

**INTRO**

- Describe a time when you worked hard at something and saw the reward for your work.
- “Grace is not opposed to effort” — how do you make sense of that?

Today, we’re exploring how God’s grace invites us into deepening relationship with Him. Hebrews masterfully takes all the significant themes and storylines of the OT and shows how they ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus.

**READ**

Heb 4:12-16

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

Almost all religions instruct us to come to God first through doing, feeling or knowing something. But v15 reminds us God in Jesus came to us *first*. Jesus is the ultimate high priest in that:

**He is like us** — he can empathize with our human struggle and weakness toward sin.

**He is unlike us** — he can help us overcome our struggle through his victory over sin.

*Qu: why is it important to have someone you can go to who can provide both empathy and victory in the area you’re struggling with?*

Through grace, we are invited to come into God’s presence confidently and consistently. Here’s at least 4 ways grace transforms our relationship with God:

**Grace guards us from PRIDE**

The fact that we need grace to draw near to God means we can’t rely on our own merit.

**Grace guards us from APATHY**

Our relationship with God is a journey with ups and downs. Disciplines of grace can help ignite a fire where apathy might be creeping in.

*Qu: what ‘disciplines of grace’ or habits are you building into your relationship with God? What role does community play in this?*

**Grace guards us from INDEPENDENCE**

Sometimes we avoid God because we want to avoid his claim over our lives. v16 tells us we are to confidently draw near to the THRONE of grace. Grace is not just an invitation to forgiveness, but to transformation.

*Qu: how is God’s grace and his lordship over your life connected?*

**Grace guards us from GUILT & SHAME**

Guilt & shame tell us to hide from God; grace calls us to be found by God. Grace reminds us we are fully known (v13) and deeply loved.

*Qu: All of us have varying degrees of guilt & shame we struggle with. So, how can we help one another in this regard?*

Because of Jesus, you can confidently and consistently draw near to God:

*“Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the **reach** of God’s grace. Your best days are never so good that you are beyond the **need** of God’s grace.” — Jerry Bridges*

*Qu: Of the above 4 barriers, which one is your greatest struggle right now? How might God be calling you to specifically respond to his inviting grace in this area?*

**PRAY**

- Are there any answers to prayer we can celebrate?
- In light of the answer to the last question, pair up and pray for one another trusting God to be a minister of God’s grace to one another.