

INTRODUCTION

Because God is holy, He sees evil and it angers Him – he is even referred to as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). If it were not for God’s graciousness, His holiness would prohibit us from being in His presence. In *Christian Theology*, Millard Erickson says, “Grace is another attribute that is part of the manifold of God’s love. By this we mean that God deals with His people not on the basis of their merit or worthiness, what they deserve, but simply according to their need; in other words, He deals with them on the basis of His goodness and generosity”. What does God’s graciousness mean to us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of when you hear the words ‘grace’ or ‘gracious’? Read 2 Kings 13:23; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:17; and Psalm 86:15. What is listed alongside of God’s graciousness in these verses? Does this help you define ‘gracious’?
2. Exodus 33:19-20 and 34:5-7. How would you describe God based on these verses? Do you see His graciousness in 34:7 (compare this with Exodus 20:6)?
3. Read Isaiah 6:5-13. When confronted by a Holy God, Isaiah states that he is a man of unclean lips. What do you think he meant by that (see Matthew 12:34-35)?
4. Isaiah experienced God’s graciousness – not only did he not die in the presence of a Holy God, but he was then commissioned to serve Him. How much do you trust God? Could you say “Here am I. Send me!” to our gracious God without knowing where He may lead you?
5. How was God’s graciousness ultimately fulfilled (see John 1:14,17). How does this impact your desire to draw closer to Christ?
6. Read Colossians 3:12-14. How might you expect your daily life to change based on your desire to be gracious with others as God is with you?
7. How can you encourage others who may not understand God’s graciousness?

APPLICATION

God wants us to reflect His nature by treating others with grace. If we only encouraged or showed kindness to others when we felt they deserved it, it would never happen. This week, meditate on God's graciousness. Despite the circumstances, see how you can show His grace to others by being kind, encouraging, etc. Next week, share with your group how these experiences expanded your understanding of God's grace.

SCRIPTURE

And the Lord said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," He said, "you cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live." Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed His name, the Lord. And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Exodus 33:19-20; 34:5-7 (NIV)