

The Implication/Application of the Excellencies of God

Lesson 11 – Grace, Mercy (Compassion), and Lovingkindness

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Review

We are studying the excellencies of God. God has made us true worshipers (John 4:23) for the purpose of declaring His excellencies (1 Peter 2:9).

His excellencies are the perfect, full manifestation of characteristics that describe His intrinsic eminence. They are what God has stated and/or exhibited in His self-revelation, the Bible. We are studying the excellencies in order to know God better (have correct, true knowledge) and be impacted by that knowing (grow in sanctification).

We started with excellencies that deal with God's transcendency and belong to Him alone – the *absolute* or *incommunicable* or *divine* excellencies.

- **Transcendence** – God is distinct, far above, greater than His creation.
- **Immanence** – God remains in His creation and is intimately involved in it.
- **Perfection** – God lacks nothing in type or quality of excellency.
- **Beauty** – God is the possessor and the sum of all desirable qualities.
- **Blessedness** – God delights fully in himself. He is self-happy, self-content, self-fulfilled.
- **Aseity** – God does not need anything, He is perfectly independent and self-sufficient.
- **Glory** – the composite of His excellencies; He is so magnificent that He shines.
- **Immutability** – God is unchanging in being, excellencies, eternal purposes, and promises.
- **Omniscience** – God perfectly knows all things actual and possible in a simple, eternal act.
- **Omnipresence** – God is present at every point of space at every point of time.
- **Omnipotence** – God is able to effortlessly do all His holy will.
- **Sovereignty** – God's exercise of His rule over His creation using His absolute power.

Now we are studying excellencies that God is working to build to some degree in us through the Spirit's work of sanctification – *relative* or *communicable* or *personal* excellencies.

- **Holiness** – God is pure and separated from sin.
- **Wrath** – God intensely hates all sin.
- **Righteousness** – God always acts rightly and is Himself the final standard of what is right.
- **Truthfulness** – God is the true God; all His words are true and the final standard of truth.
- **Faithfulness** – God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised.
- **Wisdom** – God always acts skillfully, maximizing His glory and our sanctifying good.
- **Goodness** – God is the final standard of good (wholesome, helpful, conducive to well-being, beneficial, and worthwhile) and all that God is and does is worthy of approval.
- **Love** – God eternally gives of himself to others.

❖ **Are you striving to allow the truth of these excellencies to impact your life?**

Introduction

Let's read the story of David after he ascended to the throne of Israel.

⁴Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth. (2 Samuel 4:4)

In 2 Samuel 9, David desired to show "kindness" for the sake of his friend Jonathan, the one he had made covenants with. "Kindness" is the same word translated "lovingkindness" when referring to God in other passages. David sought out a specific person to show his lovingkindness.

¹Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him **kindness** for Jonathan's sake?" ²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "*I am* your servant." ³The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the **kindness** of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." ⁴So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." ⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

Mephibosheth was afraid because he believed he was going to receive wrath.

⁶Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" ⁷David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show **kindness** to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." ⁸Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?"

David showered undeserved blessings on Mephibosheth.

⁹Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in *the produce* so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. ¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do."

David adopted Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons. ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. ¹³So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet.

This is grace. The undeserved, unmerited favor of God.

Today, we will look at the excellencies of grace, mercy, and lovingkindness. These excellencies are so deep, so amazing and displayed in such splendor to the wretched and miserable that we cannot do them justice today. We can only pray that God will impress them on our heart by His Spirit as we dig into His word.

Interestingly, we often see mercy (compassion), grace, patience (longsuffering), and lovingkindness together in Scripture. God's mercy (another word is compassion) moved God to give grace.

¹⁵But **You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious**, Slow to anger and **abundant in lovingkindness** and truth (*faithfulness*). (Psalm 86:15)

Grace

Grace means that God gives unmerited favor to undeserving people in salvation and sanctification. God gives that which is not deserved for the advancement of His own glory.

¹⁰After you have suffered for a little while, **the God of all grace**, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

⁸**The Lord is** compassionate and **gracious**, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. (Psalm 103:8)

¹⁸Therefore **the Lord longs to be gracious to you**, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. (Isaiah 30:18)

¹³And rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the Lord your God, **For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil**. (Joel 2:13)

¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth**. ... ¹⁶For **of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace**. ¹⁷For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ**. (John 1:14, 16-17)

❖ **Do you reject God's grace by attempting to earn God's favor?**

God gives grace...

¹¹For the Lord God is a sun and shield; **The Lord gives grace and glory** (ESV – “honor”); No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

For His glory

⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶**to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of His grace** ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight... (Ephesians 1:5-8)

To the humble

⁶But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:6-7 cf. 1 Peter 5:5)

In salvation

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (Romans 3:23-24)

⁸**For by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; (Ephesians 2:8)

In sanctification

¹¹For the **grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,** ¹²**instructing us** to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, (Titus 2:11-12)

¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, ¹⁸**but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:17-18)

For service to the body

¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, **employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** (1 Peter 4:10)

²⁶From there they (*Paul and Barnabas*) sailed to Antioch, **from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished.** (Acts 14:26)

For help in time of need

¹⁶**Turn to me and be gracious to me,** For I am lonely and afflicted. (Psalm 25:16)

¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, **so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.** (Hebrews 4:16)

⁸Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And He has said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

❖ **Do you seek grace from elsewhere than the Lord?**

Implications of grace

- Because God is gracious, you are saved from your sin.
- Because God is gracious, you are progressing in sanctification.
- Because God is gracious, He provides enabling grace for service in the body.
- Because God is gracious, He provides unmerited favor in time of need.
- Others?

Mercy (Compassion)

Mercy means that God is actively compassionate which moves Him to relieve the misery and distress of fallenness, even though it is not deserved.

We often think of mercy as withholding deserved punishment (as opposed to grace which gives underserved reward). But the Hebrew and Greek words for “mercy” are the same words also translated “compassion”. Mercy/compassion means the outward manifestation of pity; to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need or to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable. The essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery.

One Greek scholar notes that “Grace meets man’s need in respect to his guilt and lost condition; mercy, with reference to his suffering as a result of that sin.” (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans)

⁶Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, **compassionate** and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; (Exodus 34:6)

³¹For **the LORD your God is a compassionate God**; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. (Deuteronomy 4:31)

¹⁴Then David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. **Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great**, but do not let me fall into the hand of man.” (2 Samuel 24:14)

¹⁵But **You, O Lord, are a God merciful** and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. (Psalm 86:15)

⁸**The LORD is gracious and merciful**; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. (Psalm 145:8)

²¹This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²²The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, **For His compassions never fail**. ²³They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I have hope in Him.” (Lamentations 3:21-24)

²He prayed to the LORD and said, “Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that **You are a gracious and compassionate God**, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. (Jonah 4:2)

³Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the Father of mercies** and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

“...so mercy is the goodness of God confronting human suffering and guilt. Were there no guilt in the world, no pain and no tears, God would yet be infinitely merciful; but His mercy might well remain hidden in His heart, unknown to the created universe. No voice would be raised to celebrate the mercy of which none felt the need. It is human misery and sin that call forth the divine mercy.” (Tozer in “Knowledge of the Holy”)

Mercy is found...

By those who fear the Lord

⁸**The LORD is compassionate** and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. ... ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So **the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.** (Psalm 103:8, 11-13)

By the contrite

¹Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; **According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.** ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. ³**For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.** ⁴**Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight,** So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. (Psalm 51:1-4)

Through nearness to God in prayer

¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, **so that we may receive mercy** and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

¹⁶Answer me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; **According to the greatness of Your compassion, turn to me,** (Psalm 69:16)

By those who are merciful

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty. ¹³For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:12-13)

❖ Do you rely on the Lord for His compassion?

Implications of mercy

- Because God is merciful, He sent Christ for you.
- Because God is merciful, He has sympathy for your sorrows and misery.
- Because God is merciful, He can be trusted to care for you when in misery.
- Because God is merciful, you can have compassion on those helpless and in misery.
- Others?

Lovingkindness

“Lovingkindness” attempts to combine an amalgam of Hebrew ideas into one English word – faithful love in action; persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy; a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy; and God’s loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises. Some scholars think “devotion” is a good word. The ESV uses “steadfast love” instead of “lovingkindness”. The Hebrew word appears 253 times in the OT. This is the “kindness” that David showed Mephibosheth in 1 Samuel 9.

Lovingkindness is God’s devoted love promised within a covenant.

God's lovingkindness is...

Abounding

¹⁷“They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and **abounding in lovingkindness**; And You did not forsake them. (Nehemiah 9:17)

⁷I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, According to all that the Lord has granted us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has granted them according to His compassion And according to **the abundance of His lovingkindnesses**. (Isaiah 63:7)

²For **His lovingkindness is great toward us**, And the truth of the Lord is everlasting. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 117:2)

Precious

⁷How **precious is Your lovingkindness**, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. (Psalm 36:7)

Good

¹⁶Answer me, O Lord, for **Your lovingkindness is good**; According to the greatness of Your compassion, turn to me, (Psalm 69:16)

Marvelous

²¹Blessed be the Lord, For He has made **marvelous His lovingkindness** to me in a besieged city. (Psalm 31:21)

Everlasting

¹Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For **His lovingkindness is everlasting**. (Psalm 107:1; also 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 106:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1; Jeremiah 33:11)

Better than life

³Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You. (Psalm 63:3)

Comfort

⁷⁶**O may Your lovingkindness comfort me**, According to Your word to Your servant. (Psalm 119:76)

❖ Do you rest in God's devoted, steadfast love?

Implications of lovingkindness

- Because of God's lovingkindness, you should praise God.
- Because of God's lovingkindness, you can be strong in the midst of life's difficulties.
- Because of God's lovingkindness, you can be comforted.
- Because of you have experienced God's lovingkindness, you can give steadfast love to the brethren.
- Others?

Conclusion

We are studying God's excellencies in order to know Him better and be impacted by that knowing. God is gracious, compassionate, and full of lovingkindness. May we be impacted by these excellencies.

Additional Study

- Each day this week, reread the passages that we looked at today.
- After reading the passages, spend time in prayer adoring God. Ask Him to build godly responses to His excellencies in your life.
- Memorize Psalm 103:8.

⁸The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. (Psalm 103:8)