

Small Group Booklet  
March 2015



The  
**Grace**  
of God

## THIS SMALL GROUP BOOKLET:

We see every member of BMC connected, loved and fully assimilated into the life of BMC, living out their faith in their day to day lives. We see the river of God flowing through each and every member offering Christ's hope to the world. We believe that everyone living a Christ-centered life is a person of spiritual influence. We believe that life happens in community: Small groups.

### **SMALL GROUPS: Intentionally transforming people in loving community!**

**Romans 12:1-2** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**Acts 2:42-47** *The fellowship of the believers: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

This booklet offers you **individual reflections** for every day and a **small group agenda** that takes into account your group's spiritual and emotional dynamics.

- Main Bible reading and Message

- Daily Devotions (Sunday to Saturday)



- Background information



- Small group Sessions



- Welcome: Getting to know each other (building relationship).
- Worship: Inviting God into our meeting.
- Accountability: Keeping us responsible for our promises.
- Word & Questions: Studying the bible with questions in community.
- Ministry to each other: Prayer.
- Reaching out: Helping or serving others.
- Going Deeper during the week.

*Group members are encouraged to do the daily readings, investigate the background of the Biblical passages and prepare for the questions assigned to each week.*

# THE GRACE OF GOD

According to John Wesley, grace is: “The loving, unmerited favour and active power of God toward all and in all.” God’s grace flows from Him, always taking the initiative in a person’s life, from Prevenient Grace to grace throughout eternity – Glorifying Grace.

John Wesley’s theology on grace has been sustained and refined over the last two centuries making him the eminent theologian of grace. He emphasized that the grace of God contributes to every phase of a person’s life.

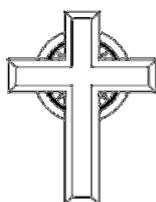
In 1746 Wesley wrote our main doctrines (theological truths that define and describe Methodism) as: Repentance, Faith and Holiness. Twenty years later he formalized it by saying the 3 strands of scriptural doctrine for Christian unity are: Original sin, Justification by faith and Holiness of heart and life. In each, grace is emphasized, Prevenient, Justifying and Sanctifying grace. Over the next 6 weeks we are going to extend these further by adding Convicting grace, Converting grace, Assuring grace and Glorifying grace – looking at 7 experiences of grace in our lives and beyond.

We speak of grace a lot, but do we understand it and believe it? Do our lives reflect this gift? You cannot get grace by anything you do or say – God gives grace freely. God is at work in you before you even meet, throughout your life and after you die.

I hope that this series will challenge our beliefs about grace (God at work in your life) and that we will pause and reflect on God’s grace in every experience we have had and are having now. Through this we will grow in God’s grace to look more like Jesus every day.

May God help us to step over our wounded parts, our controlling and our self-seeking natures to truly see HIS GRACE in our lives this Lent season!

Blessings!  
Nadja



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# WEEK 1:

## WHAT IS GRACE?

### MAIN SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 2:8-10

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

### MAIN MESSAGE: GOD AT WORK IN MY LIFE

#### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 1:



Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 22 Feb: Ephesians 2:8-10	When someone gives you a gift – do you go: “That’s very nice, how much do I owe you?” Do you feel that you owe God?	Father God, thank you for the amazing free gift of grace given through Your Son Jesus Christ. I receive it with grateful thanks.
Monday 23 Feb: Proverbs 22:11	Do your words reveal your heart in Jesus?	Lord, as I interact and relate to others give me a deeper understanding of how to extend love and grace toward them.
Tuesday 24 Feb: John 1:16	You have received <i>My grace</i> , and you receive it over and over again in full. Does <i>My grace</i> in your life overflow to others?	Holy Spirit, I ask and pray for a fresh anointing and blessing of grace and truth that comes through my relationship with You.
Wednesday 25 Feb: Acts 4:33	<i>My grace</i> is powerful and unique to you – know it and own it like a true disciple.	Lord may my life be a powerful witness and testimony of the love and grace of God freely offered to others.
Thursday 26 Feb: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18	You are being transformed by the Spirit into God’s image.	Holy Spirit I desire to be a true reflection of God’s grace and glory as I journey through this week. Affirmation: His grace is sufficient for me.

Friday 27 Feb: Col 4:6	Are you gracious when you tell others about Christ? Does it encourage further dialogue?	Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable and pleasing to You and affirming and healing to others.
Saturday 28 Feb: 2 Timothy 2:1	Do you claim the strength that you have in Jesus Christ? He will give you the strength each day to do His work.	Lord let me be strong in grace; drawing deeply on Your enabling power to accomplish and exercise this gift. Response: Pray for those who have offended or rejected you.



## BACKGROUND:

Counselor David Seamands summed up his career in this way in the book ***What's so amazing about Grace*** by Philip Yancey: *“Many years ago I was driven to the conclusion that the two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are these: the failure to understand, receive and live out God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness; and the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people... We read, we hear, we believe a good theology of grace. But that’s not the way we live. The good news of the Gospel of grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions.”*

Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue – Eugene O’Neil.

*We do not “get it” in our hearts.*

The world can do good works as well as or better than the church: feed the hungry, heal the sick – you need not be a Christian, but there is only one thing the world cannot do: it cannot offer grace. This should be the most distinguishing factor in our Christian walk.

**No other system, ideology or religion proclaims a free forgiveness and a new life to those who have done nothing to deserve it.**

We still think that if we **do** “good”, we will be rewarded, but it has nothing to do with us and everything to do with God. God doesn’t want us to be rich or famous or successful. He only wants us to be RIGHT WITH HIM. God loves the sinner, but not the sin. Max Lucado says it this way in his book ***In the grip of Grace***: *“God justifies (makes perfect) then sanctifies (makes holy). God does what we cannot do so we can be what we dare not dream, perfect before God. He justly justifies the unjust.*

You cannot by anything you do or say get grace – God gives it freely. You should only **do** “good” because you want to please God – it flows naturally from your heart. Faith isn’t just

to believe in God, but to believe that God is FOR YOU – believing it in the head and in the heart. You need to KNOW God loves you because of who He is, not because of who you are.

God is at work in you before you even meet (**prevenient** grace). He then, at the right time convicts us of our sin (**convicting** grace), so that we become aware of our need for Him. We are reborn (**converting** grace), we become a new person – made perfect – a child of God (**justifying** grace). God assures us of his Love (**assuring** grace) and we get a new identity that continuously grows in Holiness as we grow closer to God (**sanctifying** grace). We live out that grace so that **others can believe**, and then when we die we get a new body and life (**glorifying** grace).



## SMALL GROUP SESSION WEEK 1

### WELCOME

What is your all-time favourite meal? And how often do you enjoy it?

### WORSHIP

Be creative with the song below and participate in one of the following ways: prayer, singing, meditation, and or thanksgiving as fits your group dynamics.

#### **Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

*Chorus: My chains are gone I've been set free.*

*My God, my Saviour has ransomed me.*

*And like a flood His mercy reigns unending love, amazing grace.*

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures.

He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

*Chorus*

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow the sun forbear to shine.

But God, Who called me here below, will be forever mine.

Will be forever mine. You are forever mine.

**Amazing Grace Lyrics John Newton (1725-1807), Adapted by  
Chris Tomlin**

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## WORD & QUESTIONS

### **Ephesians 2:8-10**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

1. What stood out for you in this reading? Why do you think it “jumped out” at you today?
2. We experience grace in different stages of our lives, where are you in your grace journey? Why?
  - a. Prevenient grace: God at work in you before you are made aware of your need of Him.
  - b. Convicting grace: God makes us aware of our sin and need for him.
  - c. Converting grace: We are reborn (What God does IN us).
  - d. Justifying grace: I am a child of God (What God does FOR us).
  - e. Assuring grace: I know that I am a child of God - the opposite of living in shame/guilt
  - f. Sanctifying grace: God grows me in holiness.
3. What do you find most challenging of this stage? How can your group help you in this regard?
4. Spend some time praying in silence asking for God's grace.

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## ACCOUNTABILITY

Did you answer God's call to make a covenant with Him?

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## MINISTRY TO ONE ANOTHER

Pray for one another – specifically with regards to the challenges shared - to encourage each other on this faith/grace journey.

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## REACHING OUT

Are you passionate about children, worship, crafts and seeing young lives changed for eternity? Why not join our vibrant children's ministry? There are many ways in which you can get involved! For more information contact Bernice on [bernice@bmc.org.za](mailto:bernice@bmc.org.za) or at the BMC office on 011 463 2333.

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## GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

### **Nehemiah 9:28-31**

- What does this passage tell you about God?
- What resonates with you in this passage? Does it speak into your heart?
- What does this passage tell you about your relationship with Him?
- Is there anything you need to action? What is your message out of this scripture?

## WEEK 2:

# PREVENIENT AND CONVICTING GRACE

MAIN SCRIPTURES: ROMANS 5:8 & I JOHN 1:7

### **Romans 5:8**

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

### **I John 1:7**

*...but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

MAIN MESSAGE: GOD IS AT WORK IN US BEFORE WE MEET HIM. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS ME OF MY SIN AND MY NEED FOR JESUS.



### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 2:

Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 1 March: Romans 5:8	When you feel uncertain about God's love remember that He loved you before you turned to Him. If God could love you as a rebel, surely He can strengthen you now that you love Him in return.	Lord God, thank You so much for the love, grace, favor and forgiveness that you so lavishly pour out into my life despite my weaknesses and failings.
Monday 2 March: I John 1:7	Christian love is not a feeling but a choice. If we choose to love others God will help us express our love.	Lord, I make myself accountable before You today and choose to walk in the light and love of Jesus Christ. Thank You for the cleansing and healing power of the blood of Jesus.
Tuesday 3 March: Isaiah 43:25	God says He remembers your sin no more. Do you believe that with all your heart?	Praise the Lord! My future is different from the past! I am forgiven and my sins are remembered no more.

Wednesday 4 March: Isaiah 26:10	Even wicked people receive God's benefit, but that doesn't teach them to do what is right.	Pray for those who need to experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the lost and unsaved.
Thursday 5 March: Jeremiah 31:34	Every person you meet can teach you something about God.	Father God may my life and service stem and then flow from a deep desire to know You..
Friday 6 March: Romans 6:22	<i>I paid the penalty for your sin. You are saved. I have released you.</i> What is holding you prisoner?	Celebrate the fact that Jesus came to set you and others free. Pray for those who are in bondage to addiction, incarcerated and for those held captive by others.
Saturday 7 March: Romans 4:8	God will never hold your sin against you. Your debt is paid in full.	Lord I count my blessings today in the knowledge that I stand righteous before You. My debt has been paid! I open my life to your continued work of sanctification.



## BACKGROUND:

**Prevenient grace is all about God**, and has nothing to do with who I am, what I do, where I live, what my strengths or weaknesses are. He is at work in my life long before I meet Him. He creates opportunities (knocks on the door); it is up to me to let Him into my life. This grace is for all of God's creation – yes, for you! When you choose God, the Holy Spirit creates in you the power to believe. This and all the grace that follow create wonderful witnessing opportunities to share God's grace with others which is essential as we learn grace by being graced.

**Convicting grace is about us**, it happens when the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and our need for Jesus. We continually over extend our credit line with God. We know that we are guilty and that we should “pay” for our sins. No person is without a natural conscience which makes them uneasy when they go against it.

It seems difficult to understand God's love coming to us free of charge; it goes against our instincts and experience. It is just too good to be true. By the grace of the Holy Spirit we are saved from sin: from the guilt, anger and power of past sin, bad habits, sinful desires and willful sin that controls us. The cost of your sin is more than you can pay and the gift of God is more than you can imagine.

God's grace is older than your sin and greater than your sin. Since we have been made right with God we have Peace with God, we have a Place with God and we share in His glory.

## SMALL GROUP SESSION WEEK 2



### WELCOME

What is the worst weather situation you have been in? Explain?

### WORSHIP

Spend time in meditation and thanksgiving as God speaks to you in the devotion below.

#### Jesus Calling (January 19):

“Seek my face, and you will find more than you ever dreamed possible. Let me displace worry at the centre of your being. I am like supersaturated cloud, showering Peace into the pool of your mind. My nature is to bless. Your nature is to receive with thanksgiving. This is a true fit, designed before the foundation of the world. Glorify me by receiving my blessings gratefully.

I am the goal of all your searching. When you seek me, you find me and are satisfied. When lesser goals capture your attention, I fade into the background of your life. I am still there, watching and waiting; but you function as if you were alone. Actually my light shines on every situation you will ever face. Live radiantly by expanding your focus to include Me in all your moments. Let nothing dampen your search for Me.

(Jeremiah 29:13, Philippians 4:7, Psalm 27: 8)

**Sarah Young**

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Did you tell someone about God's free grace last week?

### GOING DEEPER LAST WEEK

Did you take any actions after your study of last week's passages?

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## WORD & QUESTIONS

1. Who was the person or what were the circumstances that led you to Christ? (Parents reading the bible at night, a sermon, a teacher, an event etc.). Briefly share your story.
2. Have you given in to your need of God? Are you at peace or are you anxious, depressed or filled with joy and peace? Does anger consume you and the people around you? Does guilt imprison you? Do bad habits discourage you? Do you feel like a failure so much that you don't even try anymore? Discuss with your group where you think you need God most in your life today.
3. Most of us struggle with sharing deep feelings especially about our failures; this makes us feel vulnerable and exposed. In light of the above question - is there something this group can help you with, keep you accountable for, and encourage you with?
4. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* How do these words of God make you feel? Discuss.

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## MINISTRY TO ONE ANOTHER

Pray for each other to recognize God's grace, and for any shared needs or struggles that have been discussed in this session.

*"Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please forgive my sins and give me the gift of eternal life. I ask you in to my life and heart to be my Lord and Saviour. I want to serve you always."*

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## REACHING OUT

Do you know someone that is struggling with current or past sin? Have you spoken to them about God and his redeeming grace? Are you God's "catalysts" in someone else's life - are there people that you can influence, opportunities of grace that you can create? What one thing can you commit to, that you think might create "fertile ground" for God's convicting grace in someone else's life this week.

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## GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

### **Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

- What does this passage tell you about God?
- What is the thorn in your flesh?
- Can you see God reflected / made perfect in your weakness? How or why not?
- Praise God for His strength in you!
- Is there anything you need to do this week?

## WEEK 3:

# CONVERTING AND JUSTIFYING GRACE

### MAIN SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 8:5-13

*Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 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. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 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.*

**MAIN MESSAGE: I AM BORN AGAIN. MY SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.**



### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 3:

Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 8 March: Romans 8:9	You don't wait for a feeling to know that the Holy Spirit has come; he has come because God promised he would when you believe that Jesus is His son.	Thank You Lord that it is in you I live and move and have my being. Holy Spirit, help me to walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh.
Monday 9 March: 2 Corinthians 1:12	The Holy Spirit speaks to into your conscience and you know because you know that it is from God.	I choose to walk in Your truth with honesty and integrity. Am I honest and sincere in my relationships? By God's grace I choose to be.

Tuesday 10 March: Romans 5:1-2	You can have peace because you have been justified through faith into His grace. You are in grace when you believe.	Lord Jesus, thank You for the grace and peace that I have found in You. I fully embrace the Truth that it is by grace I have been saved through faith and not by my works.
Wednesday 11 March: Galatians 5:4	We need to trust in God. Nothing you do or say can give you God's grace. It is a gift from God.	Lord, forgive me for striving and not entering into Your rest and the full knowledge of grace freely given. I choose to trust You in all things.
Thursday 12 March: Ephesians 2:4-6	You ARE SAVED. You will go to heaven because God loved you first.	Praise the Lord I am one with Christ Jesus and am seated in heavenly places. I am accepted, adopted, loved, cherished and highly favored by the Father.
Friday 13 March: Romans 12:6-8	God gives us all gifts according to His grace. Show God's grace in all you do by doing it diligently and joyfully.	Father, I thank You for your gifts, graces and anointing on my life. May I use them boldly, wisely, diligently and joyfully in service to You and the body of Christ.
Saturday 14 March: Isaiah 58: 11	The Lord is your perfect Shepherd. Praise God for satisfying all your needs to overflowing and keeping you in His grace.	As I reach out to those in need, I thank you Lord that I become an extension of Your love, grace, mercy and compassion which is then returned to me a hundredfold.

## BACKGROUND



Richard Rohr writes the following in his daily devotions book – ***Radical Grace: Daily Meditations*** “When Jesus comes to know himself in relation to a loving father as a loving son, when he comes to know the election of the father, God’s favour rests on him. In that moment, Jesus’ whole mission changes. For 30 years he has waited and listened for that revelation, that knowledge that he is the elect of God, the chosen of God. The pattern is exactly the same for every Christian. Conversion awaits that moment when you know the election of God – when you know your sonship or daughterhood, when you come to hear the Lord speak your name, when you know that you are absolutely created...When you finally hear that unique pronouncing of your name, that is your first opening to the gift of the spirit”.

God sees you as if you have never sinned! We are **born again, a new creation – converting grace** (what God **does in us**). His Holy Spirit makes us alive in Christ because of His righteousness. By His Spirit he puts to death the misdeeds of the body. Now God is my divine parent, **I am His child – my sins are forgiven – justifying grace** (what God **did for us**)! I am saved from guilt of sin and restored to the favour of God.

Salvation is for everyone, but we need to be in some way accountable for our eternal destiny, there needs to be some active responsiveness or choice on our part. We have a choice if we are going to live according to the flesh or the Spirit. We choose to be converted or not, if we do, we are justified by faith. This is the beginning of a new life journey to grow in Holiness in God.

What does your new identity in Christ look like?

Romans 3:24	I am justified (declared not guilty of sin).
Romans 8:1	No condemnation awaits me.
Romans 8:2	I am set free from the law of sin and death.
1 Corinthians 1:2	I am sanctified and made acceptable in Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 1:30	I am righteous and holy in Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:22	I will be made alive at the resurrection.
2 Corinthians 5:17	I am a new creation.
2 Corinthians 5:21	I receive God's righteousness.
Galatians 3:28	I am one in Christ with all other believers.
Ephesians 1:3	I am blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
Ephesian 1:4	I am holy, blameless, and covered with God's love.
Ephesians 1:5, 6	I am adopted as God's child.
Ephesians 1:7	My sins are taken away, and I am forgiven.
Ephesians 1:10, 11	I will be brought under Christ's headship.
Ephesians 1:13	I am marked as belonging to God by the Holy Spirit.
Ephesians 2:6	I have been raised up to sit with Christ in glory.
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's work of art.
Ephesians 2:13	I have been brought near to God.
Ephesians 3:6	I share in the promise of Christ.
Ephesians 3:12	I can come with freedom and confidence into God's presence.
Ephesians 5:29, 30	I am a member of Christ's body, the church.
Colossians 2:10	I have been given fullness in Christ.
Colossians 2:11	I am set free from my sinful nature.
2 Timothy 2:10	I will have eternal glory.

Stir up grace and God will give you more. This is the beginning of a new life journey to grow in Holiness in God.

## SMALL GROUP SESSION WEEK 3



### WELCOME

Do you study/read best in silence or with background noise? Why?

### WORSHIP

Be creative with the song below and participate in one of the following ways: prayer, singing, meditation, and or thanksgiving as fits your group dynamics.

#### Happy Day:

The greatest day in history, death is beaten, You have rescued me.

Sing it out, Jesus is alive.

The empty cross, the empty grave. Life eternal, You have won the day.

Shout it out, Jesus is alive. He's alive.

*Chorus: Oh, happy day, happy day. You washed my sin away. Oh, happy day, happy day, I'll never be the same. Forever I am changed.*

When I stand in that place, free at last, meeting face to face.

I am yours, Jesus, You are mine.

Endless joy, perfect peace, earthly pain finally will cease. Celebrate, Jesus is alive. He's alive.

*Chorus: Oh, ...*

Oh, what a glorious day. What a glorious way. That You have saved me

Oh, what a glorious day. What a glorious name

*Chorus: Oh...*

Tim Hughes

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Did you speak to someone about God's redeeming grace last week?

### GOING DEEPER LAST WEEK

Did you get to do anything from your "to do" list you made last week?

### WORD & QUESTIONS

#### **Romans 8:9-10**

*And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.*

1. Can you describe what “Living in the Spirit” and not in the flesh looks like for you?
2. Which one of the above statements (identity in Christ) are the most difficult for you to believe? Why?
3. What interferes with you believing it: temptation, chains of addiction, lack of knowledge, not accepting God’s forgiveness, your calendar, sin, other things?
4. Which one thing can you do to strengthen this belief (acquire more knowledge, read the Bible, affirmations, change your way of thinking, other)?

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## MINISTERING TO ONE ANOTHER

Pray for each other and for any shared doubts that have been discussed in this session.

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## REACHING OUT

Do you have Tuesday mornings free? Would you like to empower the people in the Lazarus Ministry? Every Tuesday from 08:00-11:00, around 80 people from surrounding areas who live mainly in shacks, come to BMC for a sermon, fellowship (break into classes), and a meal. If you are an expert on a subject or have a skill to share (Healthy living / Finances / Cooking / Knitting) please contact [davidh@bmc.org.za](mailto:davidh@bmc.org.za) / 011 463 2333.

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## GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

**Luke 15:11-32** – The prodigal son

- If you were the father – what would your response have been when your son returned?
- By temperament and experience who can you relate to more: the father, the older son, the younger son?
- What is the lesson in this parable for you?
- What is the next step for you in your spiritual journey?



## WEEK 4:

# ASSURING GRACE

MAIN SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 8:15-17 & 2 CORINTHIANS 1:12

### Romans 8:15-17

*The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship and daughtership. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

### 2 Corinthians 1:12

*Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.*

MAIN MESSAGE: I KNOW I AM A CHILD OF GOD.



### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 4:

Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 15 March: John 1:12	We are children of God because we believe.	What does it mean to you to be a child of God? Respond in prayer to ABBA who loves you.
Monday 16 March: John 20:30-31	The Bible contains everything we need to know to believe that Jesus is God through whom we receive eternal life.	Thank You God for the written Word that has become alive in my life. It has helped me transform and renew my mind regarding Your Grace.
Tuesday 17 March: Hebrews 11:1	We know from past experiences that God's mercies and grace will always be new.	Faithful, loving and gracious God, Your Word gives light and revelation and I have the confident assurance that Your mercies are new every morning.

Wednesday 18 March: 2 Corinthians 1:12	Our conscience testifies that we are children of God.	Help me Lord, to conduct all I do with transparency and sincerity in order to keep my conscience clear of condemnation and guilt.
Thursday 19 March: 1 Timothy 3:13	The more you serve and trust God, the more assured you will be of your faith.	Thank You Lord that as I continue to serve, trust and obey Your Word I grow and mature in my faith walk.
Friday 20 March: Peter 3:18	It is important to get to know our God better and better all the time. The sinful world will always challenge our faith.	Father God my deepest desire is to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Spend time in His presence today.
Saturday 21 March: Hebrews 10:22	We have so many blessings associated with our new life in Christ!	Praise God for the broken body and the cleansing blood of Jesus that has given full assurance and access into His Holy Presence.

## BACKGROUND



**I know that I am a child of God (assuring grace)** because the Holy Spirit confirms it in me. Our own spirit testifies to our salvation as we study the Bible with understanding. We see how God changes our lives. God impresses on our souls that we are His children. When we become aware of the Holy Spirit witnessing with our spirit, we are free to grow in perfect love.

We know that we are saved when we truly feel remorse and grief at our sin, and make moral life changes. We are filled with humility and joy at what God has done for us. We continue to strive to love and obey God fully. We know and understand God's love for us and lose our fear. We are filled with the joy of the Lord. We desire only God and His will in our lives. We love our "neighbour"; we become humble, faithful, patient and even-tempered. We become honest, caring and kind. We can do all of this because of the Holy Spirit in our lives and hearts.

We become a new person – a mind which is in Christ. We have a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for **my** sins, that he loved **me**, and gave himself for **me now and forever more!**



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WELCOME

Have you ever participated in a long distance walking, running or biking event? Tell your story.

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WORSHIP

Meditate on **Psalm 121**:

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?*

*My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber;  
indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your shade at your right hand;  
the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.*

*The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life;  
the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*

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ACCOUNTABILITY

What have you done in the last week to live in the Spirit more?

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WORD & QUESTIONS

**Romans 8:9-16**

1. Does God's Spirit whisper with your own that you are child of God? Do you know because you know you are a child of God? Please explain.
2. When is it most difficult for you to believe that you are a son/daughter of God – when feeling abandoned, not good enough, fearful, experienced personal loss, have no hope and a future, rejected, are lonely, powerless, any other reason?
3. Why is it so hard for you to give this to God? What is stopping you?
4. What have you found helpful to do in situations of “acute fear or disbelief” in the past? Please share with the group.

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## MINISTRY TO EACH OTHER

Pray for each other and for any shared needs or struggles that have been discussed in this session.

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## REACHING OUT

You have been in a group for a while and have seen how it works. The small group team urgently needs Facilitators (especially in the Fourways area). Please contact [nadjaa@bmc.org.za](mailto:nadjaa@bmc.org.za) if you would like to find out more. Training and support will be provided.

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## GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

### **Psalm 121:**

Divide a piece of paper into 3 columns, give each column the following heading: “the biblical text”, “the text in my own words” (**include your own name where possible**), “discoveries made”. Write down the bible text, put it in your own words and then write down any discoveries you made whilst doing this.



Grace Gift  
unmerited  
Favor  
abundant  
Free Mercy  
Forgiving

# WEEK 5:

## SANCTIFYING GRACE

MAIN SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*

MAIN MESSAGE: GOD GROWS ME IN HOLINESS.



### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 5:

Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 22 March: 2 Corinthians 12:9	God’s grace is enough for all we need to do today! Turn to God to find pathways for effectiveness.	Lord, Your grace is sufficient for me, Your strength is made perfect when I am weak, all that I cling to I lay at Your feet. Your grace is sufficient for me.
Monday 23 March: Matthew 5:48	God expects a different kind of behaviour depending on our stage of spiritual development.	We have a high calling placed on our lives “Do I love my enemies?”
Tuesday 24 March: Hebrews 12:14	You are the only Bible someone might ever see.	Grace enables me to seek to walk in love and peace with those around me. May my life be a true reflection of righteousness, joy and peace as I minister to others.
Wednesday 25 March: 1 Thessalonians 3:4-5	Giving in to temptation can have disastrous results.	Lord, Strengthen me when I face the temptation to fall from grace and into sin. As I face these temptations give me the self-control to rise up and walk away in victory.
Thursday 26 March: Jude 1:4	We need to be careful to not twist the truth to justify our own opinions, life-style or wrong behaviours.	Thank Jesus for His grace that sets us free from rule- bound religion. Enjoy and appreciate this amazing grace without using it as a license to sin.

Friday – 27 March: Romans 1:7	We are called to be God’s Holy people. He is the only source of our security and salvation!	Lord, I turn and embrace the call upon my life to live a holy life, pleasing in Your sight. Actively engage in community service with those who need to know the grace and love of God.
Saturday 28 March: Titus 3:5	We are reborn by the Holy Spirit. We gain eternal life with all its treasures.	Thank You for Your mercy, and grace. Thank you for Your blood Lord that made a way to come into Your presence and magnify Your name. I stand in awe of what You have done for me!



## BACKGROUND

**By sanctifying grace we are saved from the power of sin and restored to the image of God (made holy).** Wesley sees sanctification as both gradual and instantaneous. At justification a sinner is sanctified instantaneously, and then the gradual work of the sanctification begins. We go from grace to grace whilst we avoid sin, and try to do good works.

Works in themselves do not contribute to our salvation. We simply do good works because of God’s grace as we look in faith and act according to the light in us. It’s a faith response to God’s grace initiative. If we disobey God’s call, it is a deliberate rejection of God’s grace. We always have the choice.

We are not perfect in knowledge (we cannot know God’s mind) and we still make mistakes (misinterpreting scriptures, God’s will). We are not free from illnesses in mind and body and we are still tempted. Even “holy” Christians need to grow in grace and perfection. When one falls from grace it can be restored by repentance and faith.

Wesley defines Christian perfection as “loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength” (Mark 12:30). This implies that nothing but love remains in the soul, and that all words, thoughts and actions are covered by pure love. He maintains that we can be filled with pure love and still be able to make mistakes, a natural consequence of being human. He insists that it is possible to become perfected in love in this life. If God gave us a command to love him with all our mind and heart then it should be possible, as God always delivers on what he promises.

Christian perfection is thus perfect love; the soul is pure from sin. Wesley wanted every believer to expect this blessed gift from God in faith. This perfection continues even

beyond death, throughout eternity. We go from a saint on earth to a saint in heaven. We will have a spiritual body that will be raised in glory forever.

Jefferson Bethke writes in his book **Jesus>Religion** “No matter how we come to Jesus, whether we come to him for the first time or if we are finding our way back after faking it, or even if we have tried to be righteous by adding our own rules to the bible – we are all in need of his grace and truth.”

He holds up the story of the Prodigal son and emphasizes that the story is not just about the younger son that left, but also the older son’s reaction to the redemption of the younger. Some of us are like the older brother. We have been good, so we think the father owes us good gifts, and we think that others are so bad that they don’t deserve anything from the father. Some of us are like the younger brother – so ashamed of our past that we think we don’t deserve any good gifts. God gives grace to the younger and the older. God wants both the religious and the rebellious to come to the party. “The reality is that God owes neither son anything, and both sons showed ungratefulness in different ways”.

Salvation by faith sometimes sounds too easy for many people (come back to the Father and all will be forgiven), they would rather want to work hard to earn it (I stayed with you all these years, faithfully doing your work). This self-effort then becomes one that either leads to disappointment or pride. We then judge other people by the effort they put in, but sanctification is between you and God. We can’t judge the “holiness” of other people. We need to concentrate on our relationship with God as He grows me in Holiness.

*The life application bible holds up the following comparison:*

	<b>Religion by Self-effort</b>	<b>Salvation by Faith</b>
Goal	Please God by our own good deeds.	Trust in Christ and then live to please God.
Means	Practice, diligent service, discipline and obedience, in hope of reward.	Confess, submit and commit yourself to Christ’s control.
Power	Good, honest effort through self-determination.	The Holy Spirit in us helps us do good work for Christ’s kingdom.
Control	Self-motivation, self-control.	Christ in me; I in Christ.
Results	Chronic guilt, apathy, depression, failure, constant desire for approval.	Joy, thankfulness, love, guidance, service, forgiveness.





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WELCOME

Are you a traveler or a home body? Explain.

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WORSHIP

Be creative and participate in prayer, singing, meditation, and or thanksgiving.

**Take my life:**

How many times have I turned away?  
The number is the same as the sand on the shore  
But every time You've taken me back  
And now, I pray You do it once more  
*Chorus: Please, take from me my life when I don't have the strength  
to give it away to You  
Please, take from me my life when I don't have the strength  
to give it away to You, Jesus*  
And how many times have I turned away?  
The number is the same as the stars in the sky  
But every time You've taken me back  
And now, I pray You do it tonight  
*Chorus: Please, take from me my life when I don't have the strength  
to give it away to You  
Please, take from me my life when I don't have the strength  
To give it away to You, Jesus  
To give it away to You, Jesus*

**Third Day**

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Do you KNOW that you are a son/daughter of God after last week's session?

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GOING DEEPER LAST WEEK

What new discoveries did you make last week after reading the psalm differently?

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## WORD & QUESTIONS

1. John Wesley says we can reach Christian perfection - living in pure love. Can you see this happening in your life? Why or why not?
2. We sometimes cling to our religious rules (how people need to live and act) more than living out our faith (caring for the poor and the downtrodden). Discuss.
3. What kind of person do you attract? Religious (older son) or Rebellious (younger son)? Why do you think that is so?
4. Which one of the brothers (in the prodigal son story) reflects who you are? The father wanted both to enjoy the party. Would you resist or take part in it? Why?

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## MINISTRY TO EACH OTHER

Pray for each other and for any shared needs or struggles that have been discussed in this session.

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## REACHING OUT

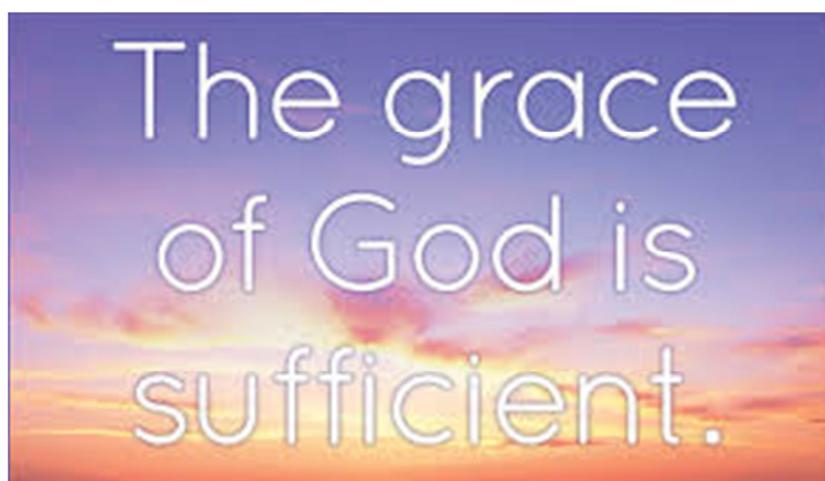
Join us for Mobile Meals on a Thursday evening from 18:00-20:30pm to feed the homeless in the Bryanston area! Please contact [davidh@bmc.org.za](mailto:davidh@bmc.org.za) / 011 463 2333 for more information.

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## GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

### **Thessalonians 3:1-5**

- What does this passage tell you about God?
- What are the good things that you are doing that you need to continue doing?
- Praise God for His strength in you!
- Is there anything else you need to do this week?



# WEEK 6:

## GLORIFYING GRACE

MAIN SCRIPTURE: I CORINTHIANS 15:42-44

*So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

MAIN MESSAGE: AT DEATH I AM GIVEN A NEW BODY AND LIFE.

### DAILY DEVOTIONS – WEEK 6:



Date and Scripture:	Daily Devotion:	Prayer:
Sunday 29 March: I Corinthians 15:42-44	You will get a new spiritual body, it will not be limited by flaws of nature, and it will never get sick and never die.	Thank You Lord for the resurrection and promise of eternal life that we will enjoy with You. God will give us a transformed, eternal body suited to our new eternal life.
Monday 30 March: 2 Corinthians 5:1	We know we have an eternal home in heaven that is indestructible.	By God's grace all who believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior have hope in a future life. No more pain, tears or suffering. Thank You Jesus!
Tuesday 31 March: Genesis 4:7	The Holy Spirit will help us master sin. This will be a life-long battle.	Praise God, I am well equipped. When sin comes knocking at my door I can defeat it in the name of Jesus Christ and through the empowering and enabling of the Holy Spirit.
Wednesday 1 April: Hebrews 12:14	We need to make every effort to live in peace with EVERYBODY.	Lord, I choose to try to live in peace with everyone, and to live a clean and holy life as best I can.
Thursday 2 April: 2	Don't let criticism, fatigue or pain force you "off the job". Do not forsake your	Father God, help me to see my problems and circumstances

Corinthians 4:16	eternal reward because of today's pain.	from an eternal perspective.
Friday 3 April: 2 Corinthians 4:7-9	Our risks, humiliations, and trials are opportunities to demonstrate God's power through us.	Thank You, God that in the midst of my imperfections you use me as a conduit that holds the light and power of Jesus Christ. God, let your light shine.
Saturday 4 April: Revelation 2:10	God is in control and His promises are reliable now and for the future.	Thank you Lord that I seek to live out my faith during difficult times I have the promises of the crown of life.

## BACKGROUND



Grant R. Jeffrey writes in ***Heaven: the mystery of angels***: “Heaven is the last frontier. Like other frontiers in human history, it will challenge us with new opportunities, possibilities and experiences. Unlike the previous frontiers on earth, heaven will be unlimited in time and space. It will inspire us to join as participants in the dynamic, creative, plans of Jesus as we embark on a greater adventure than we have ever dreamed of. The eternal quest of our human spirit yearns for a heaven in which we can explore the infinite possibilities of an unlimited universe. Our future blessings in Heaven will begin with the ending of all evil, fulfillment and enhancement of all the real joys and happiness of human life. The promises are of an active, purposeful and joyful life in a creation filled with beauty, fairness and justice. As the sons and daughters of God we shall see Jesus face to face and enjoy His divine presence for eternity. John tells us that the knowledge of this will purify our spiritual walk “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (v3)”.

The Christian life was never promised as an easy way to live, instead Paul constantly reminds us that we must have a purpose and a plan, because times will be difficult and Satan will attack. But we can persevere because we have the promise of a prize. **A new body and life in Christ after death (glorifying grace)** – a promise God will keep.





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WELCOME

If you were a master sculptor for a day, what would you sculpt? Why?

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WORSHIP

Be creative and participate in prayer, singing, meditation, and or thanksgiving with this song as fits your group dynamics.

**Consuming Fire**

There must be more than this O breath of God, come breath within

There must be more than this Spirit of God we wait for You

Fill us anew we pray. Fill us anew we pray

*Chorus: Consuming fire fan into flame a passion for Your name*

*Spirit of God fall in this place*

*Lord have Your way. Lord have Your way with us.*

Come like a rushing wind, clothe us with power from on high

Now set the captives free, leave us abandoned to Your praise

Lord let Your glory fall

Lord let Your glory fall

*Chorus*

**Tim Hughes**

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Have you found your serving “spot” at BMC yet?

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GOING DEEPER LAST WEEK

Where you surprised at your list of things that you are already doing from last week? Why?

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WORD & QUESTIONS

**Revelation 7: 14-17**

1. Do you believe heaven is a place and do you have a clear understanding of what heaven will be like if you do?
2. If you could go to heaven TODAY would you say: “Yes, Lord take me now”? Why or why not?
3. If you had to make a list of all the people that you love and would like to see in heaven with you - how many of them will you see there? Is

there something you can do/say to make them experience God's grace in such a way that they can see a glimpse of heaven in you?

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#### MINISTRY TO EACH OTHER

Pray for each other and for the people identified in each other's lives that needs prayer.

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#### REACHING OUT

Start a connect group! Do you like reading, surfing, walking, and/or tennis? Contact [nadjaa@bmc.org.za](mailto:nadjaa@bmc.org.za) and she will advertise for people to join you in doing what you love doing! BMC would love to have everybody in the congregation connected in some form of group to share fellowship in 2015.

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#### GOING DEEPER DURING THE WEEK

Meditate on the following:

John Wesley's quote from ***Malihambe – Reading the Bible in Southern Africa today***: “I want to know one thing, the way to heaven – how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri (“a man of one book”). Here I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven.”

Do you read His book as your way to Heaven? Read the bible in 50 weeks with us (download it form [www.bmc.org.za](http://www.bmc.org.za)).



LOVE IS A FIVE LETTER WORD  
**GRACE**

**RESOURCES USED IN THIS MATERIAL:**

***Building a church of small groups***

***Heaven – The mystery of Angels***

***In the grip of grace***

***Jesus Calling***

***Jesus>Religion***

***Journal of the Evangelical theological Society***

***Malihambe Reading the Bible in SA today***

***What is so amazing about Grace?***

Donahue and Robinson

Grant R. Jeffrey

Max Lucado

Sarah Young

Jefferson Bethke

Robert V. Rakestaw (June 1984)

Neil T. Oosthuizen

Philip Yancey

***Google Images***

***Life Application Bible (NIV)***

***Serendipity Bible (NIV)***

***www.biblegateway.com***

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