

ARE YOU WASTING GOD'S GRACE?

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

One of the greatest tragedies of the Christian life would be to receive the transforming grace of God, and then live as though nothing has changed.

WE NEED TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T WASTE GOD'S GRACE

- *"Working together with him, we also appeal to you, 'Don't receive the grace of God in vain.' 2 For he says: **At an acceptable time I listened to you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.** See, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation! (2 Corinthians 6:1-2)*
- **Grace was never meant merely to get you into heaven; grace was meant to transform how you live on earth.**
- *"For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. 12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God." (Titus 2:11-12)*
- **The tragedy is not that God's grace is insufficient; the tragedy is receiving His grace and then living as though nothing has changed.**

WE NEED TO REMOVE UNNECESSARY STUMBLING BLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

- *"We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed." (2 Corinthians 6:3)*
- **We should never allow something unnecessary in our lives to become an unnecessary obstacle between someone else and Jesus.**
- *"Don't give offense to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God. 33 I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved." (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)*
- **We should never compromise the truth to reach people, but we should be willing to sacrifice anything unnecessary that keeps people from seeing and hearing the truth of the Gospel.**

OUR JOYFUL ENDURANCE IS THE PROOF THAT WE ARE CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

- *"Instead, as God's ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardships, by difficulties, 5 by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, 6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God; through weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, 8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; regarded as deceivers, yet true; 9 as unknown, yet recognized; as dying, yet see—we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed; 10 as grieving, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)*
- **Paul doesn't point to an easy life as evidence of God's presence. He points to endurance through affliction, hardship, rejection, grief, and loss while still possessing a joy that circumstances cannot take away.**
- *"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world." (1 Peter 1:6-7)*
- **One of the greatest evidences of Christ in you is not that you never suffer, but that suffering cannot steal the joy Christ has placed within you.**
- *"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." (James 1:2-4)*
- **The world takes notice when Christians walk through the same storms as everyone else but possess a joy the storm cannot explain.**

WE NEED TO OPEN OUR HEARTS WHEN TRUTH IS SPOKEN TO US FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

- *“We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide. 12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13 I speak as to my children; as a proper response, open your heart to us.” (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)*
- **Spiritual maturity is not demonstrated by how much truth you know, but by how willing you are to receive truth when it confronts you.**
- *“So don’t bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. 9 Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more.” (Proverbs 9:8-9)*
- **A closed heart will resist the very truth God intends to use to change your life, while an open heart allows painful truth to become God’s transforming grace.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- What warning does Paul give concerning God’s grace, and what concern does he express about becoming an obstacle to others? (vss. 1-3)
- What hardships did Paul endure, and what qualities and resources enabled him to remain faithful through them? (vss. 4-10)
- What contrasts do you notice in verses 8–10? What do these contrasts reveal about Paul’s perspective?
- How does Paul describe his heart toward the Corinthians, and what does he ask them to do in response? (vss. 11-13)

Understanding

- Why is it easy to think primarily about grace as something that forgives our past rather than something that should also transform our present?
- What are some ways a Christian might experience God’s grace but resist allowing that grace to change certain areas of life?
- Is there an attitude, habit, relationship, priority, or behavior where you sense God saying, “My grace should be producing something different here”?

- What are some things that may not necessarily be central gospel issues but can become unnecessary stumbling blocks that make it harder for people to hear our Christian witness?
- How can grief and genuine Christian joy exist at the same time?
- Why can a Christian’s response to suffering sometimes communicate the reality of Christ more powerfully than their response during seasons when everything is going well?
- How do you normally respond when Scripture, a sermon, a trusted friend, a spouse, a spiritual leader, or another believer points out something in your life that needs to change?
- Consider the four questions raised near the end of the sermon:
 - Is there something Jesus died to free you from that you’re still holding onto?
 - Is there something unnecessary in your life making it harder for someone else to see Jesus?
 - Are you allowing hardships to steal your joy?
 - When God’s truth confronts you, is your heart open enough to receive it?

Which of these questions challenge you most personally right now, and why?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?