

**Life Groups – Winter, 2007**  
**Ephesians**

**March, Lesson One**

**Gathering Question –**

If you had to explain grace to a child how would you do it?

If a person asked you, “How does a person make it to heaven,” how would you answer that question?

**Amazing Grace!**

As you know there are many views, even among very conservative, Bible believing churches, about the question of eternal salvation. One view is that we are all individually responsible for our own destinies and how well we live determines where we will spend eternity. In other words, salvation is largely, if not entirely, dependent upon human effort. This view in many ways can contribute to human pride and control. It gives a person the sense that they can earn their own way. It is hard for anyone to admit that they are sinners and unable to totally control themselves and stop sinning.

There is another view that says that salvation is a gift from God. We cannot possibly earn it or deserve it because we are sinful and completely lost. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, we are not basically nice people who only need to clean up our act a bit; rather, we are rebels who need to lay down our arms. Because of our sins, we are spiritually dead. It is only when we respond to God’s grace, admit our sinfulness and helplessness, and humbly receive Christ’s offer of forgiveness and eternal life that we find life. Instead of depending on ourselves for salvation, we have to put all our hope in God and his grace.

The only gospel found in Scripture is the gospel of grace. It is the gospel of divine redemption totally apart from any work or merit of man. We live in grace from the moment of salvation, and if grace ever stopped, we would lose our undeserved salvation and perish in sin. The grace of Christ is God’s free and sovereign act of love and mercy in granting us salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus, apart from anything we can do.

If we accept the finished work of God on our behalf, we act by faith to God’s rich grace. Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “Faith occupies the position of a

channel or conduit pipe. Grace is the fountain and the stream. Faith is the aqueduct along which the mercy flood flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men..." And, of course, faith acting in a person's life encompasses all the acts of obedience that are characteristic of a person whose life is led and controlled by God's Spirit. But no act of obedience can do what God's grace has done. We are saved. We are redeemed. We are secure and so we live lives of faith.

### **Read and Reflect**

Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 5:6-11

1. How does Paul graphically describe those who are dead in sin?
2. Underline the word "grace" in this passage. What other words does Paul use in the passage to describe God's actions towards the lost?
3. How are grace and faith related in our salvation?
4. In the Romans passage, what is the message that comes from the truth that God saved us when we were at our worst?
5. What can we do to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18)?

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If you had to explain grace to a child how would you do it?

If a person asked you, “How does a person make it to heaven,” how would you answer that question?

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As you know there are many views, even among very conservative, Bible believing churches, about the question of eternal salvation. One view is that we are all individually responsible for our own destinies and how well we live determines where we will spend eternity. In other words, salvation is largely, if not entirely, dependent upon human effort. This view in many ways can contribute to human pride and control. It gives a person the sense that they can earn their own way. It is hard for anyone to admit that they are sinners and unable to totally control themselves and stop sinning.

There is another view that says that salvation is a gift from God. We cannot possibly earn it or deserve it because we are sinful and completely lost. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, we are not basically nice people who only need to clean up our act a bit; rather, we are rebels who need to lay down our arms. Because of our sins, we are spiritually dead. It is only when we respond to God’s grace, admit our sinfulness and helplessness, and humbly receive Christ’s offer of forgiveness and eternal life that we find life. Instead of depending on ourselves for salvation, we have to put all our hope in God and his grace.

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If a person asked you, “How does a person make it to heaven,” how would you answer that question?

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**March, Lesson One**

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