



Radical *Grace*

Live Free and Unashamed

Book Club Leader Guide



Welcome to the club!

Thank you for your interest in my award-winning book, *Radical Grace*. You and your friends are about to embark on a journey into the beautiful blessing of **Jesus** and His amazing, revolutionary, and radical grace. I pray your time together, as you discuss my book, is helpful, hopeful, and healing.

This downloadable document is flexible as it includes book club questions for two different scenarios depending on how often your club meets. Simply follow the questions for either **Section 1** or **Section 2**, whichever suits your situation.

1. Your club typically meets once per month after reading the entire book.
2. Your club meets once per week, discussing a few chapters at a time. This guide is set up for a four-week discussion which includes approximately six chapters per week.

You are welcome to send this guide to your book club members prior to the group meeting so they can **ponder the questions** ahead of time.

God bless you!

Laurel

Section 1

Message From Laurel

Dear friends,

I am honored and excited that you have chosen to read and discuss my book, *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed* as a group. My prayer for you all is that God will speak to you during your time spent reading about His life-changing, chain-breaking, revolutionary radical grace. I hope that through my personal story you have seen how His grace can impact our lives when we thoroughly understand it, fully receive it, and willingly share grace with the world around us. I hope the time you spend with this group is a blessing, that your relationships are enriched, and that you discover the beauty of who you are to God and the world around you.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your group.

1. What was your favorite part of *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*? What was your least favorite part?
2. What was your main takeaway from reading this book?
3. Were there any sentences you highlighted? If so, which ones and why?
4. What surprised you most about the book?
5. What effect has this book had on your spiritual life? Do you have any examples?
6. Do you have anyone in mind that you want to read this book?
7. If you could ask the author any questions, what would they be?

Further Discussion

If you would like to engage in further discussion, choose one or more of the **Further Discussion** questions listed in the four weekly segments of Section 2 of this document.

Section 2

Week 1: Chapters 1-6: *Grace Promised*

Message From Laurel

Dear friends,

I am honored and excited that you have chosen to read and discuss my book, *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed* as a group. My prayer for you all is that God will speak to you during your time spent reading about His life-changing, chain-breaking, revolutionary radical grace. I hope that through my personal story you see how His grace can impact our lives when we thoroughly understand it, fully receive it, and willingly share grace with the world around us. I hope the time you spend with this group is a blessing, that your relationships are enriched, and that you discover the beauty of who you are to God and the world around you.

In these first six chapters I begin to discuss my story as I set the stage for the coming King, Jesus. Understanding Adam and Eve's disobedience and how that affected humanity, God's plan to help us out of that predicament, and the installment of His Law for the Jewish nation are all foundational to our understanding of His radical grace.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with the group.

1. What was your favorite part of the first six chapters of *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*? What was your least favorite part? Why?
2. What was your main takeaway from reading these chapters?
3. Were there any sentences you highlighted? If so, which ones and why?
4. What surprised you most about these chapters?
5. What effect have these chapters had on your spiritual life? Do you have any examples?
6. If you could ask the author any questions, what would they be?

Further Discussion

If you would like to engage in further discussion, choose one or more of the following topics to spend time on during the group meeting.

1. What do you hope to learn from reading *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*?
2. In chapter one I describe a pivotal moment that drove me to seek God for a change in my life and for healing from the devastation of childhood abuse. Are there any of you who have experienced a pivotal moment that necessitated seeking God and possibly a course correction in your life? If so, please share with the group your experience, what you learned from that pivotal moment, how God directed you or spoke to you, and what came of this transitional time in your life? Your experience and wisdom may help others who are facing a pivotal time in their lives as they seek God.

3. In chapter two, I share the astounding number of negative thoughts that the average person endures. Is there anyone in the group that deals with negative self-talk, who is willing to share their experience? What do you think is the catalyst for those thoughts?
4. Do any of you struggle to understand the Bible? Can you express why that might be? Offer the group your thoughts and ideas on how everyone can benefit fully from reading the Word of God.
5. In chapter five, I share my story of a promise God made to me when I was very young about adoption. God followed through faithfully. Like God's fulfillment of His promise to me about my daughter, do any of you have a similar story about a promise fulfilled? Are you waiting for the fulfillment of a promise by God? What are your thoughts about God's promises?
6. God is faithful in His promises. People, however, are terrible at that, aren't we? When people don't follow through with their promises, at best it frustrates us, and at worst, it can feel like betrayal if it concerns a serious enough matter. Sometimes that broken promise is from a close friend or relative and it has a lasting impact on us. Have any of you had this situation in your life? How have you handled dealing with those feelings? How has God comforted you in those times?
7. Because I felt unworthy, dirty, and useless I embarked on a life of trying to behave perfectly. I craved approval and needed people's adoration of my talents and accomplishments to feel okay about myself. I often thought, *at least they can accept me for what I do, even if they don't accept me for who I am*. This is a common battle for people. What would you say to encourage others who struggle with their worth?

Week 2: Chapters 7-13: *Grace Defined*

Message From Laurel

My dear friends,

Welcome to week two of your gathering to discuss *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*. In this section of the book, I lay down specifics that define God's grace. My hope is that you have begun to see the beauty and freedom that God intended for you as you realize that when you were born again, you became a new creation in Him. That "*new you*" is your true identity now. Yes, you still have that old self hanging around for a bit longer, but you are not defined by your flesh anymore. I pray that you receive God's definition of who you are and that you celebrate that beautiful person!

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with the group.

1. What was your favorite part of chapters seven through thirteen of *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*? What was your least favorite part? Why?
2. What was your main takeaway from reading these chapters?
3. Were there any sentences you highlighted? If so, which ones and why?
4. What surprised you most about these chapters?
5. What effect have these chapters had on your spiritual life? Do you have any examples?

6. If you could ask the author any questions, what would they be?

Further Discussion

If you would like to engage in further discussion, choose one or more of the following topics to spend time on during the group meeting.

1. In chapter seven, I share a story with you describing the moment I realized that Jesus didn't come to die for only my sins, but that He came to die for the sins of the people who had hurt me so deeply and to release me from the bondage they had put me in. It was that revelation that helped me to understand what the New Covenant was all about. Are any of you feeling held down by something that someone else did to you? Are you lugging chains around that you need Jesus to unlock and free you from? You can be freed from the burdens of others' sin, just hand those over to Jesus and let Him make you whole again.
2. Because we live in a society that embraces a work-for-reward system, it is difficult for some to see that God doesn't require His followers to work at making themselves better through doing less *bad* and more *good*. The Gospel says it isn't about what we do, it is only about who we put our faith in. Do any of you wrestle with knowing what it means to *live* as a Christian without striving to fulfill some required list of moral to-dos? Discuss this question within the group.
3. In the chapter, *The Love of God*, I share a difficult scene from my past. My abusers created many horrible consequences for me, and those consequences spilled into my marriage as well. I felt so terrible about myself that I thought I had to work to be perfect to have value and for me to be accepted by God, but grace taught me that wasn't so. I learned that God loves me regardless of my behaviors. As a believer He might be disappointed in me because of what I do at times, but I have value and I am loved, and you are too. Do any of you struggle with feeling unworthy of God's love and grace? Discuss God's love with the group.
4. One of the most common beliefs in the Christian community is that when we sin, we are separated from God. When we believe this, it leads us to think that God isn't listening to our prayers and that He has turned His back on us. I pray that you fully receive that is not true. I believe that when we feel distanced from God it is just a perception that we are putting on ourselves, probably because of our own guilt. When we feel distant is when we must walk by faith and believe that He has not turned from us. We must realize that God loves us so much that He is always with us; He will never leave us nor abandon us. That is what grace is all about. Did chapter ten encourage you in any way?
5. Duality is most likely a new concept for you as it isn't discussed or taught much in the Christian community. Though not talked about, it certainly is clear in the Word of God that when we put our faith in Jesus, He makes us new. It makes sense too because that is what we experience in life, right? We want to do good, but we are still drawn to sin. That battle proves that we have two different natures in us when we are born again of the Spirit. What are your thoughts about this concept of being mindful of our two different natures? Does this idea help you to understand yourself better?
6. In chapter twelve, I talk about the blessings of righteousness and holiness. Jesus came to make you both. The truth is, without being righteous you cannot live with God in eternity. Righteousness is the whole reason Jesus died and rose again. He wanted to make you righteous and bring you into His family. Knowing you are already righteous and holy should help to relieve

you from striving to become righteous and holy by your own effort. How does the information presented in this chapter help to define God's grace? How does this fact free you from thinking you have to work hard to impress God?

7. Chapter thirteen, *The Sanctification Myth*, argues against thinking that we progressively get more holy as we work on our sin. This idea is currently very popular amongst believers, but it can't explain why there are so many scriptures that say we are already sanctified, which means to be made holy. The very fact that we must be holy and righteous *to be* saved is counter to the idea that we won't be either *until* we are saved. Frankly, it doesn't make any logical sense. The concept of our dual natures supports the fact that we have already been made righteous and holy in our newly remodeled spirit, not our flesh. Discuss within the group what this means for your walk with Jesus. What are your thoughts about being released from the chains of trying to become holy in your own efforts to being freed into the peace of knowing Jesus already did that work for you? How does this notion resonate with God's grace?

Week 3: Chapters 14-19: *Grace Lived*

Message From Laurel

Dear friends,

I am excited for you to get to this section of my book. So far, we have covered why we need grace and have been able to define it more specifically, and now it is time to learn to put God's radical grace into action. What I discuss in these chapters have changed my life and my relationships both with God and with people. These are the concepts that pulled me through the healing process from my abuse as a child. It took time for me to walk in this new grace I had found, but once I started stepping out in faith, I found each following step to be more stable and more joyous as time went on.

My prayer for you as you read through the end of *Radical Grace* is that you would truly be able to receive the grace that God has for you so that you, too, can be freed from any shame, self-condemnation, or doubt. This new walk took time for me to feel comfortable in, but every time I stepped out in faith that God's grace is real and powerful, I grew, my faith was strengthened, and I saw the beauty and life that walking in the Spirit produced in the world around me. I want to encourage you that you can experience this too. It is only a matter of taking that first step.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with the group.

1. What was your favorite part of chapters fourteen through nineteen of *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*? What was your least favorite part? Why?
2. What was your main takeaway from reading these chapters?
3. Were there any sentences you highlighted? If so, which ones and why?
4. What surprised you most about these chapters?
5. What effect have these chapters had on your spiritual life? Do you have any examples?
6. If you could ask the author any questions, what would they be?

Further Discussion

If you would like to engage in further discussion, choose one or more of the following topics to spend time on during the group meeting.

1. In chapter fourteen I speak about the Fruit of the Spirit. We have the Spirit living in us, and since that is true, two things are also true. First, we can use the fruit as a mirror as to which nature we are walking in. And second, we can hand out the fruit that He produces in us to those around us. We can be intentional with our love and grace. Discuss the concepts presented in this chapter and talk about how they might change the way you interact with others.
2. At the beginning of chapter fifteen I present a scenario that I'm sure most people are familiar with. Seeing that we have switched our behaviors in a snap in times past means we can switch between our flesh and our spirit natures any time we choose. What are your thoughts about this idea and how can you apply it to your life? How might this concept be beneficial in your life?
3. You can't get any simpler than having one command: love. The Bible tells us that if we love God, we will love others. But that is so stinking hard sometimes, isn't it? When we get upset or ugly about someone, it is in that moment that we must remind ourselves of that list of fruit the Spirit can give us. We are blessed to be able to see the ways in which we can love people. As believers in Christ, we love because we are already in His grace, and we may now offer that grace to others. I know that talking about doing this in real life is easier than doing it, but the fact remains that it is possible. Jesus sent His Spirit to help us. We get our strength from Him. How do you think loving others reflects God's grace? How does love in action strengthen relationships?
4. In *The Freedom*, I talk about being free to be authentically you. God is not surprised by your innermost secrets, and He still loves you. I realize that it is difficult sometimes in certain situations to be yourself. However, when it comes to your church and your closest relationships, you should be able to be who you really are. If you are not, then something is wrong. How does understanding God's acceptance of you help to free you into true authenticity?
5. Forgiveness is one of the hardest things we must deal with as a believer. If you live on planet Earth, you have been treated badly, betrayed, or been hurt by more than one person sometime in your life. Grace means that we can forgive even our worst offenders. As you read in my book, I have been down the path of forgiveness. Did anything I say in this chapter help you with understanding your own path? Are there people who need your forgiveness?
6. This section of the book closes with my *Radical Grace* version of the Gospel. Did it surprise you in any way that I included a few scriptures that aren't usually included in a typical gospel presentation? What specifically stands out about this chapter to you?

Week 4: Chapters 20-26: *Grace Enjoyed*

Message From Laurel

My dear friends,

This week we are coming to the close of our time together discussing *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*. We have talked about why we need grace, what grace is, and living in that grace. This final week we get to see the beauty and benefits of enjoying the grace that God has poured over us. We get to look forward to living in His grace as we may now enter His holy throne room, thoroughly savor each and every moment in life, and walk in the victory that He has already given us. This is the first day of the rest of your lives and you are blessed to live it in His Radical Grace!

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with the group.

1. What was your favorite part of chapters twenty through twenty-six of *Radical Grace: Live Free and Unashamed*? What was your least favorite part? Why?
2. What was your main takeaway from reading these chapters?
3. Were there any sentences you highlighted? If so, which ones and why?
4. What surprised you most about these chapters?
5. What effect have these chapters had on your spiritual life? Do you have any examples?
6. Do you have anyone in mind that you want to read this book?
7. If you could ask the author any questions, what would they be?

Further Discussion

If you would like to engage in further discussion, choose one or more of the following topics to spend time on during the group meeting.

1. When you have a foundation in Jesus that is solid in understanding His grace, your faith will not and cannot be moved. This solid foundation is what holds us up in times of weakness, gives us a sure footing when life gets a little unsure, and is the grounding for us as we set off with God's Spirit to live a life that is abundant and victorious. Discuss this foundation of grace and what it means to your walk with the Lord.
2. I have given you a few keys that will help you to recognize materials that might lead you away from God's grace. I pray you can keep them all in your back pocket and use them wisely whenever you are unsure of a doctrine or teaching that you encounter. We need to protect ourselves from being led into a legalistic perspective of our faith in Jesus because that actually leads us away from Him. Are there any keys that I presented that were particularly helpful for you?
3. Knowing that we may enter into the very presence of God is astounding given what we know of how much work it was for those who lived under the law. We are free to go boldly to Him and have a chat with Him any time we want. We don't need to ceremoniously clean up first or put on specific robes, we simply open our hearts, minds, and mouths and speak. What are your thoughts about this miraculous change in humanity's position with God through His Son, Jesus?
4. Every day that we live in this world flies by in a flash. We are busy people. I want to encourage you to take time to stop and savor the moment. God has given you every minute, and though we do have responsibilities, we can allow ourselves to soak in the good things of this world. Share with the group the things you enjoy savoring? Which moments this week have been special to you?

5. How would you define victory in Jesus? Do you have victory in your life? What things have you done, accomplished, or enjoyed that help define victory in your life?
6. In the last chapter of *Radical Grace*, I ask some questions about what you will do next. I hope you take the time to ponder each of them. What have you learned from this book? Did reading this book fulfill the expectations you had when you first picked it up? What was the best thing that you will take away from reading this book?

Thank you for taking your time and spending it with me. I pray you have discovered something special and priceless in Christ. I pray you have a newfound freedom and a joy that cannot be comprehended outside of Jesus. May God bless you all!