

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of botanical illustrations. The designs include various types of ferns, some with delicate, feathery fronds and others with more robust, segmented leaves. There are also sprigs of small, round berries or seeds on thin stems, and some larger, pointed leaves with prominent veins. The color palette is limited to shades of teal, light green, and a golden-yellow, all set against a solid black background.

Cultivate

Growing through the Beatitudes

MAY 26-28, 2018

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Mercy

This week we're learning about God's mercy toward us and how God calls us to offer mercy toward others.

WATCH THE VIDEO

NorthlandChurch.net/Studies

Afterward have someone read the discussion questions in the "Hear God's Story" section and start the conversation.



Share Your Story

Begin by praying together. This should be a brief, simple prayer in which you invite God to give you insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of your time together or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Then begin your time together by discussing the following questions.

- When is a time you got caught doing the wrong thing but didn't get in trouble for it?
- When have you caught someone else in a mistake and showed the person mercy?

Hear God's Story, and Create a New Story

READ MATTHEW 5:7 (NIV) & EPHESIANS 2:1-7 (NLT)

- Why were we subject to God's anger? What does God's mercy, which He has offered us instead of His wrath, look like?
- According to the beatitude, who will be shown mercy?
- Why does God show us mercy and grace?
- Where is a place in your life that God has shown you mercy? What impact did that show of mercy have on you?
- Can you think of other stories of the Bible where God showed mercy? Can you think of stories where God's show of mercy led to repentance or redemption?
- Have you experienced mercy from other people in your life? How has that affected you?
- Are there people it's easy for you to extend mercy toward? Are there specific people it's hard to offer mercy toward?
- In Ephesians 2:4, we learn that "God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much." What is the connection between love and mercy? How does love impact your desire to give mercy? How does love affect your ability to extend mercy?
- How can your group help you better extend mercy as God does for us?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests.

Find Your Story in God's Story

If you feel God is nudging you to go deeper, take some time between now and our next discussion to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own, jotting your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. Want to go deeper? Select a few verses and try paraphrasing them: writing them in your own words. If you like, share them with the group the next time you meet.

Whereas *grace* is unmerited favor – receiving a reward you didn't earn – mercy is being spared a punishment that you did earn. Our recognition of failure and frailty and our fear of failure are often what lead us to seek mercy from God. And over and over again, we can see examples of our pursuit of mercy being the first step in a journey from mercy to grace, all the way to redemption and restoration into the family of God.

READ LUKE 18:9-14 (NIV)

- What was the difference in the perspective the Pharisee and the tax collector had of themselves? What was the difference in the perspective the Pharisee and the tax collector had of God?
- How does our perspective of God affect our perspective of ourselves? Of others? How does that perspective shape our view on our need for mercy for ourselves? How does that perspective of God affect our willingness to extend mercy toward others?
- Who is someone who needs your mercy? How can you practically extend that mercy in the coming days?

READ JONAH 4 (NIV)

- In Jonah 1-3, we see God call Jonah to call the people of the city of Nineveh to repent and turn from their sin to God. When Jonah (finally!) preaches that message, the city repents and begs God for mercy. And God hears their prayer and spares them the punishment they'd earned. How does Jonah respond to God's show of mercy? Why is he so angry?
- Who are some people it is difficult for you to extend mercy toward?
- How can your group pray and support you in serving God and serving others with a spirit of love instead of the spirit of judgment that we see in Jonah?

Looking for more questions and reflections so you can keep digging deeper? There's even more to this week's study available on Northland's apps or at NorthlandChurch.net/Studies.