



## Approaching God

### Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

### Today's Theme: God is Gracious

Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely; the peace of God given to the restless; the unmerited favor of God. Grace is unconditional love toward a person who does not deserve it.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

### Exodus 34:4-8

**4** So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. **5** Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. **6** And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, **7** maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." **8** Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped.

### Psalms 145:14-20

**14** The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. **15** The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. **16** You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. **17** The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. **18** The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. **19** He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. **20** The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

### John 1:14-18

**14** And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. **15** (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") **16** From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

### Romans 5:15-17; 20-21

**15** But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! **16** Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. **17** For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! **20** The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, **21** so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Meditation - GOD IS GRACIOUS

Read the short essay from PaulTripp.com

Grace. You need it. You can't live without it, but you can't purchase it and you can't earn it. It only ever comes by means of a gift, and when you receive it, you immediately realize how much you needed it all along, and you wonder how you could've lived so long without it. In a fallen world, populated by selfish, lost, fearful, and rebellious people, it's the one thing that everyone needs. And you can only give it to someone else when you have first been given it yourself, because you can't give away that which you don't have. You see, God's grace is the most powerful force in the universe, so I would have to argue that it's the most beautiful word in the universe. It reaches you where you are and takes you where God wants you to be. It has the power to do something that nothing else can do: transform you at the causal core of who you are as a human being - your heart. So what is it?

1. **Forgiveness** - First and foremost, there's the grace of forgiveness. We all do wrong - the Bible calls that sin - and that leaves us guilty. Guilty people need to be condemned and punished unless they're forgiven and declared guilt-free. Jesus Christ went to the Cross to carry our sin and to bear our punishment so we could experience radical, comprehensive, and complete forgiveness. In Jesus Christ, we're forgiven for everything we've ever done in the past, everything we now do in the present, and everything we'll ever do in the future.
2. **Acceptance** - God not only forgives us through grace, but He welcomes us into relationship with Him. He invites us into His family. He adopts us as His children, and because of that, we now have this Father-child relationship with Him where we can come to Him. We can sit on His lap and bring our needs, concerns, and failures to Him, and He responds as a loving and kind Father. Sin once separated us from God; by grace, we now have acceptance.
3. **Presence** - Like acceptance, the grace of God's presence means that our Father is not distant. In fact, God is present with us wherever we are, whomever we're with, and whatever we're doing. The Bible tells us that God, in His grace, has made us the place where He dwells. It wasn't enough for God to forgive us - He literally unzipped us and got inside us by His Holy Spirit, and so He is with us all the time.
4. **Enablement** - Grace reaches us where we are and takes us where God wants us to be. You see, God's not simply content to give us salvation and then leave us alone until eternity. Rather, He wants us to become more like His Son and work for the furtherance of His Kingdom right here, right now. But remaining sin leaves us lame and weak and unable. God's grace intervenes to give us power and strength. It gives us the ability to do what we're called to do but what we could never do on our own.
5. **Freedom** - God's grace also delivers. Sin turns us into addicts - we're slaves of sin, but God's grace breaks that bondage. Grace gives us the power to say "No!" and turn in a much better direction.
6. **Completion** - Finally, God's grace is the grace of completion. There will be a day when you and I will be fully restored to who we were meant to be. There will be no more sin; there will be no more struggle. Everything will be restored, and we will worship in the presence of this amazing God of grace.

### Close in Prayer:

- What can I **REJOICE IN** as a result of today's study?
- What do I need to **REPENT OF** as a result of today's study?
- What do I want to **REQUEST FROM** God today?