

D Group Lesson

Sermon: Motivated Members

Series: Prescription for a Healthy Church

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:12–17

Big Idea: A forgiven heart is a grateful heart, and a grateful heart is a motivated heart.

HOOK — 10 Minutes

“If You Could Erase One Thing...”

Opening Question:

If you had a real-life “eraser” that could erase one mistake, failure, or embarrassing moment from your past, what would you want erased?

You don't have to share the specific event—just describe the category.

Give everyone an opportunity to respond.

Transition

We all have things we wish we could erase. Sometimes our past mistakes can make us feel disqualified, discouraged, or stuck.

But the good news of the Gospel is that **God's grace is greater than our past.**

Paul is a powerful example. Before becoming one of the greatest missionaries in Christian history, Paul had violently opposed Jesus and persecuted Christians.

Yet God didn't throw Paul away.

God forgave him, transformed him, and gave him a purpose.

Icebreaker Follow-Up

Ask:

- Why do people sometimes allow their past to determine how they see themselves today?
- Why is it difficult to believe that God can truly forgive us?
- What is the difference between feeling guilty about our past and allowing God's grace to transform our future?

LOOK — 20 Minutes

Read: 1 Timothy 1:12–17

Have someone read the passage aloud.

1. Paul Was Honest About His Past

Read **1 Timothy 1:13**.

Paul describes himself as a blasphemer, persecutor, and violent man.

Discuss:

- Why do you think Paul was willing to be so honest about his past?
- What does Paul's story teach us about God's ability to change people?
- Why can it be dangerous when we believe, "This is just who I am"?
- What are some things people commonly use as excuses for not changing?

Key Thought:

Your past may explain some things about you, but **it does not have to define who you become through Christ.**

2. Grace Changed Paul's Perspective

Read **1 Timothy 1:14–16**.

Paul doesn't focus on how impressive he became. Instead, he focuses on how incredible God's grace was.

Ask:

- What words does Paul use to describe God's grace?
- Why do you think Paul considered himself the "worst" of sinners?
- How would remembering what God has forgiven you change the way you live?
- How does gratitude differ from simply doing religious activities?

3. Grace Produces Gratitude

Read **1 Timothy 1:12**.

Paul begins by saying, **"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord."**

His service wasn't primarily motivated by recognition, status, or obligation.

It flowed from **gratitude**.

Discuss:

- What motivates you to follow Jesus?
- What can cause Christians to lose their motivation?
- How can we tell when we're serving God out of gratitude versus simply going through the motions?
- What are some practical ways we can remind ourselves of God's grace?

4. God Can Use Imperfect People

Consider these biblical examples:

- Abraham had significant failures, yet God used him.
- David committed serious sins, yet God continued working through him.
- Peter denied Jesus, yet became a powerful leader of the early church.
- Paul persecuted Christians, yet became a missionary and church planter.

Ask:

What do these stories have in common?

The answer isn't that these people were perfect.

They experienced God's grace and allowed God to use them.

TOOK — 15 Minutes

"How Will Grace Change Me?"

The goal of the TOOK section is to move from **information to application**.

Personal Reflection

Give everyone a minute or two to quietly consider these questions:

1. **What am I still allowing from my past to define me?**

2. **Where do I need to receive God's forgiveness instead of continuing to condemn myself?**
3. **What has God forgiven me for that I need to become more grateful for?**
4. **How should God's grace change the way I serve Him this week?**

Group Discussion

Ask:

If I truly believe that God has forgiven me, loves me, and wants to use me, what should look different in my life this week?

Possible answers:

- I should forgive someone else.
- I should spend more time with God.
- I should serve someone.
- I should share my testimony.
- I should stop allowing shame to control me.
- I should encourage someone who feels disqualified.
- I should become more faithful in church and ministry.
- I should thank God more intentionally.

Weekly Challenge: "Live Grateful"

Challenge everyone to choose **one specific action** this week that demonstrates gratitude for God's grace.

Examples:

- Encourage someone who is struggling.
- Serve someone without being asked.
- Share what Christ has done in your life.
- Spend 10 minutes each day thanking God.
- Reconcile with someone.
- Invite someone to church or D Group.

- Begin addressing an area of your life where you've been saying, "That's just who I am."

Have each person complete this sentence:

"Because God has shown me grace, this week I will _____."

Allow everyone to share if they are comfortable.

Closing Thought

Read **1 Timothy 1:17** together.

Paul's response to God's grace was worship.

He looked at who he **used to be**, recognized what Christ had **done for him**, and allowed that grace to determine how he would **live going forward**.

God's grace doesn't give us permission to stay the same—it gives us the freedom and motivation to become who God has called us to be.

Final Takeaway

Grace → Gratitude → Motivation → Faithfulness

A **forgiven heart** becomes a **grateful heart**, and a **grateful heart** becomes a **motivated heart**.

Closing Prayer