

Think about favor. It means getting someone's approval, support, or blessing. When you want someone's favor what do you do? You try to do and say everything that would please them, and do and say nothing that would displease them. It's acting right all the time. Is that really possible to accomplish? It's like defying gravity. You can do it for a little while but in the end you will fail. It's stronger than you are.

I related to the woman in my dream. I've felt like that when I've tried hard to do everything right but missed one little detail and failed. I thought that if only I could make it through the day without messing up I would've accomplished something. But no, my shortcomings always caused me to be imperfect. I thought that not only had I disappointed my heavenly Father but I would condemn myself and beat myself up. I was self-defeated. I was focused on my abilities and inabilities. Never measuring up, never good enough to make the grade, I needed someone to rescue me!

God in His mercy sent us help; His name is Jesus. God sent Him to deliver us from ourselves and our powerless attempts to fulfill His law. Jesus took the punishment for the law we could not keep so we wouldn't have to die, and could go free, and have eternal life with Him. Jesus gave us the gift of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the law. We have peace with God through what He did for us in His death, burial, and resurrection. We have favor with God, unearned and undeserved. That's grace.

Believing this, your heart must be settled without a doubt, knowing that He did this because He loves you. Make your heart sound,

secure, stable, and firm in His grace, that is, be established without question or doubt that He has given us everything we need to live an abundant life in and through Jesus.

If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. It is with the heart that we believe and receive His righteousness and grace. Our hearts must be wholly His; that is when we will be fulfilled and at rest.

"Above all else, guard your heart. For it affects everything you do" Proverbs 4:23 (TLB).

Discipleship Questions

Answer the following by reading the corresponding discipleship lesson and using your Bible.

1. How was "grace" defined in this lesson?
2. When the heart is established in grace we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our _____.
3. Read Hebrews 10:14. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Wendy's shortcomings always caused her to be imperfect. How are we made perfect according to this verse?
4. Read Romans 5:17. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Jesus gave us the _____ of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy

before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the law.

5. Read Isaiah 26:3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad, and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. What must we keep our mind stayed on?

6. Read Ephesians 3:17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." Our hearts must be wholly His, that is when we will be

7. Read Romans 4:4. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Is salvation a reward to be earned or a free gift of God's grace?

8. Read Romans 5:17. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Righteousness (right standing with God) is a gift. Do you have to work for a gift?

9. How do you obtain a gift?

10. Read Romans 6:23. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." What is the free gift of God's grace in this verse?

11. Read Titus 3:5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." How many of your good works and deeds contribute to your salvation?

12. Read Romans 6:14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Explain in your own words what it means to be under God's grace?

13. Read Romans 11:6. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." If God's blessing are given to us by grace they are not by our _____.

14. Read Romans 3:24. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Explain in your own words the meaning of this verse?

15. Read Ephesians 1:7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The forgiveness of our sins, was according to _____.

Discipleship Answer Key

Do not look at the answer key until you have completed the questions. Compare your answers with the following answers.

1. The unearned, undeserved favor and ability of God.
2. Performance.

3. By Jesus' offering He has perfected us forever.
4. Gift.
5. Our minds must be stayed on the LORD.
6. Fulfilled, and at rest.
7. A free gift of God's grace.
8. No.
9. By simply reaching out and taking it.
10. Eternal life (instead of eternal death).
11. None.
12. We are not getting what our sins deserve but rather God's best through Christ. Righteousness, acceptance, forgiveness are ours (all as a gift of God's mercy).
13. Works.
14. Righteousness (justification) is a free gift of God's grace given to the believer because of Christ redeeming work on the cross.
15. The riches of God's grace.

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The Heart Established in Grace by Wendy Krow (Discipleship Lesson)

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Read the entire lesson and then answer
the questions that follow.

Last night I dreamed about a woman who kept being punished for all the things she did wrong (her sins). A man followed her around and whenever she would make a mistake he would shake his head in disgust, take off his belt and beat her. If she said a wrong word or did something wrong he'd punish her. She was limping around trying to smile and have a good attitude, but she kept on doing things that would get her in trouble. Not big things, but every little thing that this man saw her doing wrong would get her a beating. It seemed hopeless. She couldn't keep from doing things that got her in trouble. I remember feeling sorry for her. I wanted to help her get away from the mean man who always beat her. And then I woke up.

I started thinking about God's grace, the unearned, undeserved favor and ability of God. When the heart is established in grace we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our performance, and try to keep His law in our own strength and ability. We are finally able to get away from the beatings we earned from breaking the law of God. We are rescued by Jesus.