



### BEGIN WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE

Try to get everyone to share at the beginning of your connect group. Having everyone share from their experience often jump starts conversation later on. Encourage everyone to think of a moment when they experienced receiving unmerited favor/grace from someone else. There's probably time for a couple of people to share a longer version of the story, but give everyone a chance to at least share the 30 second version of their experience receiving grace. I would encourage them to focus on answering the "what did you learn" types of questions as they share their story.

### LOOK IN THE WORD

You could assign individuals or groups of 2-3 people a couple of Scripture passages to look up and find in the hymn. Then have each group report back to the larger group what they discovered. This gives people a chance to really focus on a few passages and yet learn from what the whole group found in their passages. Make sure you save some time to think about which of these passages communicates something about the gospel that you might share with someone you are praying for, caring for, and sharing with. That's a critical step of obedience question that might be slightly uncomfortable, but if asked graciously, really gets at our mission of connecting people to life-defining relationships in Christ.

### MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

What makes this truth of GRACE ALONE, which is true for all believers, so important to you personally? This is probably a moment for you as a leader to set the tone and pave the way for others to share. Be prepared to share why grace and your relationship with Jesus matters to you personally.

**CONNECT GROUP LEADER TIP** – Has your group done anything informal and fun together lately? I was reminded this week that much of discipleship is learned as we spend time together in informal situations. Watching someone live out their faith in real life is an important element to learning what a life-defined by Christ looks like.

### Announcements:

**Host a Dinner at Main Event** - Iowa State Navs are hosting the Main Event conference this October! We need families to host a dinner in their home for 6-8 students on October 21 from 5:15-7:30p. They will share about their relationship with Christ and what He means to them and engage students to share about God's work in their lives. Go to [www.navsmainevent.org](http://www.navsmainevent.org) and click on Host Dinners.

**Pumpkin Painting & Praise** - Join us on Thursday, October 19 at 7:00p in C1 at Christ Community Church! Wear a cozy sweater, bring your pumpkin spice latte, and grab a friend or two! We'll have some fall snacks to share and materials for painting. This is a BYOP [bring your own pumpkin] event, but let us know if you need us to get you one! [kwhite@ccames.org](mailto:kwhite@ccames.org).

CONNECTING  
PEOPLE TO  
LIFE-DEFINING  
RELATIONSHIPS IN

CHRIST

INTRO: This week’s teaching explored the key Reformation conviction of GRACE ALONE: that salvation comes to us by God’s grace as a free gift. We come to Christ “empty-handed,” with nothing but a Spirit-of-God encouragement to believe and trust, and the gift of declared righteousness in Christ becomes ours. This study explores the wonders of this Biblical doctrine, and encourages some “readiness” to share this good news with others.

**BEGIN WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE**

In *Growing Deep*, Charles Swindoll suggests that the Biblical truth of God’s grace is this: “Probably the most popular 2-word definition = **unmerited favor**. Grace is what God does for mankind, which we do not deserve, which we cannot earn, and which we will never be able to repay. It is our only hope.” For a few moments, explore your experience and share when you were the recipient of someone’s unexpected and unearned “grace.” What happened? Did the grace you receive surprise you? Was it tough to accept? What did you learn from this episode?

**LOOK IN THE WORD**

As noted in today’s teaching, Charles Wesley (1707-1788) wrote a hymn (he actually wrote over 600 hymns!) describing his experience of God’s grace in his salvation. **AND CAN IT BE!**

And can it be that I should gain  
An int’rest in the Savior’s blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

’Tis myst’ry all: th’ Immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.  
’Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father’s throne above—  
So free, so infinite His grace—  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam’s helpless race:  
’Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach th’ eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own



Let’s have some fun with this hymn, and rehearse the great truth of the Reformation doctrine of Sola Gratia (grace alone). **Look up** (assign a couple per person) **the following Scriptures, and identify the place in the hymn** where Wesley expresses this Scriptural truth:

Romans 8:1-3  
Romans 5:7-9  
1 Peter 1:10-12  
Romans 8:35-39  
2 Corinthians 1:20  
Romans 4:3-6

Romans 3:24-26  
1 Timothy 3:16/Ephesians 1:9  
Philippians 2:5-8  
Romans 5:12-14  
1 Peter 3:18  
2 Timothy 4:7-8

Colossians 2:13-14  
Ephesians 2:1-3  
Isaiah 6:1-3  
Romans 4:16, 5:2,15  
Hebrews 4:14-16

Can you think of any others that the hymn references that are not listed here?

Finally, if you were to **pick ONE PASSAGE** that you’d like to share with someone, which one would be? And, do you have someone in mind for whom you are praying, and caring for, right now?

**MY LIFE - OUR MISSION**

Two young girls were comparing their progress in some reading that was required for their catechism study. “I’ve got to ORIGINAL SIN,” said one. “How far have you gotten?” “Me?”, the other replied, “Oh, I’m way beyond REDEMPTION.”

Not if you are reading what the Bible teaches! None are beyond redemption. The GRACE of God – his unmerited favor toward us in shining light into our sin-imprisoned life and releasing us from its chains – can change anyone.

In our CCC Mission, we can be ready to help someone take a step closer to Christ, a “step across your welcome mat” to the Savior. As you finish up, ask yourself (and be honest) if you would be ready to CLEARLY answer this question: **“Why is this stuff** (God’s grace, and your relationship with Christ) **so important to you?”** What would you say? What simple Biblical truth about the difference God’s grace has made in your life would you share? Discuss this...and pray about this together.