

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Becoming Who God Created You to Be

led by Mary Lowman



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Grace-full, More Than Graceful

John 1:14: *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus was full of grace. We have the incredible opportunity to be filled with grace. like Jesus.

Grace – the Christian Distinctive

If you were asked to identify the one thing about Christianity that sets it apart from all other religions, what would you say?

We are taught from earliest days that you have to earn your way, and all other religions have codes and laws and requirements in order to earn approval and acceptance by God. Only Christianity dares to make God's love unconditional.

Grace – a Multi-Faceted Word

Some words get worn out through use, and over time we substitute other words for them that better convey our meaning. But the word "grace" has made it down through the ages without losing its punch, without becoming stale or worn out.

Name some of the ways we use the word "grace."

Even in Scripture we find "grace" used in different ways.

Ephesians 2:8: *For it **is by grace you have been saved**, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Romans 5:2: *Through him we have also obtained **access by faith into this grace** in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 6:14: *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but **under grace**.*

Ephesians 4:29: *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may **give grace** to those who hear.*

Colossians 1:2: *To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: **Grace to you and peace from God our Father.***

Living Dependent: Growing in Grace

2 Peter 3:18: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

We do not drift toward knowing God, toward holiness. It must be intentional.

A Grace-full Woman:

- **Seriously seeks to know God.**

John 17:3: *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

Matthew 6:33: *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

Psalms 105:4: *Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!*

Your day is won or lost in the morning hours. Do you give God the early hour of your day?

- **Believes she is loved.**

Jeremiah 31:3b: *I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.*

Romans 8:38-39: *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- **Confesses quickly**

1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Acts 3:19: *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out.*

- **Depends daily**

Hebrews 4:16: *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Philippians 4:6 - 7: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

John 15:5: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*

Proverbs 3:5 - 6: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

Living Secure: Abiding in Grace

Abiding means to remain, to stay, to endure. Yet how easily we forget to live in God's grace.

A Grace-full woman:

- **Spurns shame**

The enemy of your soul wants to keep you in bondage to guilt and he wants to turn that guilt into shame.

2 Corinthians 5:17: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Sadly, many who have asked for and received forgiveness from God for something in their pasts still harbor the shame of that past. They never enjoy their forgiveness. Would that be true of you—maybe sometimes?

That guilt and shame may have found a nesting place in your mind; it's like an evil bird who has built a nest of shame right there in your brain, and that shame is controlling your thought life.



Another source of shame is the lies that people have told us about ourselves.

Have you believed some lies about yourself? Can you locate those lies—name them and renounce them? Tell Jesus about those lies and ask him to heal you from them. Fill your mind with the truth of God's Word—spend more and more time in his Word, reading it, memorizing it, listening to it, until you drive out those wrong thoughts and replace them with the truth.

A Grace-full woman:

- **Rejects Bitterness**

Hebrews 12:15: *See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

There are many bitter roots that can become ingrained in our hearts.

The bitter root of rejection

It's very easy to allow the pain of rejection to start taking root in your heart and bloom into bitterness.

The bitter root of unfulfilled dreams

Unfulfilled dreams create a fertile ground for bitter roots.

The bitter root of being wronged

When someone mistreats you, abuses you in any way, takes advantage of you, deceives you or purposely tries to make your life miserable, it is fertile ground for a bitter root to grow.

The bitter root of poor health

The bitter root of loss

What have you lost lately? Losses make us vulnerable to bitterness.

Three important characteristics about bitter roots:

First, they grow. When left unchecked, bitterness always grows. You can't hold onto one little bitter twig. It always grows.

Second, they cause trouble.

- Physical troubles
- Emotional/mental troubles
- Relationship troubles

Third, they defile many. Bitterness is a poison that affects everyone it touches.

A Grace-full woman:

- **Embraces how God designed her**

Psalm 139:13 – 16:

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

God did not make a mistake when he designed you. If you never appreciate how God created you, you'll miss out on that abundant life Jesus came to give us.

- Do you relate to God as a beloved daughter or a nervous employee?
- Are you comfortable in his presence? Is his presence real to you?
- Where are you still trying to earn what he has already given you?
- Are you living in the joy of your forgiveness?
- Are you living in regret?

Here's some suggestions.

- When you start to criticize yourself, either internally or speaking it out loud, stop yourself and say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made and my soul knows that well."
- Speak to yourself like you would speak to a dear friend. Stop filling your mind with negative thoughts about yourself.

Ephesians 4:15: *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.*

- Speak the truth in love to yourself about yourself. Grow up in Jesus!!

Living Generously: Showing Grace To Others

Colossians 4:6: *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Ephesians 4:32: *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

A Grace-full Woman:

- Assumes the best about others
- Speaks gently
- Listens well even when it's tiring
- Doesn't keep score
- Forgives freely

1 Corinthians 13:4 – 7(NIV):

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Who is it most difficult for you to extend grace to? Is there someone you've quietly "written off"?

Grace does not ignore truth — it delivers truth gently.

Living Steady: Showing Grace Under Pressure

- **Proverbs 31:25:** *Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.*
- **James 1:19:** *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*

When your cup tips over, what spills out?

A Grace-full Woman:

- Pauses before reacting
- Brings calm
- Trusts God when plans change
- Responds instead of explodes

Closing

2 Corinthians 9:8: *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

We're not talking about a pinch of grace here and a pinch there. We're talking about abounding grace, overflowing grace. We're talking about grace that gets us through the hard times, and grace that deepens the joy of the good times.