



Sermon-Based Study Guide | Menlo.Church

This guide is designed to guide a group discussion around the weekend sermon. You can also use this as an individual, but we highly recommend finding a friend and inviting them to discuss with you. Menlo Church has Life Groups meeting in-person and online using these guides. We'd love to help you find a group: [Click here for our group finder.](#)

What you will find in this guide:

A discussion guide for groups and individuals. If you are using this as an individual be sure to engage with each question in a journal or simply in your mind as you prayerfully consider what you heard in the sermon and seek to discover what God is inviting you to know and do.

Sermon-Based Discussion Guide for Groups and Individuals

November 27, 2022 – Matt Stephan

The Gift: Grace

Every group is different; please choose the questions that relate best to your group, and don't feel like you must get to every question.

Connect

- This is the first week of Advent. Do you have any favorite traditions in the advent season as we move towards Christmas?
- Are you already feeling busy this holiday season, or do you feel like the year is slowing down?

Engage

Read Ephesians 2:8, Romans 11:6, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 2 Corinthians 5:28

Matt talked about the Greek word that we translate as 'grace' can mean 'gift' in the Greek language. As you read each passage below, take note that we have swapped the word gift in for where the word grace is typically read in these verses.

"For it is by the gift that you have been saved through faith. It is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by work, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8

"And if by the gift we are saved, then it cannot be based on our works. If it were, the gift would no longer be a gift." Romans 11:6

"For the gift of God has appeared for the salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in the present age." 1 Timothy 2:11-14

"Three times I pleaded with God to take away my suffering, but He said to me, 'My gift is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" 2 Corinthians 5:28

- What does grace or the gift do for us?
- How does God use grace in our lives?
- How would you describe grace from these verses?

- Does it change your emotions to read these verses with the word translated 'gift' instead of 'grace'?
- Does it help you to notice something new about grace to see it as the word gift?

Apply

- Which of the misconceptions of grace has been difficult for you? (1. Grace doesn't mean low standards, 2. You or someone you know is ineligible for the gift, 3. We prefer earning, 4. If God is good, then why are things so hard?)
- What is a practice that has been helpful for you to focus on the goodness of God?
- What feelings come to you when you think about God's closeness to you?
- What is a way that you can help remind yourself that God is with you in your ordinary day?
- Do you find it difficult to slow down? Does your calendar already feel out of control as you move towards December?

Prayer

Spend time sharing prayer requests and praying for each person that shares. Then read the following prayer slowly over your group and ending with a time of silence.

*Christ, as a light
Illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me;
Christ under me:
Christ over me:
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.*

Going Deeper

Advent Resources:

Check out our advent resource page that has a link to the Menlo Meditations podcast and other practices to help you slow down and remember God is with you.

<https://menlo.church/advent-2022> or menlo.church/advent

Menlo Midweek Podcast:

Tune in every Wednesday for a conversation with the previous week's speaker. It's a deeper dive into the message and an engaging time to learn, reflect, grow—and have fun. Join us as we journey through the Unlikely Witness sermon series together!

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/menlo-church-sermon-podcast/id129950807>