

BBC Youth Story for June 5 – Talk About Gifts!

As a boy growing up in a church, I heard the word *grace* a lot. I didn't think much of it...I just thought the minister was talking about my aunt Grace in Florida. After I was corrected, my concept changed. Grace then became the prayer we said before dinner. Once again, I was corrected. Somebody told me that grace was "undeserved favor." Yeah thanks, that really clears thing up. What is undeserved favor?

Grace is a gift from God which we don't deserve, but which we receive anyway because He chooses to give it. This gift is His unconditional love. God's love is not based on what we do, but on who we are-His creation. There are no strings attached to His gift. I tried to explain this concept one Sunday morning to my youth group by inviting a visitor to come forward and receive a \$20 bill. She took it, and then tried to give it back. She didn't deserve it and hadn't earned it, but I gave it to her anyway.

My gift to her was only for the sake of illustration. But God's gift to us is an expression of His love. We don't understand it and we don't deserve it, but He gives it anyway.

God gives His grace to all who come to Him. But to the person who is not a Christian, grace is only a word. It becomes real when they step into a loving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

As Christians, we can respond to God's generosity in one of two ways. One response is arrogant disobedience. This attitude says, "Since God will forgive me anyway, I'm going to blow off Christianity for now, live a life of sin, and then get back in touch with God when I'm on my deathbed. If grace is available to sinners, what's the point of me trying to work hard to be good? Some people call this response "cheap grace," mocking and misusing God's precious gift.

The other option is to respond with thankful obedience. This is an attitude that says, "I don't understand why You love me so much, but I'm thankful and I'm going to show my appreciation by serving You!"

Have you received grace from God? Is your life a living response of thankfulness for His generous, unconditional love? Remember, you can't really teach a lesson you're not already modeling.