

Leaders – As we start this series on parenting, half of every message is meant to be about a different characteristic of God and how it applies to **everyone**. As you get into the discussion that is specific to parenting, feel free to alter questions based on the needs of your group (non-parents, or different seasons of parenting).

- **Growing up did you have God parents or people who served in a similar role in your life?**
- **Can you remember a time you were on the receiving end of someone else’s grace?**
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In order to truly understand the grace that God offers, we have to first understand the need and the cost of that grace.

Have someone volunteer to read Romans 3:10-12 & Romans 5:10

- **Why are people described as “enemies of God?” Are some people worse than others in God’s eyes?**

“Enemies of God” is an interesting description. We are described as enemies of God because of our rebellion to the rules and laws established by God. We like to think of scales of good and bad in our life. While we may make mistakes and sin, we many times rationalize that our mistakes weren’t as bad as the mistakes of others. Ultimately, Romans 3 describes that EVERY person has fallen short. Regardless of the number or severity of the sins you feel you’ve committed in life; every person is equally incapable of making ourselves right with God. [We had some good discussion about this topic on the leader podcast.](#)

- **What was the cost of God restoring our relationship with Him?**

Romans 5:10 describes that the cost God reconciling us was the death of His son. It is important for us to remember as we think about this truth – **Grace is free, but it is not cheap.** God has freely offered us forgiveness and the ability to have peace with Him, but the cost of that grace was expensive.

While grace is a free gift from God, and a command for those who follow Jesus, many times our ability to receive and give it can be a struggle. It can be refreshing to receive grace when we are at fault, yet difficult for us to turn around and offer it to others. Sometimes, it might even be difficult to accept grace because of the guilt/shame we feel due to our actions.

- **Have you ever had difficulty accepting the forgiveness of God or someone else?**

While many of us are readily willing to receive grace when we are at fault, sometimes people struggle with accepting it because of the guilt/shame they feel due to their mistakes. While everyone may not have felt this before, there is an opportunity to have discussion about how the guilt and shame we may feel is also covered by the forgiveness Jesus brings. When we hold on to guilt and shame, it means we have not fully embraced the power and fullness of Jesus’ gift of grace.

– **Have you ever been reluctant to forgive someone else?**

Even though this may seem like a simple question, the hope is for it to draw out different areas of discussion. Every person has struggled with this before. We are probably much quicker to receive than give forgiveness. Why? Even the big things people have done against us, don't compare when we hold it up against what God has forgiven us of. God's forgiveness of us is meant to humble us and remind us that we forgive because we have been forgiven of so much more. There may also be an opportunity to discuss the tension we feel sometimes with forgiving those who have seriously wronged/hurt us. Forgiveness does not always mean that the pain/trauma/consequences of others disappears or that we are meant to forget that it happened. [Listen to the podcast for some idea/more discussion on this.](#)

Have someone volunteer to read Colossians 3:13

As followers of Jesus, we are called to give grace to those around us in the same way we have received it. The true goal of loving others and loving our kids the way God loves us, is to create an atmosphere of grace around us.

– **What are some ways to create an atmosphere of grace in our homes? (friendships, workplaces, etc.)**

One of the best ways to create this type of atmosphere in our homes and with our children is by continually reminding our children of our own need for grace. Many children grow up idolizing their parents. If we can help our children to see that we also need God's grace and we need to apologize when we make mistakes in our homes, it can create an atmosphere of authentic faith and grace that can transform our children and our relationships.

– **A helpful practice is to "view your children the way God views you." How does that reminder help us to give grace in difficult moments?**

God knows us well and all of our faults. We have to understand that our children are going to make mistakes, despite our best efforts. If we can think about God's response to our mistakes when we see our children mess up, it can transform how we respond in those moments. Another important point we would love to have discussed is the grace that is available for parents. Mistakes are inevitable, and there is grace for parents as well.

End your group time with some guided prayer for the International Mission Board, which is one of the recipients of our Beyond campaign. The IMB sends short and long-term missionaries around the world in order to help others hear the good news of Jesus.

- **Allie White** – Allie is a former intern of Brazos Pointe who is serving with the IMB in Uganda reaching women stuck in the cycle of prostitution. They have started a Bible study and are seeing many women come to faith as they hear about a God who loves them.
- **Missionaries in closed countries** – Pray for the missionaries who are working in closed countries, where being open about their faith and reaching others is not only difficult, but also dangerous.
- **More Missionaries** – Pray that God would open more doors in more countries for people to be sent. Also pray that God would move in the hearts of people to say yes to serving Him as missionaries.