

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Jesus the Master Teacher



SESSION 2
Why Teach?
To Communicate God's Truth and Grace

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Why Teach? To Communicate God's Truth and Grace

SESSION OVERVIEW

What is God's Truth and Grace?

How Do I Communicate His Truth and Grace?

Why Did Jesus Teach?

An Example

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- list God's truth you have experienced
- define the grace of God using scripture and apply it to your life
- testify how God's truth and grace are evidenced in your life.

Why Teach? To Communicate God's Truth and Grace



INTRODUCTION

JOURNALING

In this lesson, just as in the previous and following lessons, it is suggested you keep a journal. In fact, you will be reading some notes from my journals in most of the lesson introductions. I truly believe our experiences in our Christian life are meant to be shared, and as a teacher, you need to tell some of your story to illustrate God's lessons in your life. Journal prompts are provided at the end of the lesson, but feel free to record your thoughts and share those you want with your mentor, your students, or your Christian friends. Reflect and write . . . It is important!

THE WORST WEEK OF MY LIFE

It was winter in Michigan, a cold and overcast week in all ways. I had just been "pink slipped" from my teaching position, I had filed for divorce from my husband of seven years, my school had recently been burned by a disgruntled employee destroying many of my teaching materials, and the bills were just too high for me to move away from the trailer park. On this Monday, I was sitting in the hospital outer office waiting for the doctor to tell me if surgery was needed on my 3-year-old daughter for the "blockage" in her lungs. Not a good way to start the week!

The week did not improve quickly; in fact, it got worse! Although I was not at fault, I was in a car/pedestrian accident in which I hit a small boy who happened to be the Chief of Police's son. My bills increased rapidly, my daughter was admitted to the hospital, and those closest to me were supporting me with lots of advice and answers "as long as I did what they suggested!" I felt alone and totally defeated.

So, how does this rather dismal experience relate to the topic of this lesson, *Why Teach?* Let me continue the story to answer that question. By Sunday of the next week, my life had not improved. I went to church only because I always did, and I didn't know how I would explain to my sweet daughter I didn't feel like going or that truthfully I was mad at God and very afraid He had left me forever. But, I went. I sang the familiar songs, I bowed my head when we prayed, I listened to the sermon stoically, and I didn't speak to anyone. I couldn't! At the end of the service, I went to the altar and knelt. I did not cry or pray a passionate or "religious" prayer. Instead, as I remember

it, I said something like this, “Dear God, IF You are there and You care about me, please know this. You do NOT need to do anything else in my life or even answer one of my prayers. You do NOT need to provide for me or help me feel good. You do NOT need to bless my life. That is up to You. I just want You to know I will always serve YOU because You are God. I don’t need to understand what You do or don’t do. You made me and I am Your child.” I rose from the altar with no feeling or tears, but in that moment, I had recommitted my life, my purpose, and my joy.

At that altar, I did something very important. I acknowledged my life was God’s NOT because of what He does for me, but just because He is God! It became a turning point for me. In spite of my despair, God answered my prayers. He has richly blessed me. God healed my bitter spirit. He met all my needs. God taught me so many lessons. He showered me with His grace and mercy over and over again. That awful week occurred more than 35 years ago, and from that experience until now, I have wanted to tell others about God, my Savior, my Friend, and my Redeemer! I want to communicate His Truth that has set me free! I want to communicate His Grace that has abundantly “above all that I can image or think” been supplied in my life. That is WHY I teach! I know your story will be different, but I also know it must involve God’s Truth and His Grace.

You too will find true joy in communicating it to others.

WHAT IS GOD'S TRUTH AND GRACE?

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What is God's truth? Jesus said, "I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:6-8). To know God's truth is to know God, and to know God is to know Jesus. Throughout the Gospels and frequently (about 100 times), Jesus begins or ends His words by saying, "I tell you the truth!" To find God's truth, we need only to open our eyes and see Jesus!

Let's look at just a few pictures of God as illustrated by God, the Son . . . Jesus. This is just a short list and in no order of importance or sequence. Rather, these are just small "photos" from a never-ending album that describe God's truth.

- **God is faithful.** The pictures of Jesus throughout the Gospels are filled with optimism and faith. Over and over again, Jesus tells His followers of His promises and the fact He will never leave them alone. The Gospel of Mark tells a story about an interaction with Jesus, His disciples, and someone described as "the rich young ruler." Jesus counseled the man to sell all he had and give to the poor, so he could have eternal life. When the man sadly decided not to follow Jesus' counsel, He observed, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were astonished and wondered how anyone with riches could enter the Kingdom. Jesus then gave one of His greatest promises. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible. Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time... and in the ages to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:17-31).
- **God is our Father.** Imagine you are sitting on a mountainside listening intently to Jesus. After talking about how you should live and your relationships with others, Jesus brings up the topic of prayer. He talks about who you should NOT be like in prayer and the importance of authenticity. You have heard Him pray before and address God as His Father, but now He tells you how to pray to OUR Father! Finally, before He specifically states what we know as the "Lord's Prayer," He reminds us that "your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." Amazingly, Jesus encourages us to have a father/son/daughter relationship with God. We are children of God!


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- **God is our provider.** This picture is one we have often experienced. The people following Jesus were hungry – not just for truth but also for dinner! We know there were about 5,000 men plus women and children, and Jesus fed them all (“so they all ate and were filled”) with five fish and two loaves. Try calculating that one! A conservative number that includes women and children would be 10,000 people. If everyone ate just one fish and half of a loaf, there would need to be 10,000 fish and 5,000 loaves. So, that means the five fish were multiplied 2,000 times and the two loaves were multiplied 2,500 times. AND there were 12 baskets left over! A miracle . . . God provided more than enough for all of them! He is also our Provider. He provided not just a little but overflowing (Matthew 14:13-21).
- **God is wisdom.** Oh, I wish I could have been on the front row of the crowd as Jesus taught on the mountain! As a young child, I memorized much of Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and even today I remember some of Jesus’ words of wisdom. “You are the salt of the earth.” “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you.” One of my favorite quotes is from Hannah Whitall Smith in *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*: “. . . you must remember that our God has all knowledge and all wisdom, and that therefore it is very possible He may guide you into paths wherein He knows great blessings are awaiting you”, “but, which to the shortsighted human eyes around you seem sure to result in confusion and loss” (*Disciplines for the Inner Life*, by Benson and Benson, pg. 226).
- **God is love.** Jesus showed God is love in so many ways in the Scriptures. One of my favorites is the story of the woman who anointed Jesus in a great love offering. Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper. Wouldn’t you love to have that name? Unexpectedly, a woman poured an alabaster flask of very costly oil onto His head. Being aware that His followers believed it was a waste, Jesus admonished them and told them she did this as a love gift in preparation for His burial, a gift that should be remembered always. Yes, God is love . . . an everlasting, life-giving, and overflowing love . . . and we respond with our love for Him and others (Matthew 26:6-13).
- **God is powerful.** Imagine seeing Jesus walking across the water in the middle of a terrific storm. Now, imagine Jesus says, “Come.” And when you step out onto the “boisterous” waves, you become afraid and begin to sink. Jesus IMMEDIATELY catches you, gets into the boat, and the wind stops. What a powerful God: one that catches you and takes you


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to safety (Matthew 14:23-33)! In situations of great need, Jesus says with all power, “Fear not... only believe!” and we can respond in total confidence, “Yes, Lord!”

- **God is a healer.** Matthew paints a beautiful picture of Jesus the healer with four brief snapshots (Matthew 8:1-27). First, we see Jesus coming down from the mountain, responding to a leper’s faith, and healing him immediately. Second, Jesus offered to help a centurion’s servant by going to his home. When the centurion expressed his faith by saying Jesus just needed to say a word to heal, Jesus praised (marveled) at the man’s faith and healed the servant. Third, Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law from a fever and again, it seemed to be an immediate healing. Fourth, Matthew simply reports Jesus “healed all who were sick” at the end of the day. Amazing!
- **God is our sustainer.** Picture a day of travel, speaking, healing, teaching, and preaching, or just a day where the chores seem to be unending. Jesus had compassion on the crowds and His disciples, and He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Can you feel yourself take a big breath? Then, He continued, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light!” Praise God . . . He gives us rest and sustains us with His love and power (Matthew 11:28-30)!
- **God is merciful.** Imagine you are listening to Jesus teach in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus notices a “woman who had a spirit of infirmity 18 years,” a woman who “could in no way raise herself up.” He mercifully calls to her, lays His hands on her, and immediately she is made straight and praises God (Luke 13:10-13). What a merciful God we serve! “God gives his blessedness to those who claim no merit for themselves but, knowing their own heart’s needs, are content to rest wholly on the mercy of God” (from *A Pattern for Life – An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* by Archibald Hunter, 1965, as quoted in *Disciplines for the Inner Life, Benson and Benson, 1989*).
- **God is our joy.** Wouldn’t you love to have heard the message of the angel on resurrection morning, “He is not here; for He is risen as He said?” I picture the women running to tell the disciples with tears of joy running down their faces exclaiming, “He is alive! He is alive!” And then . . . Jesus met them and said, “Rejoice!” I have no doubt they were overcome with joy as they bowed down and worshiped Him. Yes, our risen Lord is our JOY (Matthew 28:1-10)!


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- **God is our Savior.** Jesus hanging on the cross, the perfect Lamb sacrificed for our sins, is the true picture of God, our Savior. I can almost see and hear the people and the soldiers taunting Him, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.” Or, “If you are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” And all I hear Him say is, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” I want to shout, “He IS my Savior . . . He could have called ten thousand angels but He chose to die for me and you!” Praise His wonderful name! May I never forget the price He paid for my redemption (Luke 23:32-39).
- **God is a forgiver.** Picture this scene. A leper, an undesirable, an unclean man, kneels down in front of Jesus and said, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus “moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him.” Jesus said, “Be cleansed,” and immediately he was cleansed. This scene is easy to picture because it is easy to see ourselves . . . unclean and undesirable, filled with sin, and asking Jesus to make us clean. Jesus moved with compassion, touched us, and immediately we were forgiven and cleansed as white as snow. Hallelujah for His touch and saving grace!

What is God’s grace? My favorite definition of God’s grace is from John Wesley’s writings. He defined grace as “the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit.” (Quoted in Kenneth L. Carder’s *A Wesleyan understanding of grace*, Interpreter, November-December 2016). In other words, grace is God withholding the punishment we rightly deserve and exchanging it with the most precious of gifts instead. The gospel of John talks about the Word (Jesus) who became flesh and dwelt among us. He expresses the importance of grace and truth in John 1:16-18: “And of his fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses but GRACE and TRUTH came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. He has declared Him.”

At the age of 17, Robert Robinson heard a message preached by George Whitefield. He was convicted of his sin and gave his heart to Jesus. As a young pastor, he wrote a hymn for Pentecost Sunday, “Come Thou Fount,” a hymn that expresses the grace of God (*The Gaither Homecoming Bible* pg. 312-313, 2012, Thomas Nelson, Inc.) much better than I possibly could. Read or sing the words as you reflect on God’s grace in your life.

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*Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing.
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing.
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet.
Sung by flaming tongue above.
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.*

*Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter.
Bind my yielded heart to Thee.
Let me know Thee in Thy fullness.
Guide me by Thy mighty hand
Till, transformed, in Thine own image
In Thy presence I shall stand. (Robinson, 1758)*

HOW DO I COMMUNICATE HIS TRUTH AND GRACE?



NOTES

The message of God's truth and grace should be communicated every time you meet with your group of students. It makes no difference if you are studying a lesson from the Old or New Testament, if it is about King Saul or the Apostle Paul, or if you are studying a Psalm or Revelation. You must communicate God's truth and His grace. To communicate, simply tell your story as a seeker. Express how you respond to your new understandings of God and His work in your life, and share the gift of grace He gave to you. Tell how the verse, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and ALL these things will be added to you" has been true in your life. Tell how God has been and is faithful, how He is merciful, how He has forgiven you, how you know His love, and the evidence of God's power in your life . . . and so much more! Your students (and you too) need to be reminded of God's truth and grace every day, and your testimony is the best channel to communicate it.

WHY DID JESUS TEACH? AN EXAMPLE



NOTES

Jesus taught to communicate truth and grace. One of my favorite stories that illustrates His reason for teaching is the story of Zacchaeus, the “wee little man” who climbed a tree just to see Jesus. Oh my! Jesus taught so many important truths that day! He taught that God seeks people who have needs; Jesus “looked up and saw him.” He was a friend to all people. “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” He taught that God cares for the ostracized, those that people didn’t understand. “Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector who could later say, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor.” He taught that God offers the gift of grace and salvation. “And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house.’” He taught that each person is important to God, and He called him “the son of Abraham” (Luke 19:1-10).

It is important to note that Jesus taught many different people that day. Zacchaeus received the gift of grace and salvation. The disciples and followers of Jesus saw truth in action and observed how Jesus responded to a true seeker. Most interestingly, the crowd learned that Jesus saw people through different eyes. Yes, Zacchaeus was a sinner just as they were, but Jesus went to the house of the tax collector to offer truth and grace, and He reaffirmed Zacchaeus as a true son of Abraham. He taught by His actions and His words . . . God’s truth and grace!

CLOSING THOUGHT

Please know this session should be an entire book! There are so many more illustrations of God’s truth and grace. It is so exciting to teach when I think about God’s truth and grace. Each time I prepare a Bible lesson, I think of the truth I want to convey and examples of God’s grace in the lives of His children. Please know it is not MY truth or the facts of what I have learned or studied. Yes, some of those ideas are important, and I enjoy sharing new things I have learned. More importantly, however, I always try to teach God’s truth – what I have gleaned from the Scriptures and prayer or what I have seen acted out that week. What a unique privilege we have to communicate God’s truth and grace!

APPLICATION



NOTES

Be prepared to share your three application activities with your mentor.

1. Review the truths that are listed in the first section. Which one means the most to you? Select another story or illustration from the Scriptures that tells the same truth, and explain why you selected that one. Which one have you not thought about? Select another story from the Scriptures you think illustrates the same truth and explain why you selected that one. What other ones would you like to include? Finish the sentence, “God is _____” with at least two more, and select stories from the Scriptures that illustrate your sentences.
2. Complete a study of the word “grace” as used in the Scriptures, songs, other religious works, and the world (example: “grace” period in bill paying). List the definitions and examples of grace that mean the most to you and tell how God’s grace is evident in your life. Please include the concept of grace as a gift of God.
3. Begin writing your story of God’s truth and grace. Tell about “your worst week” or “an important event.” Tell how God’s truth made a difference in your life. Include scriptures or quotes that remind you of God’s truth.

JOURNALING

Consider some of the following when journaling:

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

EXAM

**NOTES**

1. According to the author of the lesson, to know God's truth is to know _____.
 - A. the inner light
 - B. what to think about the world
 - C. Jesus
 - D. all of the above
2. What representation(s) of God the Father are revealed to us in Jesus Christ?
 - A. God is Father
 - B. God is faithful
 - C. God is love
 - D. God is angry
 - E. A, B, and C.
3. A definition of grace is that it is "unmerited favor or kindness shown to one who is utterly undeserving."
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. When you teach, it is good to emphasize truth without grace.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. Your testimony of how God's grace and truth has been found in your life is important to share.
 - A. True
 - B. False

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor:

1. Give a copy of your responses to the first application activity to your mentor before you meet.
2. Use Marty Lloyd-Jones' definition of grace and discuss how it applies to your experience.
3. Share with your mentor why you teach or why you will teach. Ask your mentor to tell why he or she teaches.