

# AMAZING *grace*



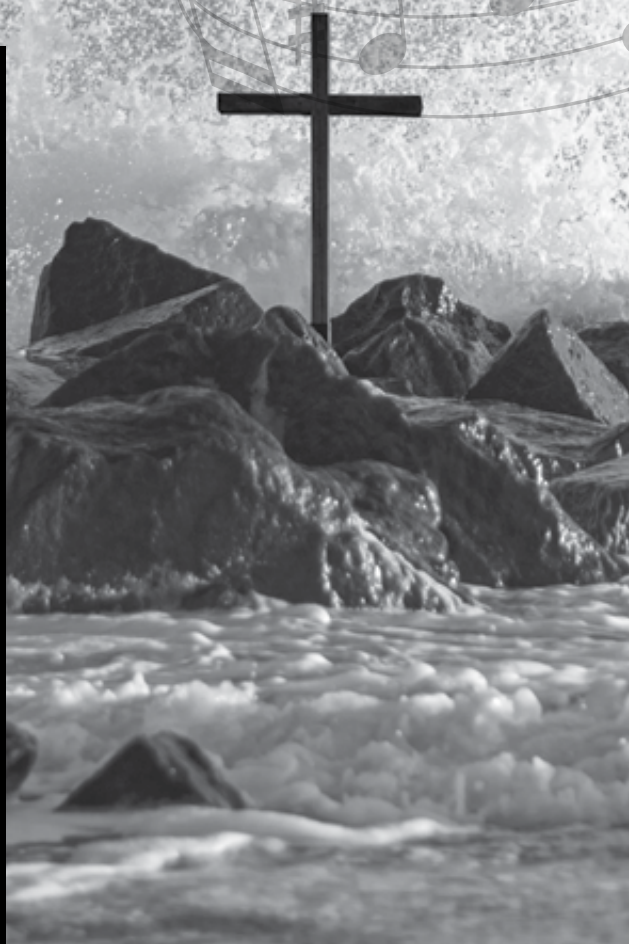
SESSION 1  
David



SESSION 2  
Isaiah of Babylon



SESSION 3  
The Prodigal Son



SESSION 4  
The Blind Man



SESSION 5  
The Penitent Thief



SESSION 6  
Mary Magdalene



A 6-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**  
FOR LENT

LEADER'S GUIDE

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# Introduction

The word *grace* sometimes refers to prayer, as when we “say grace” before a meal. We may speak of an athlete or dancer moving with grace. People who remain calm in difficult circumstances are said to show grace under pressure. These uses of the term *grace* suggest things that we do. In the biblical understanding of the term, grace is about God. Grace is God’s favor for sinners—favor that we, as sinners, do not deserve. Sometimes the letters in the word *grace* have been used as an acronym for this definition: **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**. We do not deserve God’s love and forgiveness or the glory of eternal life in his presence, but these rich gifts were purchased for us with the blood Christ shed on the cross. The gifts are ours because Jesus paid the price for them. That is God’s undeserved favor for sinners, his amazing grace.

## Leader's Guide for Session 1

**BEFORE CLASS:** Read through this session yourself. Examine the Bible readings listed, and become acquainted with them.

**READ:** Have a member of the group read the Introduction on page 4 aloud.

**READ:** Read or have someone read the Opening Prayer.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss the characteristics often expected in a leader.

**READ:** Read or have someone read the Introduction.

### SESSION 1

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## David

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.*

**PSALM 51:1**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, guide us by your Spirit as we study your Word. As we learn about your grace displayed in the lives of others, help us to recognize and give thanks for that same amazing grace in our lives. Lead us to true repentance and look on us in mercy, forgiving our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Hear our prayer, and accept our praise in his holy name. Amen.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Without becoming involved in a political discussion, describe the general characteristics you expect in a leader.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Before recording the last words of David, Scripture describes the dying king as “the son of Jesse ... the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1). Scripture also reveals that David was an adulterer and a murderer. Although he wanted to build a house, or temple, for the Lord, God would not permit him to do so because David had “shed much blood” and “waged great wars” (1 Chronicles 22:8). Yet God, out of grace, chose David not only to be the king of Israel but to

be the ancestor of the promised Messiah, the Savior who would be called the Son of David.

#### MADE SURE FOREVER

1. **Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.** Why is Samuel, the prophet and judge, reluctant to anoint a new king over Israel? Are his fears reasonable? Why or why not? What is God's plan for addressing Samuel's worries? What characteristics of leadership seem to be important to Samuel? What traits are important to God? Describe David, the chosen son of Jesse. The anointing with olive oil meant that the chosen person was set apart for service to the Lord. How did the Lord prepare David for service, even on that first day? In our world today, when have you seen people chosen for leadership roles or elevated in popularity based on "outward appearance" rather than the Lord's method, of looking "on the heart"? Should we try to choose leaders based on traits that are desirable in the Lord's eyes? Why or why not? What God-pleasing traits in a candidate might win your vote?
2. **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-7 and 1 Chronicles 22:6-10.** When David becomes king, he decides to build a house, a temple, for the Lord. Speaking through the prophet Nathan, God puts a stop to that idea. What does God tell David about the king's house-building plan? What characteristic seems important in marking the place where God comes to meet his people?
3. **Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17.** There will be some house building going on, but David will not be the builder. Who will build a house for David and what kind of house will it be? Who will build a house for the name of the Lord? What does God say about David's son, and what are God's promises concerning the son? How does God's promise to David point to the promised Messiah, Jesus?

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#### Made Sure Forever

1. **Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.** Samuel knows that Saul might try to kill him if the prophet anoints a new king. Answers will vary. God has Samuel arrange the "diversion" of a sacrifice in Bethlehem, the home of Jesse and his sons. Samuel seems to be looking for an impressive outward appearance, someone who is tall and imposing. While individual traits are not mentioned, God looks on the heart, perhaps searching for characteristics such as faithfulness and humility before him. When David was anointed, the Spirit of God filled him and remained with him from that day forward. Answers will vary.
2. **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-7 and 1 Chronicles 22:6-10.** God says that he has had his dwelling in a tent, moving with his people since he brought them out of Egypt. He never asked his people to build a house of cedar for him. David is also a man of war, and he shed much blood on earth, so he cannot build a house for the Lord. That building project will be done by David's son, who will be "a man of rest" or peace. God wants his house, his temple, to be a place of peace.

3. **Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17.** God will raise up David's offspring, his son, to reign, and that son will build a house for the Lord's name. God will establish the son's throne forever. When the son sins, he will be disciplined at the hands of men, but God's love will never depart from the chosen son. David's throne and kingdom will endure forever. Jesus the Messiah will be a descendant of David and will be called the Son of David. Jesus was delivered into the hands of sinners (Acts 2:23). He took onto himself the sins of the world; he was beaten and crucified for those sins, but God raised him to life on the first Easter morning. The Father's love never departed from his beloved Son.

## You Are the Man

1. **Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13.** David broke God's commandments against murder and adultery and against coveting the wife of another. He is also guilty of idolatry, following his desires instead of the will of God. Nathan confronts David through a story of a man who selfishly kills the single pet lamb of a poor man. David is angered by the story and says the man who killed the lamb deserves to die. The prophet tells the king that David is the man of the story because he murdered Uriah and stole his wife. As a result, the sword will never depart from David's house; he will experience constant war and strife. David's wives will be given to another in the sight of all of Israel (2 Samuel 16:20-22). The first child born to David and Bathsheba will die.

2. **Read Psalm 51.** David knows that his sins are "ever before" the Lord, and it is against the Lord that he has sinned. He has done evil in the sight of the Lord; he has been a sinner from the point of his conception. David pleads for forgiveness, trusting in God's steadfast love and abundant mercy. David knows that the Lord delights in inward truth and repentance. Answers will vary. David sinned against Uriah and

Bathsheba, but with that sin, he disobeyed the commandments of the Lord. David knows that the Lord's forgiveness will cleanse him from sin. The Lord will create a clean heart within his servant and renew his spirit. Forgiven, David will teach other sinners about God's ways so that they also repent. He will praise God and offer up the sacrifice of a contrite heart.

3. **Read Acts 13:36.** David died when he had fulfilled God's purpose in his generation. Answers will vary, but each of us will fall asleep in Christ, according to God's perfect timing, when we have fulfilled the purpose God has planned for us. Answers will vary.

4. (See next page.)

## YOU ARE THE MAN

1. **Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13.** This text, in which the prophet Nathan confronts the king, provides a summary of David's sin with Bathsheba (the full story is found in 2 Samuel 11:1-27). David despised the word of the Lord. What commandments did the king break? How does Nathan lead David to realize his terrible disobedience? What are the consequences that David will suffer because of his sin? How is God's grace shown here in the life of David?

2. **Read Psalm 51.** Inspired by the Holy Spirit, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" wrote these words after Nathan confronted him with his sin. What does David say about his sin and the forgiveness he hopes to receive from God? David certainly sinned against Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. Why does he say to the Lord, "Against you, you only, have I sinned"? What does David say about the sacrifices that God desires? How does this psalm express David's trust in God's steadfast love? How will David and all of Israel respond to God's grace in their lives?

3. **Read Acts 13:36.** What does this verse say about the timing of David's death? How might the same thing be said of each of us who trust in Christ? Do you find comfort in that thought? Why or why not?

4. **Read Acts 2:22-36.** The inspired psalmist served God's purpose in his own generation, yet through his life, death and inspired psalms David continued to serve even after he died. In his Pentecost sermon, how does Peter use the story of David—and one of David's psalms, Psalm 16—to testify to the crucified and risen Savior? **Read Matthew 1:5-6.** By God's grace, David and Bathsheba were ancestors of Jesus the Messiah. God's covenant promise to David is fulfilled in David's greater Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus rose victorious from the dead. His throne and his kingdom were established forever. **Read 1 Peter 2:4-7.** How has Jesus, as promised to his ancestor David, built a house for the Lord's name?

**RESPONSIVE READING ..... PSALM 89:1-4, 34-37**

- L** *I WILL SING OF THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD, FOREVER;*
- C** **WITH MY MOUTH I WILL MAKE KNOWN YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS.**
- L** *FOR I SAID, "STEADFAST LOVE WILL BE BUILT UP FOREVER;*
- C** **IN THE HEAVENS YOU WILL ESTABLISH YOUR FAITHFULNESS."**
- L** *YOU HAVE SAID, "I HAVE MADE A COVENANT WITH MY CHOSEN ONE;*
- C** **I HAVE SWORN TO DAVID MY SERVANT:**
- L** *"I WILL ESTABLISH YOUR OFFSPRING FOREVER, AND BUILD YOUR THRONE FOR ALL GENERATIONS." ...*
- C** **I WILL NOT VIOLATE MY COVENANT OR ALTER THE WORD THAT WENT FORTH FROM MY LIPS.**
- L** *ONCE FOR ALL I HAVE SWORN BY MY HOLINESS;*
- C** **I WILL NOT LIE TO DAVID.**
- L** *HIS OFFSPRING SHALL ENDURE FOREVER,*
- C** **HIS THRONE AS LONG AS THE SUN BEFORE ME.**

4. **Read Acts 2:22-36.** In his Pentecost sermon, Peter refers to David's prophecy of resurrection in Psalm 16. Yet David himself was not raised from death, and his tomb still exists. The psalmist was pointing ahead to the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David. Jesus had been raised from death, and the apostles were witnesses of his resurrection. **Read Matthew 1:5-6.** The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew lists Solomon as the son of David and the wife of Uriah. **Read 1 Peter 2:4-7.** All who trust in Christ are being built up as living stones into a spiritual house, as a holy priesthood to offer to God the sacrifices of prayer, worship and service.

READ: Read responsively the verses of the psalm.

SING: Sing (or speak) this hymn.

**L** *LIKE THE MOON IT SHALL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER,*

**C** *A FAITHFUL WITNESS IN THE SKIES.”*

**HYMN..... CHRIST, THE LIFE OF ALL THE LIVING**

Christ, the life of all the living,  
Christ, the death of death, our foe,  
Who, thyself for me once giving  
To the darkest depths of woe:  
Through thy suff’rings, death and merit  
I eternal life inherit.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Thou hast suffered great affliction  
And hast borne it patiently,  
Even death by crucifixion,  
Fully to atone for me;  
Thou didst choose to be tormented  
That my doom should be prevented.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto thee.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, you looked on us in mercy and carried our sins in your own body to the cross. You suffered the penalty of death that we deserved and rose in triumph over sin, death and the devil. Baptized into your death and resurrection, we have been raised to live new lives of love and service in your name. Help us each day to reflect the grace of God in our lives, in our words and actions. We pray

READ: Have someone read the Closing Prayer or read the prayer in unison.



that by the power of the Holy Spirit, others will come to know you through our witness and so experience your amazing grace. Amen.

**FORGIVEN**

We pray as Jesus taught us, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). We have experienced the grace of God, receiving forgiveness for our sins for the sake of Christ Jesus. During the coming week, consider those with whom you are angry or those toward whom you feel hatred. Ask God for his gracious forgiveness, and seek to extend forgiveness to others.

ACT: Suggest to participants that they ask for and extend forgiveness.

## Leader's Guide for Session 2

**BEFORE CLASS:** Read through this session yourself. Examine the Bible readings listed and become acquainted with them.

**READ:** Read or have someone read the Opening Prayer.

**DISCUSS:** Describe images of royal power and authority.

**READ:** Read or have someone read the Introduction.

### SESSION 2

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## Isaiah

*And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."*

**ISAIAH 6:7**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, bless our study of your Word and lead us during this Lenten season and always to true repentance. Help us to see more clearly all that our Lord suffered to atone for our sins and to acknowledge with joy your amazing grace at work in our lives. Empower us by your Spirit to be bold witnesses for our Savior so that others will come to know and worship him as Lord. Hear our prayer, and accept our praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Describe pictures you have seen of kings or queens. How is royal power portrayed or symbolized?

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The author of a book on a near-death experience said the event taught him he was loved and cherished and had nothing to fear; there was nothing he could do wrong. Another author claimed to have learned in her near-death experience that people are not sinful and that she should not regret her past deeds. The prophet Isaiah did not have a near-death experience, but he was given a vision of the God of Israel enthroned in his temple. Isaiah did not learn that