



Fellowship

Focus In our spiritual lives, there are four levels of growth. We begin by exploring God, move to beginning in God, then we become close to God before finally move to being God-centered. To move past the first level, a person must understand that salvation is through grace—it's not through works—and is a free gift that's easy to receive.

Fun What's your favorite amusement park? Why? What are some of your favorite rides at amusement parks?

Review Key Scriptures: Mark 4:1–9

- As we grow in our walk with God, we'll move from one level in our relationship with Him to the next. We begin with fellowship with God, move to a relationship with Him, then to discipleship and finally to His complete lordship over our lives.
- Several key truths help us to move from one level in our walk with God to the next. When people understand the concept of grace, they'll move from exploring God to the next level, beginning in God.
- The key to understanding grace is knowing it's not based on works. Jesus did all the work for our salvation on the cross—it's a free gift.
- The gift of salvation is easy to receive. Romans 10:9 says, "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Verse 13 continues this thought: "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Group Dynamics Idea The best way to get new people to your group is to invite them. Ask the members of your group to invite someone new. Oftentimes a simple invitation is all it takes for someone to connect to community.

Discuss

1. We grow in our relationship with God similarly to how we grow in our relationships with people. What are some things we do to grow in relationship with others? How can we do similar things to grow in our relationship with God?
2. Read Mark 4:1–9. What does this parable teach about how the enemy comes against the Word of God sown into our lives? How does knowing the enemy's strategy help us guard against his attacks?
3. Can you remember the first time you heard about the truth of salvation through grace? What was that experience like and how did you respond to it?
4. Was there ever a point in your life where you thought God accepted you by merit of your works? How did it feel when you realized you were saved apart from works and you simply had to believe in Jesus' works on your behalf to be saved?
5. How do we sometimes fall back into the trap of thinking our salvation is based on our own merit or works?
6. What are some practical ways you can tell someone this week about salvation through grace?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Wherever you are in your walk with God, He's calling you to go to the next level.
- If you're just learning about God, receive the free gift of His salvation and realize that Jesus completely paid for your every sin so you can spend eternity with God.
- If you've been saved for a long time, don't fall back into the trap of thinking you're saved by works. Share the truth of God's grace and salvation with someone this week.

Pray

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to pay for all my sins. Thank You that I'm not saved by works, but simply through faith. I receive the gift of salvation freely. I ask you to help me move to deeper levels of commitment in my life to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip One role that's important in leadership is developing new leaders. If you haven't already done so, now's a good time in the semester to identify emerging leaders. Invite them to begin sharing in leadership responsibilities.