



“EXTREME MEASURES”

Romans 5, 7 Small Group Plan

*For the law was given through Moses;
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

— John 1:17 —

*The word grace emphasizes at one and the same time,
the helpless poverty of man
and the limitless kindness of God.*

— William Barclay —

*There will always be the seeming contradiction ...
that while God's saving grace is always and forever free,
it is never, never cheap.*

— Herman W. Gockel —

*For whoever keeps the whole law
and yet stumbles at just one point
is guilty of breaking all of it.*

— James 2:10 —

*Justice is getting what you deserve.
Mercy is not getting what you deserve.
Grace is getting what you don't deserve*

— Unknown —

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Do commands usually inspire or discourage you? Explain.
- What about mercy and grace — do they motivate?
- Reflect on the last quote above.
What is the motivational power of each word — Justice, Mercy, and Grace?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THE GOOD – THE BAD – THE DIFFERENCE —

Romans 5:1-21

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. ⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when 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! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned — ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Find the words in Romans 5 that describe the Good News. Quickly define them and identify which ones give you the most positive feeling.
- Next, find the words that describe the Bad News. Define them and identify which ones give you the most ominous feeling.
- Find all the statements similar to (v. 1) “through our love Jesus Christ.” Words to look for are “through” and “by.” Why does Paul repeat the same thought over and over?

— IN TROUBLE BY OURSELVES —

Romans 7:7-13

⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed, I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” ⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. ¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

- What is good about the law?
- What limitations do you see in these same verses? What is the law unable to do?
- What is the purpose of the law?
- How did Paul see this purpose working in his own life?
- Notice Paul’s switch to the personal pronoun “I” — His definition of “sin” is highly personal. Why is it important to look at sin in this way?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Why is it important to see the “bad news” before we see the “good news?”
- What happens to our experience with “good news” if we have not faced and understood the “bad news”?
- Which part of the “bad news” has the great impact on you?
- How would describe or explain that impact?
- How is it possible to “take advantage” or “take for granted” the grace of God?
- READ Titus 2:11-13. How does it strike you that Paul personalizes “grace” in this passage — that he describes it as a person who “appeared”?
- Close by thanking God for the Grace that appeared and taught humanity.