

Joseph and Others Received God's Liberating Grace

Children's teacher should read study #22 for children



Prayer: “Our Father in heaven, help us to stand firmly like Jesus, Peter and Paul, who resisted men and traditions that hindered the free flow of your infinite grace.”

1. Prepare by God’s Word, to receive our Lord’s free grace.

Contrast what the New Testament says about God’s grace with what religious tradition says about grace.

The New Testament says	Religious Traditions says
Grace is God’s gift of forgiveness and eternal life for undeserving sinners who believe. Find in Rom. 5:8–21 the only source of grace.	“If grace is free, then Christians will think they can do anything they want and will keep sinning.” Find in Rom. 6:1-14 if this is true.
God’s goodness leads sinners to repentance, Rom. 2:4. Find in Titus 2:11–15 what grace leads believers to do.	“Religious leaders must enforce strict rules to keep good order, and govern congregations with man-made policies besides the Bible.”
Salvation is by grace through faith. Find in Eph. 2:8-10 whether works result from, or cause our salvation.	“Salvation requires good works. You are unsaved if you do any of the forbidden pleasures on my list.”

Read the story of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37 and 39–45. Find an illustration of how Christ freely forgives those who have sinned against Him, when they repent. Joseph resembled Jesus in several ways:

Have the **children** present their drama about The Wasteful Son. They may have a poem and may ask the adults questions about the drama. Ask **helpers** to tell or act out either or both stories of Zacheus, Luke 19:1-10, and the sinful woman, Luke 7:36-50. After telling the story, ask the people how it shows Jesus’ grace. Ask the **believers** to give testimonies of how God’s forgiving grace has reached them.

Memorize John 1:14. Remember what it was that filled Jesus.

(6) Freedom for the trainer of shepherds to respond to the immediate needs of their new flocks.

- Jesus said that wise teachers offer things old and new, Matthew 13:52. We must offer choices to new leaders so they can choose studies that fit their new flock's current needs.
- **Mr. Tradition asserts:** "My training program has a standard curriculum. Each student studies the same thing, starting in the same place and following the same path. They will apply it all in the future, after graduation and getting ordained."
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that Christ taught in response to current situations and immediate needs. Paul told Titus to deal with what was lacking in the new congregations of Crete. New congregations often have different needs.

(7) Freedom to provide coordinators like Titus in a region, who will supervise new congregations and train shepherds, as Paul instructed Titus, Titus 1:5.

- **Mr. Tradition** argues: "New congregations should govern themselves, except for the bishop who visits them every five years. If anyone must oversee the new churches, I myself will."
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that new congregations, like newborn babies, have urgent needs and require the help of older congregations and leaders. Paul left Titus in Crete to name shepherding elders in each congregation to deal with what was lacking.

His father loved him.
His brothers rejected and sold him.
He was punished unjustly.
He was raised to a place of power.
He forgave those who had harmed him.

He interceded for his brothers.
He revealed himself at a banquet. (We will see Jesus' face at a great feast, Rev. 19:6-9, 1 John 3:2.)
He gave them a good land to live in.

2. Plan with co-workers next week's activities.

Review the chart under section 1. Then go visit believers and shepherds who are enslaved to religious rules, and explain grace to them

3. Plan with co-workers the upcoming worship Time.
(Choose items that fit the needs.)

Tell the story of Joseph and explain several ways that his life illustrated Jesus' grace.

Explain 'Seven Freedoms' from religious traditions. We must exercise these freedoms to enjoy healthy congregational life and allow a widespread movement for Christ.

- Prepare a sign that reads 'Mr. Tradition' and ask someone to take his part.
- Explain that 'Mr. Tradition' enforces man-made restrictions. He is everywhere! After you read each of the freedoms, Mr. Tradition will argue with you. Ask the people to correct him.

- (1) Freedom to do all that Jesus commanded and His apostles practiced.** His commands include assuring believers of God's free grace and forgiveness, baptizing them without man-made requirements, and celebrating the Lord's Supper wherever believers gather.

Mr. Tradition shows his sign and argues, in his own words, “Only ordained clergy can baptize and serve Communion. Baptismal candidates must first walk on water to prove they are holy!”

Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that we obey Jesus before we obey man.

- The first believers in Jerusalem in Acts 2:38-47 began from the beginning to obey Jesus.
- We can summarize His commands in 7 practices that the 3,000 new believers obeyed in Acts 2.
- They repented and received the Holy Spirit, were baptized, ate the Lord's Supper, loved one another as seen in their fellowship, prayed, gave and made disciples.
- Ask what Jesus said in Matt. 28:18–20 that puts His commands above all human rules

(2) Freedom to enter the homes of seekers, evangelizing and starting new congregations in their homes at once, working within their families and cultures.

- **Mr. Tradition** disagrees. “Separate new believers immediately from the bad influence of friends! A church must mature for many years before starting another church. It needs approval from our regional office, and enough members to pay the new pastor’s salary.”
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that we must work within family networks. Jesus and the apostles often entered homes and ate meals with people. They dealt immediately with the families and friends of seekers. They started new congregations wherever they went without requiring that congregations have buildings or pay salaries.

(3) Freedom to serve one another in groups small enough that members can talk with one another (1 Cor. 14:24-26).

- **Mr. Tradition** disputes: “We must do all things in decency and order. The order is what I myself say it is! Only educated clergy should lead public meetings.”
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that God commands us to serve one another with our different spiritual gifts. We must have freedom to talk and keep groups small enough that everyone can speak.

(4) Freedom to name leaders who meet God’s requirements, with or without salaries.

- **Mr. Tradition** argues: “Our church requires pastors to be ordained. Our policy book lists 734 requirements that they must meet first, including professional academic agrees.”
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that Paul named elders to shepherd new congregations and mentored them, Acts 14:23. He told Titus to do the same, Titus 1:5-9.

(5) Freedom to work in different ways, without imitating practices of older churches.

- **Mr. Tradition** disagrees: “We must all use the same methods, those that I myself approve. Unity in Christ requires that we conform to the same practices. We must all preach the Word the same way. God requires top quality and excellence in the pulpit.”
- Ask the believers to correct Mr. Tradition. Then explain that we may use many methods, as Jesus and the apostles did, and adapt to each group’s size, to their leaders’ maturity and to local customs.