

# GRACE

# 6

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### WEEKLY WIN

Participants understand the role that grace plays in our relationship with God.

### BOTTOM LINES

- People often relate to God on a performance basis.
- With God, grace is the rule, not the exception.
- One hundred percent of the “to dos” in Christian faith are responses to what God has “to done” for us.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

### PRAY

Keep praying for your group members individually. Pray they’ll accept God’s undeserved gift of grace.

### LEADER DEBRIEF

Address the following:

- Evaluate the previous meeting with your co-leaders.
- Decide who will facilitate each part of the discussion for the next week.
- Clarify which leader will follow up with any group members who need individual attention.
- Ask yourselves, “Are group members experiencing a *conversational* environment where they can explore faith and experience community?”

### CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS

Contact your group members individually by email, phone, text, or a by sending a note. Meet with them outside of group if you haven’t yet. Remind them to think about what grace means to them.

You can use the email template provided for Session Six at [startingpoint.com/leaders](http://startingpoint.com/leaders).

### DISCUSS SECTION ONE:

# SYSTEM FAILURE

## SECTION WIN

Participants discuss how they are affected by a performance-based world.

## LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1: Where do you feel the effects of a performance-based world most?**

This question provides an opportunity for participants to share personal experiences with the pressure to perform.

**Question 2: How has this influenced your view of God?**

Many people assume God judges us based on our performance. Listen to group members' responses. They will guide your discussion about grace.

**Question 3: When is a time that you've been let "off the hook"? How did you feel about it?**

When we experience mercy and grace, we often feel indebted to the other party. Something in us wants to pay the other person back. This conversation sets up the idea that pride can be a barrier to reconciliation with God.

## DISCUSS SECTION TWO: UNDESERVED FAVOR

## SECTION WIN

Participants understand that grace is the undeserved favor of God, and it should produce in us an ongoing sense of gratitude.

## LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1: Do you relate more to the older son or the younger son in the story? What makes you feel this way?**

This question allows participants to find themselves in the story of the prodigal son and his brother. The discussion may reveal how they see themselves in relationship to God. *You may want to read the parable of the prodigal son together (Luke 15:11-31).*

**Question 2: In this story, Jesus portrays God as a loving father who longs for his son to return. Does this align with the way you view God?**

This question shines a light on participants' past church experiences and religious backgrounds. Use this time to explore the character of God and how he may be different from their perception of him in the past.

**Question 3: Page 43 says: "God does not view you through the filter of your performance. You didn't earn your way into God's good graces. You don't have to perform to stay there." What's your reaction to this? Does it change how you think God views you?**

This discussion gives participants who grew up in a performance-based faith system a chance to contrast their experiences with this teaching on grace. If you've had a similar experience, be prepared to share.

## DISCUSS SECTION THREE:

# THE REASON FOR OBEDIENCE

## SECTION WIN

Participants understand that grace that obedience is a voluntary response of gratitude because of what Jesus has done for us.

## LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1:** How is obeying to get God's approval different from obeying out of gratitude for what God has done?

This question highlights the difference in motivation when we are acting out of a desire to get something versus acting out of gratitude for what we have already received.

**Question 2:** How would your relationship with God change if you believed his love for you was truly unconditional, meaning there is nothing you could do to make him love you more or less?

This question allows participants to imagine a life without the burden of performance. Receiving the gift of grace can set us free to love, to forgive, and to serve others from a place of confidence and rest. We don't have to earn our place in the family of God and we don't have to perform to stay there.

## WRAP-UP

### REVIEW THE BOTTOM LINES

- People often relate to God on a performance basis.
- With God, grace is the rule, not the exception.
- One hundred percent of the "to dos" in Christian faith are responses to what God has "to done" for us.

### PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read Chapter Seven in the Conversation Guide and complete the questions.
- Listen to Episode Seven of the Starting Point podcast which can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or [startingpoint.com/podcast](http://startingpoint.com/podcast).

### STORIES

If you still have group members that have not shared their stories, ask for volunteers to share in your next group meeting. Remind them that resources are available on the website to help them prepare.

### PRAYER

As you close in prayer, thank God that you don't have to earn his love, but that he freely gives it.