

BEING GRACIOUS

DATE: SUNDAY, 26TH OF JULY 2020 | SERIES: RELATIONSHIP GOALS - PART 1

COLOSSIANS 4:6

Let your conversation be always **full of grace**, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

LUKE 6:31

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

1 PETER 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

EPHESIANS 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

In this series, the question we should be asking ourselves is: "what should I be changing in order to become more Christ-like in my relationships?" Encourage your group to actively challenge themselves to improve their relationships by participating in the weekly goals we're setting.

START TALKING

1. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
2. What funny mistake in your past are you glad was not caught on video?

START THINKING

1. Read Colossians 4:6. What do you think Paul means that conversations should be "always full of grace and seasoned with salt"?

START SHARING

1. On a scale of 1-10 (one being low, 10 being high) how well are you doing in terms of extending grace and being gracious towards others? What is currently impacting this number? e.g. Is working remotely making you frustrated with colleagues? Is financial pressure causing arguments in your marriage?
2. Describe a time when someone showed you more grace than you deserved? What was the impact on your relationship with that person?
3. On Sunday Steve spoke about four steps to becoming more gracious:
 - a). I have received undeserved grace [from God]
 - b). Assume that everyone is doing their best
 - c). Try and put yourself in their shoes
 - b). I can love someone without understanding them fully
 Which of these four do you struggle most with? What could you change to start growing in that area?

START PRAYING

Lord God, as we consider all the relationships in our lives, help us to be more gracious towards others. Let our words not be judgmental and critical, but full of grace and seasoned with salt.

START DOING

Our goal this week is to be more gracious in our relationships. In what practical ways can you show grace to others?

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, in our new series, "Relationship Goals", Steve shared a message about being gracious. This is a popular hashtag on social media which is usually linked to romantic relationships, but we are looking at the idea in a far broader context than that.

We are social beings, designed to be in connection with others, because we were made in the image of God! This connection can range from business partnerships and colleagues to life-long friendships, from casual acquaintances to committed marriages. Our relationships are a substantial and significant part of our lives and all of us are looking for good relationships in the different areas of our lives.

In our different relationships, when things aren't going well, most of us want the other person to change in order to improve those relationships, however we have no control over the other person's actions and emotions. What we do have control over is our own actions and reactions.

Our goal, over the next four weeks, is to look at how we can become more Christ-like in those relationships. Each week we will set a new goal. Our goal for this week is to be more gracious in our relationships.

Four steps to becoming more gracious in our relationships:

1. We have received undeserved grace

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul is saying that it's not because of who we are that we've been saved, but because of God's amazing grace. Jesus dying on the cross for our sin is a beautiful picture of grace. He loved us so much that He willingly died for us - before we even knew Him! Surely, if that amount of grace has been extended to us we should extend grace through our lives to others.

God's grace is like standing in a waterfall where the entire river above that waterfall is pouring down over you and then continues downstream. There is an infinite amount of grace that's come to us and an infinite amount of grace available to us; and every single day we live in God's grace extended to us regardless of what we do.

Another picture of God's grace is an escalator - it carries us forward, even if we are not physically moving.

2. Assume that everyone is doing their best

We want others to believe the best about us – that we are trying our best not our worst. Luke 6:31 says: *Do to others as you would have them do to you.* This tells us that we should believe that about others too! Understanding this helps us to resolve issues rather than avoiding them. It gives us the springboard to the right

approach.

We can leave those few who are malicious and have bad motives to God! *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord.* Romans 12:19

3. Try and put yourself in their shoes

The idea of empathy is a thread that carries through the Bible: *Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.* 1 Peter 3:8.

When dealing with conflict and difficulties in relationships, before making a comment or criticising the other person, try asking the question: "Why would they act like that?" It will give us more empathy and make us more gracious when we consider background, emotional pain etc. in dealing with relationship challenges

4. You can love someone without understanding them fully!

Chances are we'll never understand each other fully as we are each uniquely wired. In Ephesians 4:2 Paul wrote: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.* He knew that we wouldn't always understand each other or agree with each other.

Imagine the difference we could make if each one of us processed our relationships through the lens of grace! *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* Colossians 4:6.