



Fall 2025 Marriage Study | Week 5

Grace & Forgiveness in Marriage

Opening Icebreaker (5 minutes)

Question:

"What's one 'unfair' thing your spouse or someone close to you has done that turned out to be a gift in disguise?"

(Example: They forgave you when you didn't apologize yet, served you when you were cranky, encouraged you after you failed.)

Leader Notes:

- Encourage light, quick sharing – 2-3 responses will set the tone.
- Transition: *"We're talking tonight about grace – and how God's version of love isn't about keeping score but about giving what's undeserved."*
- If singles are present: broaden to friendships, family, or mentors.

Scripture Focus (5 minutes)

Read aloud together:

- **Luke 6:27-36** – Jesus teaches us to love beyond fairness.
- **Romans 2:4** – God's kindness leads us to repentance.
- **Matthew 18:21-35** – The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

Group Prompt:

Ask: *"What do these passages show us about God's grace, and how it differs from human fairness?"*

Leader Notes:

- Draw out contrasts: fairness vs. generosity, deserved vs. undeserved, keeping score vs. releasing debt.

- Emphasize: *Grace shocks us because it feels “unfair,” but it’s also what saves us.*

Part 1 - What Grace Really Is (10 minutes)

Key Truth: Grace is undeserved love rooted in God’s character, not our spouse’s performance.

Questions:

- How would you define *grace* in your own words?
- In Luke 6, Jesus calls us to love those who don’t deserve it. Why do you think this is central to Christian living – and to marriage?
- Where do you find it hardest to show grace in marriage (or close relationships)? (e.g., repeated failures, unmet expectations, careless words)
- How has experiencing God’s grace personally shaped your ability to extend it to others?

Application Challenge:

This week, ask God to reveal one place in your marriage (or friendships, if single) where you’ve been keeping score. Write it down – then pray for the strength to replace it with undeserved grace.

Leader Notes:

- If answers are shallow: share a short story of how God showed grace to you.
- Transition: *“If grace is God’s gift, then what’s the biggest threat that poisons it in our relationships? Let’s talk about that.”*

Part 2 - What Poisons Grace (10 minutes)

Key Truth: Self-righteousness kills intimacy. Humility revives it.

Questions:

- What does self-righteousness sound like in a marriage? (Examples: *"I would never do that," "After all I've done for you..."*)
- Romans 14 reminds us that being "technically right" can still damage a relationship. Have you seen that in your own experience?
- Why is it so hard to let go of being right, even when you know it's hurting the relationship?
- What would it look like to choose humility instead of winning an argument?

Application Challenge:

Before your next disagreement, pause and pray: *"Lord, help me see my own sin before I focus on theirs."*

Leader Notes:

- Encourage laughter when describing self-righteousness – it keeps the tone honest but not condemning.
- Redirect if venting starts: remind the group the goal is *self-examination, not spouse-blaming*.

Part 3 - What Grace Looks Like in Action (10 minutes)

Key Truth: Forgiveness is costly – but it's the clearest picture of the gospel in marriage.

Questions:

- What stood out to you in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant?
- Why is forgiveness often so difficult when we've been genuinely hurt?
- What's the difference between forgiving someone and pretending nothing happened?
- Why is grace "unfair" – and why is that good news?
- (Optional for singles): How has receiving God's grace shaped the way you respond to others, especially in unfair situations?

Application Challenge:

Identify one offense in your marriage (or close relationship) you've been holding onto. Pray this week for courage to release it – even if the other person never apologizes or fully understands.

Leader Notes:

- Gently remind: Forgiveness doesn't mean excusing sin or ignoring harm. It means releasing the debt because Christ paid for it.
- Transition to close: *"Grace is hard, but it's also holy – and Jesus says our willingness to forgive reflects whether we've received His forgiveness."*

Closing Scripture & Prayer (3-5 minutes)

Read aloud:

Matthew 6:14-15

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Prayer Points:

- Thank God for His radical, undeserved grace.
- Ask Him to make grace the dominant tone in marriages and relationships.
- Ask for the Spirit's power to forgive freely, love generously, and reflect Christ's "unfair" but beautiful love.

Leader Notes:

- Suggest 1-2 people pray aloud, then close. Or invite everyone to pray sentence prayers of thanks for God's grace.
- End with: *"Grace is not natural, but it is possible – because Christ has first given it to us."*