

Lavish Blessings!

By Shari Miller



Leader's Notes and Bible Passages Available Online

[Please do not use the “if time permits” section when your study session time is limited. That section could possibly be done by the participant in private.]

Share with your group the most lavish dessert that you have ever had. What made it lavish?

Consider the online definition of the word “lavish.” As an adjective, it means “sumptuously rich and elaborate; marked by profusion or excess.” As a verb, it means to “bestow something in generous or extravagant quantities upon; to expend or bestow profusely.” Synonyms of the word are “extravagant, abundant, prodigal, great, generous, and overflowing.” Antonyms of the word are “reasonable, temperate, and moderate.”

This Bible study focuses on the lavish grace and love of our God in Christ Jesus our Lord and the lavish opportunities that we — His redeemed and precious children — have to share that grace and love with others.



Opening Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, You are an awesome God! You lavishly give us grace and love because of the merits of Your Son, our Savior Jesus. Help us to share that grace and love with those around us. Empower us through the Holy Spirit to share the message of salvation in Jesus with people we encounter every day. Bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus' great name we pray, Amen.

The Lavish Grace and Love of God

Read **Romans 1:18–32** and **Galatians 5:19–21**. Find at least ten specific phrases in these passages that describe the state of all people because of original and actual sin. What is the end result of life lived in this sinful condition? (See **Romans 1:32** and **Galatians 5:21**.)

Romans 1:18–32

Galatians 5:19–21

Read **Ephesians 1:3–10**. What are some of *the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us* (**verses 7–8**)? Why is this lavish grace of God good news for sinful people?

In light of the depraved state of sinful people, what makes God's grace in Christ Jesus so extravagant — so lavish? Read **John 1:1–5**, **Luke 2:4–7**, **Romans 5:6–8** and **Colossians 1:18–20**, **2:13–15**.

John 1:1–5

Luke 2:4–7

Romans 5:6–8

Colossians 1:18–20, **2:13–15**

According to **1 John 3:1–3**, how has the Father lavished his love on us? Look up **1 Peter 3:21**. How does He make us His children?

1 John 3:1–3

1 Peter 3:21

If time permits: Look up the following Bible verses and find in them words and phrases that could be synonyms for the word “lavish.”

Psalms 23:5

Psalms 31:19

Psalms 145:1–8

John 1:14

Romans 5:17

Romans 15:13

2 Corinthians 9:8

1 Timothy 1:13–15

Ephesians 2:3–5

Faith Talk: Discuss with a partner or your small group a time when you have shared the lavish grace and love you have received in Christ Jesus with someone else. What was the result?

Faith Talk: Read **John 1:16–17** printed below from two different Bible translations (New International Version and English Standard Version) and a paraphrase (The Message). Discuss with a partner or in your small group the feelings you experience as you read phrases such as *grace in place of grace*, *grace upon grace*, *gift after gift after gift*, or *exuberant giving*.

*Out of his fullness we have all received **grace in place of grace** already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (NIV)*

*And from his fullness we have all received, **grace upon grace**. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (ESV)*

*We all live off his generous bounty, **gift after gift after gift**. We got the basics from Moses, and then this **exuberant giving** and receiving. This endless knowing and understanding—all this came through Jesus, the Messiah. (The Message)*

Lavish Opportunities

When we are baptized, God makes each one of us His child, and we receive the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit. Read **Galatians 5:16–17**, **22–25**. Describe in detail our new life in Christ as we are led by the Spirit.

What are the “means of grace” the Holy Spirit uses to lead us?

Acts 2:41

1 Corinthians 10:16

Colossians 3:16

What does Paul exhort God's people to do in **Galatians 6:9–10** and **Ephesians 5:15–16**?

See the following Bible passages to discover ways to lavishly *make the most of every opportunity* (watch for phrases, as well as the “lavish” synonyms).

John 15:12–14

2 Corinthians 4:14–16

Colossians 2:6–7

Colossians 3:16

Colossians 4:2–6

1 Thessalonians 3:11–12

Read **Matthew 28:18–20** and **Acts 1:8**. What is the lavish opportunity our Lord gives to each Christian in these passages?

Matthew 28:18–20

Acts 1:8

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or your small group specific opportunities that the Lord has given to you to share the Gospel message of salvation. How did you take advantage of those opportunities?

Faith Walk:

Reflect on the lavish love and grace that God has given you because of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Rejoice that you are a baptized child of God and that He has made you His own!

Thank the Holy Spirit daily for giving you faith in Jesus and the ability to share that faith.

Pray for lavish opportunities that open the door (or even a window!) to share the Gospel message. Be prepared when those opportunities arise!

Closing:

Divide into two groups and share the following litany based on **John 1:16–17** and **1 Timothy 1:17**.

Group 1: We praise You, Father, that we have received grace in place of grace through Jesus Christ.

Group 2: O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!

Group 1: We praise You, Christ Jesus, that we have received grace upon grace because of Your birth, perfect life, death and resurrection.

Group 2: Thank You for Your love, grace, salvation, and hope for eternal life in heaven with You!

Group 1: We praise You, Holy Spirit, that You have given us faith in Jesus and keep us in that faith.

Group 2: Thank You for exuberantly giving us gift after gift after gift!

All: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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