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GRACE
CHANGES EVERYTHING



WEEK 3 | The Scandalous Gift

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, how we praise your name that you have made us new creations in Christ and have credited us with your righteousness, by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you that although we were dead in our trespasses and sins, you breathed new life into our bodies and made us your children for ever and ever. Thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

WARM UP (OPTIONAL)

Is there a historic figure that you consider an example of strength and belief? Who are they and why do you consider them?

NOTES

WORD

¹ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

...

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." ²³ But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

[ROMANS 4:1-8,16-24](#)

Oh, how I long for God to be glorified in our pursuit of holiness and love. But God is not glorified unless our pursuit is empowered by faith in his promises.

And the God who revealed himself most fully in Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins and raised for our justification ([Romans 4:25](#)), is most glorified when we embrace his promises with joyful firmness because they are bought by the blood of his Son. God is honored when we are humbled for our feebleness and failure, and when he is trusted for future grace. That's the point of [Romans 4:20](#) where Paul describes Abraham's faith, "No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith, giving glory to God."

He grew strong in his faith, thus giving glory to God. Faith in God's promises glorifies him as supremely wise and strong and good and trustworthy. So, unless we learn how to live by faith in the promises of God's future grace, we may perform remarkable religious rigors, but not for God's glory. He is glorified when the power to be holy comes through humble faith in future grace.

Martin Luther said, "[Faith] honors him whom it trusts with the most reverent and highest regard, since it considers him truthful and trustworthy." The trusted Giver gets the glory.

My great desire is that we learn how to live for God's honor. And that means living by faith in future grace, which, in turn, means battling unbelief in all the ways it rears its head.

From John Piper's, *Future Grace* (p.220-221)

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 = never; 10 = always), how would you rate your frequency in living every day on purpose? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. Can you share a time when you were about to give up, but things turned out the way you wanted?
3. John Piper writes on Romans 4:20, "Faith in God's promises glorifies him as supremely wise and strong and good and trustworthy." How is your faith in God's promises? Do you trust him to come through with his every word?
4. Paul refers to Abraham from the Old Testament as a father figure in the faith. It was not necessarily his efforts that counted him as righteous, but his belief in God. Do you consider yourself righteous? Why or why not?
5. Would you like to trust God with your life, receive his grace, and follow him, entering into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer with them:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.