

Lesson 2: Ultimate Grace

Objective: The point of the lesson is that your students would understand that salvation through Christ is the fullest expression of God's grace, and that they would be able to identify how God's grace transformed their characters.

Scripture Focus: Titus 3:3-8

Overview: God's kindness and goodness are displayed throughout the Bible. He lavishes blessings on the righteous, and even blesses the unrighteous! Yet, nowhere is God's kindness more extravagantly displayed than through the gift of salvation given through His Son, Jesus. This passage from Titus makes it clear: God's provision of forgiveness from sins and eternal life were motivated by nothing other than His grace. We deserved death because of our sin. But because of God's kindness, He made a means for us to know and serve Him. One of the best things you can help your students do is to articulate how God's grace has transformed them, realizing the difference God's grace has made in their lives. This lesson will equip you to facilitate this level of discussion.

Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "grace Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/grace-teacher-prep>

Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

The Details

Who wrote Titus?

The first verses of the epistle establish Paul as the author of Titus. Titus was a contemporary of Paul's, and a fellow Christ-follower.

When was Titus written?

Conservative scholars have long dated the writing of Titus between Paul's first imprisonment and his second imprisonment/death. This would place the writing of Titus sometime in the mid 60's AD.

What was the purpose for writing Titus?

Paul had helped play a role in starting a church on Crete. Titus has stayed to help lead the church in its infancy. Paul wrote to address some heresies cropping up in the church, in addition to addressing matters of church leadership, holy living, and the power of the Gospel.

The Main Point

In the first lesson you learned about what grace is and how it flows from who God is. In this lesson, you'll take it a step further and examine how the Gospel is the fullest expression of God's grace. This passage from Titus shows that God's kindness through the forgiveness of sins and the granting of eternal life were motivated by nothing other than His grace. This Titus passage does a great job of examining the difference in our lives before Christ and our lives after Him. Plus it attributes the change to God's grace, lavishly poured out on us through His Son, Jesus.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

The Lead In

- **Goal:** The idea of this exercise is to give students an idea of the awesomeness of God's grace.
- **Set-Up:** This activity focuses on a pretty comical mishap during San Diego's annual 4th of July fireworks show. You'll need to access this article ahead of time to summarize the story for your students: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/07/san-diego-bay-fireworks-ignite-all-at-once-botching-show.html>. If the URL is inaccessible, simply Google "big bay boom" and you'll find plenty of articles and videos from the event. If you choose, arrange to show this YouTube video of the explosion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzYfH-7opBA>. If this video is not available, a search of YouTube will return tons of videos of the event. However, make sure you screen them as some contain inappropriate language.

FIRST, ask your students if they have any family traditions or memories that involve attending one of those large fireworks displays. Maybe your city puts on a show for 4th of July or New Year's. Or maybe students have seen a cool fireworks show while at an event, such as a concert, or a Baseball or Football game, or maybe while on vacation. Ask students to share where they've seen a big fireworks display and if there was anything that made them particularly special, or memorable. (Their answers may range from being with family to watching explosions.)

NEXT, relay to students the story of the massive gaffe at the 2012 San Diego fireworks show. Explain to the students that San Diego puts on a HUGE fireworks show each year. Due to a computer error, just as the show was about to start, every single one of the fireworks went off at once, resulting in show that was only 15 seconds – a very loud, bright, and awesome 15 seconds.

THEN, show the YouTube clip you've prepared. Allow the sheer awesomeness of the firework display to sink in. When you've finished, explain to the group that the videos show the fireworks from a viewer's perspective. The people in attendance, many of whom paid money for parking and premier seating, came expecting something COMPLETELY different than what they got. However, what they ended up getting was something unique and spectacular, in its own way.

FINALLY, wrap the intro activity up by saying:

- **God's grace can often be like this fireworks show. We come expecting a nice, controlled, typical display, but God appears in a big way. When we think about an over the top, all-at-once display of radiant grace, we have to immediately think of the cross. We're going to learn in this lesson that in Christ, all of God's grace was on display. All of it! Let's go a little deeper and learn how this impacts our lives.**

The Main Event

- **Goal:** The idea is for students understand that salvation through Christ is the fullest expression of God's grace.
- **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, spend a moment reviewing what you learned in *grace* Lesson 1. Ask if anyone can recall what you covered in your previous gathering. You may want to ask students to share about their experience with the devotions. Use the bullet points below to help you flesh out the discussion.

- **Grace can be thought of as the overwhelming goodness of God—His mercy, kindness and ultimately salvation—poured out over us.**
- **Grace flows from God's goodness.**
- **We don't deserve grace, but God gives it to us anyway.**

Once you've caught students up, transition into your time of Bible study. Explain to them that today you'll be looking at a passage in Paul's letter to Titus. Provide some context by sharing the following:

- **The Epistle of Titus was written to Titus from Paul.**
- **Paul is writing to Titus to encourage him in leadership and devotion to faithfulness, and to knowing and living God's Word.**
- **He challenges Titus to stand up for truth and grace with authority.**

THEN, read or have a student read Titus 3:3 out loud. When he or she has finished, take a few minutes and have a discussion based on how verse 3 describes what all of our lives were like before God's grace came on the scene through Jesus.

- **Look at that first part of verse 3. Those are some strong words. What are the words Paul listed to describe what a life looks like apart from God? And what do you think he meant by them?**
 - *Answers:*
 - *Foolish:* Not talking about intelligence here. Before Christ, we are ignorant to spiritual things. An unregenerate heart cannot understand the things of God.
 - *Disobedient:* We are rebellious against God.
 - *Deceived:* Satan deceives us, or we are generally deceived by our sin.
 - *Slaves to passions:* We don't just sin apart from Christ, we actively pursue pleasure in ways that are opposite to God's ways.

Point out that the second part of verse 3 isn't any better. Paul said apart from Christ we are both malicious (That means mean and harmful) and envious. We hate others. Simply put, without the power of God's grace in and over our lives, we're in pretty sad shape. Ask:

- **Why do you think Paul thought it was important to describe in such detail who we all are before we encounter God's grace in Christ?**
 - *Answer:* Paul is trying to point out that we cannot accept God's grace until we realize our need for it. Paul brings up all of this to remind us that we're incapable of saving ourselves.

NEXT, read the rest of our passage out loud. Work through Titus 3:4-8 with the students, helping them see the difference God's grace in Christ makes in our lives. Ask something like:

- **Verse 4 starts with the most powerful three-letter word we could hope to find. What is it?**
 - *Answer:* "But"
- **What do I mean when I say this word is powerful? Why is it so important in the context of this passage?**

- *Answer:* Because Paul was describing us as we were apart from Christ. And it was an awful description! God could have left us in our sin. He would have been justified if He did. We deserve it. That “but” represents a turn. A twist. It represents rescue!
- **OK, so, after the “but” Paul writes that the “Kindness and love of God appeared.” Hmmm . . . kindness and love . . . sounds a lot like God’s grace! So, God’s grace erupts onto the scene. Now, look at verse 5 and 6 and tell me exactly what God’s grace accomplished. Take it slow. It’s important.**
 - *Answer:* Lead students to see that we were saved by God’s mercy. More so, we were saved through the Spirit and through Christ’s work on the cross. And all of it was motivated by God’s great mercy.
- **WOW! What an awesome picture! But it’s not quite complete. Verse 7 wraps it up in an amazing bow. Can anyone read this and tell me exactly what Paul is describing?**
 - *Answer:* Remember, to be justified is to be declared innocent of the guilt of our sin. And Paul says that it was God’s grace through Christ that cleansed us!
- **What was the ultimate fruit of God’s grace at work? What did we gain from it?**
 - *Answer:* Eternal life as God’s children, forever in relationship with Him.

Point out that if you need to stop and catch your breath, or take a water break it’s OK! This is SUCH powerful stuff and it’s a ton to take in. But explain that this is just the way God’s grace works. It’s so amazing how He works *in* grace and *through* grace to create a way for us to be in harmony with Him for all time. Point out that it’s hard to fathom at times it’s so awesome!

FINALLY, explain to students that God doesn’t withhold His grace from us. In fact, His grace motivated Him to send His own Son to undergo an unfathomable sacrifice on our behalf. His grace is radically aimed at us. We can’t earn it. We can’t justify it. It is given freely. And it is life changing! Close the Bible study time by saying something similar to:

- **God in His goodness changes our eternal path through the message of His grace. It’s only because of the death and resurrection of Jesus that we can experience this new life. When we begin to forget this, we lose sight of what grace truly is. If we’re followers of Jesus, we aren’t better than those around us. We’ve simply accepted a gift that’s been freely given. Our motivation should be to share this message with as many as we can who are still slaves to sin.**

Transition into “The Last Word.”

The Last Word

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to consider the ways God’s grace has transformed their characters.
- **Set-Up:** A dry-erase board will be helpful to make a list. Also, provide ways for students to record their thoughts in a way they can take it with them after your group time. The easiest way would be to encourage them to type it on a note app on their phone. But, if this would create difficulties, provide note cards, or cardstock, or something similar, and a pen to write with.

FIRST, explain to the students that up to this point, you’ve talked about the effects of God’s grace expressed through Christ in more of a big picture sense. But explain that if they’ve submitted their lives to Christ through faith, they’ve experienced the transforming nature of God’s grace, just like Paul talked about in Titus. Say something like:

- **The odd thing is that we don’t often stop to think about who we’d be apart from Christ, or just how He’s transformed our characters. As we wrap up this lesson, let’s carve out a few moments to simply think about the difference God’s grace in Christ has made in our lives.**

THEN, tell students that you want them to be able to write down some thoughts to take with them when they leave. Inform them of whatever means you've made available to make this happen, whether that's suggesting they use a note app on their phones or tablets, or writing on index cards. Then, challenge them to think about how God's grace has come into their life and changed their characters. Instruct them to think about this in terms of these areas (consider writing these on the dry-erase board so students can see them):

- **The things I care about**
- **The things I think about**
- **How I treat others**
- **How I think about my future**
- **The words I say**
- **How I look at my life**

Say something like:

- **Think about God's grace and how it has changed you in regards to these categories. Then, choose two or three of them and try and write a one sentence statement of how God's grace through Christ has changed what you care about, or what you think about, and so on.**

Allow students a few minutes to think about their responses. Then, consider having a few volunteers share if they feel comfortable doing so. Encourage students to take their responses with them and keep them in a place where they can see them this week and reflect on them.

FINALLY, challenge students to embrace the new life God made possible through Christ, a new life motivated by God's grace.

Close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the "Grace: Lesson 2" devotions to your students. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

