



Sermon Discussion Guide for Cumberland Fellowship Church Sermon Series: I Choose: Week 2 (October 1, 2023)

*This guide is a supplement to the weekly sermon. We encourage families and groups to use it. When we hear God's Word, we need to do more than listen. The bible says, "Be doers of the word, not hearers only" (James 1:22). Step 1: **GATHER** with your family or group. Step 2: **REVIEW** and **DISCUSS** the key points and scriptures from the sermon. Step 3: **PRAY** for the prayer requests shared by your family or group.*

DISCUSSION STARTER

Discuss a time when you gave grace to someone. Tell of a time when you received grace. How did it feel? Did you enjoy giving grace or receiving grace more? Why? Who deserves or even qualifies to receive grace? Why?

DIGGING DEEPER 1

Read Ephesians 2:1-9. Using a good Bible Study tool like *Bible Hub* (biblehub.com) or *Blue Letter Bible* (blueletterbible.org), study through this scripture before responding to the following questions. Define Biblical grace. What are verses 1-3 saying about desperate predicament that sinners are in? What remedy do verses 4-6 give us for being dead in sin? What do these verses tell us about God? Explain. What do the verses implicitly say about what God saw in us that made us 'worth' saving? What do we 'contribute' toward our salvation? Read verse 7 and explain it! What should be our response to this? Explain the relationship of these words (8-9): Grace, Gift of God, Faith, Not of works. In what way should the last phrase of verse 9 be evident in our lives? Who is the obvious giver and who is the obvious receiver in the text? How does that make you feel? How should we respond to these truths? What is the difference between a Christian who is motivated by grace and someone who does good works to gain a right standing with God? Why is it easy to believe that we can earn God's grace? How is it difficult to believe we need grace—especially if we're a pretty good person? What obstacles have stood in the way of you accepting God's gift of grace? How can you be more thankful in your everyday life? How does acknowledging our weaknesses allow us to better understand our need for God's grace? How can we accept God's grace during life's storms? How can we show those who are suffering that same grace, without being cliché or simplistic?

DIGGING DEEPER 2

Read Luke 15:11-30. Using a good Bible Study tool like *Bible Hub* (biblehub.com) or *Blue Letter Bible* (blueletterbible.org), study through this scripture. What is the definition of the word "prodigal"? What motivated the younger son to demand his inheritance from his father and what type of pain did the father likely experience? What happened to the younger son after he left his father and what did the consequences of his willful and selfish behavior teach him? How does sin promise enjoyment but bring enslavement? How does obedience to God's will bring true freedom? The son was brought to repentance. How is true repentance different than regret or remorse? How did his father react to seeing his son even before receiving the son's apology? How does this reflect God's disposition towards a lost person returning to Him? The prodigal son expected to be a servant, but what was lavished on him instead? What was the older brother's reaction to the return of his brother and the celebration that ensued? List the ways the older brother showed unforgiveness to his brother and father. What joys did he miss out on because of his unforgiveness? How does knowing that God seeks and saves lost sinners give me comfort and confidence in Him? How does God's grace free me to serve the Lord without fear of failure or rejection? How does it free me of developing unhealthy expectations of my co-laborers in Christ? What do I seek apart from the Lord to fulfill my needs and desires? How can I repent of these tendencies? What do I believe about God's reaction to my mistakes, failures, and times of rebellion? Do I draw near to Him or stay away until I can clean up my act? Am I harboring any unforgiveness in my heart towards anyone? Am I holding back grace from them? What joys am I missing out on because of it?

DOING THE WORD

It is critical for our spiritual health to preserve a sense that grace is amazing, and it is ours in Christ. We don't want to be a Pharisee-type who ignores grace or a guilt-laden type who forgets that we have it. Friends, your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace. So, whether you're in the middle of your worst day or your best day or one of the many days in between, remember God's grace. And finally, what better way to close than how the apostle Paul closes all thirteen of his letters to the churches: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (1 Thess. 5:28). Close by thanking and praise God for His amazing grace in our lives. Ask Him to help you to receive grace and give grace freely every day. **CHOOSE GRACE!**