

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.”*