

# AMAZING GRACE

**GOD'S GIFT AND OUR RESPONSE**



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**HOT**  
  
**SHOTS**

Amazing Grace

Originally Titled: Case Dismissed: What Grace Means to You

Written by Mark Farnham

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Grace: “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense” is the definition that many of us learned when we were kids. That’s a good beginning, but you cannot encapsulate the richness of grace in a simple acronym.

In grace we see the active love of God poured out on His people—in spite of our sin against His love. Perhaps an illustration will help.

Imagine that you have been sent to prison for murder. After spending thirty years alone in a cell, you are released for good behavior. Now you’re free, but you have no friends, no home, and no money. With nothing but the clothing on your back, you find shelter under a bridge, eating dumpster scraps for your first meal.

As you are begging on the street one day, a well-dressed man comes walking toward you. You stretch out your hand, asking for some change, when to your horror you recognize that the man is the father of the boy you murdered. He walks straight to you, but instead of attacking you, berating you, or even recoiling at the sight of you, he hands you several hundred dollars in cash.

He asks you to buy some clothes and then join him for dinner at his mansion. That night in his house, he tells you that he wants to adopt you and give you the privilege and inheritance that was due to his deceased son.

This is just a finite picture of God’s grace. Not only do we not deserve it, but we’ve also done everything in our power to make us unworthy of God’s blessing. Yet in love He offers the provision and strength we need from day to day.

We should all be awed, overwhelmed, and inspired by God’s grace. We should be motivated to deeper levels of commitment to Him because of His grace. We should strive to defeat sin in our lives because of grace. We should swim in grace—be caught up in God’s gift and its eternal importance.

You have the tremendous privilege of teaching your teens the richness of God’s grace. May your teaching have a freshness and relevance that comes only from living by grace.

## **How to teach this study**

Hot Shots are written with the firm belief that teens learn much better when they are actively involved in the learning process. Teaching does not have to be dry, boring lectures or fruitless question and answer sessions. The most remembered lessons are those that included taste and touch, humor and drama, discussion and study, video and music. Active learning uses all these elements and more. It places the student shoulder-to-shoulder with the teacher instead of twenty feet away. It brings stories to life and gives information meaning. It changes thinking, speech, behavior and life.

The sections in each lesson have a specific function within the lesson.



The Warm-up is an exercise that creates a sense of togetherness and begins the meeting with a fun game or interesting discussion.



The Bridge introduces the subject content with a provocative illustration.



The Content is the explanation and application of the lesson.



The Closing summarizes experiences and calls for a commitment from the teens.

Different active learning styles are used to reinforce and illustrate the content, including discussion, role play, question and answer, sight, smell, taste, video, music and many more!

## Before you start the study...

Read the Introduction, Course Objectives and Overview. It is important that you understand the scope of this study before you teach it.



## Before each lesson...

1. Read through the lesson and take note of the Lesson Aim, Objectives, and the materials needed for creative teaching segments.
2. Plan ahead to modify the lesson if necessary. Your facilities or equipment may limit you. Substitute your own ideas if necessary.
3. Each lesson can be taught in 20–30 minutes, but preparation can let you shorten or lengthen the lesson as needed.
4. Use excitement when you teach! An excited teacher produces students who are excited about learning. If you don't feel that one of our teaching ideas or warm ups will excite your teens, spend some time and develop one that will work.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Understand the importance of justification
- Realize the dangers of misunderstanding grace
- Be willing to sacrifice for the Lord
- Begin expressing grace to others
- Appreciate how grace motivates us to holy living

## Overview

### Lesson 1: Court Adjourned: God's Grace to You!

- **Lesson Aim:** To teach teens what the doctrine of justification means to them
- **Text:** Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:11

### Lesson 2: Grace: God's Attitude Toward You

- **Lesson Aim:** To illustrate the difference between legalism and grace
- **Text:** Matthew 23

### Lesson 3: Living Sacrifice: The Proper Response to Grace

- **Lesson Aim:** To teach teens how they should respond to grace
- **Text:** Romans 12:1–2

### Lesson 4: Grace Living: Showing Grace to Others

- **Lesson Aim:** To teach teens how they can show grace to others
- **Text:** Colossians 3:12–13

### Lesson 5: Standards: Nuisance or Necessity?

- **Lesson Aim:** To teach teens the importance of personal and institutional standards
- **Texts:** 1 Corinthians 14:40; Job 31:1

## LESSON 1

# Court Adjourned

## God's Grace to You!

For a teenager, walking into a new social setting for the first time can be scary, intimidating, and confusing. He may be thinking, “Where do I stand?” or “Where do I fit in?” When teens come to Christ, they enter a new experience and they ask the same kind of question: “Where do I stand with God?” Understanding the doctrine of justification can help teens experience the joy of knowing where they “fit in” with God as believers.



**To teach teens what the doctrine of justification means to them.**



**Students will:**

- See what happens at the moment of salvation
- Learn the definition of justification
- Share experiences of God's grace in their lives
- Express gratefulness for God's grace



**Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:11**

Romans 5:1 tells us that we have peace with God because Jesus Christ has justified us. 1 Corinthians 6:11 reminds us that our past is behind us because our justification puts us in a new position with God.

## The Lesson



Place all the objects for the object lesson (see “What You Need” on the next page) on a table and cover them with a sheet. Hand out paper and pencils as students enter. When you are ready to start, uncover the objects for 30 seconds and then cover them up again. Now give the students two

## What You Need

- An overstuffed backpack
- A little dirt or soot
- A wet washrag or towel
- A large zip tie
- A pair of heavy scissors
- A bill envelope marked “Sin Debt”
- A legal file or manila envelope marked “GUILTY”
- A small sign marked “Sentenced to Death”
- A small sign marked “Eternal Life”
- Three large signs marked “Dad,” “Sis,” and “Bro”
- A black heart cut-out
- A white heart cut-out
- A dove cut-out
- A “frowny-face” mask with a string to tie around someone’s head
- A large check
- An ID card
- Three small gift boxes or gift cards

minutes to jot down as many objects as they can remember. Award prizes to the teens that remember the most objects.



Ask, “What are some common things that we forget easily?” (Phone numbers, combination lock numbers, how to spell someone’s last name) Say, “One thing that’s easy to forget—even though we’ve heard it before—is what happens to us when we get saved.”

## What Happens at Salvation



When we trust Christ as our Savior, many things happen to us all at once.

**Object Lesson:** To illustrate what happens in salvation you will need several volunteers to act out characters—a newly saved Christian, a father, a sister, and a brother—and the props from the warm-up. You’ll need a little time to prepare the characters, so assign the verses listed below to the remaining teens, telling them to look up their verse(s) and be prepared to say what each indicates will happen at salvation.

Take the characters out of the room and prepare the Christian for the skit by doing the following:

- Smudge the bit of dirt or soot on his forehead
- Put the overstuffed backpack on his back
- Give him the “GUILTY” file and the bill envelope marked “Sin Debt”
- Tape on his back the sign saying “Sentenced to Death,” and stick to his chest the black heart
- Secure his hands behind his back with the zip-tie
- Put the frowny-face mask on him
- Hand the father, sister, and brother characters their appropriate signs.

Bring the characters into the room, with the Christian up front and the others standing off to the side. Explain that the Christian is like every person before salvation. Say that spiritually speaking, we all look ridiculous without Christ.

Instruct the teens with assigned verses to read them, explaining each one in turn. Clarify as necessary, then illustrate each truth by having the characters perform the actions listed below.

- **Ephesians 1:7:** Our sins are forgiven—Slip the backpack off his back and throw it aside.
- **Revelation 1:5:** We are washed from our sin—Wash the smudge off his face with the wet paper towel.
- **Romans 6:18:** We are loosed from the power of sin—Cut through the zip-tie.
- **Romans 5:11:** Our sin debt is paid in full—Take the “Sin Debt” envelope and mark it with a large X.

- **2 Corinthians 1:9–10:** Our guilt is fully pardoned—Take the “GUILTY” file and mark it with a large X.
- **Romans 6:23:** Our death sentence is exchanged for eternal life—Replace the “Death Sentence” sign with the “Eternal Life” one.
- **Ezekiel 36:26:** We are given a new heart—Replace the black heart with the white heart.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17:** We are made into a new person—Take the frowny-face mask off.
- **Luke 11:13:** The Holy Spirit comes to live in us—Tuck the dove cut-out into his shirt.
- **Romans 8:15:** We get a new father—Have the father stand next to him holding up the “Dad” sign.
- **Matthew 12:50:** We get new brothers and sisters—Have the brother and sister stand next to him holding up their signs, as well.
- **Colossians 1:12:** We obtain an inheritance—Hand him the check.
- **2 Peter 1:3:** We are given all we need to live the way we ought—Hand him the utility belt.
- **Isaiah 62:2:** We are given a new name—Hand him the ID and announce his new name as “Christian.”
- **1 Corinthians 12:1–11:** We are given spiritual gifts—Hand him the gifts.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it does illustrate how many things happen to us at the moment of salvation.

Distribute the small gifts or gift cards to the characters for their participation.

Say, “Of all the things that happen to us when we get saved, one of the most important is justification.”

## Definition of Justification

**Visual Aid:** On a whiteboard or overhead projector write: “Justification is the judicial act of God proclaiming restoration of a sinner.”

Ask, “What does the word ‘judicial’ mean in this sentence?”

## Judicial Refers to a Judgment or Ruling by a Judge

In justification God passes down a ruling about us. It is a decision with authority and finality.

Since He is the judge of the entire universe (Gen. 18:25; Heb. 12:23), God holds the authority to make a judgment on our eternal standing with Him. His judgments are final. There is no higher court than God’s—and no place to appeal His judgment.

## What You Need

Chalkboard or whiteboard

## Justification Is God Passing Down a Ruling

This ruling releases a guilty sinner from his just punishment, restoring him to a place of favor. We are freed from our deserved sentence of eternal death in hell. This is only possible because Jesus paid the debt of our sin, satisfying both God's holiness and justice (Mic. 7:18).

Restored to God's favor, we are now approved and accepted by Him. When God looks at us, He sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Our fellowship with God—once broken by Adam's sin—is restored, leaving us adopted sons and daughters in God's family.

## What Justification Means to You

### You Are No Longer Under Condemnation by God— Romans 8:1

Many Christians live with a fear that if they mess up too many times, they will lose their salvation. They struggle with a doubt fueled by uncertainty and unconfessed sin. Justification reminds us that when we completely trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, our eternal destiny is settled once and for all. God is the one who makes the declaration about our spiritual condition and no amount of failing and weakness on our part can change our ultimate standing with Him. If a person is saved by Christ, how he feels about his salvation does not affect his justification.

Christians who are out of fellowship with God and living with unconfessed sin will feel conviction and guilt because of the Holy Spirit's work in their lives. Don't mistake this guilt for the condemnation of God. If you repent of the sin in your life and fellowship with Him through the Word and prayer, your feelings of guilt will go away.

### You Are Now Living in God's Favor

Rather than being subject to God's anger—like we were before salvation—we now experience His favor. This is known as His grace. Every time something bad happens in your life, it's not God "getting you" for being bad. He sees you as righteous, not bad. If there is sin in your life, God will deal directly with that sin, but even in this you can expect to be treated by God as a good, loving father would treat his precious child.

The father does everything he can to show that child love. He showers the child with gifts and attention. He is there when the child is hurt, comforting when it's needed most. This is what God's favor is like.



Ask the teens to name different ways we experience God's favor in our lives. Then close in prayer, asking the teens to pray out loud individually as they are led to thank God for His grace.

## LESSON 2

# Grace

## God's Attitude Toward You

Many teens are confused about how God feels about them. Some think that God must be angry with them because they fail Him. Others have heard that God loves them, but they never feel that love. Understanding the doctrine of grace and its meaning for them will help teens have the motivation to live right.



**To illustrate the difference between legalism and grace.**



**Students will:**

- Learn the definition of grace
- Discover how much they live by grace
- Visualize the dangers of legalism
- Study the failure of the Pharisees



**Matthew 23**

This text reveals the stark contrast between the grace of Jesus and the legalism of the Pharisees. Jesus exposed them for who they were: hypocrites putting on a good outward show while their hearts were full of wickedness. They were teaching others to earn God's favor through self-righteous acts. Jesus demonstrated that as believers we already have God's favor.

### What You Need

A table,  
Snacks for everyone,  
A sign,  
A marker

## The Lesson



Set up a table at the entrance to the room and arrange a variety snacks and drinks on it. Write up a sign that says "Cost: Whatever You Want." Sell the snacks to anyone who offers money, but also give them away free to anyone who requests

something. Note who gives each amount. If anyone asks how much the snacks are, just say, "Read the sign." When you are ready to start the class, clean up the table and explain to the teens that the snacks really were free, but you wanted to see if anyone would feel obligated to pay anyway. While you appreciate their generosity, thankfully things don't work the same way with the blessing of God's grace. Hand the money back to those who paid, and distribute the rest of the snacks to those who didn't take any.



Say, "Many people don't realize God's grace, or favor, is free. Someone has told them they have to work for it, but God's Word tells us it is free. Some will try to earn it, and some refuse to take advantage of it at all, thinking they have nothing to offer in return. The truth is, none of us has anything to offer that compares to the wealth of God's grace."

## The Definition of Grace

**T**We mentioned the definition of grace in the last lesson. Grace is that part of justification that places us in the favor of God. We move out of condemnation and into the kindness of God.

**Visual Aid:** Write the following definition on the whiteboard or overhead: "To show grace is to extend favor or kindness to one who doesn't deserve it and can never earn it."

There are several parts of this definition:

### God Extends Favor and Kindness to Us

This is a permanent disposition God has toward us. He welcomes us into a relationship with Him in which He accepts us as we are. He treats us with kindness. In Psalm 68:19, David says that God daily loads us up with blessings.

**Handout:** Distribute copies of "The Grace Meter" and pens or pencils. Have the teens answer the questions and rate their grace quotient.

But many of us don't recognize God's blessing in our lives. We don't see the blessings showering down from heaven all around us. And there's a reason: when we're on the treadmill of legalism, we don't have the time or ability to appreciate God's grace.

### Grace Is Undeserved and Cannot Be Earned

Since few Christians understand the doctrine of justification by grace, they feel condemned and don't think that God's favor is on them. Instead they've placed themselves under a system that says, "To escape God's anger and earn his favor, keep this list of hundreds of rules and then you will deserve God's acceptance." This system completely denies God's grace. A treadmill can help us understand this mindset.

### What You Need

Whiteboard or overhead

### What You Need

Copies of "The Grace Meter"

Pens or pencils

## What You Need

A treadmill

**Object Lesson:** Bring a treadmill to class. A great way to hold the students' attention would be to teach the following points while walking or jogging on the treadmill.

### **A Person on a Treadmill Goes Nowhere**

You can run as long as you want on a treadmill, but you'll never get anywhere. Christians who live their lives trying to escape God's wrath and earn His favor never get there because grace is not received this way.

### **A Person on a Treadmill Gets Tired After a While**

At first running on a treadmill looks easy. The path is only five or so feet long. But soon you realize it never ends. After a while you quit because you're not getting anywhere. Likewise, a Christian who lives a legalistic life soon gets emotionally exhausted with running from God's anger, never fully experiencing God's grace. Many Christians in a system like this eventually quit the faith and never have anything to do with God or the church again.

### **A Person on a Treadmill Can't Lift His Eyes to Look Around**

A Christian in a legalistic life has to focus so hard on making sure he doesn't break one of the hundreds of man-made rules that he doesn't have time to see God's grace all around him.

There is only one solution to this destructive mindset: get off the treadmill! God's grace does not require us to be on it. We already have His favor and have already escaped condemnation. We can't earn God's favor; we already have it. We don't deserve it and can never deserve it no matter how hard we try. It's given freely to undeserving sinners like you and I. We must simply accept it and begin to enjoy it!

The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) is a perfect picture of grace. He didn't deserve his father's grace when he came back home. He even tried to earn it by becoming a hired servant. But his father showed him favor all along. He was always waiting for his son to come back, and when he did, no amount of work was needed to regain favor. The father's grace was free!

## **The Danger of Grace**

One of the reasons so many Christians live under legalism rather than grace is that legalism keeps them in line through an emphasis on fear of God's wrath. When Christians constantly focus on the impending judgment of God, no one dares question or violate the rules that have been set up, even though they may be man-made and not from God. Christians then maintain a meticulous outward life while never addressing their inner problems. This is how the Pharisees lived.

**Group Study:** Have your teens read through Matthew 23:2–7, 13–28. Ask them to listen carefully to the difference between the outward lives and inner lives of the Pharisees. Discuss what they learn. Have them take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle lengthwise. At the top of the left-hand side write the word “Pharisee,” and on the other side of the column write “God’s Ruling.” As you read the passage, record every act that the Pharisee does and then record what God thinks about that action. You may not find a judgment recorded about each action.

It is possible for you to misuse grace as a pass for sinful living. Paul notes this danger in Romans 6:1 and the verses that follow. He anticipates the immature response of someone who discovers that he is not condemned but accepted and favored. “If this is true, then I can live any way I want. I can sin and enjoy it because I’ve escaped God’s condemnation. The more I sin, the more grace I can experience.”

To this Paul replies, “By no means!” Or in other words: “no way!” We should not live in sin just because we have God’s grace already. Instead of living righteously because we’re trying to earn God’s favor, we do it because we already have God’s favor.

It’s the difference between doing something because you have to and doing something because you want to. The first will make you more consistent initially, but eventually you’ll get tired and just maintain your outward appearance while your heart grows cold. Or you will just stop trying altogether. Living by grace may make you less consistent at first, because on days you don’t have the desire to live for God, you won’t. But eventually you’ll be gripped by grace, and your life and heart will be what they ought to be.

**Galatians 3:1–5:** Legalism leads to a life dominated by the rules of men.

**Galatians 5:1–6:** Grace leads to a life ruled by the love of God.

**Matthew 19:20:** Legalism makes you ask, “When will I have ever done enough?”

**Philippians 3:10:** Grace makes you say, “I want to give more.”

**Luke 18:11–12:** Legalism leads to pride in what you have done.

**1 Corinthians 15:9–10:** Grace leads to humility as you realize all God has done through an undeserving sinner like you.

**Luke 18:11–12:** Legalism leads to a phony life that others see through easily.

**Luke 18:13–14:** Grace leads to transparency and a real life that gets hold of a teen’s life and transforms him.

**Galatians 3:10:** Legalism demands strict conformity.

**1 Corinthians 12:4–14:** Grace recognizes and affirms the differences in how God made us.



Ask the teens to bow their heads and close their eyes. Tell them to ask God to teach them to live by grace. After a few minutes, close in prayer.

## What You Need

Paper,  
Pens or pencils

# The Grace Meter

Answer the following questions honestly and then see how much you are living by grace.

I find myself thanking God for the “little” things in my life—like good health, a nice day, my friends, and my family:

- a. Consistently
- b. Almost never

I read my Bible and pray because:

- a. I long to know God better and I look forward to talking to God each day
- b. I know I should do it

When tempted to do wrong, my first thought is:

- a. How could I sin against God like this?
- b. What will happen if I get caught? Is it worth the punishment?

When I think about God, I ask:

- a. How can I give more of myself to you, Lord?
- b. Why do you ask so much of me and why can't I have any fun?

When I think of what I do for God:

- a. I am amazed that God would use someone like me
- b. I am pretty proud of what a good Christian I am compared to others

When it comes to the real me:

- a. I readily admit my failures and most people know the real me
- b. I feel like I have to maintain an image of a good Christian teen, but inside I know that there is a lot wrong with me

I feel like:

- a. God loves me and is good to me even when I am at my worst
- b. God must be angry at me or out to get me because I don't feel His love

Being a Christian is:

- a. The greatest thing that ever happened to me and I love it
- b. Good because I don't have to go to hell, but other than that it doesn't do much for me

After you have honestly answered these questions, grade yourself. An “a” is worth three points; a “b” is worth one point.

Scores	
<b>20–24:</b>	You are experiencing God's grace in a real and exciting way.
<b>13–19:</b>	You know a little about God's grace but there's more to it.
<b>Under 12:</b>	God desperately wants you to experience His grace so He can claim your love.

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