

BRIDGE OF GRACE

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 3, Part 6, Teaching #22)

Leader Guide...

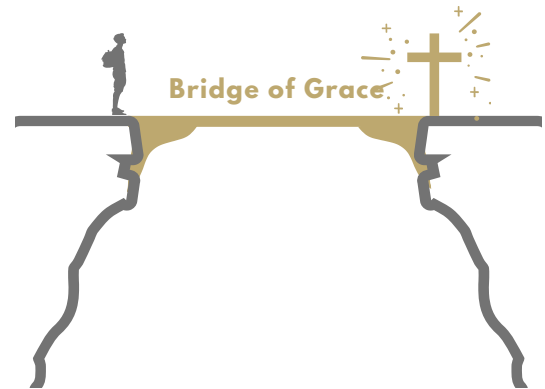
See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

Instructions: Watch video, read aloud, underline what stands out to you most, discuss

Imagine a great chasm—a wide and bottomless valley stretching endlessly between two cliffs. You stand on one side. Eternal union with God waits on the other. Between the two yawns a gulf so deep and vast that no amount of strength, no moral achievement, no lifetime of good deeds could ever span it.

This is the reality of the human condition. For “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Even the most righteous among us cannot reach the other side on their own. The one with the best behavior and the one with the worst behavior both fall equally short. The chasm is not crossed by merit, effort, or intention. It is crossed only by grace.

Grace is the unmerited favor of God—the divine gift we cannot earn and do not deserve. It is by grace that the bridge is extended. It is by faith that the bridge is received. It is by cooperation that the bridge is crossed.



Faith, then, is the key that lays the first plank of the bridge. Faithfulness is the walk across it. But understand—faithfulness is not powered by human will alone. It is made possible only by the grace of the Holy Spirit working within you. As it’s been said, “God provides the wind, but man must raise the sail” (St. Augustine). The moment you choose to walk in God’s will, you open the sails of your soul and invite the wind of grace to carry you forward.

To pursue the will of God is to step out onto the bridge in trust, allowing grace to guide every step. But to pursue the will of self—to turn back toward the desires of the flesh, the pride of life, or the lure of the world—is to walk away from grace and into the shadows of separation.

It is said, “Our worst days are never so bad that we are beyond the reach of God’s grace. And our best days are never so good that we are beyond the need of God’s grace... The grace of God is unearned and unearnable, but if we ever expect to grow in grace, we must pay the price of a consciously chosen course of action” (Jerry Bridges).

That course of action is this: to make God’s will your will—seeking to glorify Him in all you do by pursuing a virtuous life. For it is in this lifelong pursuit that grace flows more freely, more fully. Not because you earn it—but because you learn to receive it.

The more you walk in virtue, the more your soul is strengthened to carry grace. The more you align your life with God’s truth, the more your desires are purified, your passions ordered, your will conformed. Grace does not grow by your effort, but your effort makes room for grace to grow.

So walk the bridge of grace by faith—step by step, day by day. When you stumble, rise again. When you doubt, pray again. When you grow weary, rest in Him. You are not called to sprint across it in your own strength, but to walk faithfully, trusting the Spirit to uphold you, renew you, and carry you forward.

For the grace of God is not just the narrow bridge you cross. It is the wind beneath your feet. It is the light that guides your way. It is the love that draws you home.



Watch Video: Scan the QR code to access the video for this teaching as well as additional resources such as related Scripture, quotes, and more.

Or, visit horseandchariot.com/bridge-of-grace

The chasm of sin cannot be crossed by human strength, but only by grace. Faith lays the first plank, faithfulness is the walk, and the Holy Spirit provides the wind that carries you forward. Virtue does not earn grace—it makes space to receive it more fully.

1. Grace spans the gap. No effort or merit can reach God without it. → Do you still rely on your works to “earn” what only grace can give?

2. Faith begins the journey. Trust places your first step on the bridge. → Where is God calling you to step out in trust?

3. Faithfulness is cooperation. Grace empowers perseverance. → Are you yielding daily to the Spirit’s strength or leaning on your own?

4. Effort prepares the soul. Discipline clears room for grace to grow. → What daily practice helps you “raise the sail” of your soul?

5. Grace is constant. Needed on your worst days and best days alike. → Do you rest in grace when you fail, and remain humble when you succeed?

CHARACTERISTICS OF WALKING THE BRIDGE OF GRACE

Those who lift the sails of their soul to grace exhibit these traits:

1. Humility. Recognizes need for God at all times.

2. Trust. Steps forward in faith despite fear.

3. Perseverance. Keeps walking, even when stumbling.

4. Cooperation. Aligns the will with God’s will.

5. Receptivity. Creates space for grace through prayer, virtue, and obedience.

6. Hope. Anchored in the promise that grace will lead home.

Signs of Drifting from the Bridge...

- You depend on performance instead of God’s mercy.
- You delay obedience, fearing the cost of trust.
- You treat grace as license to sin rather than strength to resist it.
- You swing between pride in success and despair in failure.
- You resist prayer, dulling the sails of your soul.
- You chase the will of self instead of seeking the will of God.

Think: Grace is not just the bridge—it is the wind, the light, the strength, and the love that carries me home. My effort cannot earn it, but my faith receives it, and my faithfulness makes room for it. Each step I take across the bridge is not my own, but the Spirit’s work in me.

Pray: Lord, thank You for the bridge of grace that spans the chasm I could never cross. Teach me to trust You with each step. Keep me humble when I succeed, hopeful when I stumble, and faithful when I am weary. By Your Spirit, strengthen me to walk in virtue, raise the sails of my soul, and be carried ever closer to You. Amen.

SELF-EVALUATION & ACTION STEP

Of the areas you underlined throughout this teaching, which stood out to you most and why?
(Reflect, write down, discuss)

Rate yourself from 1-10

1 = I often rely on my own works

10 = I walk daily in humble dependence on grace

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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(avoid 5)



Why did you give yourself this rating?

(What daily discipline can help you “raise the sail” of your soul to receive grace more fully?)

Do you struggle more with despair when you fail, or pride when you succeed?

Where is God calling you to trust Him with one step of obedience this week?

How will you rest in grace—not just to begin the journey, but to sustain it?

Daily Affirmation: Today, I will walk the bridge of grace by faith. My strength cannot span the gap, but God’s Spirit will carry me forward—step by step, day by day—until His love draws me safely home.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Courageous Facilitator,

Your willingness to step forward and lead is a gift of grace to your community and a brave act of faith. God bless you for answering the call to inspire others to grow in virtue and pursue the character of Christ.

The Holy Spirit thrives in fellowship and community, working powerfully through the connections and shared experiences of small groups. That's why these lesson plans are designed to cultivate genuine relationships, inspire meaningful conversations, and foster a spirit of transformation through shared wisdom and grace.

Facilitating these lessons is both simple and impactful. While many forms of teaching rely on one-way communication, where one person speaks and others listen, true transformation happens through two-way communication. In this format, ideas aren't merely taught—they're explored together. You'll guide, but everyone will share and learn from one another, creating a rich environment where the Holy Spirit can move and grow each mind, heart, and soul.

These lesson plans succeed because they:

- **Encourage connection** in a collaborative small group setting that fosters action and accountability
- **Empower every voice** with opportunities for each participant to share and contribute
- **Inspire growth** through educational, inspirational, and transformational teachings

Your role as a facilitator is to:

- **Follow the instructions and trust the process**—the wheel is already built, you're here to guide it.
- **Honor the schedule** by being punctual and respecting the time of your group.
- **Lead with love** and rely on God's grace to inspire, guide, and uplift everyone in the group.

Your courage to create a space for growth and fellowship will not only bless others but will deepen your own journey of faith and virtue. Together, with God's help, lives will be transformed.

To God be the glory!

FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

1. Getting Started (5-10 mins)

- ☐ Give everyone a few minutes to join before getting started. Be friendly and greet people as they arrive. Get them talking! Come prepared with some good ice-breaker questions you can ask during this time.
- ☐ 3-5 minutes in, do quick introductions for anyone new to the group. What brought them to the group? Spend a moment getting to know them.
- ☐ Open with a short prayer (facilitator or volunteer).

2. Watch & Read the Teaching (5-10 mins)

- ☐ Watch the video of the teaching as a group.
- ☐ Have a volunteer read all of page 1. Have others follow along and underline what stands out to them most.

3. How it Applies (5-10 mins)

- ☐ Have a volunteer read all of page 2. Have others follow along and underline what stands out to them most.

4. Reflection & Discussion (20-30 mins)

- ☐ Have everyone quietly take 5 minutes to complete the "Self-Evaluation & Action Step" on page 3.
- ☐ Then, going around the group, have each person take a minute to share what stood out to them most about the teaching and why.
- ☐ If time allows, continue the discussion using the remaining self-evaluation questions as a guide.

5. Wrap Up (5 mins)

- ☐ Remind everyone to do the daily affirmation until you meet again next time.
- ☐ Ask for any prayer requests from the group.
- ☐ Close with a short prayer (facilitator or volunteer).