



Family Bible Lessons

Character Word Studies Lesson 5: Grace

Let's Review!

Happy New Year! We're glad that one of the ways you are kicking off this year is to spend time as a family reading and learning God's word together!

In our first 3 lessons, we introduced word study as a way of reading the Bible and seeing how a given word plays into the story of the Bible. Our word studies this year focus on character: the character of humans and the character of God. The three words we find in the Bible describing human character are *sin*, *transgression*, and *iniquity*. The story of the Bible shows us that, even though God created us in his image, we have failed to reflect that image. We have broken trust with him. We have thought, spoken, and acted in crooked ways.

Last month, we began looking at God's character, especially as he describes himself in Exodus 34:6-7. These verses are quoted all over the Old Testament. We began with looking at God's compassion for humans and his desire for us to be compassionate as well.

This month, we'll look at the next word in those verses: God's character is full of grace or gracious. Let's dive in!

The study notes for this lesson were sourced from BibleProject's study notes on Grace. You can find those by [clicking here](#).

Video: Grace

Watch Grace (about 5 minutes) - https://youtu.be/ABPVVw_aw44

Let's do a quick review from the video:

1. The word for *grace* is translated from the Hebrew word *khen* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *kharis* in the New Testament.
2. These words are often translated as *grace* or *favor*.
3. It is often used to describe a gift.

The Beauty of Grace

Before we see how this word is rooted in God's character, let's look at how it is used by humans and between humans.

Have you ever seen something beautiful, something that made you stop and think how beautiful it is? Maybe it's a beautiful person, a beautiful painting, a beautiful scene in a movie, or a beautiful place in nature. Whatever it is, when you see that thing, you find it appealing to you or something you favor. That's one way that grace is used in the Bible – *khen* is something that is favorable to look at.

Read Proverbs 3:21-22 (New International Version):

*My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an **ornament to grace** your neck.*

The author is telling his son that when he has wisdom, it will be like a beautiful necklace around his neck that others will find favorable.

When someone can write or speak with beautiful words, they are speaking with grace. Read Proverbs 22:11 (New International Version):

*One who loves a pure heart and who **speaks with grace** will have the king for a friend.*

Showing Grace to Others

Another way *khen* is used in the Bible is to show favor or generosity to someone else. Most of the time, it is used when someone of a higher status shows a generous response to someone of lower status. In the book of Esther, the Jews are in danger of being destroyed by a decree from a wicked man. Queen Esther, a Jew herself, goes before the king to request this decree to be defeated. She requested *khen*.

Read Esther 8:3 (Lexham English Bible):

*And Esther again spoke before the king, and she fell before his feet and wept, **pleading for his grace to avert** Haman the Agagite's evil plan and the plot that he devised against the Jews.*

It is commonly used in the saying "let me find favor in the eyes," a phrase used 47 times in the Old Testament. Boaz told Ruth that she could come to his field as often as she wanted for food, and she could drink water from his well. It was a gift of *khen*. She is stunned!

Read Ruth 2:10 (English Standard Version):

*Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "**Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?**"*

Grace isn't just shown because someone wants to be kind to a good person in need. It is especially shown when the other person doesn't deserve favor. Jacob had cheated his brother out of their father's blessing. Esau was angry enough to kill Jacob, so Jacob ran away for 20 years. He comes back to Esau wanting to make things right.

Read Genesis 33:8 (New International Version):

*Esau asked, "What's the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?" "**To find favor in your eyes, my lord,**" he said.*

Before Esau even asks this question, he showed *khen* to Jacob, the one who cheated him. He hugged him and cried. He welcomed him home. Jacob didn't need to earn it with his flocks and herds offered to Esau.

When God Shows Grace

While there are a few times in the Bible where humans show grace, they don't do it a lot or consistently. After all, human nature is enslaved to sin. But God's character is different. He shows *khen* throughout the story of the Bible. The first time he does it is with Noah.

Read Genesis 6:5-8 (New Living Translation):

*The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. And the Lord said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." **But Noah found favor with the Lord.***

One of God's greatest acts of showing grace was in the story that comes right before Exodus 34:6-7. Israel agreed to enter a covenant relationship with God at Mt. Sinai. But while Moses was on the mountain with God to receive the full covenant, Israel broke the first commands. They built a golden cow and worshiped it as God. God was heartbroken and angry. He was ready to be done with these people and start over with Moses. But Moses pleaded for God's *khen*. He asked that God forgive the people, give them favor, and stay with them.

Read Exodus 33:15-16 (English Standard Version):

*And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that **I have found favor in your sight, I and your people**? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"*

God listened and responded with grace to this stubborn people who didn't deserve it. It became one of the key repeated ways God responded to the sins of his people.

If your family needs a break, this would be a good stopping place.

Pleading for God's Grace

Moses wasn't the only one who asked for God's favor. The Psalms contain many prayers asking for God to grant *khen*, particularly when they faced hard times and challenges.

Read Psalm 25:16-20 (Christian Standard Bible):

*Turn to me and **be gracious to me**, for I am alone and afflicted. The distresses of my heart increase; bring me out of my sufferings. Consider my affliction and trouble, and forgive all my sins. Consider my enemies; they are numerous, and they hate me violently. Guard me and rescue me; do not let me be disgraced, for I take refuge in you.*

The plea for God's grace isn't just when humans try to follow him. King David had a man murdered, so he could have his wife. But when confronted with his sin, he calls out for *khen*.

Read Psalm 51:1 (Christian Standard Bible):

Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love; according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.

David deserved God's judgment, but God granted him favor instead. While God didn't keep the consequences of his actions from David, he remained king over Israel until he died.

Even when Israel rebelled against God and found themselves in exile to Babylon, the prophets declared that God was not done with them. He was still showing grace.

Read Isaiah 30:18-19 (New International Version):

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you.

Jesus Is God's Ultimate Grace

As we turn to the New Testament, we find God's ultimate expression of grace or *kharis* in Jesus. Jesus was God's grace become human.

Read John 1:14, 16-17 (English Standard Version):

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace** and truth. For from his **fullness** we have all received, **grace upon grace**. For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ**.*

Remember that grace is a gift given from someone of high status to one of low status, given to those who are unworthy of such a gift and deserving justice instead. We all deserved God's judgment, but he responded to our sin with *kharis* by giving the gift of his Son.

We see this play out in the apostle Paul's incredible description of our state in sin and God's generous response of grace.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10 (English Standard Version):

*And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked**, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, **and were by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind. But **God, being rich in mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, **even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages **he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**, not a result of works, so*

that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God's *kharis* as displayed in Jesus is an overwhelming gift for sinners like us. God meets our sin, iniquity, and transgression with abundant generosity. Because Jesus died in our place and rose again from the dead, we can experience the full riches of God's grace and none of the judgment we deserve. As the old hymn by Julia Johnston says:

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.*

*Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

Response

How can we respond to God's character of grace today?

1. Humble yourself and receive it – you cannot get God's grace thinking you have deserved it. You don't. You must recognize how undeserving you are because of your sin. That is exactly the place where God gives it to you. His grace through Jesus can forgive all our sin if we will humble ourselves before him and ask him to give it just as those before us in God's word asked for it.
2. As you have been given grace, give it to others – God's character is not something that stays with him when you decide to follow Jesus. His character shapes ours. There are people in your life that might be of lower status than you or don't deserve any kindness from you. How might you show God's favor and grace to them? It might be a kind word. It might be a gift to meet a need. It might be forgiveness for wrongs done against you. Whatever it is, let the riches of God's *khen/kharis* flow through you to others who need such a gift.

Review Questions with Your Family

These are designed to help children ages 8-18 to review before taking their individual Google quizzes.

1. What is the Hebrew word for *grace* in the Old Testament? *Khen*
2. What is the Greek word for *grace* in the New Testament? *Kharis*
3. According to Proverbs 3:21-22, wisdom is like an _____ of grace. *Ornament*
4. Which queen requested grace from the king of Persia when her people were in danger? *Esther*
5. How many times does the phrase "let me find favor in the eyes" occur in the Old Testament? *47*
6. Who requested grace from his brother after he had cheated him? *Jacob*
7. In Genesis 6, who received grace from God when God determined to destroy the world? *Noah*
8. Who asked for God's grace for Israel after they worshiped a golden cow? *Moses*

9. Which king cried out for grace after he murdered a man and took his wife? *David*
10. John 1 tells us that the law came through Moses but grace and truth came through: *Jesus*
11. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that in the coming ages, God will show us the immeasurable _____ of his grace to us in Christ Jesus. *Riches*

Praying the Scriptures

One of the joys of reading the Bible is praying its words back to God. Let's thank God for his grace and favor, asking him to give even more of it.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (New Living Translation):

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are rich in mercy and grace. You have given the greatest gift to us in Jesus, your Son. By his life, death, and resurrection, you have made us alive in him. We ask now for your favor as you gave to so many who came before us. Strengthen us for every good work, that we might give gifts of grace and favor to others who need them. Amen.

Google Quiz

- Children in your family who are ages 8-18 can now take their Google quiz for this lesson.
- Parents, you should receive an email when each child completes their quiz, so you know it has been completed.
- Take the Google Quiz: <https://forms.gle/HEwucJ4i5WP27xZH9>