



Week Three: How to Be Open to Others – Study Guide

August 16, 2014

When we get caught in the trap of sin and then desire to turn towards Christ, we can have the tendency to want to say just the right things, or work off our wrongs in order to gain God's acceptance. However, when we find ourselves running back to our heavenly Father and arrive with our plans, and our words, we find the real God—not religion or negotiation. It's in that moment when we realize that we are in the arms of God, that His grace covers and us and that He gladly welcomes all who return to Him.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Have you ever wanted to see someone "get what's coming to them" because of something they've done towards you? If you find yourself in sin, do you think that you deserve God's grace, or do you find yourself trying to work hard to gain back His approval? Explain your answer.

Into the Bible

- 2) Despite our feelings of self-worth and doubt, God's grace extends past human emotions. Read **Luke 15:18-24** and **John 1:14-17**. What is the connection between the father in the story and the verses in John? In what way was the son's thinking law-based instead of grace-based?



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- 3) As Jesus followers, we lead the way in living out forgiveness and extending grace to others. Read **Acts 20:24,32**. How do these verses describe grace changing the way we live our lives?

How Does This Apply?

- 4) Think about your own life. How does experiencing God's grace change the way you live? In what area(s) have you been like the prodigal son—thinking you need to say or do something so you can get God's approval?
- 5) Is it hard for you to imagine grace as something you can't work towards? Why or why not?
- 6) Is there someone in your life that you're withholding grace from, or maybe even treating unfairly, because you want them to suffer for the wrong they've done? Share if you're able. How would extending grace towards them change your relationship with them and with God?

Take Action

As summer ends and Go Bananas begins to wrap up, let's finish strong! There is one week left of packing lunches, serving at Neighborhood Lunch Sites and hosting cookouts! Make plans to join in to serve our neighbors and meet new friends at one of our Go Bananas Back to School Cookouts. You can find a list of all the cookout dates and locations at www.covechurch.org/gobananas.



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Continue Learning on Your Own

- 7) Grace is not given because we've achieved anything, but because redemption has been achieved through Jesus. Read **Ephesians 2:4-8**. Why can't we work for our salvation? What is the purpose and effectiveness of our works?