

Mercy, Part 1 | God

I. The Definition of Mercy

- A Secular Definition

- According to Merriam-Webster, mercy has three main understandings.
- The first definition is “compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one's power.”
- The second definition is “a blessing that is an act of divine favor or compassion, or a fortunate circumstance.”
- There you can see the blending of the not giving us what we deserve and the giving us what we don't deserve.
- And the third definition is “compassionate treatment of those in distress.”
- But the key in these three definitions is the repeated word, *compassion*. According to Merriam-Webster, compassion is "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." And that is a beautiful definition of mercy.

- A Biblical Definition

- The most common Hebrew and Greek words translated *mercy* are also frequently translated *compassion*. In fact, the Hebrew word most often associated with mercy is translated *compassion* far more times than *mercy*.
- Another Hebrew word translated *mercy* one time has the idea of sparing something and is also translated pity, concern, desires, and compassion.
- Mercy is God not giving us the consequences we deserve, while grace is God giving us blessings we don't deserve. -AMBrewster-
- “Mercy and grace are closely related. While the terms have similar meanings, *grace* and *mercy* are not exactly the same. Mercy has to do with kindness and compassion; it is often spoken of in the context of God's not punishing us as our sins deserve. Grace includes kindness and compassion, but also carries the idea of bestowing a gift or favor. It may help to view mercy as a subset of grace. In Scripture, mercy is often equated with a deliverance from judgment, and grace is always the extending of a blessing to the unworthy.”
-GotQuestions.org-
- What's interesting is that most Christians have no problem conceiving of the love of God. We talk about it, tells others about it, and — generally — feel pretty good about it. However, though we would rarely ever beg God to love us — for we are convinced that He does — we regularly plead with God for mercy.

II. Man's Response to God's Mercy

- The Christian's deep knowledge of His own sin coupled with His myopic belief in the necessity to earn God's favor that blinds him to God's mercy. Our pride believes we deserve good things from God. We deserve His love and grace because we so often are good and noble. That's the one extreme lie we believe. But on the other hand we so often see ourselves through the eyes of God and recognize the fact that we are wholly deserving of punishment.
- Too bad our reflection stops so infinitely short of the truth. Whereas we see ourselves as deserving of God's wrath and nothing more, we miss the fact that it's in our helplessness and our hopelessness that God is pleased to show His compassion.
- The fact that we deserve death and hell and negative consequences of all sorts makes us exactly the pitiable creature God so loves. And it's His love that limits His mercy, not our worthiness. Our unworthiness strips us of any hope for mercy, but God's infinite love powers His mercy toward us.

- In Titus 3:1-7 we read, *“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the **kindness** of God our Savior and His **love** for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His **mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*
- Our works earn us death, but God’s kindness, love, and mercy win us life eternal!
- If these truths don’t ignite a fire in your heart to better know God and His mercy, then you should wonder if you’ve every truly experienced it.
- How many friends have you told about your favorite food, sports team, diet, or movie? How passionate do you get when you find out your favorite artist is dropping a new album? How tired do you friends get of hearing about your new love interest, and yet how much more do you wish to know of them?
- If you have truly tasted of the mercy of God, we invite you to continue your study with us this Season. Dive into the mercy of God and confidently allow it to envelope you.
- Lamentations 3:22-23, *“The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”*
- Before the day is over, thank the Lord for His mercy, tell someone else about His mercy, and confidently look forward to His mercy the next day.
- But also ask Him to give you a better appreciation for His mercy. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you about your potential apathy concerning the mercy of God, and ask Him to use this Season to mature you in the knowledge, understanding, and practical application of God’s mercy.

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