

WEEK 4





DAY 13: A GRACIOUS GOD

The Lord came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, "the Lord." 6 The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed: The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, 7 maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin.. EXODUS 34:5–7a

Pause

Focus your mind on God by listening to "Your Grace Is Enough" by Matt Maher, or listen to one of your favorite worship songs.

Read Psalm 145:8-9,13. David could proclaim that God was gracious and compassionate because God had already said it about Himself. Read Exodus 34:5-7a, highlighting in your Bible what God proclaimed about Himself:

Compassionate: God genuinely cares about His people and wants to extend mercy.

Gracious: God will show His people favor they don't deserve.

Slow to Anger: God will be patient with His peoples' failures.

Forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion, and sin: God eagerly forgives sin, something He alone can do.

DAY 13: A GRACIOUS GOD

Behind the Story

Exodus 34 records what happened after Moses received the Ten Commandments, then found the people worshiping the golden calf. God was angry, but responded out of His character: compassionate, gracious, merciful. This was welcome news to people who had so recently failed Him.

The Point

God is gracious. He continually shows us mercy and favor we do not deserve.

Respond

Moses met with God and God proclaimed truths about His character. As you pray over today's passage, ask God to reveal aspects of His character and the depths of His graciousness to you. Record anything He reveals through His Spirit and His Word.

For further study, consider how God's mercy and grace toward us is always balanced with His justice. Read John 3:36 and compare it to Exodus 34:5-7.

DAY 14: A TENDER GOD

"The Lord your God is among you, a warrior who saves. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will be quiet in his love. He will delight in you with singing." ZEPHANIAH 3:17

Pause

What is the last thing you celebrated? How did you celebrate? Take a few moments to think about the amazing truth that God celebrates you with shouting and singing!

Read Zephaniah 3:16-17 in your Bible. Underline all the words or phrases that point to God's tender nature.

Think through the following questions:

- How can God be both a powerful warrior and also protect you with quiet love? Explain.
- Re-read verse 17. What pictures does this verse bring to mind? Sketch them below or in your journal.

• Look at all the things God is described as doing or feeling in verse 17. What does this verse teach you about God's tender love for you? Why are those things important?

DAY 14: A TENDER GOD

Behind the Story

In Old Testament times, weak, limp hands expressed extreme terror, as shown in verse 16. Although the Israelites had much to fear, Zephaniah gently reminded them that they were not forgotten and that their predicament would not last forever. Zephaniah had clearly explained God's judgment on the people for their indifference toward Him and called them to return to Him. Their God would save and protect them, and His salvation would result in rejoicing and peace.

The Point

God can tenderly protect you because He is the powerful warrior who also delivered you. He has the strength to keep you safe.

Respond

Take a few moments to sit before the Lord, meditating on the beautiful truth that He is with you; fought as a warrior to save you; rejoices over you with gladness; quiets you with His love; and delights in you with shouts of joy. Which of these actions means most to you today? Write God a note, telling Him why that action is meaningful to you.

DAY 15: YOU ARE A FORGIVING GOD

They refused to listen and did not remember your wonders you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, and you did not abandon them. NEHEMIAH 9:17

Pause

Ponder this quote to begin your quiet time: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

—George Santayana

Read Nehemiah 9:14-17 in your Bible.

Think through the following questions:

- What things do these verses point out that God had done for the Israelites? Highlight them in your Bible.
- What was the Israelites' response to what God had done? Why do you think they responded that way?
- Despite the Israelites' response, how did Nehemiah describe God (v. 17)? Why is that important?
- In spite of their sin and rebellion, how did God display His character quality of forgiveness to the Israelites? How has He displayed it in your life? Explain.

DAY 15: YOU ARE A FORGIVING GOD

Behind the Story

Nehemiah wrote this book of the Old Testament to Jewish exiles who were returning from 70 years of captivity in Babylon. He wanted to remind them of God's faithfulness by helping them remember all God had done for them. The Israelites' 70 years in captivity demonstrates that God doesn't allow the guilty to go unpunished, yet He is still a God of forgiveness.

Forgiveness *n.*

To indicate pardon for a fault or offense; to excuse from payment for a debt owed.

The Point

God's very character is one of forgiveness. Regardless of our sin and rebellion, He remains constant and true to His willingness to forgive.

Respond

Using Nehemiah 9:14-17 as a template, journal a brief history of your life. Include statements indicating how God has been faithful to you.

<u>DAY 16: A KIND GOD</u>

For you, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive, abounding in faithful love to all who call on you. 6 Lord, hear my prayer; listen to my plea for mercy. 7 I call on you in the day of my distress, for you will answer me. PSALM 86:5-7

Pause

Take a moment now to sit quietly before God. Ask Him to speak to you through His Word today.

Open your Bible and read Psalm 86 in its entirety. As you read, write in the appropriate columns the words and phrases that describe people and our needs and those that describe God.



Look over what you wrote. What does this psalm reveal to you about God and His character? What does it reveal about yourself?

In a time of turmoil, David called out to God in prayer. His prayer centered on God's character, because David knew that God's actions flow out of His character.

Why is it important that one of God's characteristics is His kindness? What would life be like if He weren't kind?

<u>DAY 16: A KIND GOD</u>

Behind the Story

David wrote Psalm 86 while on the run from ruthless men who sought his life (v. 14). Notice what he did in the midst of his distress: he focused on the character of God. He didn't ask for a brighter tomorrow or assure himself that bad things don't happen to good people. He reminded himself that God is good, forgiving, abounding in love, and eager to answer David in his day of trouble. How did he know that God would answer? Because he knew that God is kind, protective, and caring over His children.

Do you have that kind of faith? Why or why not?

The Point

God's kindness is part of His character. He shows us undeserved kindness in the way He cares and provides for His children.

Respond

Think about who God is—the very essence of His character. Respond in a prayer, using Psalm 86 as a model. List and praise God's character then thank Him for specific ways He has displayed His kindness in your life.

For further study of God's kindness, read Titus 3:3-7.