



21 GRAMS

Soul Food – Part 1

#NP21GRAMS

Week 4
4 of 5
October 23, 2016

Bottom Line: Grace is receiving what we need, not what we deserve.

Icebreaker: What is the difference between a need and a want? Give a personal example of each.

Key Verse: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

This past weekend we defined grace as receiving what we need, not what we deserve. Another way to look at the grace of God is God’s unmerited favor. Before God, we all deserve to be judged for the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Every word and action will be measured at the end our lives. Of course, we all know the problem with this is that we can never measure up to God’s holy and perfect standard.

We feel this problem every time we try to earn the blessing and favor of God by our works. The more we try to earn favor through our works the greater burden we begin to carry because we are chasing a feeling that we can never achieve – the feeling that we are right with God. Yet notice how profound, direct, and tender Jesus’ words are here in Matthew.

Jesus has said to those trying to earn favor, “come to Me.” This is a profound statement of acceptance. Jesus sees the load we carry and He wants us to know that we are accepted and loved and cared for. He wants us to take the load off our own backs and yoke it to His because He is stronger and more suited to carry the load – in fact, He already has. Jesus is asking for us to make His grace our sustenance.

Jesus is saying that our significance is not found in the things we do or the person we are becoming, but in our dependence on Him. This is a radical reversal of a me-first culture that tells us to pursue our own desires and interests at any cost. Jesus stands in the gap and says true achievement is obeying the will of the Father, which Jesus has done on our behalf. From here we enter His rest and extend His grace to others.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight’s message, what stood out to you?

Dwight said the cycle of grace is . . .

- Acceptance
- Sustenance
- Significance
- Achievement

He said we live in grace by surrendering to God, resisting the devil and spending time with God.

What do we deserve from Jesus? What has He given us instead?

How do we see the cycle of grace at work at NewPointe?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

What is our means of acceptance before God? Have you accepted your acceptance from God? What happens in our souls when we don’t embrace this acceptance?

What happens when grace becomes your sustenance and the thing that drives you? What would it look like to want the things you need?

How does the grace of God working in your life give you identity and significance? Why is this a better identity than one found in working to earn God’s favor?

How does receiving the grace of God compel us to extend the grace of God to others?

What is the opposite of grace? What does grace-centered achievement look like?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together, as a group:

1. Praise God for His powerful and effective work in your life and the grace that gives life to your soul. Spend some time asking God to make His grace real to you every moment of every day. Let this motivation guide you as you seek to live a life in obedience to Him from grace, not out of a misplaced desire to earn approval.
2. This past weekend we talked about the cycle of grace: acceptance – sustenance – significance – achievement. Do you feel each of these? If not, which one are you lacking? How can we as a group rally around each other to help one another realize and wholeheartedly accept God's incredible grace?

EVALUATION/ACTION **Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ**

Bottom Line: Grace is receiving what we need, not what we deserve.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Day 1: Matthew 3:16-17

Day 2: Matthew 11:18-19

Day 3: Matthew 5:13-16

Day 4: John 4:34

Day 5: Romans 12:9-16

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)