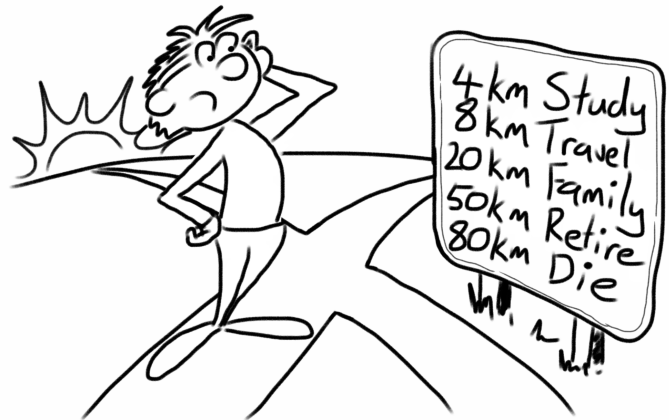


Session One: Grace

What's The Big Deal With God?

Let's Talk

What are your expectations for this course?



See if you can define these words:

Church

Sin

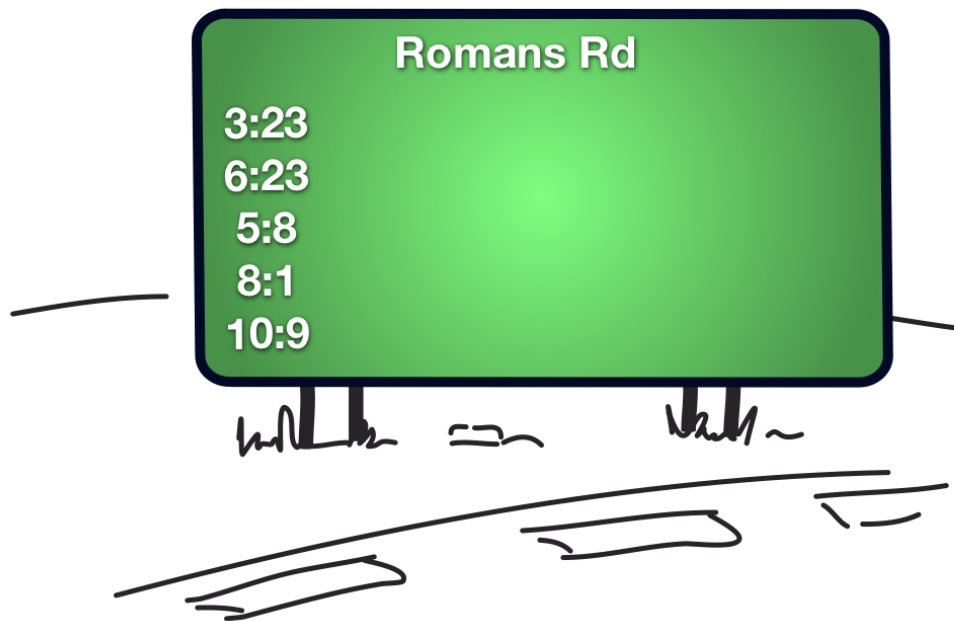
Faith

Prayer

Justification

Grace

Read: The Romans Road

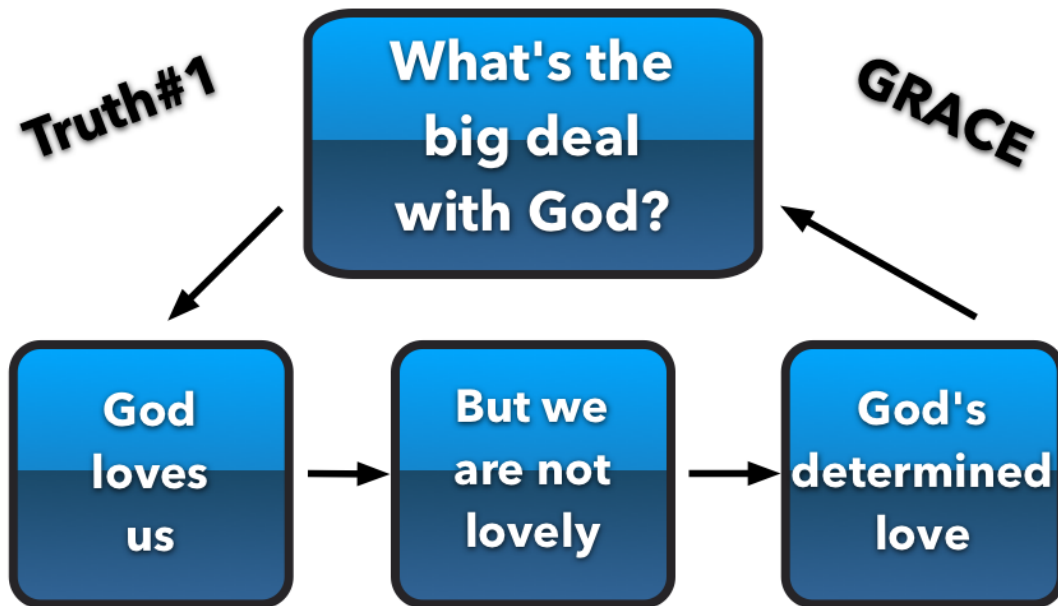


Read: Romans 5:1-11

What do these verses tell you? Write the message of the passage again in your own words.

Read verses 6-8. How does God stand out from everybody else?

Overview Of This Lesson



God Loves Us – Romans 5:8

Romans 5:8 tells us that **God has demonstrated his love for us.**

Putting aside the word 'demonstrated' for a minute - this verse tells us that God loves us. That is, God has an opinion about us - an intellectual and emotional relationship with us and that is love. Think on that for a minute.

It is not simply knowledge of us like we know that Saturn exists.

It is not a maintenance relationship like a mechanic to a car.

It is not that God enjoys us and finds us entertaining like a boy and his pet turtle.

No, God loves us. He is decidedly for us. It is no accident that God is referred to from time to time as our heavenly Father.

But what sort of love are we talking about?

A Love That Would Die For You

There's lovey dovey love. With hearts fluttering and romance and perhaps even a heated affair of passion - there's that kind of love, then there's crucifixion - a love that would give anything for the other - a sacrificial love. A love so committed to the other that giving up a costly thing is possible. This sort of love is like the love of a Father or Mother adopting a child. Choosing to share their life, wealth, time, affection, patience and everything to a child that cannot offer anything in return.



This is the type of love that God has for us. And we know this because he demonstrated his love for us in that he gave the most precious thing he had for us. "God demonstrated his love for us in that Christ - his son - died for us." That's a bold move. Why did he need to die? Well, we'll get to that in just a moment - but **pause and notice what God is prepared to do for you.**

What type of relationship does each of the following suggest? Do they all require a response from us?

Takes your garbage bins off the street...

Smiles and waves...

Eats dinner with you...

Donates their kidney for you...

Lends you money...

Makes a meal for you...

Invites you to their wedding...

But...We Are Not Lovely - Romans 3:10-20

What do these verses tell you?

Our Problem Is Sin

In the universe that God has made, mankind has given God the finger - time and time again. Humans, although we try to improve ourselves, we turn against one another with our tongues and more. Humans have also turned their backs on God - without even listening to his love. One of my children demonstrates this to me often. He'll fold his arms and turn his back to me if he thinks I'm saying something he doesn't like. Often I'm not saying anything nasty to him at all! But in his mind, I'm crushing his freedom - he's the boss and I'm threatening his control. He doesn't think this all through of course, he's just doing what his heart desires. And that is just like us and God. It's not that we are literally looking God in the face and giving him the finger. It's just that we are doing what our hearts desire - living our lives without a care for God. Everything we do is twisted by sin. We humans tend to think too highly of ourselves and too little of God. We are rebels and failures.

Consider these three examples of rebellion and failure...

‘But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement.’
(Matthew 5:22)

‘Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you.’
(Deuteronomy 5:16)

‘Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.’ (John 3:36)

How should God react to such treatment? What do we deserve?

Read Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23a

Write down the message above in your own words.

Why Is It That We Die?

The bible has given us here an explanation for death that goes beyond biology. Sure, our bodies and all of life on this planet are on a constant trajectory towards death and decay and we have become accustomed to this. But death is dreadful. It is terrible that we all must say goodbye to our loved ones. The bible tells us that death is our punishment for walking away from God.

God's Determined Love – Romans 6:23 (again)

But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23b

What does the text say?

Amazing Grace!

.....

The grace of God is love freely shown towards guilty sinners contrary to their merit and indeed in defiance of their demerit. It is God showing goodness to persons who deserve only severity, and had no reason to expect anything but severity.

J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 1993, p150.

.....

Grace is God's unmerited favour on us! It is the benefits of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. It is being right with God – undeserved and unachieved.

Read Romans 3:21-26

What does the text say?

Session One: Grace: What's The Big Deal With God?

The seriousness of sin has been dealt with in a serious way! God has not just lifted the penalty! No. The penalty for rebellion is death and it must be paid for. **There is no shortcut to forgiveness.**

'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

'He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed"' (1 Peter 2:24)

Picture it!

SIN
(us)

RIGHTEOUSNESS
(God)

Describe It!

What does Romans 5:8 tell you?

What does 'grace' mean?

What is the first truth to live by?

Apply It!

What's the big deal with God? Why should we care at all about him? Because he cares deeply about us. The deal is that those who will pay attention to his love, who thank him for his compassion will receive the gift of forgiveness. Knowing God begins with knowing what grace is.

Grace defines our relationship with God – and so we start here.

Grace shapes the way we understand the scriptures.

Grace transforms the way we deal with failure.

Grace alters the way we approach church.

For Next Week

Write down a prayer in response to the message of Romans 5:8

What do these verses tell you?

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

1 TIMOTHY 1:15

GALATIANS 2:20

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21

PSALM 32:1-2

1 JOHN 1:5-10

1 PETER 2:24

JOHN 3:19-21

MARK 10:45

Listen To A Sermon

**What's The Big Deal
With God? (Romans 5:8)**



**From Death to Life
(Ephesians 2:1-10)**



Read Something Great

Knowing God by J.I. Packer is an exceptional book and a great way to get stuck into the most important subject in the universe! The following QR-Code points to a PDF copy of chapter 13 in the book, "The Grace of God."



For Further Reading

Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*.

Packer, J.I., *Knowing God*.

Stott, John, *The Cross of Christ*.