

Celebrate Recovery Lesson 18: Grace

An unforgettable thing happens in recovery during Celebrate Recovery lesson 18 because you receive a gift – one that you did not know you were due, one you certainly did not earn, and one that will change your life in a positive way. It's called grace!

How do you accept and model this gift to yourself and others? You do it in the manner that Jesus Christ did! This is good news and bad news; it's amazing that we were given a gift like this when we did nothing to deserve it, but we are given a tough example to follow when it comes to grace!

Celebrate Recovery lesson 18 is an essential part of completing Principle 6. You've done many things with this principle, so you can handle this step, I promise!

Lesson 18 goes hand-in-hand with Step 9 of the Alcoholics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery programs. As mentioned, it also relates to Celebrate Recovery's principle 6 of the CR 8 Principles.

Be prepared for something amazing with this LESSON!

The Gift of Grace in Recovery

Webster's Dictionary defines grace as unmerited divine assistance given to people or a virtue coming from God. Truthfully, what grace is and the many types of grace have always been a bit confusing. After all, why did God give us the gift of grace if we did not earn it?

Specifically, the reasons we received such a gift might be a question for another day. However, it was once explained that grace was like something extra we get in life.

The example given was explaining what mercy and grace were. If you had a nice collection of speeding tickets and a police officer excused them all, that is mercy. Mercy is excusing something you did deserve (such as speeding tickets).

Grace, on the other hand, would happen if the said police officer gave you a paid vacation to Hawaii on top of excusing your speeding tickets. Wouldn't that be nice? So, grace is getting something you did not earn or deserve, and mercy is excusing something you did deserve.

We certainly did not deserve the grace that God freely gave us, but it is a beautiful thing. Consider praying today to thank God for the grace He gave you. Let Him know that you appreciate what His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did on the cross!

What we have received is not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

“In the midst of our failed attempts at loving Jesus, His grace covers us.”

Francis Chan

Lesson 18 Grace Principle & Step

Celebrate Recovery principle 6 is: *Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I’ve done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others. Be careful with this step to not cause harm elsewhere!*

Happy are the merciful.

Matthew 5:7 (TLB)

Happy are the peacemakers.

Matthew 5:9 (TLB)

Step 9 says: *We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there, remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

Celebrate Recovery loves using acrostics, so in lesson 18, we’ll use the acrostic for **GRACE**, which will give us a better understanding of this amazing gift we have received and what to do.

This ACROSTIC is from Celebrate Recovery lesson 18.

- **G**od’s Gift
- **R**eceived by our Faith
- **A**ccepted by God’s Love
- **C**hrist Paid the Price
- **E**verlasting Gift

My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, My power is made perfect in you.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NCV)

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

God's Grace is an essential concept for believers to understand, He freely offers His favor to mankind because Jesus; sacrifice on the Cross purchased forgiveness and salvation for anyone who believes.

Charles Stanley

The **G in grace, is GOD'S gift**, Grace is a gift. Grace cannot be bought. It is freely given by God to you and me. When we offer (give) our amends and expect nothing back, that's a gift from us to those whom we have hurt.

Romans 3:24 NLT

"Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins."

1 Peter 1:13 NLT

"So, prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world."

If my relationship with God was dependent on my being perfect, I would have trouble relating to God most of the time. Thank God that my relationship with Him is built on His grace and Love for me. He gives the strength to make the amends and offer the forgiveness that Principle 6 requires.

How do we receive God's gift of grace?

That's the **R in GRACE: is RECEIVED by our faith**. No matter how hard we may work, we cannot earn our way into heaven. Only by professing our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior can we experience His grace and have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT says:

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Let me share another verse with you.

Philippians 3:9 NLT states:

"I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith."

You and I tend to be more interested in what we do. God is more interested in what we are.

Jesus says in Romans 5:2 NLT:

"Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory."

Just a word of warning: Our walk needs to match our talk. Our beliefs and values are seen by others in our actions. And it is through our faith in Christ that we can find the strength and courage needed for us to take the action Principle 6 requires: making your amends and offering your forgiveness.

The next letter in **GRACE is A**. We are **ACCEPTED by God's Love**. God loved you and me while we were still out there sinning.

Romans 5:8 NLT says:

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

We can, in turn, love others because God first loved us. We can also forgive others because God first forgave us.

Colossians 3:13 NLT says:

“Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”

Ephesians 2:5 NLT reminds us:

“that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)”

I don't know about you, but I know that I do not deserve God's love. But the good news is He accepts me in spite of myself! He sees all my failures and loves me anyway. And the same goes for you.

Hebrews 4:16 NLT says:

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Let's move on to the **C in GRACE**: **Christ paid the price**. Jesus died on the cross so that all our sins, all our wrongs, are forgiven. He paid the price, sacrificed Himself for you and me so that we may be with Him forever. When we accept Christ's work on the cross, we are made a new creation. We can then rely on God's strength and power to enable us to forgive those who have hurt us. We can set aside our selfishness and speak the truth in love. We focus only on our part in making amends or offering our forgiveness.

Ephesians 1:7 NLT says:

“He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.”

The last letter in **GRACE is E: God's grace is an EVERLASTING gift.** Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, God's gift of grace is forever. Let me read a quote from the Big Book of AA, pages 83–84:

“Once you have completed Step Nine, you will know a new freedom and a new happiness.... you will comprehend the word serenity and know peace.... You will suddenly realize that God is doing for you what you could not do for yourself.”

And here's a quote from the real Big Book—the Bible:

Philippians 1:6 NLT

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

Also, **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NLT**

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.”

My life verse is **1 Peter 2:9–10 (NLT)**, where God says,

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. “Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy.”

I stand before you as a product of God's grace. Everyone here this evening who has let Christ into his or her life is also a product of God's grace. As we model this grace, we will be able to do the work that Principle 6 requires. Let's close tonight with Colossians 1:6: “All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.”

Lesson 18 – Highlights:

We have come to the end of Principle 6 where we have made amends, restitution, and offered forgiveness to those who have hurt us.

Now we must choose to receive and model Jesus' free gift of grace.

A Celebrate Recovery Lesson 18 Personal Story

Just like at a meeting, I feel it's important to share a bit about myself, or I wouldn't be doing what **the Lord has called me** to do, so here goes!

I'm **Dennis**, a grateful believer in Jesus.

I **celebrate recovery** addictions from drugs and alcohol, and struggle with controlling others, perfectionism, patience, unforgiveness, resentments and anger!

In looking at my story in relation to Celebrate Recovery lesson 18, please note that it's not easy **bearing your soul** to the world, so I really appreciate you accepting me and my faults as part of my being human!! Also, I trust God to use my stories in the way He needs to!

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him to help you do it, and He will.
Psalm 37:5 (TLB)

Do Not Worry

Too often I've walked through life worried about the next bad thing that is going to happen. I try to **control** all the dynamics of my life to prevent anything unexpected from happening. This is actually just foolish behavior, but it always made sense to me.

Through recovery, I learned that **worrying too much** was a senseless thing to do, as I can only control my actions and reactions, not the actions and reactions of another person. That's what was great about giving my amends; I expected nothing back, as I was taught to do in CR!

I was married at 25, thinking I was wise and ready for a big step in life, but mostly because I was with someone who was susceptible to my instructions. In other words, I was a very **controlling husband** and thought I knew the best course of every action.

Of course, this type of **controlling attitude** only will last for so long before the other person takes a stand and decides they will not allow you to control them! It was a tough pill to swallow – understanding that all I thought I was controlling was really **uncontrollable**.

Our marriage, of course, struggled, probably partly due to my **controlling behavior, lack of patience and my anger**. If you are a control freak, I would suggest you try to back off from that and allow other people to make their own mistakes, decisions, and actions. It's **not your job** to control others!

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own.
Matthew 6:34 (NIV)

Making Amends

When doing this, I recalled how we need to focus on ourselves, not what the other person will do when we offer our amends. **Have an open mind and heart** when you offer amends, and don't expect some grand gesture on the part of the other person! You can do this!!

Never pay back evil for evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest – clear through. Do not quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, as much as possible!
Romans 12:17-18 (TLB)