GRACE IS GREATER
This journal is designed to take you deeper into the unbelievable, astonishing grace of God. Each day you’ll reflect on a portion of Ephesians 2, a short section of “Grace is Greater” and additional stories, Scriptures and reflection questions to help you understand and experience grace.
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**Greater Than Your Brokenness**

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If you are **reading** “Grace is Greater” along with this journal, consider reading the corresponding chapters each week.

If you are **watching** the Grace is Greater Series, complete Week 1 after watching Episode 1, Week 2 after Episode 2, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED!

In the early 20th century, a woman named Hetty Green died, leaving behind an incredible fortune. By today’s figures, it’s estimated that she was worth over four billion dollars at the time of her death. She was likely the wealthiest woman in the world when she died.

What’s most unusual about Hetty Green, though, is not her wealth but her stinginess. Despite her great fortune, she lived an extremely simple and miserly life. She only owned one pair of clothes. She never used heat or hot water in her house. When her son broke his leg, she refused to pay for him to go to a hospital, and his leg eventually had to be amputated. Her tightfistedness was so well known she is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the greatest miser in history!

Why would she live like this? Why would she, having such great wealth and resources, not live into its benefits?

Why would anyone with unlimited riches never put them to use, never enjoy them?

If you think about it, this is what we Christians do all the time! We have the abundant, amazing, outrageous, unlimited, scandalous grace of the one true God ... and yet we live as though we are impoverished orphans.

We have rejected the benefits of being a child of God for the life of an orphan.

We have inherited riches beyond our wildest imagination but continue living on our old budget, penny-pinching our way through life with God.
DON’T MISS THE GRACE OF GOD

In “Grace is Greater,” Kyle Idleman quotes Hebrews 12:15:

“SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE MISSES THE GRACE OF GOD.”

How could one miss the grace of God? Too often, we live like a spiritual Hetty Green: We miss the invitation to fully receive God’s grace, to live as recipients of a never-ending fortune.

JOURNEY OF GRACE

My hope and prayer for you is that this journal serves as a guide to your journey in grace.

Consider making this more than just another book, another task to complete. Consider committing to a 28-day journey of grace!

This study journal has 28 days, including four days to catch up and review. That’s 28 days saturated in God’s grace!

Imagine what God might do in your heart and mind through this four-week journey of grace!
The second reading is really a “second level” reading. Think of this as a level beneath the first reading. Rather than just looking at what the passage says and means, consider what it means for you and what it means for you today. So as you read the verses again, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

The goal of this second reading is meditation — to deeply engage the truths of the passage with your heart, not just your head. Biblical meditation is not like Eastern meditation, where the goal is to empty your mind. Instead, biblical mediation is about removing distractions and filling your mind with the things of God. In biblical meditation, we slow down and center ourselves on his Word.

In the sections marked “Meditation and Application,” you’ll ask yourself, “What does it mean for me to obey this passage today?” and “How can I love and enjoy God more as a result of these truths?”

The open space is provided to journal any thoughts prompted by the questions, or any reflections after meditating on the text. Use it as you see fit, not feeling as though you have to provide a correct answer or response to each question.

HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Each day, you’ll read the selected passage twice. In the first reading, at the beginning of the day’s notes, you can read to understand the content and meaning of the passage.

CONTENT AND MEANING

The goal at this point is to ask of the text, “What does it say?” and “What does it mean?” The questions under the heading “Content and Meaning” will help you reflect on the passage along these lines.

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

Once you understand the passage’s content and meaning, you’ll do a second reading of the same passage. Why read the same thing again? In order to really savor the depth of the passage and to begin to apply its message to your life, you must reflect even more deeply.
BEFORE YOU BEGIN
Before diving into Day One, answer these questions.

HOW WOULD YOU CURRENTLY DEFINE GOD’S GRACE?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE GOD’S GRACE TO SOMEONE WHO DIDN’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY?

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS STUDY OF GOD’S GRACE?

HOW DO YOU WANT TO GROW DURING THIS JOURNEY?
WEEK 1 | GREATER THAN YOUR GUILT
DAY 1
FINDING GRACE IN EPHESIANS

IMAGINE BEING A MEMBER IN
the Ephesian church when Paul’s letter was read aloud. What would
that have been like?

Ephesus was a large city, so the church likely gathered in numerous
houses across town for worship and fellowship. New Testament
expert Scot McKnight describes a typical first century church as a
fellowship of about 30 members, meeting in a host’s large house that
would have also lodged traveling guests — like an early Airbnb rental
home.

In this typical church, the gathering would include:

- Some homeless people who depend on church for food & clothing.
- Migrant workers who don’t speak the native language.
- Jewish transplants who are law-abiding & family oriented.
- Roman citizens who want to see their political kingdom spread.
- The host family’s own children & elderly parents.
- Several tenants — some of whom are believers, some not.
- A couple of the community’s slaves, whose owners don’t attend.
- A couple of male slaves & a female slave homemaker.
- The homeowners, who are moderately well off.
The context, or the situation that a letter was written in, helps us understand the author’s meaning. But this isn’t merely an intellectual exercise. Imagine yourself there.

Now imagine your house’s church leader has just received a copy from your church’s founder, the apostle Paul. Read with fresh eyes to discover the heart of the gospel in the grace of God.

Use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.

**AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH.**

— **EPHESIANS 2:1-3**
THE EPHESIAN CHURCH

Paul was writing to a diverse group of believers who were new in their faith.

At the time of this letter’s writing, Ephesus was the capital of the Roman empire. Located in modern-day Turkey, Ephesus was a busy commercial town on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. As a port town, it was a highly secular and global place full of different types and groups of people. It was also the home to the temple of Artemis, a beloved shrine to the goddess and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Yet the believers in Ephesus were not so different from you and me. Like the Ephesians, we are in desperate need of God’s grace.

Like the Ephesians, our relationships were marked by a combination of friendship and conflict. Like the Ephesians, we can easily drift into disobedience and spiritual laziness.

Like the Ephesians, we live as minorities in a secular world.

Like the Ephesians, we are children of God, having received his amazing, astonishing grace by faith in his son Jesus Christ.

When Paul describes the spiritual condition of the Ephesians apart from God, he is not suggesting they were unusually sinful or corrupt. They were simply living as unbelievers.

The message of Ephesians 2, then, is just as timely and important for us as it was for them 2,000 years ago. Paul paints a vivid contrast between what we are by nature — broken, dead in sin, drifting away — and who we are by grace.

The message of Ephesians is that God’s grace is greater than our sin!

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

But before Paul gives us what I call the “Good News” about God’s grace in Jesus (verses 4-10), he has to tell us the bad news (verses 1-3). The bad news is that all who are not reconciled to God and one with Christ are dead in sin. Paul describes the condition of the unbeliever in multiple ways, and in order to discover the depth of God’s grace toward us in Christ, we have to understand what we are saved from.
WE ARE DEAD
“AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS.”

WE ARE DISOBEDIENT
“You followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

WE ARE DEPRAVED
“All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts.”

WE ARE DOOMED
“Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.”

How does this strike you? Our spiritual condition apart from grace is not very palatable.

A BEAUTIFUL TURN

So how do we get from a place of being dead, disobedient, depraved and doomed to a place of being saved, reconciled, and restored to community?

God’s grace!

That’s what this study is all about. Once the Ephesians could understand their condition apart from grace, they could fully realize the lavish acceptance they had received from God!

It’s not enough for us to merely understand these truths. God invites us to experience his grace against the backdrop of our need of him.
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

To understand how to answer these two types of questions, see the “Questions for Reflection” on page 8.

CONTENT AND MEANING

IN WHAT WAYS IS OUR CULTURE SIMILAR TO THE EPHESIANS’ CULTURE? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

HOW DOES THE CONTEXT OF THIS LETTER CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

HOW CAN ONE BE BOTH “DEAD” IN THE SPIRITUAL SENSE (VERSE 1) AND YET PHYSICALLY ALIVE?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND OUR NEED OF GRACE BEFORE WE LOOK AT GRACE ITSELF?
BUT IN COVERING UP OUR SIN,
WE ARE COVERING UP GRACE.
IN MINIMIZING SIN
WE ARE DIMINISHING THE

JOY

THAT COMES WITH
FORGIVENESS.

KYLE IDLEMAN
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION
Read Ephesians 2:1-3 again slowly and answer the following questions. To understand how to answer these types of questions, see the “Questions for Reflection” on page 8.

WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST DIFFICULT ABOUT HEARING THIS PORTION OF PAUL’S LETTER READ TO YOU? WHAT IS MOST DIFFICULT FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?

IF VERSES 1-3 MADE UP THE ENTIRETY OF PAUL’S MESSAGE TO YOU, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL? HOW WOULD YOU LIVE?

HOW IS YOUR HEART MOVED BY CONSIDERING GOD’S OUTRAGEOUS, OVERCOMING GRACE TOWARD YOU?
DAY 2
GOOD NEWS FOR DEAD PEOPLE

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE increasing fascination with zombies in the last two decades?

A zombie is “walking dead.” They appear to be living, but they are dead bodies that continue to operate as if they’re alive, moving through life seeking people and things to devour.

Hundreds of zombie films and novels abound, and zombie walks — organized gatherings of people dressed as the living dead — now occur in cities across the world.

Why are people so fascinated with the idea of the living dead? Perhaps it’s that, on a deeper level, we are hardwired with a longing for death and resurrection.

In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul is saying, apart from grace, you are all zombies. We are the walking dead without Christ. But in him, we have new life.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.
AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH.

— Ephesians 2:1-3

GOOD NEWS FOR ZOMBIES

Before God’s grace, we were all zombies, following “the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (v 2).

Paul says, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” (v 1). Not just those really bad sinners. You. And me.

APART FROM GRACE,
we are carried along by the current of the devil’s schemes and lies.
we live only for ourselves.
we live only to gratify sinful cravings and addictions.
we are deserving of God’s wrath.
we are the walking dead.
So what does Paul mean when he says that someone is spiritually dead from Christ?

Just as a physically dead body is unresponsive, a spiritually dead person will not be able to respond to the things of the spiritual world. Jesus says of the spiritually dead:

THOUGH SEEING, THEY DO NOT SEE; THOUGH HEARING, THEY DO NOT HEAR OR UNDERSTAND.

- Matthew 13:13

Those apart from God’s grace can see physically but not spiritually; they can hear physically but not spiritually.

Without Christ, people are not simply sick or struggling; they are dead! And the dead don’t need resuscitation; they need resurrection!

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE

In order for us to be made alive, God sent his own son to live the life we failed to live. Christ then went to the cross as the penalty for sins. Whose sins? Not his own — Jesus was sinless. Jesus died for our sins. Your sins, my sins. And after three days, the rock was rolled back and Jesus shook off death and walked out of the tomb. Jesus was raised to new life, and for all who believe in him, we too are resurrected!

In order for a spiritually dead person to be made alive again, another death is required. Whose death is required? It’s not our own! Why would we go on living among the dead when we have been made alive and declared children of the King?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION
CONTENT AND MEANING

WHAT MIGHT BE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF BEING DEAD IN SIN? WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL LIFELESSNESS LOOK LIKE?

WHAT TYPES OF FORCES ARE PEOPLE APART FROM CHRIST SUBJECT TO? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THESE FORCES AT WORK IN YOUR LIFE OR THE LIVES OF OTHERS?

READ ROMANS 8:11: “AND IF THE SPIRIT OF HIM WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD IS LIVING IN YOU, HE WHO RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD WILL ALSO GIVE LIFE TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES BECAUSE OF HIS SPIRIT WHO LIVES IN YOU.” WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN? HOW DOES IT RELATE TO OUR PASSAGE?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION
Read Ephesians 2:1-3 again but this time, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE LIKE BEFORE DISCOVERING GOD’S GRACE?

WHAT WOULD YOUR LIFE BE LIKE NOW APART FROM GOD’S GRACE?

HOW CAN YOU EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR HIS SAVING, RESURRECTING GRACE IN YOUR LIFE?
“RELIGION WITHOUT GRACE IS POISONOUS. A RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT GRACE IS POISONOUS. A CHURCH WITHOUT GRACE IS POISONOUS. A HEART WITHOUT GRACE IS POISONOUS.”

Take some time to journal your reflections on these statements. But don’t rush to cast judgment on others. Begin with your own heart.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE BITTER, POISONOUS ROOT OF DUTY AND EFFORT IN YOUR OWN HEART?

HOW DO YOU THINK YOU DEVELOPED THIS DIFFICULTY IN RECEIVING AND LIVING BY GRACE?

NOW CONSIDER YOUR RELATIONSHIPS: WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS SOME FORM OF GRACE FROM GOD AND FROM YOU?

CONSIDER YOUR CHURCH: HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE A DEEPER AWARENESS OF GRACE IN YOUR CONGREGATION?
A FEW WEEKS AGO, I WAS driving my family from Louisville, Kentucky back to Columbia, Missouri — a drive we’ve made dozens of times. I was trying to focus on my podcast through the shouts and laughs of our three boys in the back of the van.

A fork in the highway came up, and without noticing, I drifted right onto a northbound highway headed for Chicago. About twenty minutes later, I began noticing a totally new set of buildings and landmarks. But it was only when I saw a highway marker that I realized my mistake!

I had drifted off carelessly in the wrong direction.

I didn’t mean to go north, but I wasn’t being attentive enough to stay on the right path. Even though it was an honest mistake, I was still left with the consequences of being in the wrong place.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.
AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH.

– EPHESIANS 2:1-3
FOLLOWING THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

There’s a sense in which sin does this to us. Of course, we are still responsible for our sin just as I was responsible for taking the wrong highway. But sin holds a power over us, so that apart from God’s grace intervening, our natural tendency is to drift onto the wrong path.

This wrong path may not be obvious at first, but the further we go, the more dangerous it becomes and the further we get from the place we need to be.

DRIFTING AS CHRISTIANS

Because our sinful nature still remains with us, we have to be careful not to drift back into sin. The author of Hebrews writes:

WE MUST PAY THE MOST CAREFUL ATTENTION, THEREFORE, TO WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, SO THAT WE DO NOT DRIFT AWAY.

HEBREWS 2:1

So how do we pay attention as believers? How do we avoid drifting away from grace and truth?
CHART: PAY ATTENTION!

1. KEEP YOUR EYES FOCUSED ON JESUS CHRIST.

**HEBREWS 12:1-2**
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. LOOK TO GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES.

**PSALM 119:18**
Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

3. REMEMBER ALL GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU.

**DEUTERONOMY 4:9**
Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

4. REMAIN IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**
And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

5. PRAY CONTINUALLY.

**MATTHEW 26:41**
Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

We are all quick to drift away; we’re prone to wander.

Read or sing through the lyrics of "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" and pay special attention to verse 4.
Thankfully, God’s grace is greater than our drifting.

Even though our human nature causes us to casually move toward sin, Romans 5:15 tells us that “even greater is God’s wonderful grace” (NLT). How can this be?

“For the sin of one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many.

BUT EVEN GREATER IS GOD’S WONDERFUL GRACE and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death

THROUGH THIS ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST.”

- ROMANS 5:17 NLT-

Since Adam, sin and death have been at work in this world. But since Christ, grace and righteousness reign supreme. Grace is greater!
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

CONTENT AND MEANING

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RECEIVING SOMETHING AND EARNING IT? HOW DOES IT CHANGE HOW WE HOLD THE POSSESSION?

HOW DOES PAUL DESCRIBE THE EPHESIANS DRIFTING INTO SIN?

HOW DO YOU SEE OUR SOCIETY DRIFTING INTO SIN APART FROM GOD’S GRACE?

HOW CAN IT BE THAT GOD’S GRACE DOESN’T JUST CANCEL OUT OUR SIN, BUT IS ACTUALLY MUCH GREATER THAN IT?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 again, but this time, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

HOW HAVE YOU CAUGHT YOURSELF “DRIFTING” INTO OLD WAYS OF LIFE (SEE HEBREWS 2:1)?

WHAT OLD HABITS OR PATTERNS OF LIFE REMAIN MOST TEMPTING TO YOU?

THINK BACK TO THE MOMENT OF YOUR SALVATION. WHAT WERE THE “ROAD SIGNS” THAT YOU WERE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION? HOW DID YOU GET ONTO THE RIGHT PATH?
DAY 4
THE ENEMIES OF GRACE

OUR ABILITY TO APPRECIATE GRACE IS IN DIRECT CORRELATION TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE **ACKNOWLEDGE OUR NEED** FOR IT. THE MORE I RECOGNIZE THE UGLINESS OF MY SIN, THE MORE I CAN APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S GRACE

KYLE IDLEMAN
WHEN I'M HONEST, I HAVE TO ADMIT I DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND my sin sometimes. It seems as though it’s both a force from within and a force outside of me.

Sometimes it feels as though I’m not just drifting into sin but actively being pushed into it. Could that be true?

It turns out: Grace is not without enemies.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.

AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH.

— Ephesians 2:1-3
THREE SPIRITUAL ENEMIES

So what makes us drift away from God and his grace? The Bible teaches that three distinct forces cause us to drift away from God: the flesh, the world, and the devil. These are the enemies of grace.

“WAYS OF THIS WORLD”

Ever since Adam sinned in the garden of Eden, we have been under a curse (Genesis 3). Our world is broken. (“World” in this sense means the collective results of the fall and the curse.)

WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE WHOLE IS INSTEAD FRACTURED.

WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE GOOD IS INSTEAD CORRUPTED.

WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE ORDERLY IS INSTEAD DISORGANIZED.

As long as we are following the ways of the world, we will move toward brokenness and death rather than God’s grace and life. The world wages war against our souls.

“RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR”

Since that original sin, the devil has a measure of power in the world. 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” If it feels like someone is actively opposed to your life and holiness, it’s true. The devil will one day be defeated, but until then, he is taking down as many as he can.
“CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH”
The third enemy of grace is our own “flesh” — our hearts, minds and bodies apart from Christ. We have this inner dueling between the Spirit of God within us and our old ways and habits of life — our flesh.

When we find ourselves doing things apart from God’s will and law, we are living by the flesh. Paul writes,

“FOR IF YOU LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, YOU WILL DIE; BUT IF BY THE SPIRIT YOU PUT TO DEATH THE MISDEEDS OF THE BODY, YOU WILL LIVE."  
ROMANS 8:13

GREATER THAN THE WORLD, DEVIL AND FLESH

Although these three enemies of grace besiege us believers each day, they do not have final power over us. God’s grace is greater than even these!

As Paul writes in our passage, we “used to live” under the power of these forces, but now God’s Spirit dwells within us to overcome these threats.

At the return of Christ:

The world will one day be restored to its original good,

The flesh will die and we will be raised with Christ, and

The devil will be defeated for all eternity.

Though grace has its enemies in this place, one day all will be grace.
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

CONTENT AND MEANING

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE WORLD, THE DEVIL AND THE FLESH IN YOUR OWN WORDS?

WHAT OTHER PASSAGES COME TO MIND FOR EACH ONE OF THESE THREE ENEMIES OF GRACE?

HOW CAN WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT ONE DAY THESE THREE FORCES AGAINST US WILL BE DEFEATED?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 again, but this time, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THESE FORCES WORKING AGAINST YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?
THE WORLD
THE DEVIL
THE FLESH

PERHAPS YOU ARE WEARY FROM FIGHTING AGAINST THESE FORCES. READ JESUS’S WORDS IN MATTHEW 11:28-30 AND BE ENCOURAGED TO REST IN HIM.

READ ROMANS 8:13 AGAIN. WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU TO “BY THE SPIRIT PUT TO DEATH THE MISDEEDS OF THE BODY”?

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IN "GRACE IS GREATER," KYLE QUOTES BILLIONAIRE MICHAEL

Bloomberg’s assurance that his good deeds will get him to heaven. Bloomberg says, “When I get to heaven I’m not stopping at the gate to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It’s not even close.”

Kyle puts it like this:

“EVERYTHING IN ME WANTS TO DENY, COMPARE, MINIMIZE AND JUSTIFY. BUT AS LONG AS I APPROACH MY SIN WITH THAT KIND OF SPIRIT, I WON’T BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER AND GREATNESS OF GOD’S GRACE.”

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.

— Ephesians 2:1-3
Think back to the context of Ephesians we described in Day One. The letter doesn’t paint a portrait of some particularly sinful person or society. Paul’s point is not that the Ephesians were worse off than anyone else before Christ. These verses are simply a picture of everyday life apart from God’s grace.

Paul says “all of us lived” along this sinful, corrupt path. Ephesians 2:1-3 is the condition of all people apart from the work of God.

**GREATER THAN EARNING**

Make a mark next to the phrase you have found yourself thinking about grace:

I deserve it because ...

- I'M BETTER THAN OTHERS.
- I'M SMART ENOUGH TO PURSUE IT.
- I WORK HARD; I DESERVE IT.
- I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING THAT BAD.
- I PRAY AND READ MY BIBLE EVERY DAY TO EARN IT.

Instead, think of God’s grace as even greater than your best efforts:

GRACE

I DESERVE IT!

I CAN DO IT MYSELF!
TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

Could it really be that we have nothing to do to earn God’s love — we simply receive it?

Consider a familiar story from the gospel of Luke (7:36-50). While Jesus was eating dinner with religious leaders, a woman “who lived a sinful life” came and stood behind him. In the presence of the son of God, she began weeping, and she washed his feet with expensive perfume and used her hair to clean them. The religious people were all looking down on this woman, so Jesus told them a parable.

“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. Neither had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which one will love him more?” (41-42).

Jesus follows this parable by telling the religious leaders that those who have been forgiven much will love much (verse 47). And to the great surprise of the room, Jesus says, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (verse 50).

God’s grace is for anyone and everyone who will receive it. It’s for those who are religious and morally hardworking. It’s for the lost and sinful, who have made a wreck of their life.

For those of us who think we can earn God’s favor, his grace knocks us off our feet.

One author puts it like this:

“Grace is the celebration of life, relentlessly hounding all the non-celebrants in the world. It is a floating, cosmic bash shouting its way through the streets of the universe, flinging the sweetness of its cassations to every window, pounding at every door in a hilarity beyond all liking and happening, until the prodigals come out at last and dance, and the elder brothers finally take their fingers out of their ears.”

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AMAZING GRACE

READ OR SING AND REFLECT ON THESE WELL-KNOW LYRICS.

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me!
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures; He will my Shield and portion be, As long as life endures.
5. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, with Him in the veil, A life of joy and peace.
6. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine; But God, Who called me here below, Shall be forever mine.
7. When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise Than when we’d first begun.
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION
CONTENT AND MEANING

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RECEIVING SOMETHING AND Earning IT? HOW DOES IT CHANGE HOW WE HOLD THE POSSESSION?

HOW CAN IT BE THAT GOD CALLS US TO A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE AND GOOD WORKS EVEN THOUGH THIS IS NOT THE PATH OF OUR SALVATION?

WHAT IS THE PROPER MOTIVATION FOR LIVING FOR CHRIST IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 again, but this time, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

HOW DO YOU FIND YOURSELF CITING YOUR GOOD DEEDS AS THE GROUNDS FOR YOUR SALVATION, EVEN IF IT’S NOT THIS OBVIOUS?

HOW DO YOU THINK OF YOUR HONEST EFFORT, YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE, YOUR CONCERN FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY?

COULD IT BE THAT IN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE, YOU STRUGGLE TO RECEIVE AND LIVE IN GOD’S GRACE?
WE HAVE SPENT THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS CONSIDERING OUR sin, its consequences, and our need of God’s grace. If you’re like me, it can all be overwhelming: I know I am a sinner; just give me the Good News!

The Good News, as we said earlier, involves a measure of bad news. Today, we’ll look at one final aspect of the bad news — that by nature we are deserving of God’s wrath — in a way that summarizes everything you’ve learned so far.

God’s wrath is a difficult reality, but the deeper you seek to understand it, the more beautiful it becomes.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and use the space provided to underline, highlight, circle or draw anything you think is important or want to think on.
AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH.

– EPHESIANS 2:1-3
God’s wrath is one of his many “attributes” — things that are true of God, his characteristics and personality. God’s attributes include love, power, justice, being eternal and of course, grace.

No one attribute of God can cancel out another — that would mean there is inner division in God, and there is not. So God is full of mercy and justice; he is full of love and wrath.

God’s wrath is “his love in action against sin.” Because God is holy and righteous, he cannot let sin go unpunished. In other words, our actions have consequences — we do have real guilt.

Yet because he is full of love, mercy and grace, he doesn’t bring his wrath to bear on us. How can that be? Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross met the demands of God’s wrath (because death is the penalty for sin) and the demands of God’s grace (so sinners like you and me get to go free!).

As Paul puts it in his letter to the Romans:

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BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE FOR US IN THIS: WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. SINCE WE HAVE NOW BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, HOW MUCH MORE SHALL WE BE SAVED FROM GOD’S WRATH THROUGH HIM! FOR IF, WHILE WE WERE GOD’S ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO HIM THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, HOW MUCH MORE, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, SHALL WE BE SAVED THROUGH HIS LIFE!

— ROMANS 5:8-10

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Now that is great news!

God’s love for us through Christ means we are free to come just as we are before a holy God.

God’s mercy toward us in Christ means there is no longer any guilt left on us.

God’s grace is greater than our guilt!

Whatever your greatest sin is, it’s weaker than God’s grace. To put it positively, God’s grace is greater than not just your worst sin, but every sin you’ve ever committed, combined.

**THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS**

Think this is too good to be true? The reality is that even though we barely understand the depth of our sin, we vastly underestimate the power of God’s grace!

How could our sin be greater than God and his grace? Nothing in all creation — not even the longest list of sins you can imagine — can overcome God’s powerful grace.

**ON THE NEXT PAGE, WRITE OUT A LIST OF YOUR SINS, FAILURES, OR HURTS TO THE RIGHT OF THE GREATER THAN SYMBOL.**
GRACE
Take a few minutes to memorize the verse on the following page.

If you’re not too experienced memorizing Bible verses, consider saying the verse aloud ten times. As you repeat it over and over, you’ll find yourself learning the rhythm and flow of the verse.

But mere recitation of the verse is not the goal of Bible memorization. The goal is to deeply understand and reflect on the verse. And by taking time to understand and reflect on the verse deeply now, you may be able to keep it in your memory for years to come.

Ask yourself the following questions about the verse:

**HOW DOES THIS VERSE SPEAK TRUTH DIRECTLY TO ME?**

**HOW DOES THIS VERSE CONNECT TO WHAT I’VE BEEN LEARNING THROUGH THIS STUDY JOURNAL?**

**HOW WOULD MY LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF I FULLY BELIEVED AND LIVED OUT THE TRUTHS OF THIS VERSE?**
When God our Savior revealed His kindness and love, He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. Titus 3:4-5 NLT
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

CONTENT AND MEANING

HOW WOULD YOU PUT GOD’S WRATH INTO YOUR OWN WORDS?

WRITE OUT A LIST OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES. HOW MANY CAN YOU LIST AND WHICH SEEM MOST SIGNIFICANT?
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION
MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

Read these Ephesians 2:1-3 again, but this time, read more slowly and thoughtfully.

IF YOU GREW UP IN CHURCH, HOW WOULD YOU HAVE DESCRIBED GOD’S WRATH IN YOUR EARLY LIFE? HOW AND WHEN DID YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WRATH CHANGE?

LOOK AT YOUR LIST OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES. WHICH ONES MOVE YOUR HEART MOST RIGHT NOW? SPEND A FEW MINUTES MEDITATING ON GOD’S ATTRIBUTES.

READ ROMANS 5:8-11 ABOVE AGAIN. HOW DOES THIS TRUTH CREATE A SENSE OF GRATITUDE AND WORSHIP WITHIN YOU?

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WRATH AND LOVE COMPELS US TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH THOSE APART FROM CHRIST. WHO HAS GOD PLACED ON YOUR HEART?
On the seventh day of each week, we’re going to pause to review and reflect on the past week.

If you are behind a day or two, use this day to catch up.

If you are caught up, use this day to review the previous six days’ notes — especially all the Scripture references and stories.

Based on your week’s reading and reflection, answer the following questions.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING I LEARNED ABOUT GOD THIS WEEK?**
WHAT WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING I LEARNED ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE THIS WEEK?

WHAT WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF THIS WEEK?

WHAT WOULD MY LIFE LOOK LIKE IF I FULLY BELIEVED AND LIVED EVERYTHING I READ AND WROTE THIS WEEK?

If you are watching the Grace is Greater Series, watch Episode 2 now. Learn more at GracelsGreaterStudy.com