

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Titus 2:11-15 aloud. For added perspective also read this version of the same passage: *“God’s readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation’s available for everyone! We’re being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, appears. He offered himself as a sacrifice to free us from a dark, rebellious life into this good, pure life, making us a people he can be proud of, energetic in goodness. ¹⁵Tell them all this. Build up their courage, and discipline them if they get out of line. You’re in charge. Don’t let anyone put you down.”* (The Message)

1. Open your group discussion by talking about how everyone understands grace.

How would you define it in your own terms? What might be some synonyms for grace?

Give an example where you have seen grace in action.

Did you always grow up believing in grace or did you discover it later in your faith journey? Tell your experience.

What kind of impact does grace have on you on a day-to-day basis?

2. Central to Paul’s writing to Titus in this passage is the idea of grace. Glance over this brief passage. What things do we learn from this passage about grace?

One central thing we learn about grace is that it teaches us (other translations say “train us”). How do you think grace trains us to be more mature people of faith? What does that mean exactly?

How has grace allowed you, over the years, to mature into a more faithful person of God? Give an example.

What do you say to people who might try to use grace as a way to be apathetic in their commitment to God?

How can Christians prevent grace from allowing them to become stale as believers?

3. Take some time to talk about one of the most grace-filled people you ever knew. Who were they? How did you come to know them?

What about them made them seem full of grace?

Based on this passage how would Paul describe a grace-filled, grace-transformed person?

What traits would they have?

Note: Make sure you don’t just repeat what the passage says. Describe it in your own words (or take hints from The Message).

4. Context is so important in this passage (1-10). What kinds of things do we find in the preceding verses?

Why do you think Paul follows up all those instructions with a large passage on the grace of God?

What should this order (structure) teach Christians about how they talk about the Christian life?

Why is the grace of God and commandments of God so hard to balance for many Christians in their attempts to live faith?

What advice would you give for someone trying to hold these two things in tension?

Hint: What do we learn from Paul’s instruction to Titus about how?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What do you think the grace of God is trying to teach you to say “no” to in your life right now? Encourage everyone to share.

Resources

Bible notes

Titus is a personal letter from one minister (Paul) to another, younger minister (Titus) at a specific location (Crete). Crete is a rough location (1:5, 12), but Paul does not give up on these people and he does not want Titus to either. Our passage for this week is only one small glimpse into Paul's words for this young minister, so it would be good to read the entire letter to get a feel for Paul's posture to Titus and his attitude as a minister.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

The "Riding a Bike" Activity

Prep: Find a bike (or have all the kids bring their bikes) and some outside space where the kids can eventually ride freely. Gather the kids together in a circle (and if you want them to have their bikes next to them that's fine). Read Titus 2:11-15 aloud.

Ask: What is grace? What do we learn about grace from this passage? How would you explain the idea of grace to friend?

Explain: One thing that we learn about grace here is that it teaches/trains us to become more who God wants us to be. Grace is not supposed to promote us to do nothing, but it helps us to say "no" to the things of this world and to say "yes" to the things of God.

Ask: How do you think God's grace teaches us?

Explain: One way to understand this idea is when you are learning to ride a bike. What happens when you learn to ride a bike? (To illustrate have someone get behind you and begin guiding you while you pedal).

Ask: So when this is happening (when you are pedaling and the other person is guiding) who is actually doing the work? (Note: The correct answer is *both*).

Explain: Grace is like that. We may be doing the pedaling, but God's grace is helping to guide us into good and healthy habits of living. His grace trains and teaches us. Let's remember God's grace every time we ride a bike!

LIFE Group Guide

Titus 2:11-15 – Grace Works

By Wilson McCoy (wmccoy@colleghills.org)

Be sure to check out colleghills.org for old and recent LIFE Group guides. This website is also a great resource for knowing all that is happening at our church.

The theme: Grace works in the lives of the people of God. Grace works out of the lives of the people of God. God lavishes grace on his people through Jesus Christ. God's grace transforms his people more into the image of Jesus Christ. Even though these sets of statements might appear to contradict, Paul holds them in tension as he writes instruction to Titus. The challenge for Christians to hold them in tension also stands true today.

Leadership tip: It's important to remember the intention of LIFE Group guides. They are to serve as merely guides to your conversation. Do not feel like you have to read aloud every word or answer every question. Often that feels rigid and can make the discussion drag on. Instead, read over the guide before the discussion and be familiar with the questions and talking points inside. This familiarity will make you more flexible and responsive as a leader and your discussions will feel more relaxed and fluid.

Leadership Announcement: Mark your calendars for October 5th OR 12th. On these Wednesday nights Wilson and John want to meet with all the group leaders to talk about LIFE Groups in 2011 and share some ideas for 2012. You only need to be there for one of the two nights. The meeting will last no longer than an hour. Please make it a point to attend.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Happy Labor Day Weekend! Share with the group one fun thing you did on this holiday weekend.
- ❖ What is one thing you are looking forward to in September? (And no, you are not allowed to talk about the weather cooling).
- ❖ What is one type of food you refuse to eat?