Stoa Apologetics Preparation for Monument Members

Season 22 Monument Release #3



Directions: Work through the source material in this download to help you understand this week’s selection of apologetics prompts. This release addresses approximately 5% of the total number of prompts you will need to be prepared for in your next tournament, so keep up the studying from week to week to ensure your knowledge in Apologetics. This week’s prompts are:

**Category 2: Foundations of Christianity (Part 1)**

1. What does it mean that man is totally depraved? Why is this important?
2. What does it mean for man to repent from his sins? Why is this important?
3. Compare and contrast justification with sanctification.
4. What is redemption? Why is this important?
5. What does it mean to forgive? Why is this important?\*
6. In John 10:10, Jesus said, “I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” What did He mean?
7. What is the grace of God? Why is this important?

\*This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. A worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

For a list of all the prompts for the year and all other downloads for NCFCA apologetics, visit your download page at <https://club.monumentmembers.com/stoa-apologetics/download-category/stoa-apologetics>.

Depravity *by Zack Seals*

What does it mean that man is totally depraved? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

*A. Extent:*

Heart/Mind *-* Gen 6:5; 8:21, Deut 29:4, Jer 10:14; 17:9, Matt 13:14; 15:19, Eph 4:17-18

Will/Choices *-* John 5:40; 8:44-45, 2 Timothy 2:25-26, 2 Peter 3:19

Affections/Desires *-* Prov 10:21*,* Rom 1:24-27, Eph 2:3, 2 Pet 2:13.

*B. Effect:*

Moral Inability *-* Jer 13:23, Matt 7:18, John 3:3; 6:44, Rom 8:7*,* 1 Cor 2:14.

Quotations

“As the salt flavors every drop in the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature. It is so sadly there, so abundantly there, that if you cannot detect it, you are deceived.” - *C.H. Spurgeon*, 19th century Preacher

“Man is a free agent but he cannot originate the love of God in his heart. His will is free in the sense that it is not controlled by any force outside of himself. As the bird with a broken wing is “free” to fly but not able, so the natural man is free to come to God but not able.” - *Lorraine Boettner,* 20th century Theologian

“There are very few errors and false doctrines of which the beginning may not be traced up to unsound views about the corruption of human nature. Wrong views of the disease will always bring with them wrong views of the remedy. Wrong views of the corruption of human nature will always carry with them wrong views of the grand antidote and cure of that corruption.” - *J.C. Ryle*, 19th century Anglican Bishop

Recommendations[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin, [Book 2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iv.html), Chapters 1-5

[*The Bondage of the Will*](http://www.covenanter.org/Luther/Bondage/bow_toc.htm) by Martin Luther

[*Freedom of the Will*](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/will.html) *(The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 1)* by Jonathan Edwards

Commentary

It should be noted that this card will form the backbone of the apologist’s preparation for all topics. The Christian doctrine of depravity is crucial to its entire view of man and therefore careful preparation should go into making sure there is a sufficient amount of verses and quotations prepared beforehand, in case cross applying is needed.

*Meaning[[2]](#footnote-2):*After analyzing the cited biblical data, Sam Storms succinctly summarizes depravity as that which “refers to the moral disposition or inclination of fallen man’s nature toward evil and against good.” [[3]](#footnote-3) It can be added that this moral state of man is utterly pervasive and taints every part of his being. To be clear, this is *not* to say that man is as bad as he possibly could be. Surely a world can be imagined where people acted even worse than they currently do and the Bible is replete with examples of God restraining evil by his common grace.[[4]](#footnote-4) Man is not as wicked as he could be thanks to God’s preserving common grace, but he is most definitely pervasively affected by depravity to every part of his being. Moreover, there is a crucial distinction that needs to be made in understanding the biblical description of man’s desire to sin. There is a key difference between compulsion and necessity that will helpfully clarify conflicting intuitions as to how man can continually sin, but freely do so. Remember from the discussion on God’s sovereignty[[5]](#footnote-5) that it is not contradictory to say that because man is “determined” to do something therefore he is not free. To say that man will sin “necessarily” is simply to affirm that it is unavoidable due to the status of his moral nature. There is a clearly scriptural attestation to the moral inability of man to act righteously apart from God’s work in their life and therefore they will most certainly sin by *necessity.* This is not to say however that they are not morally responsible however. To remove moral responsibility there would have to be some element of *compulsion* involved, which simply is not present. Compulsion is the idea that one is being *constrained* or *forced* to do something irrespective of their will. Certainly when someone is *compelled* to do something with their will tossed aside they are not morally responsible for the action that took place (say, someone physically grabs you and throws you into a thus window breaking it). This is not the way man acts with regards to sin however because he clearly *wants* to do so (John 3:19).

Calvin offers a helpful analogy of the difference between necessity and compulsion with regards to how we speak about God. Surely God can only do good and is under necessity of his own nature, which is to say it is unavoidable, to act righteously in all of his conduct. This, of course, does not mean that God is not morally praiseworthy because he is acting under the necessity of his moral nature. Furthermore, we would never say that because God is determined to act according to the inherent goodness of his nature therefore he is under some sort of *compulsion.* “Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes.” (Psalm 115:3). Thus, the depravity of man has most surely but him in a deplorably unavoidable state of desperation before God.

*Significance:*Apologetically, this is entirely necessary to stress because the near universal non-Christian view of the nature of man is that they are either inherently good and then corrupted by outside influences or they are some sort of “blank slate” that is affected by society. The Scriptural view of the source of evil in humankind is the heart of man not some external force. Why is such a view of the nature of man important though? It is precisely because of what J.C. Ryle stated in the quotation above. It is when mankind is in its deplorable, unable to save itself, and wicked state that God’s gracious gift of new life and salvation shines forth in full beauty. For Paul, the entire point of exclaiming that he was once “dead in sins” is to praise the full glory of God’s salvation as entirely grace. The significance of this view of depravity is that it leaves absolutely no grounds for the Christian to boast of their acceptance of God’s message, but rather a wonderful divine work that was done in their heart to change their will (Ezekiel 36:26). For this reason, we should join Paul as he exclaims “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord’“ ([I Corinthians 1:30-31](http://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/1%20Cor%201.30-31)).

Repentance *by Grant Garcia*

What does it mean for man to repent from his sins? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

[2 Chronicles 7:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+7%3A14&version=NIV)[Psalm 51](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+51&version=NIV)[Isaiah 64:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+64%3A6&version=NIV)[Jeremiah 17:9-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+17%3A9-10&version=NIV)[Habakkuk 1:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+1%3A13&version=NIV)[Matthew 4:17; 12:33-37](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4%3A17%3B+12%3A33-37&version=NIV)[Mark 1:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A15&version=NIV)[Acts 2:37-40; 3:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3A37-40%3B+3%3A19&version=NIV)[Romans 3:19; 10:8-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3A19%3B+10%3A8-17&version=NIV)[2 Corinthians 7:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+7%3A10&version=NIV)[James 2:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+2%3A20&version=NIV)

Quotations

“If Christ had not gone to the cross and suffered in our stead, the just for the unjust, there would not have been a spark of hope for us. There would have been a mighty gulf between ourselves and God, which no man ever could have passed.” –*The Cross* by J.C. Ryle

“To err is nature; To rectify err is glory.” –George Washington

“Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past; repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as king in self’s place.” –J.I. Packer

Recommendations

*Jesus Among Other Gods* by Ravi Zacharias

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 24, 35

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/faith-repentance/>

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/repentance-definition/>

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/repentance-need_for/>

Commentary

Repentance seems like an easy topic on the surface. It’s a pretty basic question. But when you dive into the richness of what repentance looks like, it becomes all the more profound. In answering this topic, the first thing that needs to be addressed is, “Do we even need to repent?”

The first to look at is our sin nature. Go back to Genesis where it all started: God creates, man rebels, and thus broke our relationship with God. It’s good not just to say that we do bad things, but to also go into who God is and who we are in light of it. When we realize how holy God is, not just good but completely perfect and so perfect that even angels cannot look at Him that they have to cover their eyes and their feet and scream out, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” it changes our perspective on our sin nature. To also know that God is so morally pure that He cannot so much as look at evil. All our “good” works that we may even do are like filthy rags when compared to God’s perfection. When we stumble at one point, we are guilty of breaking all of God’s law. It helps us to understand not just that we should repent, but that it is necessary to repent. Throughout all of Scripture we hear not just about God’s love but His wrath as well on sin, no matter what sin it is—big or small. The very idea that God searches our heart, the one thing that humans cannot see, immediately makes us guilty before Him. God doesn’t just consider actions, but also thoughts. Every careless word, Scripture says, we will have to account for. This is why we must repent. We are absolutely filthy apart from God. It is not a “good outweighs the bad” mentality, but a “sin outweighs anything apart from Christ” mentality.

So then, in light of why repentance is a necessity, what does it look like? I think there are two parts to repentance. The first and most common part is confession. This is what most people think of when they hear the word “repentance.” And the Bible clearly affirms this. Throughout Scripture, as can be seen in the references above, there is a call to confess our sins. We are to admit our guilt before God and understand how that breaches our relationship with Him. But there is a second, much harder part to repentance that isn’t as popular but still implied. That is turning form our sin. The Greek word for repentance is “μετανοέω” meaning to change, to turn away from. Repentance is more than simply confessing that you sin, it is also an action of seeking to turn from that sin and turn to God. Repentance doesn’t mean that we will never sin again, but that we are now seeking to not sin. Our lifestyle is no longer characterized by sin but love and obedience to Christ. Obviously we will fall short, but our actions show that we are trying to bear good fruit for God in growing our relationship with Him. Repentance also isn’t just for salvation. Believers still repent when they sin as well. Repentance is a constant thing for Christians. Christians don’t lose their salvation over sinning, but repentance is something that a Christians would want to do knowing that sin in one’s life can breach our relationship with Christ.

Repentance doesn’t have to be solemn. It’s honestly an amazing thing. Repentance leads to restoration. Restoration not only with God but with other people as well. Repentance is really a happy time. To know that we even can come to a Holy and Righteous God who is willing to forgive us when we clearly don’t deserve forgiveness is profound. So, there are lots of ways to dive into this topic. Let the Holy Spirit lead you in writing this card and even when you give it. Allow for Him to speak through you, even if it means going a different route that what you originally put on your card.

Sanctification *by Luis Garcia*

Compare and contrast justification with sanctification.

Bible Verses

[2 Chronicles 7:12-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+7%3A12-18&version=NIV)
[Isaiah 64:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+64%3A8&version=NIV)
[Jeremiah 18:1-6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+18%3A1-6&version=NIV)[Ezekiel 36:22-28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+36%3A22-28&version=NIV)[John 17:15-19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3A15-19&version=NIV)[Romans 8:28-39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A28-39&version=NIV)

[1 Corinthians 1:30-31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A30-31&version=NIV)[Philippians 1:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+1%3A9&version=NIV)

[Ephesians 5:25-27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5%3A25-27&version=NIV)[2 Thessalonians 2:13-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thessalonians+2%3A13-17&version=NIV)[2 Timothy 2:20-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2%3A20-22&version=NIV)[Hebrews 2:10-11; 13:20-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2%3A10-11%3B+13%3A20-21&version=NIV)

Quotations

 “What understanding do you have of the salvation of your soul? The work of salvation means that in your real life things are dramatically changed. You no longer look at things in the same way. Your desires are new and the old things have lost their power to attract you. One of the tests for determining if the work of salvation in your life is genuine is— has God changed the things that really matter to you? If you still yearn for the old things, it is absurd to talk about being born from above— you are deceiving yourself. If you are born again, the Spirit of God makes the change very evident in your real life and thought. And when a crisis comes, you are the most amazed person on earth at the wonderful difference there is in you. There is no possibility of imagining that *you* did it. It is this complete and amazing change that is the very evidence that you are saved…True salvation, worked out in me by the Holy Spirit, frees me completely. And as long as I ‘walk in the light as He is in the light’ (1 John 1:7), God sees nothing to rebuke because His life is working itself into every detailed part of my being, not on the conscious level, but even deeper than my consciousness.” –Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

“Did Christ finish His work for us? Then there can be no doubt but He will also finish His work in us.” –John Flavel

**Recommendations**

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 38

*Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, Book 4-Chapters 7-8, 10-11

http://carm.org/dictionary-sanctification

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/sanctification-justification/>

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/sanctification-practical/>

<http://gracequotes.org/topic/sanctification-positional/>

Commentary

The crux of sanctification is that it is God separating and molding us away from our flesh, so that, we might live and be consummated in the Spirit. C.S. Lewis explains this by saying Christ instills His “*Zoe*” into us through sanctification, transforming us into “New Men,” and dominating our natural desires to be like Him. Truly, we are being taken from the miry clay to be made into vessels overflowing with the Living Waters. This topic will require you to answer questions like, “If I am saved, then why do I still sin?,” “If I am forgiven of all my sin, then what about the sin that I still struggle with?,” “Will God ever give up on me?,” “How does sanctification work with the full picture of salvation?,” etc. All of the Scripture references and C.S. Lewis passages reveal and expound on the beauty of the definition and power of sanctification.

Redemption *by Luis Garcia*

What is redemption? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

[Exodus 20:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+20%3A2&version=NIV)
[Psalm 111:7-9; 130:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+111%3A7-9%3B+130%3A7&version=NIV)
[Isaiah 62:4-5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+62%3A4-5&version=NIV)
[Hosea 13:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea+13%3A14&version=NIV)
[Mark 10:45](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3A45&version=NIV)
[John 14:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A6&version=NIV)
[Romans 3; 5:6-11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3B+5%3A6-11&version=NIV)
[Ephesians 1:7; 2:1-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1%3A7%3B+2%3A1-10&version=NIV)
[Galatians 4:4-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4%3A4-7&version=NIV)
[Colossians 1:13-14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A13-14&version=NIV)
[Hebrews 9:11-15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+9%3A11-15&version=NIV)
[1 Peter 1:18-19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+1%3A18-19&version=NIV)

Quotations

“The Cross of Christ is the revealed truth of God’s judgment on sin. Never associate the idea of martyrdom with the Cross of Christ. It was the supreme triumph, and it shook the very foundations of hell. There is nothing in time or eternity more absolutely certain and irrefutable than what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross— He made it possible for the entire human race to be brought back into a right-standing relationship with God. He made redemption the foundation of human life; that is, He made a way for every person to have fellowship with God.

The Cross was not something that happened to Jesus— He came to die; the Cross was His purpose in coming…The purpose of the incarnation was redemption…The Cross is the central event in time and eternity, and the answer to all the problems of both. The Cross is not the cross of a man, but the Cross of God, and it can never be fully comprehended through human experience…The Cross was the place where God and sinful man merged with a tremendous collision and where the way to life was opened. But all the cost and pain of the collision was absorbed by the heart of God.” –Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

Recommendations

<http://carm.org/dictionary-redemption>

Commentary

Redemption implies being saved from bondage and slavery. With that in perspective, consider intertwining the story of the bondage of Israel under Egypt and the bondage of humanity under sin. The message of redemption is that God took us from the miry clay to be transformed into vessels of His glory. We are being redeemed back into the arms of the Creator, no longer having a chasm of separation caused by sin hindering our relationship with Him.

To Forgive

What does it mean to forgive? Why is this important?

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Abundant Life *by Maggie Topper*

In John 10:10, Jesus said, “I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” What did He mean

Bible Verses

Philippians 3:7-8

John 15:9-11

Psalm 16:11; 37:3-6; 42:1

1 Timothy 6:6

Hebrews 11:6

Luke 12:32-34

1 Peter 1:3-7

Quotations

“Many think of religion in general and Christianity in particular as a sour and depressing attempt to suppress human desire and deprive us of the delights of life. Nothing could be further from the truth! Christianity forbids us no pleasures, save those that lead to temporal misery and eternal woe. God has forbidden you nothing that is conducive to your ultimate satisfaction and delight.” -Sam Storms

“One of the main reasons people do not understand or experience the sovereignty of grace and the way it works through the awakening of sovereign joy is that their hunger and thirst for God is too small.” -John Piper

“Let it not be imagined that the life of a good Christian must be a life of melancholy and gloominess; for he only resigns some pleasures to enjoy others infinitely better.” -Blaise Pascal

“Jesus knew that all mankind were in the pursuit of happiness. He has directed them in the true way to it, and He tells them what they must become in order to be blessed and happy.” -Jonathan Edwards

Recommendations

*Desiring God* by John Piper

*Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer

*The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

http://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-boring.html

http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-ethos-of-christian-hedonism-sorrowful-yet-always-rejoicing

Commentary

There is unspeakable joy, peace, and hope in the life of a Christian who has truly given the reins of their life over to Christ. Sadly, there are so many people who call themselves Christians; they endeavor to be good people and follow the protocol of the Bible, but when they look around, they can’t help but wonder why their life has to be so dull. In this mindset, it can be easy to see all the excitement going on in the lives of their friends who aren’t Christians, and wonder why they can’t have that. I think it’s likely that the person asking this question would be in a situation like that, so be envisioning that as you prepare to answer this question.

One of the first things you need to impress upon the questioner is that Christians are not promised comfort and happiness (as the world sees it) in this life. Christ speaks to His disciples several times about the persecution they will endure as a result of following Him. The epistles are full of encouragement and instruction for Christians in the midst of trials. In fact, that is one of the principal purposes of 1 Peter. Peter is writing to suffering Christians and trying to build them up and remind them of their hope in Christ. He never says, “you shouldn’t be suffering.” In fact, he actually says they are blessed if they suffer for doing right! The disciples also serve as an example for the pain Christians can endure. Eleven of the twelve apostles died as martyrs for their faith. While John didn’t die a martyr’s death, he certainly lived as one, exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the name of Christ. Christians were never promised a life of leisure and relaxation here. Not at all. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer (another faithful Christian who died for his faith) poignantly put it, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.” We don’t really experience that kind of persecution in the West, it’s foreign to us, but think of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East right now whose lives are hanging in the balance. They know that every time they speak of their faith, that could be the end for them. So many have been made to choose between renouncing their faith or dying. Almost all of them choose death.

I know, that is all very dreary and depressing. We don’t really like to think about it. It’s much easier to live our lives and try to ignore the fact that some people who share our faith are paying dearly for it. But you have to ask yourself…why? Why would they choose death? Why is it worth it to them? The answer is: they *know* Christ. No, not knowing Jesus in the pray-a-prayer and go-to-church-every-Sunday way. They *know* Him and nothing else. They have lived every day understanding that Christ is all they have, and that He is the only thing they need. He is the only one they desire. In the midst of their intense grief, they have been able to see the beauty of who Christ is and what He has done. They have been able to grasp the joy that only comes from clinging to Jesus and making Him your all. You see, while we aren’t promised a comfortable life as Christians, we are promised joy. God doesn’t leave us alone when we are suffering. Christians who suffer for what is right share in the sufferings of Christ, and in so doing they can know Him all the more. God wants us to be happy. In His wisdom, however, He knows that the only *true* happiness we can ever experience in this life comes from denying self, taking up our cross, and following Him. We may look around at the fun and enjoyment our friends seem to have without Christ. What we don’t see is the emptiness of their hearts. They are searching, they are constantly seeking for something that will fulfill the desires of their heart, and they can’t ever seem to find it. There will never be contentment without our Savior, because He is the one who fills that hole and gives us fullness of life.

More than that, though, our brothers and sisters who give their lives for the sake of Christ know something else. They know that we are strangers here. This world is not our own. The so-called “pleasures” this world has to offer are not for us. They know that we look forward to a life to come where our lives will be made full by the glory of God. There is happiness, enjoyment, beauty, and wonders beyond our imagination awaiting us. Where the body of Christ is gathered around the throne of God, singing of the worthiness of the Lamb. That is where we belong. That is what our hearts yearn for. In fact, that is really what Christ is more likely speaking of in this particular verse (John 10:10). He is saying that He has come so that we can have life instead of death. Of course, we’ll all die a physical death, but Christians have hope of an abundant life to come. All the rules and guidelines God lays out in Scripture are not there to make our lives miserable, but to protect us from the consequences our actions can have. Ultimately, the “fun and enjoyment” that those who don’t follow Christ can experience will lead to their destruction. We should not envy them. We should pity them, and try our hardest to show them the truth.

Perhaps you know of someone who is or has struggled with the conundrum of this question. If you do, try to imagine you’re talking to them when you prepare for and give this speech. You must be gentle, respectful, and loving. Most of all, you should be so full of the joy of Christ that you are reflecting the truth you are speaking. If you haven’t yet experienced that “abundant life” and delight in the Lord yourself, it’s going to be impossible to give this speech in a way that your audience believes you mean it. It will be impossible to impress upon them a desire for it, if you don’t have it. If that’s where you are, then my prayer is that you will earnestly seek Him. Knock and the door will be opened to you! Christ isn’t trying to hide from you, He wants you to seek Him. Swim in the Scriptures, immerse yourself in earnest prayer, and the peace that surpasses all understanding will surely follow. You can have a heart that rejoices, even in the midst of intense suffering.

God’s Grace *by Joshua Johnson*

What is the grace of God? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

Hosea 6
John 1:14, 17
Acts 20:32
Romans 3:22-24; 5:15-17, 20; 6:1-2
2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:9
Ephesians 1:7; 2:4-5, 8-9
Titus 2:11-14
Hebrews 2:9

Quotations

“Only the Christian faith presents God’s grace as unconditional…If you’re not stunned by the thought of grace, then you aren’t grasping what grace offers you, or what it cost Jesus.” –Randy Alcorn

“Men may flee from the sunlight to dark and musty caves of the earth, but they cannot put out the sun. So men may in any dispensation despise the grace of God, but they cannot extinguish it.” –A. W. Tozer

“Christ is no Moses, no exactor, no giver of laws, but a giver of grace, a Savior; he is infinite mercy and goodness, freely and bountifully given to us.” –Martin Luther

“Grace isn’t about God lowering His standards. It’s about God fulfilling those standards through the substitutionary suffering of the standard-setter.” –Randy Alcorn

Recommendations

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem (Chapter 36, Section D.)

The Grace and Truth Paradox by Randy Alcorn

The Principle of the Path by Andy Stanley

http://www.gotquestions.org/grace-of-God.html

Commentary

The grace of God distinguishes Christianity from every other religion. Unlike Mormonism, Islam and other religions, which require works to attain salvation, Christianity affirms that God provides salvation through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. And this sacrifice reveals God’s unmerited and undeserved love for mankind, or His grace.

However, we cannot see or appreciate the beauty of the grace of God unless we understand what we have been saved from. The skeptic needs to understand the need for grace. Why does grace matter? Because all of us have a problem: sin. We have all said, done, and thought things which offend God.

So while there are many ways to approach this critical point of salvation and of the gospel, a good start when explaining grace would be to begin with a discussion of original sin and the depravity of man. Think of your own struggles and consider explaining how God has saved you from your own sinful nature through the grace of God and the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Testimonies and personal stories are often powerful. They can reveal your heart and compassion.

Also, think about discussing the nature of the grace of God. Ephesian 2:8-9 tells us that the grace of God is a gift from Him. Most of us have received Christmas gifts or birthday gifts. Are you required to accept a gift when it is offered? No. You can reject a gift. Sometimes people return gifts that they do not like or exchange them for something else. But the grace of God is a gift of immense value. Salvation by grace through faith saves our souls and gives us eternal life with God. It is undeserved, unmerited, and unconditional, yet God willingly offers it to every person in the world. Every human being has an opportunity to accept or reject God’s precious gift of grace.

Blessings to you as you explain the meaning of God’s grace and why it matters!

1. All of the recommended resources are available for free online at: <http://www.ccel.org/> (Christian Classics Etheral Library) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The biblical warrant for the following argumentation rests solely and foundationally on the verses cited above. Please read verses from each of the sections cited above first before the following portion. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sam Storms, Freedom and Depravity, http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/freedom-and-depravity---part-i [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example, Gen 20:6, Exodus 34:24, and 1 Samuel 25:14;35. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See article on God’s Sovereignty in this publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)