



“Best Kept Secret”

— Go Deep—

Small Group Plan

Dear Small Group,

“The law detects sin, grace alone conquers sin.”

-- Augustine

“Grace binds you with far stronger cords than the cords of duty or obligation ... Grace makes you gracious, the giver makes you give.”

-- E. Stanley Jones

“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.

-- John Newton

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What was your earliest understanding of God’s grace?
- How has that understanding grown?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

Ephesians 3:1-13

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold

wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

I FALL ON MY FACE

Ephesians 3:8a

I am less than the least of all God's people,

- What does Paul mean when he describes himself in this way?
- What's the difference between low self-esteem and humility?
- Is Paul's description coming from focusing on himself or focusing on God? Explain.
- Why do some think that they earn their salvation; that God owes them something?
- Can grace be earned? Explain.

I STAND AMAZED

Ephesians 3:8b

*This grace was given me:
to preach to the Gentiles
the unsearchable riches of Christ,*

- How is God's grace unsearchable?
- How does the synonymous phrase "riches of Christ" help to define the earlier term "grace?"
- What makes the gift of Christ's riches amazing (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21)?

I CARRY HIS GRACE

Ephesians 3:8-9

*This grace was given me:
to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery*

- "to preach ... and to make plain"
- What happens to grace that is received but never shared?
- If I hoard grace, how am I misunderstanding it?

I HOLD ON TO MY FAMILY

Ephesians 3:10

*His intent was that now, through the church,
the manifold wisdom of God should be made known*

- Think of a church that has no flaws and has made no mistakes ... take your time
- Now, with that out of the way, how can God show his “manifold wisdom” through such imperfect people?

I RUN INTO GOD’S PRESENCE

Ephesians 3:12

*In him and through faith in him
we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

- Do most believers feel confident in God’s presence? Explain.
- How did Jesus – “in him” – give Paul confidence?
- What does being in God’s presence – “approaching” – really mean?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What happens to leadership that loses the humility we see in Paul?
- What will it look like when I begin to share God’s grace; how will it play out in my life?
- Read Titus 2:11-12
For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.
- What does it mean, God’s grace “appeared” – what/who appeared?
- How does his grace teach us to say “no” to darkness?
- How does his grace teach us to live “godly lives”?
- Close by praying for a deeper understanding of God’s amazing grace.