

AMAZING GRACE



MIDYEAR PRAYER, FASTING, AND CONSECRATION

6-8 AUGUST 2020



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6-8 AUGUST 2020



EVERY NATION
AUCKLAND CITY
Honour God. Make Disciples.

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FASTING 101

CONNECT

All of us have needs and wants. Needs are things that we cannot live without. Wants are things we would like to have. What are some of your needs? What are some of your wants? There are many things we need and want. But sometimes, we focus so much on our needs and wants that we put aside our relationship with God. Fasting lets us focus more on God by setting aside our needs and wants.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is stopping an activity (usually eating) for a period of time to focus more on God. We replace eating or using our gadgets with more time with God. This means praying, worshiping, and reading the Bible. These activities build our relationship with God.

When our parents speak to us, we should pay attention and listen to them. Fasting helps us pay attention and listen to God. It helps us put aside distractions. We say to God, "I am going to listen to You because You are my Father. I trust You!"

Jesus gave us an example of fasting in Matthew 4. Jesus knew that He would need strength and power for His ministry. He prepared by fasting for forty days in the desert. During this time, He was tempted by Satan. His response to that temptation is the truth we can hold on to for strength when we fast:

"People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." **MATTHEW 4:4**

Fasting is usually keeping yourself from eating and drinking as you devote more time for God. But you can also fast from different media (TV, video games) and technology (gadgets, Internet) if you cannot fast from food. The important thing is to keep your focus away from the things the world offers to spend more time with God.

BEFORE FASTING

1. Pray

Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. Write down your specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

2. Commit

Pray about the kind of fast that you will do and commit to it ahead of time. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decision. Also, ask your parents and maybe even your doctor if you are allowed to do a specific type of food fast.

3. Act

If you will be fasting from food, start eating smaller portions a few days before you fast. Avoid sugary and fatty foods. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast.

WHILE FASTING

1. Focus

Set aside time to read God's word and pray. This devotional will help you go through your fast. Just be ready to listen to God's voice and do what the Holy Spirit is telling you.

2. Pray

If you can, join at least one prayer meeting in your church. Pray for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and nations throughout the week.

3. Fill Up

During mealtimes, if you're fasting from food, read the Bible and pray instead. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Keep in mind that you may find yourself becoming physically weak, tired, impatient, or irritated. If you're doing a different type of fast, read the Bible and pray during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from (for example, browsing through social media or playing video games).

AFTER FASTING

1. Eat

If you fasted from food, reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day. It may be tempting, but try not to eat junk food and sweets right away. If you've finished a different type of fast, remember what God revealed to you as you spent time with Him. Take what you learned from the fast into your everyday life.

2. Pray

Don't stop praying! Trust that God will keep His promises and knows what He's doing. Don't stop believing in and listening to God for the rest of the year. Be in faith and expect God to answer your prayers!

MY PLAN

DAY 1

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

DAY 2

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

DAY 3

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

I AM THANKFUL TO GOD FOR . . .

How did God answer your prayers so far this year?

FOR THE REST OF 2020, I WILL CONTINUE TO BELIEVE GOD FOR ...

What are your prayer requests for the rest of this year?

Myself (e.g., to be closer to God)

My Family (e.g., good health for parents)

My School (e.g., good grades)

My Friends (e.g., for friends to know Jesus)

Others (e.g., for more people to know Christ)

My prayer partner is _____



INTRODUCTION

AMAZING GRACE

In February, we set apart one week to pray and fast. This was so we could hear from God and know where He wants us to go and what He wants us to do for the whole year. We asked for God’s amazing grace to lead our lives. Now it’s August, and a lot of unexpected things have happened since February. But we know that God’s grace prepared us for this and kept us going. Until today, our faith and attitude stay the same—we humbly ask God to let His amazing grace rule and be seen in our lives.

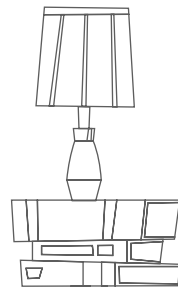
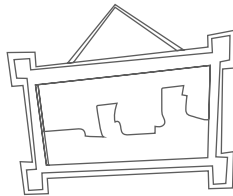
God’s grace gives us confidence and faith in the midst of any challenges we experience. As we focus on His grace at work in our lives, we can continue to hope, knowing that God will move. As His children, let us look even more closely into God’s amazing grace for us.

PREPARING FOR THE FAST GOD'S RICH GRACE

READ: EPHESIANS 1:3–10

We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. **EPHESIANS 1:7**

One day, Ben's grandmother said she had something for him. "I'll be leaving soon," she said, "so I want to give you something precious." She gave him the key to her attic, which held relics and other old and secondhand objects. Ben was upset at his grandmother for giving him worthless objects. He felt bad that while his friends were rich and owned the latest gadgets and fashions, all he had was old vases and ornaments. He put it out of his mind. Years passed, and Ben forgot about the attic. One day he remembered it, and brought one of the objects to an antique collector to find out its value. To his surprise, the collector told him that the ornament was a rare and valuable piece. Ben brought the collector to the attic to see the rest of the items. The antique collector was delighted and told Ben that everything in the attic belonged to rare collections that could be sold for millions. Imagine Ben's surprise!



Like Ben, we have the tendency to look around and feel like we have less compared to others. Worse, we even ignore God's grace because we don't know how priceless and abundant it is!

In his letters to the church in Ephesus, the apostle Paul's favorite word to describe grace was "rich." Why? In the same way that Ben discovered the true worth of the objects in his attic, we will begin to understand the rich grace of God that surrounds us. This grace is wonderful, great, and unbelievable—and God is giving it to us!

Below are two priceless truths that we can learn from the verse above:

- 1. God paid the ultimate price for us.** We know the value of something by how much someone is willing to pay for it, like the antique collector who knew the items were worth millions. Did you know that someone also paid for you? God paid for you with the precious blood of Jesus. Jesus gave His life for you—that's how valuable you are.
- 2. God saved us because He loves us.** If Ben asked his grandmother for a gift, and she gave him one, we would already call her "generous." But she gave Ben the key to the attic full of priceless treasure even when he did not ask, because she loved him. In the same way, God sent Jesus to save us and forgive us, not because we asked Him to, but because He wanted to. He gives the gift of salvation to all who want to receive it. God gave us the gift of His rich grace not because we are deserving or are successful. He freely gives His grace to us because He is a loving and generous God.



Because of the riches of God's grace, we can receive His overflowing love and forgiveness.

NOTES

 **REFLECT**

Read Ephesians 1:3-7 and write it down in your journal. Encircle the promises that you can claim. Underline those that you find difficult to understand. Put a star on those that made you say “Wow!”

Write your insights about this passage.

God’s grace can be seen in many forms. How have you experienced God’s grace so far? Write them down or draw them in your journal.

Example:

“I have loving parents!”

“God provides for me!”



PRAY

Lord, thank You for sending Jesus Christ so that I can experience freedom and the forgiveness of my sins. I know that You chose me and have blessed me with every spiritual blessing in Christ. May Your grace, which You have given to me freely, make me live according to Your purpose. May You give me the courage to share this gift of grace to those around me, so that they can experience it as well. In Jesus' name, amen.

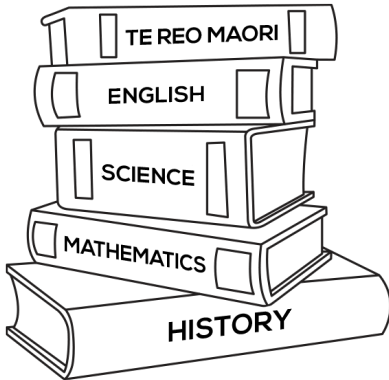
GRACE THAT BUILDS UP

1

READ: ACTS 20:22–32

Now I trust God to take care of you. I commit you to the message about his grace. It can build you up. Then you will share in what God plans to give all his people. **ACTS 20:32**

What would you do if one day your school decided that instead of Math, Science, English, and the rest of the subjects, all you'll do every day is watch movies and read comic books? While you might be overjoyed, a school like that wouldn't give you a good foundation for the things you'll want to accomplish later.



In the same way that your parents entrust you to your school and teachers to teach you the right things, the apostle Paul entrusted the believers to God and to the message of His grace. This statement has two lessons for its hearers:

- 1. God's grace builds strength in us.** God's grace will *build you up*, as Paul said in the Scripture. It helps us become strong. The way our schools build us up to be ready for the next academic levels, God's grace prepares us for the spiritual challenges that we will be facing. No matter what shakings come our way, God's grace is sure to strengthen and build us up!
- 2. God's grace gives us access to our inheritance in Christ.**

The Scripture says, "*Then you will share in what God plans to give all his people.*" When God gives us His grace, we instantly have a part in the inheritance that God has promised to give His people. This is great news—and we don't even have to work for it!

What does this tell us? If you feel weak and powerless, God promises to give you power and increase your strength (Isaiah 40:29). If you feel like you don't have everything you want, by His grace you are rich because you have inherited eternal life and the kingdom of God.



God's grace builds strength in us and gives us access to our inheritance in Christ!

NOTES

 **REFLECT**

In the same way that our lessons in school help us with many things, God also uses His word to teach and help us. What are some of God’s commands, words, and promises that you turn to when you need strength? How do they help you?

Example:

God knows my needs (Matthew 6:24). I do not worry when I need something because I know that God provides for me.

In school, to make sure that you know your lessons, you do activities and review lessons. How about with God’s word? How can you continue being built up so that you will stand strong, no matter what will happen?



PRAY

Father, I know that apart from the grace You have freely given to me, I will not be able to stand strong and have faith. Thank You for the gift of Your grace that builds me up, making me sturdy in my faith. I am confident knowing that whatever comes my way, Your grace holds me and makes me strong. I will not shrink back from any challenge I may face because I know that You are there with me. Thank You that by Your grace, I have access to my inheritance in Christ. In the mighty name of Jesus, amen.

GRACE THAT OVERFLOWS

2

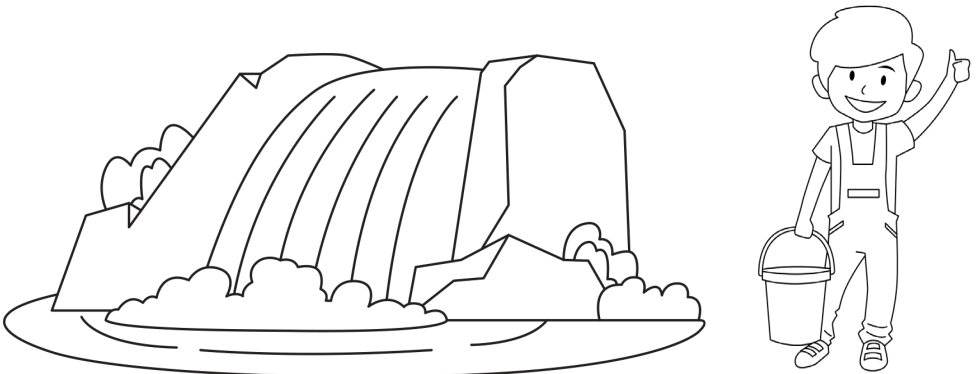
READ: JOHN 1:14–18

God is full of grace. From him we have all received grace in place of the grace already given. In the past, God gave us grace through the law of Moses. Now, grace and truth come to us through Jesus Christ.

JOHN 1:16-17

Have you ever wondered if a waterfall will ever run out of water? Is it like a faucet that you can turn off when you don't need water anymore? The apostle John uses the word *fullness* to explain God's grace. It means that God is more than happy and eager to bless us, like how a river can't help but overflow into a beautiful waterfall.

Through Jesus, God's grace is always overflowing, never running out! He's just waiting for us to catch it. If you had a pail, could you catch the whole waterfall? It's impossible. In the same way, every day we receive grace from Jesus' fullness, and it will never run out.



What if there was an empty lake and someone asked you to fill it with a bucket? You may work and work, but it is impossible to fill without a good source, like that waterfall we spoke of. We often try to “fill lakes” with our own strength. We try to obey God’s commands by ourselves, or face challenges with our own strength. But this won’t work. The only way to truly obey God and face challenges successfully is through the overflowing source of the grace of God.

Today, you may be in need of God’s favour because of the challenges you’re facing. Remember that the supply of God’s grace is greater than any waterfall. You can draw from a never-ending source of grace—Jesus! If things become overwhelming, His grace will enable you to live through the difficult times. In Him, you can always find mercy and grace!



We have a daily supply of God’s love, mercy, and grace in Christ.

NOTES

 **REFLECT**

When we face challenges, we tend to rely on ourselves and our works to overcome them. What are the usual challenges you face?

**What things do you usually rely on to meet these challenges?
On the other hand, how does God's grace help you overcome the same challenges?**



PRAY

Father, thank You for the sacrifice that Jesus made—that He became flesh, lived on earth, and gave His life for us. Thank You for your supply of grace for me that never runs dry. Even with the challenges in life, I am sure that You will supply love, mercy, and grace for me every day, like an overflowing waterfall. With this, my soul is satisfied. As I read Your word, please continue to show Yourself to me. In Jesus' name, amen.

GRACE THAT ENABLES

3

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–11

But because of God’s grace I am what I am. And his grace was not wasted on me. No, I have worked harder than all the other apostles. But I didn’t do the work. God’s grace was with me. **1 CORINTHIANS 15:10**

The heroes we see in movies usually have two identities: their real identity and their identity as a hero. Spider-Man’s true identity, for example, is a teenage boy named Peter Parker. But Peter first encountered a radioactive spider that bit him. This gave him powers that changed the way he saw himself and made him into the hero called Spider-Man. In the same way, **when we experience God’s grace, it changes how we see ourselves and enables us to be and do what He wants us to be and do.**

The apostle Paul had one of the most amazing transformation stories in the Bible. Christians of his time were terrified of him because he would hunt them down and kill or imprison them. But when Paul encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, he put his faith in Jesus and was totally changed.

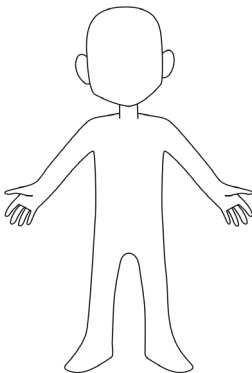
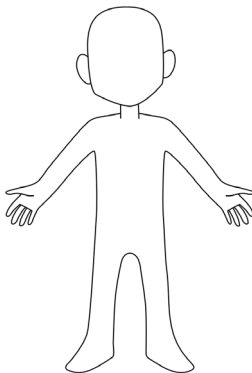
Not only does God’s grace change our identities, it also affects what we do. After becoming Spider-Man, Peter Parker had new and bigger goals. He no longer lived the way he used to. In the same way, Paul now worked very hard to do what God called him to do. He was an excellent preacher, wrote most of the New Testament, and raised many church leaders. But he couldn’t have done any of these without the enabling grace of God.

Like Paul, what we did in the past cannot stop us from fulfilling our new identity in Christ. God’s grace is like a reset button that allows us to start with a new identity. Like Paul, we can declare, *“Because of God’s grace I am what I am.”*

NOTES

REFLECT

Write your name on the blanks. Draw how you imagine you were before and now. Can you describe how you used to view yourself (e.g., scared, unimportant)? How do you view yourself now that you know your identity in Christ (e.g., courageous, helpful)? You can be creative and become a hero yourself!

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PRAY

Thank You, God, for Your enabling grace. Even with my past and my sins, You have shown me grace. I pray that as I live for Your purpose in my life, I will always remember that it is not my works that changed me, but only Your grace. I pray to live and act the way You want me to every day. Thank You for the grace that reminds me of who I am in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

BREAKING THE FAST: GRACE THAT EMPOWERS

READ: ZECHARIAH 4:1–10

So he said to me, “A message from the Lord came to Zerubbabel. The Lord said, ‘Your strength will not get my temple rebuilt. Your power will not do it either. Only the power of my Spirit will do it,’ says the Lord who rules over all.

“So nothing can stop Zerubbabel from completing the temple. Even a mountain of problems will be smoothed out by him. When the temple is finished, he will put its most important stone in place. Then the people will shout, ‘God bless it! God bless it!’” **ZECHARIAH 4:6-7**

Do you remember a time when your parents asked you to do something new? Maybe you were asked to speak in front of a crowd, order food by yourself, or go to the grocery on your own. Or maybe something even harder. Did you feel scared or nervous? This was also how Zerubbabel felt. Zerubbabel had been told to rebuild God’s temple. Aside from this big task, he was faced with two problems: enemies were against the building project, and God’s people were feeling tired and discouraged. But God had promised Zerubbabel that He would give them grace to finish the task.

Recently, our nation and the world have faced greater and more difficult challenges than just speaking in front of a crowd or buying food by ourselves. The important thing is to remember this: we don’t only have our parents to cheer us on—we have our Father in heaven who will enable us to accomplish what He has assigned to us. *Not by might, nor by power, but by God’s Spirit.* We will finish the task, not because of our confidence, skills, or talents, but by God’s Spirit!

God makes sure that His will always gets done. In the story above, Zerubbabel worked six more years before the temple was completed! He never gave up even if it took years. He was relying on God's grace, which gave him strength to finish the task. In the same way, we will be surprised by how much we can accomplish through the Spirit of God.

God is fashioning a different kind of building. The building is us. We can be sure that God will complete the good work that He started in us (Philippians 1:6). And He will not only complete His work in us, but will even work through us for His will to be done.



With God's grace, we can fulfill His call for our lives.

NOTES

 **REFLECT**

When you face challenges, how can you rely on God's grace?

What challenges are you facing right now? Think about how God is using these challenges to build you up. For example, your faith is built as you trust God to move in your nation's problems. Your patience is built when you tell people about who Jesus is even when they don't want to listen.



PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the grace with which You begin and complete Your good work in me. I know that without Your grace, I can't do anything You ask. Please remind me that I can do Your will not by might nor by power, but only by Your Spirit. I pray for Your grace to sustain me and help me finish all the tasks You have set for me. In the mighty name of Jesus, amen.



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