



ADULT

Lesson 2 / March 12, 2017

Saved by Grace

By Dick Lentz

for use as
STEP 1



Lesson 2

Focus:

God's gift of grace saves us.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Ephesians 2:1-10

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

[God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you've been saved.
—Ephesians 2:5

Students will discuss how grateful we should be as recipients of God's grace and how we should give grace to those around us.

OPENING ACTIVITY: *Grace Described*

Ask students to share their responses to these questions. Summarize their answers on a board or sheet of newsprint: *How would you describe what grace is? What are some examples of it?*

Grace means “unmerited favor.” It can be described as getting something good that we haven't earned—a free gift. One example is the gift of salvation we've received from God, something we've been given freely by Him; we didn't earn it. Other examples include a gift given to someone for no reason than just to show that person they are special or loved, or an unexpected act of kindness shown toward someone in need.

This week's article focuses on three individuals who are trying to show God's grace as Jesus' “hands and feet” to those in their community who are in need.

OPENING STORY: [Read the story aloud or make copies and pass them around.]

THE MINISTRY OF 'SAVED BY GRACE'

Although Maria Gamble, Donna Howard, and Honey Sparre of Brunswick, Georgia, had wanted to start a ministry of some sort for awhile, they probably never expected it to be focused on helping the homeless they encountered in the streets. But when they heard from Sparre about a young man in Brunswick who was unable to get a job due to mental illness and whose living conditions were poor, they decided to pay him a visit to see how they could help.

What they found was a man living in a two-room apartment empty except for a hole-filled mattress, some broken furniture, and roaches. The man owned nothing except for the shirt and pants he wore. “His shirt was turned inside out,” Gamble said about this later. “He had no socks, no underwear, no bath towels, no toilet paper, no toothbrush. He had nothing, absolutely nothing.”

After asking about his immediate needs, the women asked if he had any prayer requests. He said, “Grace. Pray for grace.” That simple request was how the three of them came up with the name for their ministry—“Saved by Grace.”

After leaving the man’s house, the women went to a nearby shopping center and bought the man some of the things he needed. His home was eventually furnished through donations. As news of their ministry spread through word-of-mouth and Facebook, they received an outpouring of support. A storage unit was soon filled with donated items including clothes, furniture, canned goods, and other needed supplies. The three made regular outings into the community in search of those in need, and they handed out supplies to those they found from the back of Howard’s Suburban.

Before starting Saved by Grace, Howard admits that she never really saw the homeless in Brunswick: “In the past we realized we overlooked them; we walked right by them without noticing them.” Part of this may be due to what Gamble says is the stigma attached to homelessness. “People have a misconception about homelessness,” she said. “They think homeless people are just riding the system, that they don’t want to work, that they’re lazy ... People think just because you’re homeless and you can walk, that you could get a job. No, you can’t ... you may not have an I.D., you may have a mental disability that prevents you from working. And transportation is another huge problem.”

The women’s interaction with those they find and help has resulted in them seeing the homeless differently. In the past they may have overlooked them. “But now,” says Howard, “we are trying our best to help them, we’re actually looking for them, and it seems like we see them before anyone else sees them ... These people are people too, and they need people to love them and they need people to help them and to extend them grace ... and that is what Saved by Grace is all about.”

Their efforts to help the homeless has inspired others to do the same. It has also been an encouragement to those who have benefited from their grace. As one man put it, “Their ministry brings light into people’s lives ... [they] are my guardian angels.”

Ask your students to form small groups to discuss the answers to these questions.

- **In what ways have you had grace extended to you? What impact did this have on you?**
- **How have you seen grace freely given in your church? In your community?**
- **Why is it important to be thankful recipients of grace as well as willing givers of it?**

(When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher's Guide*.)

News Sources:

http://goldenisles.news/news/local_news/saved-by-grace-ministry-aims-to-help-local-homeless-population/article_f9560278-46ea-5463-9914-6be7c5764bbe.html

<https://www.facebook.com/Saved-By-Grace-707537992729304/about/>



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NO ONE WILL BE LEFT OUT

The mission statement of Saved by Grace says,

Saved by Grace was founded for the sole purpose of providing for and meeting the needs of "The least of these," those that may be overlooked by others. It is our mission to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, and furniture while assisting with the process of applying for housing, disability, food stamps, etc. No one will be left out in regards to race, gender, ethnic background, addiction, or religion.

Gamble, Howard, and Sparre want everyone they encounter in need to experience the benefits of the grace they are making available. They do not want anyone to be left out. And that's a good picture of what God's grace is like. He extends grace to everyone no matter what their state in life or their spiritual condition. He wants everyone to know that He is freely offering salvation to them through believing in His Son Jesus. We don't earn our salvation. It's by grace that we have been saved, and we must share that good news and grace with others.

Have the class return to the groups they had in Step 1 and discuss their responses to this question:

- **In what ways can you be a thankful recipient of God's grace this week as well as a willing giver of it?**

Close the class in prayer. Thank God for His grace and that He extends it to everyone. Pray that those who haven't yet experienced God's grace in a personal way will be willing to accept His hand of grace and the salvation that comes with it. Also, pray that those who have experienced God's grace will be willing to share that good news with others.

After praying, you may want to offer an opportunity to students who haven't made a personal commitment to Jesus to talk with you after class about how they can receive and enjoy the benefits of God's grace.

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THE BIBLE IN THE NEWS

A new movie based on Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ* is opening next month:
<http://www.christianheadlines.com/news/author-lee-strobel-on-the-case-for-christ-now-a-movie.html>