



AMAZING

race



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Journaling Scripture

Throughout this series, we encourage you to take the specific scripture passage and spend time either journaling on your own at home, or together in your life group.

What is journaling?

Reflective journaling is where the reader engages with the scripture in an intentional and in-depth way through *writing* or *drawing*.

Why journal?

The act of writing or drawing forces you to slow down and concentrate on particular Bible passages which can help you focus, analyse and remember in more detail. It can also help you relate what you are reading to your everyday life.

How do you journal?

You can write, draw, doodle and colour. There are no rules, and it's not supposed to be perfect. Just have a go!

Here are some ideas to look at for inspiration.

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/christinebwood/amazing-grace-a-series-in-galatians/>

Key Questions:

Each time you journal, use the following questions to guide you:

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

Amazing Grace

Grace seems too good to be true. There must be a catch. There must be something we have to add to grace to make the grade with God. There must be some fine print that we are missing that means we miss out on the free gift on offer. The gospel seems too simple and grace simply seems too amazing. Grace seems too good to be true. Throughout the centuries and across all cultures, people have been adding to the gospel of grace to make it fit with our human understanding of receiving what we deserve or earning what we work for.

Grace is the undeserved favour of God towards people.

The church in Galatia had heard the gospel of grace and had gladly received the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus death on the Cross as a sacrifice for their sins. They received a gospel of grace but soon turned to a gospel of works, adding certain cultural requirements and adherence to certain laws to be certain that they were right with God. This was not the gospel they had received, and it was not good news for anyone, as the Apostle Paul strongly points out to them. Yet we still do the same today.

Twice Paul warns the church that, “*anyone who preaches a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under a curse*” (Galatians 1:8-9) They are strong words. Why does it matter so much? Why is the gospel message so important to preserve in purity and simplicity? Paul goes on to explain that when we add any requirement to the gospel, we rob ourselves of the freedom we have in Christ; the intimacy we are invited to enter with the Father and the power of His Spirit to live like Jesus. More importantly when we add to the gospel we rob Jesus of His deserved glory as the Lord and Saviour of the world, who is worth of all our worship.

This series will journey through the book of Galatians to clearly outline the simplicity of God’s amazing grace and to identify some common ways that we add to the gospel of grace today, robbing us of the relationship that God has intended for us. My prayer is that believers will be amazed at God’s grace; unbelievers will receive the gift of grace and we will all be set free from legalism to enjoy his grace.

Jason Elsmore

Gospel of Grace

Galatians 1:1-12

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all” (Galatians 1:6-7).

Nothing can be added to the gospel by anybody. Jesus died to forgive our sins and rose from the dead to give us eternal life. We didn't deserve it. We can't earn it. We simply receive it by faith in God's grace. Grace is the undeserved favour of God towards people, poured out in Jesus sacrifice for us on the Cross.

The people in Galatia received a gospel of grace but soon reverted to a gospel of grace+. When did you receive the gospel of grace? How good was it when you discovered that Jesus died to save a wretch like you? Are you still amazed at the grace of God or have you added to its simplicity and lost its beauty? This message will identify some of the pluses that we add to the gospel and why the + stops it being good news for anyone.

Read Galatians 1:1-12

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

FOCUS QUESTION: There shouldn't be a whole lot of requirements attached to the message of God's grace and forgiveness.

What requirements do we sometimes add onto salvation and why do people often try to add these things on?

Journal: Gospel of Grace

Amazed again at the beauty of God's grace, given to us through faith in Christ

New life of Grace

Galatians 2 & 3

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:20-21) ...for all who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27)

If following the law is not the basis for the gospel, won't sin run rampant? Paul says, absolutely not! (Galatian 2:17). The life of grace is lived in a relationship of loving obedience to the living Jesus not to a list of laws written on pieces of stone. The law shows us that we deserve death and need a Saviour. Jesus offers us a new life through His death on a Cross. The new life in Christ that we receive by faith is so much better than the old life of striving to follow the law.

Through faith in Jesus we are redeemed from the curse of the law and we receive the power of the Spirit to live a new life in obedience to Him (Galatians 3:10-14). We receive this new life in Christ by being baptised into Christ (3:27).

Read Galatians 2:15-21 and 3:10-27

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

FOCUS QUESTION: Through faith in Jesus, we are redeemed from the curse of the law and receive the power of the Spirit to live a new life in obedience to him. Sometimes feelings of doubt or a sense that we are not good enough, begin to creep in.

How can these feelings cause doubt in your relationship with Christ and what can we do to overcome this?

Journal: New Life of Grace

Put your old life of sin to death and be baptised into a new life in Christ.

Children of Grace

Galatians 4:1-10

“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir”. (Galatians 4:4-7)

In Jewish culture, a son would inherit the full rights of his father’s estate when he came of age. It was a promise for him to look forward to but not something he could experience until he came of age. In a similar way the people of Israel looked forward to the promise of sonship but did not fully experience the full rights of sonship under the law.

God sent his Son, who by his divine nature was the Son of God, in order that we, who are not his children by nature, might be his children by adoption and thus *receive the full rights of sons*. We have the same name, the same inheritance, the same position and the same rights as the one who is Son of God by virtue of his divine nature. The Father sent His Son that we might receive the status of sonship and He has given us His Spirit that we might have an experience of sonship. By grace we have been invited into a relationship of intimacy with the Father and given a position of authority in the family.

Read Galatians 4: 1-10

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

FOCUS QUESTION: Galatians 4 talks about receiving adoption as God’s sons. In a revolutionary manner for that time Christian women were also entitled to the full rights of ‘sons’ of God.

Think about and discuss how being sons and daughters of God changes our relationship with Him.

Journal: Children of Grace

Celebrating the intimacy and authority we have as children of God

Freedom of Grace

Galatians 5:1-12

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:1-4).

FREEDOM!!!!!! The grace of Christ sets us free from slavery to the law. Striving to please God by obeying the law is a race that you will never win. You will just end up tired and depleted. Religion is tiring. You are never sure when you have done enough. If you are tired of religion, Jesus invites you to rest with Him. He says, “Come to me all you are weary and burdened and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

He invites us to stop striving to please God and to rest with Him and enjoy His grace. It is as we rest with Him that we receive power to run the race of grace that He has set out for us.

Read Galatians 5:11-12

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

Write your story of God’s amazing grace in your life.

Share: What has God saved you from?

Rest with God and be refreshed by God for the race of God

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The world shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun refuse to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Shall be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun

My Story of Amazing Grace

Fruit of Grace

Galatians 5:13-25

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other”. (Galatians 5:22-26)

By the grace of God, we are loved and accepted just as we are, but God refuses to leave us that way. He wants to make us more like Jesus – more loving, more joyful, more peacefuletc. As we keep in step with the Spirits promptings and convictions in our lives we will become more like Christ. That is a good thing for everyone, including us. Grace is good for our families. Grace is good for our workplaces. Grace is good for our church.

There is nothing stopping us from experiencing the Spirits power in our lives. It is a choice we make to crucify our sinful nature and choose to walk in His power.

Read Galatians 5:13-25

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

Reflect:

LOVE: Am I motivated to do for others as Christ has done for me, or am I giving in order to receive something in return?

JOY: Am I experiencing joy on a regular basis, or is my happiness dependent on things going smoothly in my day?

PEACE: Do I find myself tossed by the crashing waves of turmoil in my life, or am I experiencing *“peace that passes all understanding?”*

PATIENCE: Am I easily set off when things go wrong, or am I able to keep a godly perspective in the face of life’s irritations?

KINDNESS: Do I serve others with kindness, or am I too focused on my own needs, desires or problems to help others?

GOODNESS: Does my life reflect the holiness of God or am I seeking to live up to the expectations of the world?

FAITHFULNESS: Am I constantly worried about what might happen tomorrow, or is my life characterised by faith in Christ?

GENTLENESS: Am I headstrong and opinionated, or am I allowing the grace of God to flow through me to others?

SELF-CONTROL: Are fleshly desires controlling my life, or am I allowing the Holy Spirit to direct me as I please God and serve others?

Journal: Fruit of Grace

Choose a fruit of the Spirit that you are choosing to walk in by the power of the Spirit.

Volunteer Sunday

Galatians 6:1-10

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”. (Galatians 6:9-10)

We cannot earn God’s favour by doing good, but we are called to serve God and do good to others. We are not to compare ourselves to others, but we are called to take whatever opportunity God gives us to care for and bless the people that God has put around us. When we commit to do what God has called us to do, we will see an eternal result.

Thank our volunteers from 2018 and encourage them to not give up in 2019.

Read Galatians 6:1-10

Take the time to journal and reflect on this passage using the key questions to guide you.

1. TRUTH: What is God saying?
2. REFLECTION: What is God saying to me?
3. APPLICATION: What is my response?

FOCUS QUESTION: What are the different ways we contribute to our church as ‘the body of Christ?’

- Though we cannot earn God’s favour by doing good, we are all called to serve God and do good to others.
- We are all gifted and called differently – how we serve will look different for each individual.

Journal: Body of Christ

Thank you for being a part of our church and for all that you do!



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