

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL

STUDY SIX

The Magnificent *Chesed* of God

Selected Scriptures

If we ever have the feeling of relief, God has given it to us. He's the author of relief. He is the one who grants us the peace, the satisfaction, the ease.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

MICAH had just earned his master of divinity degree with honors from seminary. On their drive to a graduation party that evening, he and his wife Sarah recounted God's faithfulness throughout their educational journey and anticipated his recent call to serve as associate pastor of Hope Chapel.

Despite the accomplishment and hopeful future, Micah's face bore emotional distress.

"We followed God's call in every way, Sarah. Before I enrolled, we searched the Scriptures, sought the Holy Spirit, and experienced peace. It was the right decision. But I'm pained under the weight of our \$33,000 of educational debt. We're heading into ministry. I'm scared."

At the graduation party, Micah met Mason, a local businessman. Enjoying hors d'oeuvres, their immediate chemistry led to an easy and lengthy conversation. Micah felt encouraged in the fellowship, but his continued preoccupation with the impending financial payoff stole the balance of his evening.

After the congratulatory goodbyes, while exiting at the front door, Mason stopped Micah, motioned him aside, and slipped a check into his hand. The check was made out to Micah . . . for \$33,000.

Mason leaned in. "Your heart is to serve God. The Lord has blessed me with resources, and I want to *relieve* you of that weight. Go, freely serve Him."



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Our God delights in relieving the burdens of His people—in a similar way that the businessman paid the debt of the young pastor. But God’s acts of relief stretch beyond putting money in a bank account. This *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study explores the Old Testament concept of *chesed*, or God’s loyal love, with a look at how God showers His *unfailing mercy* over every parched area of our lives.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare your heart to engage His Word today, reflect on David’s prayer below from Psalm 103:8–13. Let his words guide you in your adoration and requests to God.

*The LORD is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.
He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.
For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.
He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.
The LORD is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The rivulets of His mercy flow into every nook and cranny, refreshing and relieving our thirsty souls. The following five individuals in Scripture illustrate the circumstances in which God shows His mercy and the ways He brings relief.

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Observation: God's Burden-Lifting Mercy

In the chart below, first read the Old Testament account to understand the context. Then observe carefully the verse(s) in **bold**. Afterward, record the main character mentioned, his or her burden, and the merciful relief from God.

| Scripture | Character | Character's Burden | God's Merciful Relief |
|--|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Genesis 39:1–23</i> (21–23) | | | |
| <i>Ruth 1:1–9</i> (8–9) | | | |
| <i>2 Samuel 9:1–13</i> (1, 3, 7) | | | |
| <i>Job 10:1–19</i> (12) | | | |
| <i>Psalms 32:1–6, 10;</i> <i>51:1</i> (32:10; 51:1) | | | |

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When I am treated unfairly, God's mercy relieves my bitterness. When I grieve over the loss, God's mercy relieves my anger. When I struggle with a handicap, God's mercy relieves self-pity. When I endure physical pain, mercy relieves my hopelessness. When I deal with sinful actions, God's mercy relieves my guilt.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: God's Mercy Brings Relief

When interpreting a passage, Pastor Chuck seeks to understand what the passage *means* by defining key words. Take a few minutes to get an overview of the biblical use of *mercy*—rendered *chesed* in Hebrew—by reading a Bible dictionary entry for this concept. For a free, online option, check out *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Record any insights that stand out to you.

Now consider Pastor Chuck's simple definition of mercy:

Mercy is God's active compassion which He demonstrates to the miserable. . . . It is a divine action on our behalf through which He brings about a sense of relief.¹

Joseph was suffering the consequences of unfair treatment. Ruth was grieving the loss of her husband. Mephibosheth was struggling with the limitations of a disability. Job was agonizing in his physical pain. And David was bearing the awful guilt of his sin.

God's mercies looked different to each person. How did God shape His mercy to meet the specific need of each individual?

What insight into God's *chesed* do you learn from these examples?

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Correlation: Mercy—A Window into God’s Heart

Ephesians 2:1–7 beautifully captures the depth of God’s mercy toward believers. Take a few minutes to read this passage. What was our spiritual condition when God exercised mercy? What blessings do Christians enjoy because of His mercy?

In his letter to his protégé, Timothy, the apostle Paul spotlighted God’s mercy through his own testimony. Read *1 Timothy 1:12–13*. How did Paul describe his former ways? What did God’s mercy do within him?

God’s mercy is a gushing fountain bringing relief to anyone who opens his or her heart to Him. God showed mercy to the Ninevites by giving them an opportunity to repent through Jonah’s preaching and by holding back His judgment (*Jonah 3:10; 4:10–11*). In Jesus’ parable in *Luke 10:30–37*, an unlikely Samaritan modeled God’s heart of mercy by caring for the wounded man on the road.

No one, however, demonstrates God’s mercy like Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect sin-bearer. When He was being crucified, He uttered the words found in *Luke 23:34*. What does this phrase spoken *by* the Son *to* the Father, say about His compassionate mercy toward the worst of sinners?

Christ sees all pain, all injustice, and all sin—and desires to exercise mercy to bring us relief. He embodies the compassionate, never-ending, lovingkindness of God!

God loves us not because of something in ourselves but because of something in Himself. In His love He demonstrates His grace that brings forgiveness. On top of that, grace prompts mercy, and we find relief. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Exercising Our Mercy Muscle

God is generous in extending His mercy, compassion, and relief to us, sometimes directly and sometimes through others. Reflect on the Old Testament characters and truths we've covered. Of the five "miseries" mentioned for which God showed His mercy, which one do you most closely identify with?

1. The bitterness of being treated unfairly
2. The pain and heartache of grief
3. The discouragement of a disability
4. The hopelessness of physical pain
5. The guilt and shame of sinful actions

Is there one story of mercy that most encouraged you or gave you hope? How has God shown you mercy in this area? What principle or application are you drawing from it?

How has God used other people in your circle to be His hands and feet to you?

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Take a moment to reflect on your loved ones and others in your circle. How can you become the gentle hand of Jesus to them? Does one especially come to mind who's in need of relief? Pray for that person and consider what way, however small, you might be able to help.

Oh, that we become people like God, people of mercy! When we see those who are in need, when we ourselves are in need, that we become people of mercy. May we lessen our demands, may we increase our compassion, just as our God does with us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Close your study by making Pastor Chuck's prayer your own.

Thank You, Father, for tender mercy from heaven. How beautifully it balances Your sovereignty and Your justice and holiness. How greatly we need it. May we commune with You, and may we worship You. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *The Mystery of God's Will* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 120.

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Marshall F. Davis in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1987, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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