

## **Introduction~ Evidence of God's Grace**

- 1- When you hear the term "Evidence of God's Grace," what comes to your mind? What kind of stories and examples do you feel show God's grace? Can you think of any difficult situations that are examples of God's grace?
- 2- Think back on the suffering that you have experienced in your life. How can you see God being gracious in hindsight of a difficult circumstance?
- 3- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 is a comforting yet difficult verse. Paul states that our trials, sufferings, and grief are "light momentary afflictions that are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory." What do you think Paul meant by saying "light momentary afflictions?" How does Paul see God's glory in this passage? How are you suffering? How can your current suffering prepare you for glory?

## **Chapter 1~Christian Karma**

- 1- Christian Karma is the belief that if I do good, I will get good in life. Where do you see that belief system in your life? What good are you trying to do in order to get certain goodness back?
- 2- Do you think you need to do something to get Jesus to approve of you? Do you think you need to do something to get people in the church to approve of you?
- 3- What do you believe you need to do to receive God's approval and salvation? What are some things that you tell yourself you need to do in order for God to love you? What does God tell us that we need to do to receive salvation?
- 4- What beliefs have you held that you came to realize weren't in the Bible?

## **Chapter 2~God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle?**

- 1- Have you ever walked with a friend during a time of their suffering? What was it like? What were you feeling? Did you feel like you could handle it? Did you feel like God was present with you?
- 2- What is your first reaction when you see someone grieving? Why do you think we feel a need to have something to say to someone who is grieving?
- 3- Tell about a time that was more than you could handle. What did you learn about God and your faith as you experienced it? How did it change how you see the world, your family, the Bible etc.?

4- List everything that you are handling, every job, committee, volunteer position, relational role, etc. Why are these things in your life? What do you get from these things? Are these things that God has asked you to manage? How do you know? What feels like more than you can handle?

5- What grief are you carrying? How are you processing your grief? How is Jesus grieving with you?

### **Chapter 3~ *You Get What You Deserve***

1- What holds you back from being honest with God about a difficult situation?

2- King David doesn't hold back in the Psalms. He is honest, raw and "in your face" with his pain. Is there any feeling or thought that you are holding inside, for fear of what people would think or what God would think? Take a moment to write a letter to the Lord about anything that you are holding deep down inside that needs attention. Just between the two of you. He knows it so he won't be surprised.

4- God's glory is on display everywhere. Even in our pain and suffering but many times it is more difficult to notice when we are struggling. Where in your life do you see God's glory?

### **Chapter 4~ *For I Know the Plans I Have For You***

1- How has God's plan (what has happened in your life) been different than your plan for your life? What in your life has been unexpected?

2- What are you crying out to the Lord about? Describe a situation where you felt desperate for an answer from the Lord and did not receive one. Is it okay to demand answers from the God of the universe?

3- Have you ever needed to delay grief for the benefit of someone else?

4- Michelle's mom really stepped in to help. Have you ever had someone go the extra mile to help you? What did it teach you about grace?

5- Psalm 22:24 "...for He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted." Is there a time you felt afflicted and God was there even if others weren't? What did that teach you about God's character?

## **Chapter 5~ *Vending Machine God***

- 1- What do you envy that you see in other people's lives?
- 2- Do you ever pray for something and expect to receive it fulfilled, exactly the way that you asked? Why you receive what you asked for, what is your reaction? When you don't receive what you asked for, what has your reaction been?
- 2- God DOES give us the desires of our hearts, but many times it looks very different than our earthly desires (ie new car, new house, new job, healthy family etc.). Is there a time when you have been overcome with envy because someone else had someone/something that you wanted? What does it mean for Jesus to be the desire of our hearts?

## **Chapter 6~ *Back to Sunday School***

- 1- What do you fear? How do your fears affect your life?
- 2- What do you base God's goodness on?
- 3- What circumstances are you pleading for God to change in your life? How do you see God in this circumstance? What "hope" are you seeking? Did it seem that God was or was not good?
- 4- Do you have questions that have not been answered? What are they? What if they never get answered? How will you respond if your questions don't get answered?
- 5- Read Philippians 4:4. Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always. We rejoice in who the Lord is. He is faithful, unchanging holding planets, true, purchased our salvation, etc. Meditate on these verses. As you think of who the Lord is, how do you see your circumstances?

## **Chapter 7~ *Bear One Another's Burdens***

- 1- Relationships can be really difficult as we go through life learning to bear one another's burdens. Are there friends who you can list (mentally, don't share) that did not stick with you during the hard seasons of life? Who has God brought alongside you expectedly? Who have you borne the burdens of?
- 2- How do we navigate the difference between "bearing one another's burdens" and placing the responsibility for all of a friend's well being on our own backs?

3- Who in your life are you called to bear the burdens of? Are you willing to bear someone else's burdens? What barriers or objections do you have in doing so?

### **Chapter 8~ *Breather***

1- What is the difference between leaning into Jesus and abiding in him?

2- Describe a time in your life that was the "calm before the storm." What thoughts do you have as you reflect on that time knowing now what was coming next?

### **Chapter 9~ *Hadn't We Suffered Enough?***

1- What are you groaning for? What suffering in your life feels like too much, where you wonder haven't I had enough?

2- In your worst season of grief or struggles how can you now see God's grace displayed during that time?

3- What "what ifs" are you wrestling with?

4- What evidence of God's grace have you seen in the midst of tragedy?

5- What ways do you try and manufacture "peace" in your own life?

### **Chapter 10~ *Humpty Dumpty Back Together Again?***

1- What is the difference between having a fear of worry pop into your heart and mind and allowing it to become sin?

2- Have you ever had the courage to tell it all to Jesus (even all the ugly) and then listen and accept His truth in response?

3- Is it a blessing to suffer and why? When can it turn into pride? How do we become content in suffering or struggles?

4- When was the last time you "served, loved, and listened" to someone through their struggle?

5- As believers in a wealthy country, do we at times take for granted things like rest, food, shelter, functioning bodies, etc? Author, Anne Voskamp was convicted to list specifically 1000

things that she was thankful for. What would the benefit be in doing this activity in your own life? Decide now if this is something that you want to begin.

**Afterword~ *For Our Good?***

1- "All things work together for good to those that love the Lord." (Ro. 8:28) What are the "good" things that Paul refers to in this verse?