

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – February 7th, 2021

Theme: The Attributes of God Topic: The Attributes of God – Merciful and Gracious

Main Text: Psalms 103: 1 - 22

Key verse: Psalms 103: 8 *'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.'* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: The first time God revealed this twin attribute of His **mercy** and **grace** was in Exodus 34:6. It all started in Exodus 19:5, when God promised to make the people His treasured possession, if only they would obey Him. And the people readily agreed to fully obey God (Exodus 19:8; 24:3,7). God then gave the commandments, which the people again agreed to fully obey. This agreement, Moses sealed with blood. But about forty days after, the people thrashed the covenant with God by worshipping the golden calf they had made (Exodus 32). God was infuriated by this turn of events. But after Moses' entreaties, He relented but said, "*when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.*" (Exodus 32:34b). At a loss on how to keep a holy God from annihilating a rebellious people he was leading to the promised land, Moses prayed, "*that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight...*" (Exodus 33:13b). In response, "*...the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,"*" (Exodus 34:6 NKJV). These twin attributes of God are so crucial that the Psalmist recounts them as he attempts to number God's many benefits: "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: ... The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*" (Psalm 103: 2, 8)

1. Read Exodus 33:1- 5, 15-19; 34: 5-7. (a) How is God's attribute of mercy and grace an appropriate answer to Moses' concern? See Exodus 32:34; 33:5 (b) What do you understand by the Lord is merciful and gracious from these passages?

'Grace' and 'mercy' are often used interchangeably. But they differ significantly. The dictionary defines **grace** as *courteous goodwill; something not asked for nor deserved but freely given*. **Mercy** is defined as *the compassion and kindness shown to someone whom it is in one's power to punish or harm*. So, when God introduced this attribute, He said, '*... "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation"*' (Exodus 34:6-7). The Psalmist also unpacked this merciful and gracious attribute of God in Psalm 103.

2. Let participants read Psalm 103:9-17; Exodus 34:6-7; Lamentations 3: 21-23; Joel 2:13: (a) How is God's grace and mercy described? E.g., Psalm 103: 11,12, 17. (b) What are some implications of these dimensions and expressions of God's mercy and grace? E.g., Psalm 103:9, 10,13 (c) What should be my response to God's mercy and grace? E.g., Joel 2:13.

On Mount Sinai, Moses heard of God's mercy and grace. But in Jesus, we behold it. Apostle John wrote, "*From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*" (John 1:16-17). Apostle Peter echoed this truth: "*Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*" (1 Peter 2:10). Jesus through His death and resurrection has become the epitome of God's grace and mercy.

3. Read 1 Peter. 1:3-5; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:4-7; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2 Peter 3:9. What is the implication of God's mercy and grace: (a) to a believer? (b) to the unsaved?

Prayer: *Father, thank you for Your mercy and grace in Christ, which make it possible for us to approach and worship You. May we grow in our appreciation of Your mercy and grace. In Jesus name, Amen.*