

Study 4. The Mercy & Grace of God

What do you think is the difference between the mercy of God and the grace of God? Write your thoughts below:

The **mercy** of God is...His wrath and condemnation *not* extended to us even though *deserved*.

The **grace** of God is...His love and salvation extended to us even though *undeserved*.

Quotable Quote: Abraham Booth wrote, *The Reign of Grace*... "Grace...is the eternal and absolute favor of God, manifested in...spiritual and eternal blessings to the guilty and the unworthy."

God's Mercy & Grace - The Practical Connection!

Mercy defined:

Hebrew word (*kheh-sed*) means... to have compassion, to show pity - given in a context of wickedness

Greek word (*eleeo*) means... a disposition, by divine choice, to express pity or compassion in order to alleviate misery and suffering

Grace defined:

Hebrew word (*khane*) means... to bend or stoop down in kindness to an inferior, to bestow favor

Greek word (*charis*) means... gift, a benefit, or act of kindness granted without expectation of return, to give acceptance or approval

Mercy & Grace in Action! Jesus said, "Make it a practice to *love* your enemies; *treat well* (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred...Invoke *blessings* upon and *pray* for the happiness of those who curse you; implore God's blessing (*favor*) upon those who abuse you... and misuse you." Luke 6:27-28 Amplified Bible

God's mercy and grace are eternally linked together.

The two words are often found within the same passage.

Ephesians 2:4-5 "But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ - even when we were dead in transgressions...it is by grace you have been saved."

1 Timothy 1:13-14 "Even though I was once a blasphemer and persecutor... I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief...The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

Quotable Quote: In God, mercy and grace are one; but as they reach us they are seen as two, related but not identical." A.W. Tozer

Mercy & Grace Demonstrated

List below examples in the Bible of God's mercy and grace being demonstrated in both the Old and New testaments:

<i>Old Testament Examples</i>	<i>New Testament Examples</i>
Jonah & Nineveh	The prodigal son
Noah & family	Woman caught in adultery
Lot & family	Saul becomes Paul
Israel in the wilderness	Cornelius & Gentiles converted
David & Bathsheba	The blind, lame, lepers healed by Jesus
Rahab, Naomi, & Ruth	Thief on the cross
Moses & Aaron	Peter's denial of Christ

Which example above is especially encouraging to you? Why?

God's grace and mercy is the same throughout ***time & space!*** No matter when or where!

Quotable Quote: "We should banish from our minds forever the common but erroneous notion that justice and judgment characterize the God of Israel, while mercy and grace belong to the Lord of the Church...Actually there is in principle no difference between the Old testament and the New." A.W. Tozer

Small Group Activity

Group 1. How is God's mercy and grace described and demonstrated in these *Old Testament* passages?

Psalm 103:8-10 - "The Lord is compassionate and *gracious*, slow to anger, *abounding* in love...he does *not* treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

Micah 7:18-19 - "Who is a God like you, who *pardons* sin and *forgives* the transgression...you *delight* to show mercy. You will again have *compassion* on us...and hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

Nehemiah 9:29-31 - "You *warned* them to return to you law, but they... became stiff-necked and refused to listen... For many years you were *patient* with them... you *admonished* them...yet they paid not attention...But, in your *great mercy* you did *not* put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a *gracious* and *merciful* God."

Group 2. – How is God's mercy and grace described and demonstrated in these *New Testament* passages?

Luke 1:76-78 - "You will go on before the Lord...to give his people the knowledge of *salvation* through the *forgiveness* of their sins, because of the *tender mercy* of our God."

Small Group Activity (cont.)

Romans 5:17 - "For...how much more will those who receive God's *abundant* provision of *grace* and of the *gift of righteousness* reign in the life through the death of...Jesus Christ."

Titus 3:4-7 - "But when the *kindness* and *love* of God our Savior appeared, he *saved* us, not because of the righteous things we have done, but because of his *mercy*... He saved us...so that having been *justified* by his *grace*, we might become *heirs* having the hope of *eternal life*."

Group 3. – How is God's mercy and grace described and demonstrated in Paul's letter to the *Ephesians*?

Eph. 1:5-8 – "In love, he...adopted us as his sons, through Jesus Christ...to the praise of his *glorious grace*, which he has *freely given* us...In him, we have redemption through his blood, forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the *riches of God's grace* that he *lavished on us* with all wisdom and understanding."

Eph. 2:4-7 - "But because of his great love for us, God, who is *rich in mercy*, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by *grace* that you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ...in order that in the coming ages he might show the *incomparable riches of his grace*, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

Eph. 4:7 - "But to each one of us, *grace has been given* as Christ apportioned it."

According to all these passages, we can see that:

God's mercy is **undeserved** and *not... owed to us!* (as an obligation)

God's grace is **unlimited** and *not... earned by us!* (as an expectation)

Quotable Quote: "Nowhere does the glory of God's free and sovereign grace shine more conspicuously than in the unworthiness and unlikeliness of its objects." A. Pink

God's Grace in Action!

▣ "For *all* have sinned and fall short of God's glory and are justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ." Romans 3:23-24

▣ "God who has saved us and called us to a holy life – *not* because of anything we have done but because of his *own* purpose and grace. This grace was *given* to us in Christ Jesus *before* the beginning of time." 2 Timothy 1:9

God's Mercy & Grace - The Potential Confusion!

God's mercy and grace does **NOT** mean that sin is **inevitable** or **acceptable**.

Romans 6:14-15 explains, " For sin shall *not* be our master, because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means."

The Potential Confusion! (cont.)

God's mercy & grace does NOT mean that God's ***forgiveness*** is always ***available***.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 warns, "We urge you not to receive God's grace in *vain*. For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, *now* is the time of God's favor, *now* is the day of salvation."

Words of Warning and Hope!

Isaiah 55:6-7 warns, "***Seek*** the Lord *while* he may be found, call on him *while* he is near...Let the wicked ***forsake*** his way and the *evil* man his thoughts. Let him ***turn*** to the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

James 2:13 declares, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."

God's Mercy & Grace - The Personal Correlation!

What does God's mercy and grace mean to us as believers?

We can and should be:

1. ***Dependent*** on God! (2 Cor. 12:9) "But he said to me, My grace is *sufficient* for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
2. ***Confident*** before God! (Hebrews 4:16) "Let us then approach the throne of grace *with confidence*, so that we may *receive* mercy and *find* grace to help us in our time of need."
3. ***Yielded*** to God! (Romans 12:1) "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to *offer* your bodies as *living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

Making it Personal

Finish the sentence: Because of God's "amazing grace" and "tender mercies" I plan to...

Quotable Quote: "Grace means there is *nothing* we can do to make God love us *more*...and grace means there is *nothing* we can do to make God love us *less*. Grace means that God *already* loves us as much as an infinite God can possibly love." Phillip Yancey, *Grace Notes*