



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 15 – November 13, 2016

Communicable Attribute of Mercy, Grace and Patience

### I. Lesson Starters:

Last lesson we looked at the Communicable attribute of Love. *God’s love means that God eternally gives of himself to others. It is the definition of self-giving for the benefit of others. It is part of His nature to give of himself in order to bring about blessing or good for others.*

Today we will continue our review of Communicable Attributes of Mercy, Grace and Patience.

### I. Attribute of Mercy and Grace

*God’s mercy, grace and patience may be seen as three separate attributes or as specific aspects of God’s goodness; but are often mentioned together, especially in the Old Testament.*

- *God’s mercy is God’s compassion or forbearance shown towards those in misery or distress.*
- *God’s grace is God’s goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.*
- *God’s patience is God’s goodness in withholding punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.*

#### Exodus 34:6

***6 The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.***

#### Psalms 103:8

***8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.***

- Often mentioned together, but we can distinguish between them

### II. Distinguishing between The Attributes

#### Mercy

##### 2 Samuel 24:14

***14 “I am in great distress; let us fall into the hand of the Lord for his mercy is great...”***

##### Matthew 9:27

***27 Have mercy on us, Son of David”.***

##### 2 Corinthians 1:3

***3 Father of mercies and God of all comfort***

- Often emphasized where people are in misery or distress
- Two blind men who wish Jesus to see their plight and heal them cry out in Matthew
- In time of need, we draw near to God’s throne so that we might receive both mercy and grace (Hebrew 4:16, James 5:11)
- We are to imitate God’s mercy in our conduct towards others (Matthew 5:7; Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”)

#### Grace

##### Exodus 33:19(Romans 9:15)

***19 I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy”.***

### **Psalms 119:132**

**132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, as you always do to those who love your name”.**

### **1 Peter 5:10**

**10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”**

- Scripture emphasizes God’s grace or favor toward those who deserve no favor but only punishment from their actions
- God is regularly gracious toward his people
- Salvation by grace is in contrast to salvation earned, grace is freely given to those who accept
- Since grace is unmerited, only one human attitude or action is appropriate as an instrument to receive, that being “faith”

### **1 Corinthians 15:10**

**10 “By the grace of God, I am what I am”**

- The entire Christian life is a result of God’s grace
- Paul mentions the “blessing of Grace” as the most frequently listed blessing

### **Patience**

#### **Romans 2:4**

**4 “God’s kindness and forbearance and patience”**

- Slow to anger is mentioned numerous times in scripture (Ex 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15, 103:8, 145:8; Jonah 4:2)
- Jesus Christ exhibited “perfect patience” towards Paul (1 Tim 1:16; Romans 9:22)

#### **James 1:19-21**

**19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,<sup>20</sup> because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**

**<sup>21</sup> Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.**

- We are to be imitators of God’s patience, slow to anger
- Lead a life with patience (Ephesians 4:2)
- Patience is listed among the “first fruits” of the spirit (Galatians 5:22)

For us to imitate patience in our lives, it takes a moment by moment trust in God to fulfill his promises and purposes. James tells us “You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:8). We must have faith, trust and confidence that the Lord will enable us to be patient.

### **III. Group Questions:**

1. Do you find that it is hard to imitate “mercy” toward others unless you personally are in a time of need?
2. Many times, why is it difficult to have compassion for others if we have not had a serious time of distress in our own lives?
3. Most Christians would associate “Grace” with our salvation, discuss why this is “so limiting” with respect to the totality of God’s grace in our lives? Discuss where God’s grace shows up in our lives, be specific?
4. What typically causes you to be so “impatient” with someone else or in a particular situation?
5. What have you found that is particularly successful in helping you be “quick to listen and slow to speak”?
6. Given that James 1:19-21 says that “human anger” does not produce the “righteousness” that God desires in us, discuss how “anger” leads us away from “righteousness”? Given that to be true, how do we restrain this destructive human characteristic?