



“Your AMAZING grace just seems TOO EASY!!!”

November 15, 2020
10:05am Bible Study



I Need An Answer

“Your Amazing Grace just seems too easy”



Getting Started

Each group (table) is to “elect” a leader who will be responsible to make the following happen:

- 1) Read the section of Scripture assigned their group. You may choose one reader or have each read a verse or two in succession.
- 2) When done reading the section as a group divide yourselves into two camps.
 - o One side will be the “beholders and defenders” of the amazing grace of God.
 - o One side will be the skeptics or opponents on the grounds it’s just too easy.
 - o Conduct a “point-counterpoint” discussion intended to understand one another’s group’s positions. Please record “points” made by either side of the topic.
- 3) Keep in mind your section of Scripture as a possible basis for the discussion even though you are certainly free to go elsewhere based on Scripture.

Group 1 -- Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

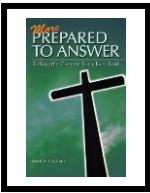
Group 3 – Romans 3:9-24

Group 2 – Luke 18:9-14

Group 4 – Luke 19:1-10

Record Discussion Points in this text box:

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REV. PAUSTIAN'S INTRODUCTORY DEVOTION

Another standing-room-only day in the life of Christ. A crowd clogged every conceivable entrance of the house while he preached inside. Outside, a circle of friends surveyed the scene. One of them was paralyzed and needed desperately to be seen by Jesus. So love found a way.

Imagine the wonderful commotion, the delightful mess. Dirt and debris fell all around. Dusty shafts of light stole through the ceiling, together with useless, mumbled apologies. These outrageous friends tore an opening in the roof to lower the paralytic down into that makeshift sanctuary. A lesser man than Jesus would have been outraged at the disruption. He glanced up at four heads decorating the skylight. "Jesus saw their faith." Wasting no time, he looked down at the object of such affection, the mumbled, useless man, and saw the Need behind the need.

"Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

Now some who were watching had a problem with this. Their minds loudly grumbled the word *blasphemy* with logic that was simple and valid. It is the one sinned *against* who gets to say who is forgiven and who is not. But don't miss Jesus' implication: "All your sins – against Goodness, against Love, against God – were sins against me."

Their private complaints – "Who does he think he is!" – were transparent to Christ. His reply was quite simply brilliant.

"Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

Notice that the question wasn't which was easier *to do* – to forgive or to heal – but which was easier *to say*. The answer, of course, was "You are forgiven." Any mouth can make a claim about the mysteries in God's heart. But once Jesus would say, "Get up and walk," the whole house would know whether he had the right to say it, whether his words were a cruelty or a scarcely imaginable power. Do you see? Jesus bound up for all time his ability to heal people's bodies with this authority to pardon their souls. If he could do the one, the other could no longer be denied. "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ..." he announced. Then, lowering his compassionate gaze to the man on the floor, he said, "Get up!"

No one could breathe. They leaned forward, mesmerized. This beautiful pause held the hope of the entire world. If this man was able just to climb up those words and to reach his own full height, then what else was true? His sins were forgiven, of course. And by the way, so are yours. Get up ... get up ... get up. He got up.

Now turn it around. What if Jesus had not asked, "Which is easier to say?" but "Which is easier to do, heal a man's body or forgive his soul?" That's a different question altogether. For what we would need to compare the effortlessness of Jesus' miracles to a long, slow crucifixion. Ask the questions: Is forgiveness easy to accomplish? Were we so easy to love? Was it a walk in the park to save me? They take us to a different place entirely ... an awful place. ... A place not even easy to look at.

*Let's each and all read Matthew 9:1-8 to ourselves. (Rev. Mark Paustian,
More Prepared to Answer, pp.66-67)*

COMMON OBJECTIONS

What are some common objections to:

- ⌚ “Salvation” –
- ⌚ “The gospel” –
- ⌚ “Forgiveness” –
- ⌚ “Peace with God” –
- ⌚ “Grace” –

If you are to “answer” these objections even for yourself ... what assistance do these Bible verses lend you?

Leviticus 16:20-31

"When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. ²¹ He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites-- all their sins-- and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. ²² The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert. ²³ "Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. ²⁴ He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. ²⁶ "The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷ The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. ²⁸ The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁹ "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work-- whether native-born or an alien living among you—³⁰ because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. ³¹ It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance.

Romans 11:35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

JUST CHECKIN' ...

Is it EASY to believe to the very core of your being that ...

- You are incapable of performing the sort of works God has the right to demand.
- God is utterly holy and cannot be put into our debt by us performing some self-centered acts of good.
- We cannot erase the bitter fragrance (odor) of all our disobedience especially when our disgraces of long ago are still a *now* to Him. (He is eternal)
- Our efforts to curry his favor are ruined from the start, because we cannot act in absolute love for God. We always have a little fear, guilt, or self-interest driving our actions to gain his favor.
- We slide our measly bribes a few inches across his infinite table only to find the currency of our dead works is worthless.
- He is the incomparably righteous Judge, the Sacred Perfection, the offended Lord.
- God would be perfectly just to pull a sheet over the lifeless corpse of humanity.

AGREE or DISAGREE ... “Nobody likes to be in debt. And none of us likes to see ourselves as we truly are.”

AGREE or DISAGREE ... “God is entirely out of our reach.”

AGREE or DISAGREE ... “... I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child.”

EXPLAIN:

If one finds it difficult or even not possible to believe the bulleted statements above ... it's much easier to dismiss grace & mercy as “*too easy*”.

Was it EASY, even for God, to save us?

What would the following verses suggest?

- **Hebrews 5:7**

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with *loud cries and tears* ...

- **Hebrews 2:18**

Because he himself *suffered* when he was tempted,

- **Luke 22:41-44**

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.⁴⁴ And being *in anguish*, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

- **John 19:30**

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and *gave up his spirit*.

AGREE or DISAGREE ... "God may be entirely out of my reach, but I am not out of His reach."

EXPLAIN ... "When a believer chooses to serve and love God, it costs us nothing compared to the cost of his choosing to love and serve us. His choice of us signed his Son's death warrant."

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION POINTS

1

explain what Ephesians 1:3-7 has to do with today's topic:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us* in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. *4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace...*



"It is a sure measure of our self-centeredness that we would even resent God for loving us before we loved him."

2

below are several examples of “the typical way we think” explain how these examples would fit nicely into the “Your Amazing Grace is just too easy.”

Bumper Sticker: “God is my co-pilot”

From *The Sound of Music*, when Maria realizes the Captain is in love with her, she breaks into song: “Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could. So, somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good.”

Common Proverb: “The Lord helps those who help themselves.”

3

Below is Rev. Paustian's handling of the common objection to God's amazing grace ... EVALUATE his treatment:

"Well, if forgiveness comes freely, can I just go do whatever I want?" Now I'm smiling. Please notice that this is one objection that only the faithful witness of Christ ever has to confront. If you're asking now, I'll take it to mean that I have presented God's grace in the same spirit as did the apostles of Christ, who were compelled to answer this very question. Listening to the Muslim, the Jew, or the Hindu, this thought will never occur to you. Sadly, it won't often come to mind even as you sit in the worship houses of many Christian denomination. Only the shocking grace as articulated by the likes of Paul, Peter, and John could give rise to such a query: "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?"

Step a little closer, and the answer is clear: "By no means!" God forbid that grace should be cheapened in such a way, that it should be taken, of all things, as a reason to be bad! Those whose hearts were once broken see in grace a powerful reason to be good, to love, to praise, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. And no, easy, is not the right word to describe this either. As it was for Him, so it will be for us – first the cross, then the crown. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."