him. Jesus gave us the gift of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the Law. We have peace with God through what He did for us in His death, burial, and resurrection. We have favor with God, unearned and undeserved. That's grace.

Believing this, your heart must be settled without a doubt, knowing that He did this because He loves you. Make your heart sound, secure, stable, and firm in His grace;

that is, be established without question or doubt that He has given us everything we need to live an abundant life in and through Jesus.

If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. It is with the heart that we believe and receive His righteousness and grace. Our hearts must be wholly His. That is when we will be fulfilled and at rest.

"Above all else, guard your heart. For it affects everything you do" (Prov. 4:23, *The Living Bible*).

Discipleship Questions

1. How was "grace" defined in this lesson?

_____

2. When the heart is established in grace, we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our _____.

3. Read Hebrews 10:14. Don's shortcomings always caused him to be imperfect. How are we made perfect, according to this verse?

_____

4. Read Romans 5:17. Jesus gave us the _____ of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the Law.

5. Read Isaiah 26:3. If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. What must we keep our minds stayed on? _____

6. Read Ephesians 3:17. Our hearts must be wholly His. That is when we will be _____.

7. Read Romans 4:5. Is salvation a reward to be earned or a free gift of God's grace?

_____

8. Read Romans 5:17. Righteousness (right standing with God) is a gift. Do you have to work for a gift? _____ How do you obtain a gift?

_____

9. Read Romans 6:23. What is the free gift of God's grace in this verse?

_____

10. Read Titus 3:5. How many of your good works and deeds contribute to your salvation? _____

11. Read Romans 6:14. Explain in your own words what it means to be under God's grace.

_____

12. Read Romans 11:6. If God's blessings are given to us by grace, they are not by our _____.

13. Read Romans 3:24. Explain in your own words the meaning of this verse.

_____

14. Read Ephesians 1:7. The forgiveness of our sins was according to _____.

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Hebrews 10:14 – *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

Romans 5:17 – *"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."*

Isaiah 26:3 – *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

Ephesians 3:17 – *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."*

Romans 4:5 – *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

Romans 6:23 – *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Titus 3:5 – *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."*

Romans 6:14 – *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*

Romans 11:6 – *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

Romans 3:24 – *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

Ephesians 1:7 – *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."*

Answer Key

1. How was "grace" defined in this lesson? **The unearned, undeserved favor and ability of God.**

2. When the heart is established in grace, we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our **performance**.

3. Read Hebrews 10:14. Don's shortcomings always caused him to be imperfect. How are we made perfect, according to this verse? **By Jesus' offering, He has perfected us forever.**

4. Read Romans 5:17. Jesus gave us the **gift** of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the Law.

5. Read Isaiah 26:3. If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. What must we keep our minds stayed on? **Our minds must be stayed on the Lord.**

6. Read Ephesians 3:17. Our hearts must be wholly His. That is when we will be **fulfilled and at rest**.

7. Read Romans 4:5. Is salvation a reward to be earned or a free gift of God's grace? **A free gift of God's grace.**

8. Read Romans 5:17. Righteousness (right standing with God) is a gift. Do you have to work for a gift? **No.** How do you obtain a gift? **By simply reaching out and taking it.**

9. Read Romans 6:23. What is the free gift of God's grace in this verse? **Eternal life (instead of eternal death).**

10. Read Titus 3:5. How many of your good works and deeds contribute to your salvation? **None.**

11. Read Romans 6:14. Explain in your own words what it means to be under God's grace. **We are not getting what our sins deserve but rather God's best through Christ. Righteousness, acceptance, forgiveness are ours (all as a gift of God's mercy).**

12. Read Romans 11:6. If God's blessings are given to us by grace, they are not by our **works**.

13. Read Romans 3:24. Explain in your own words the meaning of this verse.
Righteousness (justification) is a free gift of God's grace given to the believer because of Christ's redeeming work on the cross.

14. Read Ephesians 1:7. The forgiveness of our sins was according to **the riches of God's grace**.

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