

THE GRACE AWAKENING
STUDY FIVE

Undeserving, Yet Unconditionally Loved

2 Samuel 9:1–13

If God is satisfied with His Son's death for sin, and we are by faith through grace in God's Son, then God is satisfied with us! When will we ever believe that?

—Charles R. Swindoll

GRACE . . . how magnificent, how marvelous! Like a rainbow breaking through storm clouds and arching across the sky, grace encompasses our lives from horizon to horizon, from our first breath to our last . . . and throughout eternity!

Think of the many colors of grace's rainbow. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we have received blessings upon blessings, all unmerited and undeserved (Ephesians 1:3–8).

- *Atonement*—God paid our debt of sin.
- *Salvation*—God delivered us from judgment.
- *Justification*—God declared us righteous.
- *Redemption*—God bought and freed us from enslavement to sin.
- *Reconciliation*—God restored us to a relationship with Himself.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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And more! When we placed our faith in Jesus, God united us with His Son and adopted us as His own. “Because we are his children,” Paul declared,

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.” Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.
(Galatians 4:6–7)

By grace, God not only forgave our sins, He welcomed us into His family and made us heirs with His Son. He slipped on our finger a ring that shows we belong to Him and have a place at His banquet table—accepted, secure, and loved!

One of the greatest examples of grace in Scripture is in the account of a man who, although undeserving like us, was given a seat at a king’s banquet table. His name is one we would never have known if it had not been for grace: Mephibosheth.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Sometimes God’s rainbow of grace is obscured by clouds of legalism and the impossible demands of others. In the space below, tell the Lord about the pressure you may feel trying to live up to others’ expectations. Pray that God will open your eyes to all the hues of His grace reflected in this study.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Mephibosheth’s story can be traced to a vow that David made to Jonathan, Mephibosheth’s father. It was during the days when Jonathan’s father, King Saul, was trying to kill David because God had chosen David to become the next king. What was Jonathan’s vow, and how did David respond (*1 Samuel 20:12–17*)?



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For years, David was a fugitive on the run until Saul was killed during a battle with the Philistines. Tragically, Jonathan was killed too. In the frantic aftermath, every family member related to Saul fled for their lives, and young Mephibosheth was injured. What happened to five-year-old Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 4:4)?

Saul's dynasty came to an end two years later when Saul's son, Ishbosheth, was murdered by his own captains (4:1–8). Finally, at age 30, David was declared the rightful king of Israel (5:4). He moved his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, which became known as the City of David (5:6–10). After some time passed, he remembered his vow to Jonathan.



Observation: Considering an Example of Grace

Read 2 Samuel 9:1–13. Use the *Searching the Scriptures* method of observation to notice the progression of the passage from David's question, to his search, and to his provision of grace. Also, notice key phrases that reveal David's heart of grace.

A Question Asked—2 Samuel 9:1–4

The first task for most kings in David's day was to eliminate the previous king's remaining heirs who might threaten the new king's rule. What strikes you by contrast as you read David's question (2 Samuel 9:1)?



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The Hebrew word for “kindness,” *chesed*, has rich theological meaning. What does Isaiah’s prophecy in [Isaiah 54:8–9](#) reveal about the *chesed* of God, translated in the New Living Translation as “everlasting love” and “faithful love?”

David’s question led him to an old servant in Saul’s household named Ziba. What did Ziba tell David ([2 Samuel 9:2–4](#))? Write down the meaning of the town name *Lo-debar* from the online version of *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*. What does the name suggest about the lifeless condition in which Mephibosheth was living?

A Man Sought—2 Samuel 9:5–6

What happened when David sent for Mephibosheth ([2 Samuel 9:5–6](#))? Based on the history of hostility of kings toward former kings’ heirs, what might Mephibosheth have assumed about David’s intentions?



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A Privilege Provided—2 Samuel 9:7–13

David didn't summon Mephibosheth to kill him but to show him *chesed*. What gestures of kindness did David shower upon Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:7–13)?

From his barren place of exile, Lo-debar, where conditions were harsh and food was scarce, Mephibosheth was ushered into a place of plenty with servants to tend his needs. David even welcomed Mephibosheth to his family table, making him equal in status to his own children. What grace!



Interpretation: Seeing the Analogies of Grace

Mephibosheth did not earn David's favor through personal merit, and neither could he offer anything in exchange for David's generosity. If Mephibosheth had, it would not have been grace! Grace is acceptance without reservation, forgiveness without condemnation, pardon without probation. It is unconditional, unrestrained love from the giver to the receiver.

As we compare Mephibosheth's grace encounter with David to our relationship with the Son of David, Jesus Christ, we find deeper layers of meaning for us today. According to Chuck Swindoll, there are at least eight analogies between the grace that David showed Mephibosheth and the grace that God has extended to us through Christ. Read the verses in the right column of the following chart, then fill in the theological analogy. We filled in the first one as an example.



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The Account David's Grace toward Mephibosheth	The Theological Analogy God's Grace toward Us
Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son, born in his image.	Genesis 1:27 Humans were created as God's children in His image.
Mephibosheth suffered a fall that crippled him for life.	Romans 5:12
David sought someone to whom he might extend grace.	Luke 19:10
Undeserving Mephibosheth couldn't earn the king's favor but simply receive it.	John 1:12
David took Mephibosheth from a barren place to the royal banquet table.	Revelation 19:9
David gave Mephibosheth the same royal status as his own children.	Ephesians 1:5
Mephibosheth's disability was a constant reminder of David's grace.	2 Corinthians 12:9
David gave Mephibosheth the same privileges as his own sons and daughters.	Galatians 4:4–7

Out of his love for Jonathan, David sought anyone to whom he might extend grace. God also, because of His love for His Son and acceptance of His atoning death on the cross, continues to seek anyone to whom He might extend His grace. What should be our response to grace? The apostle Paul modeled how to respond.



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Correlation: The Life-changing Power of Grace

Like Mephibosheth, Paul received grace with humility, and his life was dramatically transformed. Read Paul's own words of how grace changed him, and write down what you learn from his example (*1 Corinthians 15:9–10*).



Application: Suggestions for Living Freely and Responsibly

In his message, Chuck described a woman who could never please her demanding boss. She spent long hours striving for his approval until, finally, he tersely mumbled, “Well done,” and walked away. He couldn't even look her in the eyes. What was her response after a year of living under her supervisor's gloomy, graceless attitude? Rebellion.

In contrast, David showed unconditional love toward Mephibosheth. David could have refused to show mercy to the heir of Saul's kingdom. Instead, David showered grace upon Mephibosheth, and the undeserving man remained loyal to the king for life.

Likewise, Paul's response to grace was lifelong devotion to Christ and determination to show grace to others. Paul's credo could have been stated in three sentences:

- God does what He does by grace.
- I am what I am by the grace of God.
- I let others be what they are by the grace of God.



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God's grace can transform your life too. Think back to your opening prayer. Has God opened your eyes to all the hues of His grace that overarch your life? What has He revealed to you about His unconditional love for you through Christ? (Remember Chuck's eight analogies.)

Have you had an experience like the woman with the graceless boss? What was it like, and what did you learn?

How may God be leading you to shower grace upon those you know and show kindness to the "Mephibosheths" in your life? How can you make Paul's "credo" your own?

When we sit at that royal banquet table in heaven, we will have so much to be thankful for. And all the praise will go to the Lord Jesus, whose face shines with grace!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your open arms inviting me to Your banquet table. Thank You for taking away my blindness when I trusted in Your Son for forgiving me. You have drawn me to Yourself through Your unconditional love and covered my life from beginning to end with the beautiful blessings of grace. I give You my heart and lift my voice in eternal praise through Jesus Christ, my Lord, amen.



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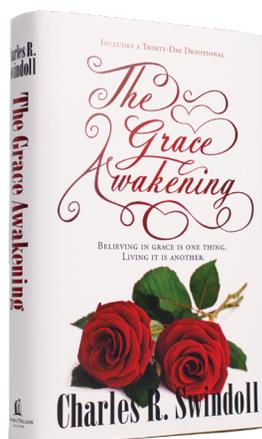
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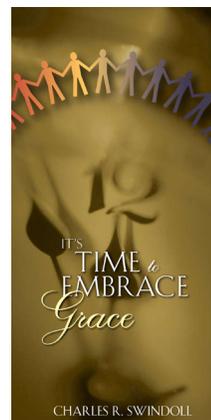
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

