

GRACE LESSON SEVEN

LAW AND GRACE IN THE GOSPELS

JESUS' LIFE UNDER THE LAW

Though the story of Jesus' life is recorded in the New Testament, He was actually living for the most part under Old Testament conditions. Old Testament laws were still binding on the people, and faithful Jews still tried to obey them. They circumcised their male children on the eighth day (Luke 2:21), they observed the Sabbath as carefully as possible (John 5:10), they offered sacrifices at the temple (Luke 22:7), and they came to Jerusalem each year for the three major feasts (Luke 2:41-42). In addition, they worshiped regularly at one of the Jewish synagogues—a custom which arose after the Old Testament itself was written (Luke 4:16) .

The Temple in Jerusalem was still the one appointed place for the people to bring their tithes, sacrifices, and offerings. The High Priest still went into the Holy of Holies only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The Levites still occupied special places of honor and service in the Jewish community. And the people were still expected to pay tithes, to worship at the Temple, and to keep the law in every way. (Matthew 23:23)

In addition, by the time Jesus was born, some of the Jewish leaders had added many laws of their own to those found in the Old Testament. These laws were often more burdensome, more stringent, and more challenging than the laws given by God Himself. People who kept all the laws were praised and those who didn't keep the laws were judged and condemned.

Since there were so many laws, some of which were very strict, some of the leaders developed a way to get around the heart and purpose of the laws. There are many examples of that. These leaders focused on keeping the letter of the law rather than seeking to please and honor the God who gave the laws. If they could somehow “fulfill” a law without doing what the Lord really intended, they would do so (Matthew 15:3-9; 23:15-22).

Also, during the time when Jesus lived, the Jews were living under the authority of the Romans. That made things even more difficult for the Jews because they had to obey Roman laws as well as Old Testament laws and the laws created by the Jewish leaders over the years. The Jews were required to pay taxes to the Roman government (Matthew 17:24-25) and had to recognize the government's authority in areas where they would rather do things their own way (John 18:31-32). As a result of all of this, many Jews in Jesus' day were extremely eager to overthrow the Romans so they would no longer be under their authority. A few of the Jewish leaders favored the Romans and received special favors from them, but most of the people were very unhappy with their Roman rulers and thoroughly disliked them.

It was into this kind of world that Jesus was born and in which He lived his entire earthly life.

In this Lesson we will focus on what Jesus did in our behalf, what he taught about God's laws, how he demonstrated the grace of God in His life, and how he wants us to live in today's world.

JESUS AS OUR EXAMPLE AND TEACHER

We can learn much about the way God wants us to live by studying the life of Jesus. In so many ways Jesus is a perfect example for us to follow. His kindness, compassion, mercy, integrity, love, grace and so much more are things we should always seek to exhibit in our own lives. However, in many ways we are not required or expected to live as Jesus did. Jesus lived under the O.T. Law. We don't. He lived in the land of Israel as a person who was obligated to obey a host of laws which we no longer have to obey. He was not married, he was not a parent, he did not have a home of his own (Matthew 8:20), and he was dependent on others for many of his daily needs (Luke 8:1-3). He had little money, he did not have a paying job, and he did not lay up any earthly treasures for himself. He never traveled very far from home, he rarely (if ever) took a vacation, and he did not do many other things which people today consider wise or desirable or necessary. Besides, he had divine power to heal the sick, raise the dead, still the waves, know the minds and hearts of everyone he met, and so much more. We obviously will never be able to live in every way as Jesus lived. However, we should humbly strive to do everything Jesus taught us to do!

JESUS AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

Jesus did not come into this world to break the laws of God or to teach people to ignore them. On the contrary, he came into this world to fulfill those laws and urged others to keep them, too (Matthew 5:17-19). Those laws, given hundreds of years before, taught the people how God wanted and expected them to live. Many, of course, failed to obey those laws and were punished for it. Others, however, sincerely attempted to keep God's laws and were blessed because of it. But no one came even close to observing the laws perfectly—until Jesus came.

Throughout his life Jesus loved and served his Father in heaven with his whole “heart and soul and mind and strength” and demonstrated His love by obeying all of God's laws and commands without a single failure (John 15:10). He demonstrated his love for others by helping them, healing them, teaching them, forgiving them, and blessing them and, ultimately, by giving his life on the cross to pay the penalty we deserved (John 15:13).

We who believe in Jesus, therefore, find that he has done two wonderful things for us: (1) He perfectly obeyed the law in our behalf and (2) He paid the penalty we deserved for breaking the law. That is the heart of the message of salvation. We are not justified or saved because of anything we have ever done or will do, but because of what Jesus has done for us.

This two-fold blessing is a wonder of divine GRACE. Jesus did what we could never do. And he did everything that God required and commanded—in our behalf!

JESUS AND THE HEART OF THE LAW

Jesus taught that the laws of the Old Testament were from God and that the people of his day were required to obey them (Matthew 5:17-19, Matthew 5:48). He also taught that those who did not obey God's law were subject to punishment because of their sins (Matthew 18:8-9; John 5:29). But Jesus also emphasized that God wanted His people to obey the “spirit” or true purpose of the law without focusing simply on the letter of the law (Matthew 23:23-26). External observance of the law meant very little if the people did not love and serve God from the heart. And those who professed to love God but did not show love to their neighbor were also failing to keep His law, even though they may have held important positions in the Jewish spiritual community (Luke 10:25-37).

In His well-known Sermon on the Mount Jesus stressed God's own view of the purpose and intention of His laws. Jesus did not dispute the importance of obeying the letter of the law, but He also taught that more than literal obedience was required. For example, he taught that hatred was the moral equivalent of murder and that lust was the moral equivalent of adultery (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). Anything less than a sincere desire to do all that God required was not considered to be true obedience.

Jesus also stressed the importance of doing positive things which pleased God and not simply staying away from those things which displease Him. Those who truly want to love and serve God and their neighbor must be loving, compassionate, generous, merciful, humble, helpful, and grateful (Matthew 5:16, 44-48; Luke 6:32-36, etc.). Those who are prone to emphasize a legalistic observance of the law are often inclined to emphasize the negative rather than the positive dimension of the law. Jesus himself was careful to observe and do all that the law genuinely required while also serving the needs of the hungry, poor, distressed, lost, lonely, and sinful.

Jesus also taught that there are times and circumstances when it is “acceptable to God” to “break” the letter of the law without violating the spiritual intent of the law. For example, he reminded his hearers that David was permitted to eat the special bread that had been set out on the table in the tabernacle—even though only the priests were normally permitted to eat this bread. And God did not hold him guilty because of it (Matthew 12:3-4). The law did not permit people to work on the Sabbath day, but the priests did work and God approved of it (Matthew 12:5). The Israelites were not permitted to work with their cattle on the Sabbath Day, but if an animal fell into a pit on a Sabbath Day, the owners were permitted to rescue it (Matthew 12:11). People were not permitted to carry “burdens” on the Sabbath day, but Jesus healed on the Sabbath and told the healed person to take up his mat and walk (John 5:8-9). The Jewish leaders regarded “healing” of the lame or blind as work which was not permitted on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:9-13; John 9:13-16), but Jesus healed them anyway. Jesus wanted the people to know that God's intention in giving them Sabbath laws was not negative but positive (Matthew 12:12; Mark 2:27-28).

In all of this Jesus was helping the people get away from the strict “legalism” of some of their leaders. These people did not “delight” in the law as the writer of Psalm 119 did. Rather, they chafed under the law and sought to escape from the demands of the law while still keeping up the appearance of obeying it. Jesus cited various examples of that kind of “obedience.”

Some of the men who wanted to divorce their wives tried to find a way out of observing God's clear teaching regarding the permanence of marriage (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). They “justified” what they wanted to do by appealing to a teacher who permitted them to do what they wanted to do (Matthew 19:3-8). Others neglected to care for their parents while finding a way to get around the clear intention of the law. To them Jesus said, “Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.” And then He added, “You do many things like that” (Mark 7:9-13).

What may be even worse than these efforts to nullify the spirit of the law was the fact that many of the religious leaders were haughty, proud, and self-righteous because they obeyed the letter of the law. Jesus dealt with their approach to the law in his parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. In that well-known parable, the self-righteous Pharisee boasted publicly and loudly of his own obedience while he looked with contempt on a sinful tax collector. However, it was the Pharisee who went home from the temple unforgiven, while the repentant tax collector went home justified by God's forgiving grace. (Luke 18.9-14)

Jesus strongly condemned these proud, self-righteous Pharisees and teachers of the law in a series of “woes” (Matthew 23:1-36). He did not condemn them because they had neglected to observe the letter of the law, but he condemned them for their sinful pride and for totally violating the spirit of the laws. These leaders, by doing what they did, not only led people astray, but they also withheld from the people a true understanding of the grace of God (Matthew 23:13-15).

The self-satisfied leaders felt they did not need grace because they had done everything God had required. Jesus condemned them because they desperately needed God's grace but didn't realize it. They felt that they had earned God's approval by their external observance. And by stressing external obedience, while eliminating the need for grace, they had made Gentile “converts” into people who were twice as much sons of hell as themselves (Matthew 23:15).

The Pharisees must have known something of God's grace through their reading and study of the Old Testament--even though they seemingly didn't see the need of grace for themselves. Many of the Gentile converts, however, may have had little knowledge of the Old Testament teaching on grace. They may have believed that they had done everything that God required of them when they obeyed the letter of the law. As a result, they learned little or nothing about the necessity *or* the reality of grace and missed the salvation God offered to true believers.

Legalism is so awesome in its deception and its destructiveness! That's why Jesus so strongly opposed it and why he continually emphasized the importance of loving God with our whole heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. When a Pharisee, tempting Jesus, asked him what the greatest commandment was in the Law, Jesus answered with these well-known words from the Old Testament:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37-40

JESUS AND FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness, Jesus taught, was always granted by grace and was never earned by offering sacrifices or by giving money or by performing certain “righteous” acts. He taught this directly and also illustrated it through his parables. One of His best known and most loved parables is known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). In that parable, a restless and rebellious son asks for his inheritance from his father and then proceeds to spend that inheritance in sinful and profligate living. When his funds were totally exhausted and he had nothing left to live on, he lost his friends, his livelihood and his self-respect. He went out to feed pigs (a terrible thing for a Jewish boy to do) and barely eked out a living. When he decided to return to his father, he went with the deepest humility, expecting to attain at best the status of a hired servant with some food to eat and a place to sleep.

However, when his father saw him coming, he ran to him, embraced him, clothed him in a luxurious garment and prepared a banquet for him. THAT was GRACE! His older brother, however, was extremely unhappy with all that happened, since he felt that his brother deserved nothing at all from his father. And in that he was right. His brother did deserve nothing. But the older son, who represented a self-righteous person who “kept the law” in his own way, knew only external obedience and knew nothing of grace. He had little genuine love for his father and no love at all for his brother.

Jesus also repeatedly demonstrated the forgiving grace of God in his dealing with specific people. A well-known prostitute who expressed her great sorrow for her sin and her deep love for Jesus was declared forgiven, while her accusers were condemned (Luke 7:36-50). On another occasion a woman caught in the act of adultery was forgiven by Jesus while she was condemned by everyone else (John 8:1-11). A rich, dishonest tax collector was the only known person who was “saved” when Jesus was passing through the town of Jericho on his way to Jerusalem where he was going to be crucified (Luke 19:1-10). In none of these situations did Jesus condone or minimize what people had done, but he lovingly administered the grace of God to them. And, yes, he also told one of the persons who had sinned publicly to “Leave your life of sin!” (John 8:11). Jesus did not take sin lightly. But God's wonderful grace triumphed over sin in the lives of those who repented and believed.

JESUS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In the Gospel of John Jesus is frequently seen as the fulfillment of many of the symbols found in the Old Testament. He was the “light of the world” (John 8:12), “the Bread of Life” (John 6:35), “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” (John 1:29), “the Good Shepherd” who gives his life for his sheep (John 10:14-15), and the great “I Am” who lived before Abraham was born (John 8:58). He also referred to Himself as “the way and the truth and the life” and the only way to the Father (John 14:6). And in John 3:14 he is presented as the Son of Man who must be “lifted up” (even as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness) so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

In John 1:16-17 Jesus' ministry is contrasted with that of Moses in the Old Testament. John writes, “From the fullness of his [Jesus'] grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John does not teach that the law was unimportant. Nor did he teach that Jesus came to contradict the law or abolish it. He came to teach the true purpose and intent of God's law, to fulfill the law in our behalf, and to reveal the grace of God to every believer who falls short of obeying the law (as everyone does!) The law was definitely very important, but it could not make people holy, righteous, or good. Only Jesus could do that--and that is what he did! Though God already demonstrated his grace many times in the Old Testament, it wasn't until Jesus fulfilled the law and paid the penalty for our sins that people could fully understand what is meant by God's wonderful, saving grace (John 1:16).

JESUS, HIS DISCIPLES, AND THE JEWISH LEADERS

In the Gospels Jesus rarely praised people for their obedience. Rather, he praised people more for their humility, their love, and their faith. And the ones he praised most of all for their faith were Gentiles (Matthew 8:10 and 15:28)! Rarely was it the spiritual leader of the people whom Jesus praised. Most of the rulers seemed to be on the wrong track—either over-emphasizing external obedience to the law or minimizing the importance of grace. Even Jesus' own disciples rarely showed compassion, love, and concern for others. On several occasions when Jesus demonstrated his compassion for those who were hungry, lost, or in need (such as in Matthew 9:35-38 or in Matthew 14:15-17), the disciples did not seem to share either his compassion or his concern. They seemed to be much more concerned about themselves, their authority, and their power.

Jesus also rejoiced over the spiritually lost people who were brought back to their heavenly Father. When he concluded his parable of the prodigal son, the father said to the older brother, “But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Luke 15:32). After he told his parables about the lost coin and the lost sheep, Jesus said, “There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Luke 15:10). By saying

this Jesus did not mean that there are some people who never sin and therefore do not need to repent. Rather he was contrasting those who became genuinely aware of their need for forgiveness and grace with those who had not violated the letter of the law and therefore saw no need of grace.

The Pharisees never seemed to rejoice over the finding of the lost or the repentance of the sinful. Even the twelve disciples of Jesus seemed rather insensitive at first to the plight of those who were lost without faith in Christ. Rarely do we read that they were eager to save the lost or rejoice over those who were found. When they returned from their first mission trip, we read that they rejoiced in the fact that they had authority and power to cast out evil spirits, but we do not read that they rejoiced over people who found new spiritual life through the grace of God (Luke 10:17, 20). (Later, as we read in the book of Acts, the disciples did rejoice in the conversion of lost sinners, but we do not read about that in the Gospels.)

When Jesus neared the end of His life and was condemned to die on the cross, he was condemned by the Jews for breaking one of the Old Testament laws—as they understood it. They said that Jesus had claimed that He was the Son of God--which indeed he was! However, they understood his claim as a violation of the law of God (John 19:7). They seemingly never seriously considered the possibility that Jesus' claim might be true! They were not searching for truth but simply looking for any legal “failure” to justify their desire to put Jesus to death. They totally disregarded Jesus' life of love, holiness, purity, compassion, kindness, and grace. They were very unhappy with Jesus' teaching about the grace of God for sinners, and they were very upset about Jesus' public evaluation of their own moral status before God. They desperately wanted to end his influence among the people so that they could go on with their own activities, their own lifestyle, and their own position of influence among the people.

As we briefly review the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, it is obvious that he definitely didn't meet the expectations of the leaders concerning the promised Messiah. They were looking for someone who was powerful enough to defeat their political enemies and strict enough to condemn those who were considered “sinners” by the spiritually elite. They were longing for someone who would re-establish the Kingdom of Israel with all its laws and legal procedures intact. They desired a Messiah who would honor them and establish them in positions of influence and authority. They obviously were not looking for GRACE. But it was GRACE which Jesus came to bring!

Emphasizing this grace does not minimize the importance of loving and serving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Not does it any way minimize the importance of loving our neighbor as ourselves. But it does put our love and service in a new light. It totally eliminates the idea that God is pleased or satisfied with a legalistic righteousness or an external obedience. It also completely removes the idea that anyone can earn his way to heaven or somehow gain sufficient merits to assure himself of a place in heaven. Jesus' life, teachings and example leave absolutely no room for anyone to earn salvation by observing God's law or by

keeping His commandments. The blessed, good, encouraging, and positive message of the Gospel is this:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

By the time Jesus came into the world in fulfillment of God's ancient promises (beginning in Genesis 3:15), the Jewish people were eager to welcome their Messiah. However, most of the people were looking for someone who would rescue the Jews from the Roman leaders—not someone who would rescue them from the penalty and power of sin! The leaders of the Jews stressed the importance of obedience to the Old Testament laws, but they also added many laws of their own. There was a strong emphasis on doing what God had commanded (and what they themselves commanded), but very little understanding of the grace which God provided!

Jesus made it clear that He did not come to do away with the Old Testament laws by abolishing them. Rather, he came to fulfill the laws in the way God intended. And when He fulfilled them, He did so in behalf of all those who put their trust in Him. His righteousness is credited to our account so that we do not have to pay the penalty we deserve. Many of Jesus' gracious teachings contradicted the teachings of the leaders of the day. They stressed external obedience, while Jesus always focused on the intention of the heart. In many ways, both through His teaching and example, He taught the people what God really wanted from His people. And what God wanted was love for Him above all else and love for our neighbors as ourselves.

By emphasizing His own righteousness rather than the “righteousness” of those who put their confidence in external observance of the law, Jesus introduced some wonderful truths which most of the people had never understood. Though many of the people heard Him gladly and trusted Him completely, the rulers despised Him and eventually crucified Him.

Through His life and death and resurrection, Jesus brought the blessedness of eternal life to all who believed in Him. And that is why He came—not to condemn the world, but to save the world through God's wonderful grace.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON SEVEN

1. The story of Jesus' life is told only in the New Testament. Yet, the Lesson notes say that He lived his life in most ways as an “Old Testament person.” What does that mean?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when he said that our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven? (Matthew 5:20)
3. Why is it so important that we obey God with our whole heart rather than simply following the letter of the law?
4. Do you think Jesus broke Old Testament laws regarding the Sabbath day when he healed people on the Sabbath day and when he told someone to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath? Please give the reason for your answer.
5. Give two examples of how the Pharisees and teachers of the law sometimes tried to “avoid” doing what the law commanded while still obeying the letter of the law.
6. What was the main message of the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector?
7. What does the parable of the Prodigal Son teach us about grace?
8. Describe in one or two sentences what Jesus said about the self righteous Pharisees and teachers of the law (according to Matthew 23).
9. According to the Lesson notes, what two wonderful things did Jesus do for us?
10. What do you think John meant when he wrote: “The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
11. How would you compare the attitude of the writer of Psalm 119 toward God's law with the attitude of the Pharisees towards God's law?

12. Describe briefly two situations in which Jesus demonstrated the forgiving of grace of God for people known as “sinners.”

13. What answer did Jesus give to the Pharisee who asked him” “What is the Greatest commandment in the Law?”

14. How did Jesus demonstrate His love for his “neighbor”?

15. Complete this sentence: After Jesus told his parables about the lost coin and the lost sheep, he said: “There will be _____ more rejoicing in heaven _____.”

16. In general, how did the disciples respond to the blessings they received during their first “missionary outreach”?

17. Why did many of the Pharisees and teachers of the law feel that they didn't need God's grace?

18. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is frequently seen as the fulfillment of some of the symbols in the Old Testament that pointed forward to him. In John 1:29 Jesus is called _____, in John 8:12 he is called _____, in John 10:14-15 he is referred to as _____, and in John 6:35 he is called _____.

19. Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the law so opposed to Jesus and his teachings?

20. John 3:16 is very familiar to most Christians. What does **John 3:17** teach us?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Many Christians put more emphasis on what we should not do than on what we should do.” Please explain your answer, giving specific examples to support your answer.

2. Evaluate the following statement: “Believers should not try to live as Jesus lived but they should try to do what Jesus taught.”

3. How do you think YOU would have responded if you were the “older brother” in the Parable of the Prodigal Son? Please explain your answer

4. In this Lesson “legalism” refers to an undue emphasis on external obedience to laws—both laws in the Bible and man-made laws.

A. Do you think there is a problem with legalism in our churches today? Please explain your answer, giving specific illustrations if possible.

B. The Lesson notes indicate that legalism is “deceptive” and “destructive.” Would you agree or disagree? Please give the reason for your answer.

5. Can you think of any situations where we might please God more by following “the spirit of the law” even if it means that we would violate the letter of the law?

Grace Lesson Seven Answers

1. Jesus lived at a time when the Old Testament laws were still in effect. So, in that sense he lived “under the law” as the people of Israel did in the Old Testament. He also followed most of the customs of the faithful Jews of his day. The “new covenant” promised in Jeremiah 31 was not established until Jesus died on the cross and arose again.
2. The “righteousness” of the Pharisees was a legalistic righteousness. They were careful to obey the letter of the law and did so with great attention to detail. And, because they did so, they boasted of their own righteousness. However, true believers in Christ would find their righteousness in HIM. Christ alone fulfilled the law and He fulfilled perfectly in our behalf. In addition, he paid for us the penalty we deserved for not keeping the law. Those who put their faith and trust in Christ found true righteousness which far exceeded that of the Pharisees.
3. By simply obeying the letter of the law, we seek our own righteousness while not really loving God or our neighbor. God desires our wholehearted obedience and love which arises from a heart that truly loves and honors Him. Anything less than that is not true obedience and does not bring His blessing.
4. No. In the eyes of the Pharisees Jesus did break the Sabbath laws because they were concerned only about formal obedience to the letter of the law. However, by obeying the letter of the law, they missed the true purpose of the law. Jesus revealed the positive dimension of the Sabbath laws and observed them. He was the Lord of the Sabbath and He reminded the people that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:11-12; Mark 2:27-28)
5. Among the things that might be mentioned are the following.
 - A. They wanted to find “legal” grounds for divorcing their wives, so they followed a prominent teacher who permitted them to do so.
 - B. They neglected to support their parents by saying that the money that would normally be used to support their parents was committed to God so they could not use the money to help their parents.
6. The tax collector was sinful but he humbly and sincerely repented of his sin and went home justified by the grace of God. The Pharisee boasted of his own righteousness because he had obeyed the letter of the law, but he returned to his home as an unforgiven sinner.
7. The parable of the Prodigal Son (or, lost son) teaches us that salvation and forgiveness come by grace alone and not by human merit or effort. The foolish and sinful son was forgiven when he trusted the mercy of his father. The older self-righteous brother forfeited the blessing that his brother received.

Grace Lesson Seven Answers

8. Jesus said that the Pharisees and teachers of the law were self-righteous, proud, deceitful, hypocritical, insensitive to the needs of others, and spiritually lost. In addition, they were leading others astray by their teachings and keeping them from the kingdom of God.
9. (1) Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law in our behalf, crediting our account with his perfect righteousness. (2) Jesus died to pay the penalty we deserved because of our sin.
10. Jesus revealed the grace of God in a way that the people of Israel could not understand or experience. God was gracious in the Old Testament times, too, when he forgave the people time and after time and also provided for their physical and material needs. However, Jesus demonstrated why it was possible for God to forgive His people even when they were not worthy of His grace. It wasn't until He came and lived a perfect life in our behalf and then paid the penalty for our sins when he died on the cross that the people could fully understand the magnitude and wonder of God's grace.
11. The writer of Psalm 119 delighted in God's law and sincerely desired to please Him and praise Him and live for Him. He did not boast of his own righteousness but wrote over and over again about the blessings He received from meditating on the law and seeking to obey it. The Pharisees, on the other hand, did not see the law as a way of walking in fellowship with God and praising and honoring Him. Rather, they “observed” the letter of the law as a way of trying to win the favor of both God and man and used their “obedience” as a source of boasting and pride.
12. Among the stories that may be mentioned are the following. Jesus forgave a woman who had been taken in the act of adultery, even though others seemed eager to condemn her and possibly even stone her to death. John 8:1-11. (2) Jesus showed his loving forgiveness to a prostitute who was rejected and scorned by the “spiritual leaders” of the day. Luke 7:36-60. (3) Jesus welcomed and forgave a notorious tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus when others were muttering that Jesus went to be the guest of a “sinner.”
13. Jesus said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40
14. Jesus showed love for others in many significant ways. He fed them, healed them, raised their loved ones from the dead, showed them mercy and compassion, and taught them the truths of God. And most significantly of all, he showed his love for them by giving his life on the cross for them so that their sins might be forgiven and they might have eternal life.

Grace Lesson Seven Answers

15. “. . . over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
16. The disciples appeared to be much more pleased with the fact that they had the power to cast out demons than with any spiritual change which may have come about in the lives of the people they ministered to. It wasn't until after Pentecost that the disciples seemed to be genuinely interested in seeing sinners redeemed and forgiven. There may be some differences of opinion in evaluating the reaction of the disciples to what Jesus did in the lives of people, but during the period prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples always seemed to be more concerned about their own power and status rather than the power of Jesus to save and redeem the lost.
17. They felt they did not need God's forgiving grace because they thought they were wonderful examples of obedience and not sinners as so many others were.
18. John 1:29 : the Lamb of God
John 8:12: the Light of the World
John 10:14-15: the Good Shepherd
John 6:35: the Bread of Life
19. The leaders were jealous of Jesus' prominence and authority. Many of the “ordinary” people were following this “simple carpenter” from the insignificant village of Nazareth rather than following the “recognized authorities” of the day. Besides, Jesus was judging and condemning them (and rightly so) them when they were the ones who usually were judging others (often unjustly)! Jesus not only undercut their authority but he taught the people new things which were in conflict with their teachings in various areas. Not one of the Pharisees or teachers was able to win an “argument” with Jesus, no matter how they tried. And probably worst of all, Jesus indicated that they were spiritually lost and in desperate need of repentance and forgiveness. All of this was just “too much” for them.
20. John 3:17 reads: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.”