

WEEK 9 DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

Recovery starts by receiving a free gift from God.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

(Ephesians 2:4-5)

GOD’S MERCY AND GRACE

PRAYER: Dear God, give me a better understanding of your mercy and grace. Help me to respond in thankfulness and walk forward in recovery.

“If people really knew me, there is no way they’d stick around.” “If people really knew the things I’ve done, they would surely run away.” Have you ever felt this way? Have you ever thought the same things about God?

A common belief is that God only wants a relationship with people who are good enough—that he only accepts those who have it all together. Worldly relationships often reinforce this belief. For instance, if you hurt a friend’s feelings, that person may avoid or reject you until you make up for the harm you caused. If you don’t perform at work, you may get fired. Since many human relationships are based on performance, God must work this way too, right? Thankfully, the answer is no. God doesn’t operate like most earthly relationships. He tells us so in the Bible. Isaiah 55:8 says, “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord.”

It is true that as in human relationships, sin harms your relationship with God and can even separate you from him. However, from the very beginning, God had a plan to pursue a relationship with you through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus took on himself the punishment for all of your failures—past, present, and future sin—when he died on the cross. He made up for your sins on your behalf (something you could never do yourself), so that a healthy relationship with God could be fully established. Instead of rejection for your failures, God offers mercy and grace. Mercy is withholding punishment that is deserved. Grace is the gift of a relationship that is not deserved.

When you accept Christ’s payment for sin as your own, your failures are no longer a barrier to a relationship with God. In fact, when you receive God’s grace, he adopts you as his child, accepting you as his own son or daughter. Your status as child of God will never change, no matter what you have done or will do. You are free to fully experience a loving relationship with him through grace.

Through Christ, God mercifully does not punish you for your sins and graciously offers you a relationship that is not earned by performance. He loves you and pursues a relationship with you as his beloved child!

DRAFT

APPLICATION: Have you ever been offered a gift you felt you didn’t deserve? What was your response? Reflect on the gift God offers you.