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Charis: God's Scandalous Grace For Us



Synopsis

“We often think that grace enters the Bible when Jesus appeared. However, Preston shows us that within the pages of the confusing, sometimes bizarre, and often war-filled pages of the Old Testament, there is heaps and heaps of grace. And the more we look, the more grace we see—grace that melts our hearts in worship of our God who shows His overwhelming, mind-blowing, over-the-top amazing grace from Eden to the New Jerusalem.”—Dan Kimball, Leadership, Mission and Teaching at Vintage Faith Church, and author of *Adventures in Churchland*

“A book on grace with the power to liberate us from the weight of works and requirements and do-goodisms that have plagued Christians for far too long. Every page is bursting with freedom. Finally, a grace-filled book on grace!”—Jonathan Merritt, author of *Jesus Is Better Than You Imagined*

“Preston Sprinkle writes a book on grace that is long overdue. Christians love to talk about grace and we name our churches Grace, but grace like God’s is in desperately short supply. Sprinkle frees us to live in God’s grace as Jesus embodied it. That kind of grace is unnerving, and for the most part, unprecedented in the Christianity most of us know. *Charis* is a must-read for every pastor, student, leader ... and anyone who has walked through the doors of a church and felt inadequate, judged, unworthy, or unspiritual. Preston brilliantly reminds us that God no longer sees you as the failed one, the messed up one. Because the kind of grace Sprinkle writes about changes it all, and God only sees you as precious and priceless. So much so that like a tattoo, your name is written on the hands of God. This is what makes *Charis* a game changer for all of us.”—Palmer Chinchon, PhD, cultural artist and author of *True Religion* and *The Barefoot Tribe*

A Look at Grace from a Most Surprising Perspective — The Old Testament — Grace. We want to domesticate it, calm it down, and stuff it into a blue blazer and a pair of khakis. But biblical grace — or *charis* — doesn’t like to settle down. Grace is a dangerous topic because the Bible is a dangerous book. — *Charis* flows from the Preston Sprinkle’s half dozen years teaching the Old Testament to college students. You might think that would produce a book about judgment — but no way. He shows how every character, every event, every single page from the Old Testament bleeds with grace. — Take a journey into *Charis* - where harlots are hugged, enemies are enjoyed, and really bad people receive really good things from a Creator who stubbornly delights in undelightful people — like us.

Preston Sprinkle (PhD, MDiv) is the director of Eternity Bible College’s extension site in Boise, Idaho. He co-authored the New York Times bestselling *Erasing Hell* with Francis Chan and is the author of the recently published *Fight: A Christian Case for Non-Violence*. He resides in Idaho with his wife and four children.

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Customer Reviews

Preston's book on grace is a refreshing reminder of how scandalous God's grace is in the Old Testament. Preston takes the Sunday School gleam off of many people in the Bible to show that these Bible characters were not used by God because they were good people. God used them despite their many flaws. This de-gleaming was especially refreshing for me when Preston talks about Jesus' disciples. Through several brilliant observations, Preston demonstrates that the twelve disciples was definitely no all-star team. In each chapter, Preston relates the scandal of God's grace back to the reader, reminding the reader that the same kind of grace found in the Bible continues today. This aspect of Charis was really helpful and encouraging for me. The reader is unable to walk away from Charis thinking, "Well that was back then; things are different now." Preston clearly communicates that God's grace is the backbone of the entire Bible, including the Old Testament, and that readers can learn much about this grace by studying the Old Testament.

Disclosure: After reading this book I purchased 6 copies to give to friends. Charis: God' Scandalous Grace for Us will open your heart and mind to the reality that there isn't anything you can do to make God love you more than He does right now. This book will be read by my girlfriend, who raised in the Catholic Church, still struggles with the overwhelming feeling of unworthiness when good things happen or, on the flip side, that God is angry at her when life is a struggle. Another friend, who like me, was raised in a home where God loved us when we were good, but angry at us when we were bad, has already phoned me with tears expressing gratitude for sharing this book with her. I think she is finally getting the meaning of "the gift." For me personally this book confirms that the 'ah ha' moment my husband and I had 20 years ago is founded in theological truth. "Grace is more than just leniency and unconditional acceptance. Divine grace is God's relentless and loving pursuit of His enemies, who are unthankful, unworthy and unloveable. Grace is not just God's ability to save sinners, but God's stubborn delight in his enemies - yes, even the creepy ones." (Preston Sprinkle, page 24 of Charis: God's scandalous grace for us.) The flannel graph theology I was taught in Sunday school was missing the key element of God's love for mankind. I am sure my parents and countless Sunday school teachers meant well. They too were misinformed and failed to study/understand the truth in the Old Testament that exposes the reality what "Charis" is and that there isn't a thing we can do to earn it - only accept it. Reading this book made me fall in love with Jesus all over again. I've been functioning as a "Red Letter Christian" for years. Thanks to Preston's book, I now see that those "red letters" got their start in the old testament. Do you feel shame, unworthiness, doubt, loneliness and fear? Then this book is for you. Are you wounded, discouraged and heartsick about what you see happening in the church/world today? This book will be like a balm for your soul as you discover that God understands. He has a plan for all the strife in this world. It's Jesus. Rarely do I find a devotional book that captures my attention and keeps me wanting more. The last book that hit me like this was Nadia Bolz Weber's book: Pastrix. :) Now these two books compliment my study of God's word. The thread that weaves through both captures the true heart of God for humanity. ALL of humanity. As I write this review I have thought of three other people that need to read this book. I'm buying a few more before I log out of .

This book gave me a new perspective on God's grace. This quote gives a flavor of the authors writing: "God aggressively and delightfully values and uses thugs and misfits to build His glorious kingdom: abrasive, thickheaded people like Peter, hothead racists like James and John, violent brawlers and extortionists like Simon and Matthew, and mentally deranged bag ladies like Mary

Magdalene." Sprinkle shines a new light on the disciples and followers of Jesus as well as other Bible heroes like Moses, Judah, Rahab and many others. He also tells the stories of modern day Christians who have come to know God's incredible grace and love. This is a book I will read again as it is full of valuable lessons.

Preston Sprinkle has quickly become one of my favorite authors after reading *Erasing Hell* with Francis Chan and his book *Fight*. His latest book *Charis* looks at the biblical concept of grace in a way that many aren't familiar with. When we think of grace, we typically turn to the New Testament. Jesus Christ, after all, is the epitome of grace. But grace didn't start with the New Testament. Sprinkle takes us on a journey through all of Scripture to show that God's grace has been active from day one. He shows that God has always been about using messy broken people to bring about his redemptive plan. Sprinkle helps us to see God's love at work even when we might misunderstand it as something completely opposite when we read some of the stories in the Old Testament. Sprinkle is a profound biblical scholar who knows how to communicate the message of Jesus in a clear and profound way. *Charis* is a great addition to the many books that already exist about the topic of grace. Review copy provided by David C. Cook

This is an excellent book! It is so engaging that I could hardly put it down as I read chapter to chapter. I finished it in just two afternoons. It's been a long time since I read a book on grace like this that produced a sense of holy affection to God after I read it. There's no way one could seriously work their way through it and come out unfazed. Chapter by chapter and page by page, Preston Sprinkle's book on grace gives Scripture the life back that all of us who've read the Bible to death have lost. This book is refreshing to the soul and reminds one of the reality of the stubborn devotion that God has to us, despite our incessant failure to drift away. I only wish there was more to the book so I could keep reading!

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