

Administer God's Grace to One Another

Show one another undeserved love and unmerited favor. Enjoy the gifts of God's grace together. Also, let your spiritual gifts flow out for the good of the church.

Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7; Heb 12:15; 1 Peter 4:10

God's grace is all around us. But we pay too little attention to it.

However, in heaven, everything will be God's grace.

This is very important for the quality of our lives in heaven: The more we can pay attention to grace now, the higher capacity we will have to truly experience grace in heaven.

God's grace is "undeserved love from God", sometimes referred to as "unmerited favor from God".

The best part of God's grace is the salvation He gives us through the sacrifice of His Son for our redemption. We are told in John 3:16: "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

From rescue from the dominion of sin and evil to eternal residency in heaven, this undeserved love and unmerited favor from God is the most wonderful gift we will ever receive. Such grace! Such undeserved love from God!

We all want to feel loved. God's love is unconditional and constant. To grow increasingly aware of God's grace is to more and more know deep down in our spirits how much we are loved by Him. If we can only sense 37% of God's love, for example, wouldn't we want to raise that level before we head to heaven? Becoming more and more aware of God's grace in our lives and all around us will do just that – make our spirits more capable of realizing a greater portion of His love.

Ever more perceiving God's grace all around us now yields tremendous enhancements for our eternal life in heaven. I want this portion of the *Getting Ready to Go Home to Heaven* curriculum to guide you into the following wonderful enhancements for heaven.

First, you will develop a keener sense of God's grace all around you now, even though distractions get in the way. When you go to heaven, you will be able to sense, absorb, and appreciate more of the grace of heaven – the eternal, but undeserved, gifts from God.

Second, this heightened sense that will enable you to recognize a greater number of God's graces in heaven will speak to your spirit the depth of God's love. The greater awareness of grace in heaven, the greater will you feel loved in eternity.

Third, sensing more grace than some others, you will be able to show them aspects of God's grace in heaven of which they are not aware. The joy of their wonderment will be matched by God's enjoyment

that they finally noticed His love, generosity, and creativity.

Administering God's grace to one another in heaven will be one of the very most important jobs the Lord has for us there. It will supercharge our worship of God.

The writer of the book of Hebrews in the Bible passed this word from God on to us: "*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God*". The purpose of this instruction is linked to holiness and that no one become bitter and cause trouble and hurt others in the church. Helping one another recognize how much we have received through God's grace enables us to be grateful rather than bitter and foster joy rather than create trouble.

However, the Bible constantly reminds us of the grace of God, so administering God's grace to one another has more applications. Let us look at how we can help one another take in as much of His loving grace as we can.

Acknowledging grace means to realize that we are not entitled to all the good things that come into our lives, that they are truly gifts of God's unconditional love. Everything around us speaks of God's grace. We have been given so much that is both undeserved and marvelous in detail. If we want to prepare for heaven with its unlimited grace to be discovered day after day after day, we must not feel entitled to such breathtaking goodness and be inattentive to it now.

Jesus told people to recognize God's grace. In what is called His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorted us, "*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*"

When we get away from the hustle and bustle of life, it should be easier to "count our blessings". A relaxed walk around the block gives us time to see gifts from God such as the beauty of flowers, the intricate designs and patterns in broken cement sidewalks, the ability to see and hear and smell and touch and taste. Apart from the difficulties of life, we are free on our hike to consider what has gone right and where God has evidently helped us with grace. There should be no "cup half empty" Christians, what with all the grace we have been given.

As we Christians live our lives together, we have multiple opportunities to help one another see and remember God's undeserved goodness given out of His love. First, we need to see where appreciation is lacking for the good things that come into our own lives. Then, when we spot someone in our Christian Inner Circles taking God's gifts for granted, we can do like Jesus and point out the grace.

It is a very high privilege to help other Christians fully grasp, appreciate, and enjoy all the many aspects of God's grace. During every day, there are moments when we can consider love given us by God that we did not deserve, grace in His creative design, or circumstances from His favor. Once we have savored such realizations, we can tell others about them. If Christians we encounter seem not to notice something good coming to them from God that they do not deserve, we can help them see that they have been blessed by God's grace.

Thus, we can administer God's grace to those in our Christian Inner Circles so that they do not miss out on experiencing the grace of God, seeing God's unmerited favor and thanking the God who loves them so much. We are to see that Christians around us do not miss out on God's grace and are thrilled with the gifts and privileges they have been given.

There are millions of aspects of grace given to Christians. But, a chief gift of grace seems to be peace, as

it is so often included with greetings at the beginning of the letters in our New Testament. For one example of many, the Apostle Paul begins his letter to the Galatian church, “*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*”.

Knowing we are surrounded by evidence of God’s love that we do not deserve and yet have can bring us peace. Awareness of God’s grace can assure us of His love. Even in the worst situations, knowing that a heaven awaits us, made available through God’s grace, His undeserved love and unmerited favor, can bring deep peace to our spirits.

Of course, the billions of things from God’s grace that can happen to individuals, friendships, families and marriages cannot be listed. If we watch out for them, these acts of grace and mercy will become apparent at least some of the time.

For example, a child graduating from high school is gracious favor by the Lord. That child has been kept from death, various addictions, multiple discouragements, and other barriers to academic completion.

Friendships might find unexpected openings in personal schedules for a fishing trip or a time shopping.

Families might similarly find that there is a calming of mandatory activities to allow for a trip to the zoo together.

Husbands and wives might find money that fell behind a bedroom dresser just at the time of their anniversary and divert the disappointment of not being able to celebrate with a dinner out.

Perhaps the most fantastic way we administer God’s grace to one another is through gifts of the Holy Spirit. Called spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit acts through us supernaturally for the good of other Christians. 1 Cor 12:7 tells us, “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*” Spiritual gifts are supernatural and often experienced as something powerful we did not intend to do or something that we know we could not have made happen. That is all I will say about spiritual gifts because they are not under our control, but a way God makes things happen through us by the power of the Holy Spirit for His purposes.

So often we only pay attention to the bad things or the hard things. Ask a person how their day was and you will find that we tend not to think of the blessings, but, instead, relate the difficulties. We can give more attention to what Satan did during the day than what God did. God has treated us better than we deserve, but we want the sympathies of others for the tough things we had to face. There is nothing wrong with the latter, but the appreciation of God carrying us on His shoulders of grace is so much more important.

The saying, “there but for the grace of God go I” is so true. Without God’s grace, we could be in any unfortunate situation. We could have been born in the poorest or most dangerous country in the world. We could be addicted to drugs, alcohol, or gambling. We could be homeless, living on the streets.

As citizens of heaven we need to know that even when life is hectic and hurtful, we are still surrounded by gifts out of God’s unwarranted love and mercy. Our lives should show an appreciation for good things in a sinful, bad culture and a thankfulness that attests to our appreciation of God.

We can remind one another that anything good that happens in a day is a gift from God. Did we drive a car? Is it made of basic elements designed and created by God? A warm day is a gift for its heat. A rainy day is God’s grace providing the water on which all life depends. A smile when we needed it was a

gift to lift our spirits.

Every time we give to another something they do not deserve, we are being gracious and administering to them God's grace. Therefore, any time we overlook an insult or some hurt, go beyond the call of duty, or do more than is easy and comfortable can be an act of grace, or gracious in the strict use of the word – if done out of love. We are passing on the grace we have received through Jesus to others.

Can you embrace what a privilege it is to sometimes be the expression of the grace of Jesus? Galatians 2:20 tells us that Jesus lives in us. Truly, is there any greater privilege than to be, in a spiritual sense, Jesus to other people? Being Jesus to others by letting Him exhibit undeserved love through us is wonderful beyond description.

We can have the attitude that anytime we cross paths with another Christian, we have the opportunity to give them undeserved love, to bless them with grace. But, it is not our grace we administer, it is God's grace through us because Christ dwells in us and comes out of us. If we can avoid being proud of ourselves, we can experience the thrill of passing on God's grace.

And, we can help those in our Christian Inner Circles go beyond simplistically saying that their day was "blessed by God". We can respond, "That's great. Tell me the specific ways God gave you something today you did not deserve."

If now we learn to see the good God intended in even corrupted things, past the distraction of blemishes and destruction, doesn't it make sense that in heaven we will be able to perceive heaven's details better? There, sin will not block perception of grace. The concentration needed to look past sin to see God's good gifts now will develop for heaven a greater perception of grace.

An illustration might clear this up. The more we look at the intricate design of a gorgeous flower, the more detailed we will see it later when we look again. So, paying attention to God's graces now will similarly prepare us to see them later in heaven.

Most of us have felt the joy of showing and explaining new things to small children. We remember their apt attention and curiosity. We cherished the joy of discovery they had in their eyes. That same joy will be waiting in heaven for those who administered God's grace by recognizing it where it was usually ignored and then pointing it out to other Christians.

Heaven will have far more grace than we have now. God will be giving us more and more that we do not deserve.

The greatest aspect of God's grace in heaven will always be that we are there. Jesus will always be for us the best of God's grace. But, He is also the beginning of God's never-ending graces. In this life, grace expresses itself in millions of ways. In heaven, it will in trillions and whatever number goes beyond that. There will be unending gifts of grace to be enjoyed. Eph 2:6-7 makes reference to this. *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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."*

Some in heaven will have better vision and comprehension of God's grace than others. Some in heaven will not be equipped to perceive the depth of grace because before death they did not look close enough at God's grace and pass their observations on to others.

That skill will have been developed in the laboratory of distraction where we had to focus beyond sin to see the grace of God. Let's develop our spirits to see God's wonderful grace wherever we are and in anything that is happening. These glorified spirits of ours will then perceive grace better in heaven and add a tremendous amount of joy to our everlasting life.

* * *

There is so much more to be said about administering God's grace to one another. Find more at our website ChristiansTogether.org. Just go down the list of the Togethers and click on "Administer God's Grace to One Another".

Prayer to Embrace this Together

Wonderful God Who is Most Gracious, I and those in my Christian Inner Circle will need Your help to grow our spirits to more intensely and vividly sense Your grace in our lives and all around us. Help us to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit for all of us to give You more glory in the way we point out and pass on Your grace to others.

Please help us all to become more like Jesus by abundantly displaying God's grace in our own lives. May we live as those who are aware of blessings of grace already received as well as more coming in the future. Remove from us any doom and gloom in our spirits, so that we can genuinely act like people very much blessed by You.

May our lives worship You more because we pay attention to the blessings of grace You have given us and respond to You with sincere and deep thankfulness. When with other Christians, help us to remind one another of Your unmerited favor in being rescued from sin and being heirs of God and heaven. Enable us through the Holy Spirit to worship You by reflecting Your graciousness, helping others to similarly pass on Your grace to others, and pointing out to others evidences of Your grace in daily life.

Make us strong in Your power to defeat the devil by being completely content with how You have blessed us. While we do not deserve Your love and unmerited favor, remind us constantly that in Christ we are worthy to receive grace from You. May we defeat the devil by not being disappointed in You or acting like we deserve Your grace because of our own goodness.

Help us all to prepare for heaven by growing to more completely see Your grace all around us and by pointing it out to others. This will be the life in heaven. We want to see Your grace in heaven because we have prepared to see it. And, we want to share it in heaven as we have learned to do so now.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.