

# BASIC BIBLE THEMES

## SESSION 3: GRACE

### STUDENT

**Background Scripture:** Matthew Mark 10:17-20; Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 3:4-6

#### 1. Engage Interest

- What are some ways God's showed grace to you before you became a believing Christian?
  
- What are some typical ways people try to "get into God's good graces," (i.e. try to earn their salvation)?

#### 2. Explore the Word

- Why do you think the young ruler felt he had to do something more, even though he was faithfully keeping all the commandments?
  
- What does Paul's experience before his conversion suggest about salvation?
  
- What is like to be "dead in your transgressions"?
  
- By contrast, what is it like to be "alive with Christ"?
  
- What makes us "alive with Christ"?
  
- What kind of "good works" cannot save us?
  
- What kind of "good works" does God intend for Christians to do?
  
- Are any of the answers to the above two questions the same works? If yes, how are they different?

### **3. Examine Life**

- What is the best gift you have ever received?
  
- Did you deserve it? What made it the “best”?
  
- What is the best gift you have ever given someone?
  
- Did he or she do something to earn the gift?
  
- What made it the “best” in your opinion?

### **4. Exercise Your Faith**

- If God did not love me . . .

# LESSON SUMMARY

Many years of anticipation and effort had gone into this event—Ron and Susan Wenaas of Minneapolis were finally going to be able to adopt a child. An aircraft from South Korea landed at the Twin Cities International Airport, and the couple paced as they watched the plane pull into the gate. When the passengers unloaded, the Wenaases saw a tiny, five-year-old Korean girl among them.

The girl had been prepared by the adoption agency to recognize her new parents. She looked at a picture in her hand, then scanned the crowd and spotted Ron and Susan. She spoke the only two English words she knew: “Daddy! Mommy!”

The parents had a picture, too. Like the little girl, they had been prepared for this meeting. Though the parents and child had never really met, they had already begun the process of knowing each other.

What the adoption agency did for the couple and the little girl is a bit like what God does for all of us in salvation--He prepares the way. Theologians call this prevenient grace, the grace that comes to all people before they meet God in conversion. It's the love God extends to people to show He wants to save everyone.

Some Christians have trouble accepting the idea of grace. They think they have to earn God's love. Even the great hymn writer who helped found Methodism, Charles Wesley, had trouble with the concept.

Wesley eventually came to realize that spiritual success in life could not be measured by the categories of being good or bad. Salvation depends entirely on God's desire to build a relationship with us. The good news is that He decided to love us long before we became either “good people” or “too bad for Him to forgive us.” God's grace precedes and actually enables our decision to accept His love for us. This has been a hard concept to grasp, even among Christians. That's because common

sense tells us that love is something to be earned.

Before our misconceptions, before our misguided attempts to find sincerity, before our desire to set our own terms with God, He chose to love us. He refused to let our relationship with Him remain broken. The death and resurrection of Jesus was God's (1) definitive statement that He would never stop loving us, and (2) provision for us to become right with Him again. Because of God's prevenient grace, we can be made right with Him through trusting Christ for our hope of salvation.