



# Grace Upon Grace

By Shari Miller

“Tuesday’s child is full of grace” is a line from an antiquated nursery rhyme that describes characteristics of children born on different days. Share with a partner or your small group what you think the words “full of grace” mean.

The apostle John states in John 1:16: *For from his [Jesus] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.* What beautiful words of encouragement, comfort, and hope! Grace is God’s undeserved favor and love (a gift!) toward sinful humans who have no right or reason to expect or receive it. In our study, we delve into God’s grace to His children in the past, present, and future.

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious God, You are our loving Lord! However, our sin builds a wall of unrighteousness that separates us from You and Your love. But You saw our need and sent Jesus — the Word become flesh — to live a perfect life, suffer, die for our sins, and rise from the dead. We are showered with the blessings of Your grace given to us through the merits of our Savior Jesus. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to give us faith in Jesus and all the gifts He offers. We ask for wisdom and discernment as we study Your Word. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

## God’s Grace: The Past

In **Exodus 33:19**, what does the Lord tell Moses about His \_\_\_\_\_ grace and mercy?

Throughout the book of Jeremiah, the Lord sends warnings through prophecy to the sinful children of Israel. Vices and idolatry were rampant in their land, and the Lord warns that they will be delivered into the hands of their enemies and are destined for exile from their homeland. As prophecies are fulfilled and Judah is conquered, despair and discouragement, as well as weeping and wailing, occur throughout the nation. God’s people had broken their covenant with Him. In light of this, read what God still promises His people in **Jeremiah 31:2–4** and **31–34**. \_\_\_\_\_

Who or what is the new covenant God promises in **Jeremiah 31–34**? See **Hebrews 8:6–12**. \_\_\_\_\_

In the midst of the chaos in their lives, how do you think Israel felt after hearing these prophetic words in Jeremiah? \_\_\_\_\_

What are we reminded of in **Romans 3:23**? What feelings does this verse generate in us? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Good News given to us in **Nehemiah 9:17b** and **Titus 3:3–7**? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean that we are justified by his grace (**Titus 3:7**)? See **Romans 3:21–24**. \_\_\_\_\_

**Faith Talk:** Share specific feelings with a partner or your small group that result from knowing that our Savior God saved you by grace — upon grace — from a life of sin and despair and that through Baptism you are His own dear child.

## God’s Grace: The Present

John Newton penned the following words: “Amazing grace — how sweet the sound — that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see!” (Public Domain). Of what does **Romans 11:5** assure us? \_\_\_\_\_

The Holy Spirit uses the Means of Grace to work faith in our hearts and keep us in the faith. What are these? See **1 Peter 1:23**; **Titus 3:5**; and **Matthew 26:26–28**. \_\_\_\_\_

Why are they called the Means of Grace? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read **Ephesians 2:1–10**. Write the phrase in verse 7 that describes God's grace. \_\_\_\_\_

What immeasurable riches does the believer receive by grace through the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

**Faith Talk:** Why can we not fully comprehend this treasure of grace that we have? Discuss with a partner or your small group. Identify and discuss specific ways that we can, with the help of the Spirit, live gracefully in our daily lives:

**Colossians 4:6** \_\_\_\_\_

**Titus 3:1–2** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 4:8–11** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 5:6–11** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Peter 3:18a** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faith Talk:** Discuss with a partner or your small group ways you can by word and action share the grace of God with those you live and work with this week.

### God's Grace: The Future

God always keeps His promises. What does He promise us in the following Bible passages, particularly in regard to the future?

**Acts 20:32** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 5:20–21** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 8:31–32** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Thessalonians 2:16–17** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 4:16** \_\_\_\_\_

God's grace is overflowing. Read **John 1:14, 16**. \_\_\_\_\_

Martin Luther wrote in a sermon on John 1:16: "For this is the sum and substance of it all: Whoever wishes to be safeguarded from the devil's might and to escape sin and death must draw from this well, Christ; from Him flows all salvation and eternal bliss. This fountain is inexhaustible; it is full of grace and truth before God; it never fails no matter how much we draw from it. Even if we all dip from it without stopping, it cannot be emptied, but it remains a perennial fount of all grace and truth, an unfathomable well, an eternal fountain. The more we draw from it, the more it gives. Such water, as St. John remarks later, wells up to eternal life (John 4:14)." [Luther's Works, Volume 22, page 134; 55-Volume American Edition on CD-ROM; General Editors J. Pelikan/H.T. Lehmann; Fortress Press/Concordia Publishing House.]

**Faith Talk:** Discuss what phrases from Luther's quote are most meaningful to you and why.

**Faith Talk:** Will this grace of God ever end on this earth? What significance does it have for you that this grace upon grace is a "perennial fount," "an unfathomable well," "an eternal fountain"? What could your future look like living in the grace of God?

### Faith Walk:

1. Thank the Lord that you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to share the message of salvation in Jesus Christ alone with at least one person this week.
2. Look for ways that God's grace is at work in your life.
3. Draw from God's fountain of grace through trials and tribulations.
4. Practice living gracefully and reflecting God's grace to those around you.

**Closing Prayer:** Read responsively these words from Psalm 86 and Numbers 6.

L: Incline Your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

**R: Preserve my life, for I am godly; save Your servant, who trusts in You — You are my God.**

L: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You do I cry all the day.

**R: Gladden the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.**

L: For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon You.

**R: Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.**

L: In the day of my trouble I call upon You, for You answer me.

**R: I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your name forever.**

L: You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

**R: Turn to me and be gracious to me;**

L: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

**R: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.**

**Closing:** (sing or speak together): "Amazing Grace" (LSB #744; LW #509; or verse 1 above).

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