Lesson 18

Grace

**Principle 6**: Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I’ve done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." (Matthew 5:7)*

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)*

**Step 9**: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23 –24)*

**Introduction**

Tonight, we are going to finish discussing Principle 6. We have talked about how to evaluate all our relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us, and make amends for the harm that we have done to others, when possible, without expecting anything back.

As we grow as Christians and as we grow in our recovery, we want to follow the guidance and directions of Jesus Christ. As we get to know Him better, we want to model His teachings and model His ways. We want to become more like Him. Honestly, if we are going to implement Principle 6 to the best of our ability, we need to learn to model God’s grace. But how?

**Grace**

The key verses of Celebrate Recovery are 2 Corinthians 12:9 – 10: “But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. Then Christ’s power can live in me. For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles for Christ. Because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.”"

Celebrate Recovery is built on and centered in Christ’s grace and love for each of us.

Let’s look at tonight’s acrostic: GRACE.

**G**od’s gift

**R**eceived by our faith

**A**ccepted by God’s love

**C**hrist paid the price

**E**verlasting gift

The *G* in grace is GOD’S gift.

Grace is a gift. Grace cannot be bought. It is freely given by God to you and me. When we offer (give) our amends and expect nothing back, that’s a gift from us to those whom we have hurt.

Romans 3:24 tells us, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

First Peter 1:13 says, “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

If my relationship with God was dependent on my being perfect, I would have trouble relating to God most of the time. Thank God that my relationship with Him is built on His grace and love for me. He gives the strength to make the amends and offer the forgiveness that Principle 6 requires.

And how do we receive God’s gift of grace? That’s the *R* in grace: RECEIVED by our faith.

No matter how hard we may work, we cannot earn our way into heaven. Only by professing our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior can we experience His grace and have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8 – 9 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Let me share another verse with you. Philippians 3:8-9 states, “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

You and I tend to be more interested in what we *do*. God is more interested in what we *are*.

Romans 5:2 says of Jesus, “Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.”

Just a word of warning: Our walk needs to match our talk. Our beliefs and values are seen by others in our actions. And it is through our faith in Christ that we can find the strength and courage needed for us to take the action Principle 6 requires: making our amends and offering our forgiveness.

The next letter in grace is *A*. We are ACCEPTED by God’s love.

God loved you and me while we were still out there sinning. Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

We can, in turn, love others because God first loved us. We can also forgive others because God first forgave us. Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Ephesians 2:4-5 reminds us, “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

I don’t know about you, but I know that I do not deserve God’s love. But the good news is He accepts me in spite of myself! He sees all my failures and loves me anyway. And the same goes for you.

Hebrews 4:16 tells us, “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Let’s move on to the *C* in grace: CHRIST paid the price.

Jesus died on the cross so that all our sins, all our wrongs, are forgiven. He paid the price, sacrificed Himself for you and me so that we may be with Him forever.

When we accept Christ’s work on the cross, we are made a new creation. We can then rely on God’s strength and power to enable us to forgive those who have hurt us. We can set aside our selfishness and speak the truth in love. We focus only on our part in making amends or offering our forgiveness.

Ephesians 1:7 says, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace”

The last letter in grace is *E*: God’s grace is an EVERLASTING gift.

Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, God’s gift of grace is forever.

Let me read a quote from the Big Book of AA, pages 83 –84: “Once you have completed Step Nine, you will know a new freedom and a new happiness.... You will comprehend the word serenity and know peace.... You will suddenly realize that God is doing for you what you could not do for yourself.”

And here’s a quote from the Bible: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39).

Also, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 states, “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”

My life verse is 1 Peter 2:9 – 10, where God says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

I stand before you as a product of God’s grace. Everyone here this evening who has let Christ into his or her life is also a product of God’s grace. As we model this grace, we will be able to do the work that Principle 6 requires.

Let’s close tonight with Colossians 1:6: “The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.”