

LEADER'S GUIDE

+ CD ROM

THE GRACE COURSE

FROM FREEDOM IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

STEVE GOSS, RICH MILLER
& JUDE GRAHAM

A 6-WEEK DISCIPLESHIP COURSE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

LET GOD'S GRACE FREE YOU TO **BE REAL AND BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

FOREWORD BY DR. NEIL T. ANDERSON

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What leaders say about *The Grace Course*

“This empowering material is accessible to those in the very early stages of pursuing life with Christ and yet highly stimulating and challenging for mature believers. I highly recommend it as a key discipleship tool for the whole church. It makes fabulous home group material and is ideal for every discipleship team.”

Lynn Chetcuti

Network Vineyard Church, Reading, UK

“So many Christians, including myself in the past, have made the Christian life a performance rather than an intimate love relationship. If true revival is to come to our nations, it will start with this message of grace. Want to be refreshed? Then this course is for you.”

Dr. Howard Ostendorff

Ministry leader with Campus Crusade for Christ for 38 years, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

“*The Grace Course* deepened people’s sense of identity in Christ and stirred them up to greater love and faithfulness from a point of grace — not obligation or legalism. It spoke powerfully to people in our church from many ethnic backgrounds and life situations. We recommend it highly.”

Revd. Dr. Rodney Woods

City Temple, London, UK

“*The Grace Course* does a marvelous job in introducing the concept of grace in a simple, engaging and, at times, even humorous way. It is short and to the point, taking an incredibly deep theological issue and making it understandable and practical.”

Dr. Jeff Stam

Set Free Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

“Several times during *The Grace Course* there was the sheer joy of lights being suddenly switched on, and I myself gained many fresh insights into God’s amazing love in Christ. Be prepared for life-changing encounters with God and experience how Bible passages as familiar as the story of the Lost Son can speak in powerful new ways. A truly compelling course.”

Revd. Charles McMullen

West Church (Presbyterian), Bangor, Northern Ireland

“Steve Goss and Rich Miller combine wit and wisdom to resource the 21st century church with essential teaching on spiritual maturity grounded in grace. *The Grace Course* will inspire you, encourage you and take you to a deeper understanding of the love of God.”

Chris Campbell

Youth specialist and director of Generation Freedom, Bridgeport, West Virginia, USA

“*The Grace Course* has challenged us to look again at our understanding of grace. It has brought about a heart transformation and released a new spiritual freshness into all areas of our discipleship.”

Major Jackie Leswell

Viewpoint Community Church (Salvation Army), Parkstone, UK

Thanks!

Creating a resource such as *The Grace Course* is a huge undertaking and could not possibly have been done without the help of many, many people. We particularly want to thank the following:

- The members of Freedom In Christ Ministries' team around the world who regularly give so much to help churches pass on this life-changing message of freedom and grace, particularly our intercessors who have supported us so much during the development process. Without you none of this could have happened.
- Tony Collins, Jenny Ward and the excellent team at Monarch for making *The Grace Course* possible and for giving us so much freedom in the creative process.
- The team who reviewed the content over many months and made so many invaluable suggestions. Thanks especially go to Craig Millward, Tim Baynes Clarke, Mike Benford, Bart Gavigan, Gareth Burgess, Jackie Leswell, Charles McMullen, Steve Prince, Derek Frank and Rod Woods.
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- Those who have worked so hard on the technicalities of the content: Zoë Goss for her help at the filming and work on the content of *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*; Rachel Mozley for transcribing the DVDs so that we can provide subtitles for the hearing-impaired; Elaine Jones for doing the technical work on the subtitles; Vic Ford for checking the manuscripts so helpfully and thoroughly.
- The lovely people who shared their stories so helpfully in being filmed for the DVDs.
- London School Of Theology who allowed us to turn their wonderful chapel into a film studio and supported us in many other ways.
- Rory Springthorpe, Stephen Montgomery and the tireless team at Vivid Broadcast who put so much creativity into producing superb quality DVD presentations.
- Jon Smethurst at Ezekiel Design for his wonderful designs and illustrations.

The Grace Course is dedicated to

**Dr. Neil T. Anderson and Joanne Anderson,
founders of Freedom In Christ Ministries,**

in the year that they celebrated both 40 years in Christian ministry and Neil's 70th birthday and in which they handed on the baton of international leadership of Freedom In Christ Ministries to Steve Goss.

Thank you so much for all you have done to spread the message of freedom throughout the world in a spirit of gentle humility, grace and compassion. We appreciate you more than we can say.

“O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.”

Isaiah 26:12



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Foreword

By Dr. Neil T. Anderson

Founder and President Emeritus of Freedom in Christ Ministries

A newly adopted child found himself in a big mansion. His new Father whispered in his ear, “This is yours and you have a right to be here. I have made you a joint heir with my only begotten Son. He paid the price that set you free from your old taskmaster who was cruel and condemning. I purchased it for you, because I love you.” The young boy couldn’t help but question this incredible gift, “This seems too good to be true. What did I do to deserve this,” he wondered. “I have been a slave all my life and I have done nothing to earn such a privilege!”

He was deeply grateful, however, and began to explore all the rooms in the mansion. There were many other people in the mansion who also had been adopted. He began to form new relationships with his adopted brothers and sisters. He especially enjoyed the buffet table from which he freely ate. Then it happened! While turning away from the buffet table he knocked over a stack of glasses and a valuable pitcher that crashed to the floor and broke. Suddenly he began to think, “You clumsy, stupid kid! You will never get away with this. What right do you have to be here? You better hide before someone finds out, because they will surely throw you out.”

At first he was caught up with the wonder of living in the mansion with a whole new family and a loving Father, but now he was confused. Old tapes laid down in early childhood began to play again in his mind. He was filled with guilt and shame. The thoughts continued, “Who do you think you are? Some kind of a privileged character? You don’t belong here any more, you belong in the basement!” “The old taskmaster was right about me, I don’t belong here,” thought the newly adopted child. So he descended into the basement of despair.

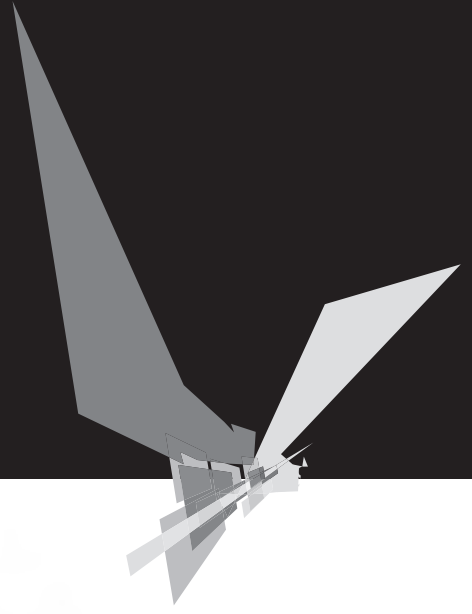
The cellar was dreary and dark. The only light came from the open door at the top of the long stairs. He heard his Father calling for him, but he was too ashamed to answer. He was surprised to find others in the basement. Upstairs everybody talked to each other and joined in with daily projects that were fun and meaningful. Nobody talked to each other in the basement. They were too ashamed and most felt that the basement was where they really belonged anyway. Those old tapes questioned the love of this new Father, and he began to question whether he was ever adopted in the first place.

He made a few half-hearted attempts to return to the light, but eventually he found a dark corner to lie down in. Then one day a shaft of light penetrated his mind and reason returned. He began to think, “Why not throw myself on the mercy of this person who calls Himself my Father. What do I have to lose? Even if He makes me eat the crumbs that fall from the table, it would be better than this.” So he decided to take the risk of climbing those stairs and face his Father with the truth of what he had done. “Lord,” he said. “I knocked over some glasses and broke a pitcher.” Without saying a word, his Father took him by the hand and led him into the dining room. To his utter amazement his Father had prepared for him a banquet. “Welcome home Son,” his Father said. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus, and the matchless grace of God! The door is always open for those who are willing to throw themselves upon the mercy of God. “In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will — to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves” (Ephesians 1:5,6). He doesn’t want us to live self-condemned lives in the basement of guilt, shame, fear and legalism. He wants us to know that we are adopted, forgiven, and forever alive in Christ and that we can live every day as beloved children.

I urge you to take seriously this course that will help you live a liberated life under the grace of God and go on to bear much fruit, fruit that will last for ever — and equip others to do the same.

Welcome!



Welcome to *The Grace Course*!

We feel humbled, privileged and very excited to share this exciting teaching with you. It has had such an impact on our own lives and ministries.

Our intention is to put a tool into your hands that will enable you to see Christians in your church become more fruitful than they could imagine as they allow God's grace to permeate their lives.

This Leader's Guide is designed to give you everything you need to run a highly effective course. We suggest that you get started as follows:

- register with us for free access to all the additional online info and downloads (see page 10).
- read these few introductory pages — they will help you understand the scope and intention of the course and how to run it well.
- watch the teaching sessions on the accompanying DVD (available separately) or read the session notes in this Leader's Guide thoroughly.
- ensure you have grappled with the concepts in your own life and have been through the ministry component (*The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*) personally before leading others.

Remember that we at Freedom In Christ Ministries are always ready to respond to questions from church leaders so feel free to get in touch.

May God bless you as you lead others into this amazing grace of His!

Steve Goss, Rich Miller & Jude Graham.

First, please register as a user

It costs nothing and you will receive:

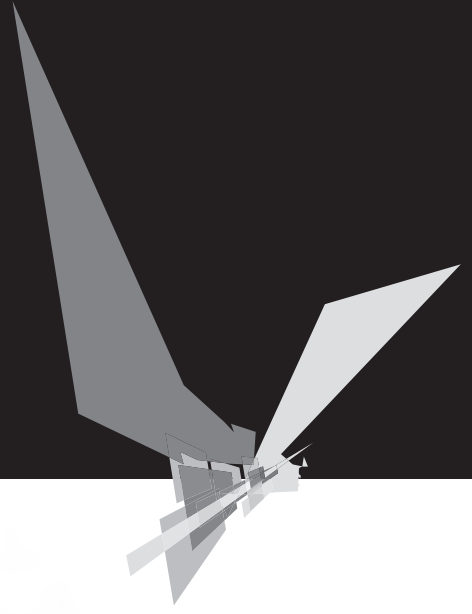
- access to a web area with helpful info for course leaders
- downloads that will make running your course even easier
- details of training events near you and occasional news from Freedom In Christ (if you request to receive these)

To register simply go to www.ficm.org.uk/gracecourse

Or call 0118 321 8084 in the UK or 865-342-4000 in the USA.

We never share your contact information with third parties. We will not bombard you with unwanted e-mails.

Running *The Grace Course*



What is *The Grace Course* about?

Jesus said that people would recognize His disciples by their love (John 13:35). Paul said: “For the love of Christ compels us” (2 Corinthians 5:14 NIV). *The Grace Course* is a tool for churches to help Christians recover their first love for God (see Revelation 2:4) so that they go on to love others and make a great impact on the world. In order for Christians to be motivated purely by love, we have to help them get rid of “false motivators” such as:

Guilt

We know, in theory at least, that salvation is by grace through faith, and that we cannot earn it. But many of us unconsciously fall into the trap of believing in effect that we **maintain** God’s acceptance by working hard and “doing the right things”. Guilt conditions us to believe that our ongoing acceptance by God is a product of how well we are performing and makes us behave as if our growth in Christ is primarily up to us. We end up stressed out, burned out or fed up.

Shame

How we see ourselves determines how we will live. We give mental assent to the truth that we have become “new creations” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), but in practice shame leads us to allow our identity to be determined by our past rather than by what Christ did for us on the cross. Many of us feel that we are “a let-down” to God and other people, that we are fundamentally flawed. This is compounded when we find ourselves stuck in sins that we can’t seem to escape from.

Fear

Some know full well that they are in the grip of fears but have lost hope that they can resolve them. Others don’t see themselves as fearful because they have learned to live with their fears, thinking, “That’s just how I am”. In both cases, fear holds us back from stepping into all that God has for us and from telling others the wonderful news about Jesus and His salvation.

Pride

Pride leads us to turn what should be a living relationship with Jesus into nothing more than dry religion. Religious people are into rules rather than relationship. They put laws above love and they are more concerned about being right than being real. The highest aim of the religious is to know the Word of God rather than to know the God of the Word. Humility is the gateway to true unity amongst God’s people, which is what will lead to the world knowing that the Father sent Jesus (see John 17:21).

A true understanding of God’s grace provides the antidote to these false motivators. *The Grace Course* is designed to help Christians understand the mind-blowing benefits of what it means to be God’s child: that, no matter what’s in the past, we are perfectly acceptable to God; that we don’t have to try hard to “act like we think Christians should act”; that we can simply live out of the truth of who we now are — free, innocent, unashamed, courageous, humble and ready to bear much fruit!

The Grace Course puts the emphasis on knowing the truth, not just in our heads but in our hearts. It is full of practical exercises for people to engage with and has a gentle, effective ministry component called *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*.

If you can encourage Christians to “do business with God” during *The Grace Course*, the end result will be that they will be so bowled over by a new sense of God’s grace that they will want to live for Him, not because they feel they have to but because they really love Him. And they’ll go on to bear much fruit, fruit that will last (see John 15:16). Imagine how different your church could be! Imagine what an impact that would make on your community.

What is the structure of the course?

There are 6 teaching sessions and a ministry component that comes between Sessions 5 and 6:

Session 1: Free!

We all know that we are saved by grace through faith alone. Yet when it comes to living out our Christian lives, it’s easy to slip into thinking that it comes down to obeying a set of rules or living up to certain standards. But God is not looking for slaves who obey because they have to — instead, He wants to free us to rest in His grace so that we serve Him because we really want to.

Session 2: Innocent!

Many of God’s people struggle with a low-grade fever of guilt which makes us “act like we think a Christian should act”. Understanding that we have been declared not guilty once and for all brings us back to a real relationship with God where we can be ourselves and do what we do purely out of love. In Christ we measure up in full to God’s righteous demands!

Session 3: Unashamed!

Past experiences, what others say and our struggles to break free of sin can leave us feeling that there is something fundamentally wrong with us. The truth is that we have become completely new people who can break the cycle of returning time and again to the same old sin issue. In Christ we have become completely new creations at the core of our being!

Session 4: Courageous!

Our God is an awesome God. But His children can come boldly into His presence without being afraid — we are absolutely secure and safe. And if this God is for us, who can be against us? We need fear no one and nothing except God Himself, and the fear of God is not a cringing mistrust but a deep awe of His great majesty and holiness.

Session 5: Humble!

In the Old Testament, God gave His people the Law. When Jesus came, He stated plainly that He had not come to do away with the Law but to fulfil it. If we understand how this works, we will resist the temptation to set ourselves up as nit-picking “guardians of the truth” but will be guided by the Law that is now written on our hearts. We will humble ourselves before God and before each other.

Ministry component: *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*

This kind and gentle ministry session will help us deal with the things that get in the way of experiencing God’s grace. It is designed to be run on an “away day” retreat between Sessions 5 and 6 or in an individual one-on-one appointment.

Session 6: Fruitful!

When we feel ground down and exhausted, Jesus makes us an astonishing offer: a light yoke and an easy burden. And He really means it! It seems a paradox, but genuinely fruitful ministry that will have value for eternity comes only when we enter into that rest through the gateway of brokenness and learn to depend completely on Him.

How does *The Grace Course* work together with *The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course*?

The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course is a best-selling course consisting of 13 sessions plus *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* ministry component — there are further details on page 223 or visit www.ficm.org.uk. The look and feel of *The Grace Course* is modelled on the *Discipleship Course* so will be instantly familiar to previous users.

The Grace Course can stand alone but is also designed to work well with the *Discipleship Course*. They very much complement each other.

The overall theme running through both courses could be characterized as, “know the truth and the truth will set you free”. Both courses have similar main emphases: knowing who you are in Christ; and the importance of renewing the mind.

With 13 sessions, the *Discipleship Course* is more comprehensive. In particular, it has more to say on the crucial areas of why we need to forgive others, the battle for our minds, recognizing that all of us are predisposed to a particular worldview and understanding how to bring our goals into line with God’s goals for our lives. It tends to draw from the epistles a little more than the gospels. *The Grace Course* on the other hand covers some key areas in a lot more depth than the *Discipleship Course*: guilt; shame; fear; pride; and ministering out of rest. It tends to draw from the gospels a little more than the epistles.

We showed *The Grace Course* to several leaders who are experienced users of the *Discipleship Course*. All said that the two courses work together extremely well. They felt that, having experienced one course, people would definitely want to go on and do the other and it would be highly beneficial for them to do so.

Nearly all said they would want to use both courses, for example by running one course for a period followed in the next period by the other course, giving participants opportunity to do both. They were, however, split on which course they would put participants through first: some said one, some said the other!

So, if you choose to use both courses, our recommendation is that you do not worry too much which order you do them in. We would, however, recommend that, if you do *The Grace Course* first, you consider giving participants an opportunity to go through *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* (the ministry component from the *Discipleship Course*) before they go through *The Steps To Experiencing God’s Grace* (the ministry component from *The Grace Course*) or even instead of it if there is only opportunity to do one or the other. It would also be beneficial if possible to show the DVD of Session 9 — “Forgiving From The Heart” — from the *Discipleship Course* during the away day retreat for *The Grace Course* because forgiveness is an integral part of the ministry components for both courses and is covered much more comprehensively in the *Discipleship Course*. There is more information on this on pages 19–20.

In summary then:

- each of the courses stands alone so can run perfectly well without the other
- there are real benefits to participants if they do both courses
- if participants do *The Grace Course* on its own or before the *Discipleship Course*, consider finding a way for them to do *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* and Session 9 — “Forgiving From The Heart” — from the *Discipleship Course*.

See page 19 for more information on *The Steps To Freedom In Christ*.

How can *The Grace Course* be used?

The Grace Course works equally well with those who have just become Christians and those who have been Christians a long time. It has been designed to be flexible enough to use in a variety of church situations:

In Small Groups

This is how most churches use our discipleship resources. If people miss a session, make sure that they have access to the DVD so that they can catch up.

We recommend that, where possible, small groups use the teaching sessions on the DVDs and that you use the "Pause For Thought" (default) option on the DVD so that the sessions pause automatically for group discussion. Each small group session is designed to last 2 hours and you will find a detailed time plan for each session in this Leader's Guide.

Systematic Preaching With Small Group Follow-Up

Each of the Word sections can be delivered as a straight talk (in person or via the DVD). You could, therefore, use them as a main church teaching programme (for example in a Sunday service or US Sunday School program). This could be followed up in small groups during the week if there is no opportunity for group discussion.

Mid-Week Meeting

In a mid-week setting where there are no established small groups, you could bring everyone together and deliver the talk (in person or via the DVD) and then divide people into groups for the group discussion questions. Alternatively, you could deliver the talk in sections, allowing the groups to discuss the Pause For Thought questions as you go.

Alongside An Outreach Course

It is possible to combine the course with an outreach course such as Alpha. You could bring both groups together for a meal before sending the not-yet Christians into the outreach course and new Christians into *The Grace Course*. Even if people have not become Christians on the outreach course, this should not preclude them from going on to *The Grace Course*, which will show them clearly in the first three sessions the differences that take place when someone becomes a Christian.

One-On-One Discipling

It is time-consuming to run the course for just one person but it works very well indeed. It's a great way to disciple a new convert or as a mentoring tool for those who have been Christians for a while.

Which method do you recommend?

Freedom In Christ Ministries has been producing resources for churches around the world since 1988, all designed to help Christians become fruitful disciples. We have found that by far the most effective way for most people to learn in a church environment is in a small group where they are encouraged to discuss what is being taught. In preparing *The Grace Course* our focus has primarily been on creating a small group resource but you will find it will work well in any of the ways outlined above.

What materials are required?

We recommend that everyone leading a group has their own copy of this **Leader's Guide** with presentation CD. You will probably also want the **DVD Set** with video presentations by the authors of the talks and *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*. Even if you are planning to present the course yourself rather than use the DVD presentations, watching the DVDs aids preparation enormously.

Each participant will need a copy of the **Participant's Guide** which contains notes for each session, Pause For Thought questions and *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*.

We recommend they also have a set of three **Biblical Truths postcards** one of which is handed out after each of the first three sessions. These postcards contain some of the key memorable illustrations from the course and the accompanying biblical truths. They are an excellent aid to help participants remember the key points and provide great encouragement to participants to keep declaring and believing the truths they will learn. The postcards are as follows:

Welcome Home! (Session 1)

Innocent! (Session 2)

My New Name (Session 3)

Customisable **invitations** and **posters** to promote your course are also available from Freedom In Christ Ministries.

The various components are listed below with their Freedom In Christ order code and ISBN number (if applicable):

The Grace Course Leader's Guide	Order code: FC301	ISBN: 9780857213242
The Grace Course DVD Set (PAL format — outside USA)	Order code: FC302	ISBN: 9780857213228
The Grace Course DVD Set (NTSC format — for USA)		ISBN: 9780857214423
The Grace Course Participant's Guide (single)	Order code: FC303	ISBN: 9780857213259
The Grace Course Participant's Guide (five pack)	Order code: FC304	ISBN: 9780857213235
The Grace Course Full Colour Postcards (20 x 3 types)	Order code: FC308	
The Grace Course Customisable Colour Invitations (50)	Order code: FC309	
The Grace Course Customisable A3 Publicity Poster (3)	Order code: FC310	

Items with ISBN numbers can be ordered from Freedom In Christ Ministries or book suppliers. Other items are available only from Freedom In Christ Ministries.

The best way for most people to get started is by ordering **The Grace Course Church Starter Pack** which contains all of the main items plus enough material for 20 participants. It is sold at a substantial discount to individual item prices and is available only from Freedom In Christ Ministries.

For further details or to order, go to www.ficm.org in the USA, www.ficm.org.uk in the UK or any Freedom In Christ office around the world (see page 222 for details of how to find your nearest office).

How do the teaching sessions work?

Each session follows the same format and contains the following elements:

Leader's Notes

An introduction for the leader of the session to help you prepare.

Welcome

For small-group settings — an opening question designed to help group members develop deeper relationships with each other and, usually, to help them to start talking about the theme. During this part of the session, it's more important to encourage group participation and interaction than to do any teaching. The main objective is to build relationships.

Worship

For small-group settings. We have suggested a theme but it is only a suggestion. The main thing is that Jesus is placed at the centre of each session.

Prayer & Declaration

For small-group settings. This leads on from the worship section. It's an opportunity to encourage people to pray together out loud and then to make a declaration. A prayer is said to God whilst a declaration is spoken out to the spiritual world in general. Encourage people to declare it boldly as the children of God they are!

Word

This is the main part of each session. Each talk lasts between 60 and 67 minutes in total (excluding Pause For Thought discussions) but is split into three or four segments of between 2 and 25 minutes separated by "Pause For Thought" discussions. This includes the filmed testimonies on the DVD that help to illustrate the main points.

If you choose to present the material yourself, you will find the talk written out in full in this Leader's Guide together with some useful additional material. We recommend that you stick as closely as possible to the notes (but without reciting them parrot fashion), ideally supplementing them with illustrations from your own experience to replace those of the authors (this is particularly pertinent to Session 6). The CD that accompanies this book (inside the back cover) contains PowerPoint presentations for each talk and *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* that you can use via a computer and projector.

The notes show the PowerPoint slides in their correct position and indicate when to move on to the next bullet point or slide.

Pause For Thought Discussions

The Word section contains two or three sets of Pause For Thought questions. In small groups, we suggest that you stop at each Pause For Thought and give time for discussion (the DVD sessions pause automatically by default). Each session builds on the previous one and it's important that people have the opportunity to grasp the main points of each. At the beginning of each session, we have suggested timings for each part of the session including the Pause For Thoughts.

Witness

This question is intended to get small groups thinking about how what has been learned could impact those who are not yet Christians and to encourage them to apply it. In practice it functions like an additional Pause For Thought question and can either be used in addition to the existing questions or as a replacement. The Witness question is not included as a separate element in the time plans.

In The Coming Week

One or two suggested activities for participants to do before the next session. We especially want to encourage people to engage practically with God through this material. Please make sure, however, that participants know that the suggestions are completely optional so that they feel no pressure whatsoever to follow them.

What advice do you have for leading a small group?

A good structure for an evening would be something like this:

Getting Started

Start with coffee and get people to chat and mingle for a while. You could use the Welcome question during this time.

Welcome

The Welcome question functions as an icebreaker and is designed for a bit of fun and to get people interacting at the start of the session. It works well to split people into twos or threes. There is no need

to feel that you have to do any teaching at this stage. It can be helpful at this point to invite feedback from the previous session. What struck people particularly from last week? Have they benefited from what they learned during the week in any practical ways?

Worship

For small-group settings — it is recommended that someone other than the person doing the talk leads this short time of worship. Include worship songs — if you have no worship leader, recorded worship songs could be used. Consider reading the Bible verses out loud together.

Prayer & Declaration

Try to get everyone praying and declaring boldly and loudly. Some are not used to this but will grow to enjoy it over time. We are trying through this section to encourage people to realize that they can be active in taking spiritual authority and responsibility in their lives.

Focus Truth and Verse

Introduce the Focus Verse and the Focus Truth for the session. There is no need to say more than is written in the Leader's Guide. Then go straight into the Word section.

Word

Play the DVD or start the talk, pausing for discussion at the Pause For Thought questions as indicated. If you are presenting yourself, keep an eye on time and try to resist the temptation to deviate too much from the notes so that the main points are not lost. The time plans for each session will help with timekeeping. Registered users can download a customisable Excel spreadsheet — just insert your own start time and all the timings for each week will be instantly calculated for you.

Pause For Thought Discussions

If your group is larger than eight, split people down into sub-groups of no more than seven or eight for the discussion and mix the groups up each week. Occasionally it is helpful to split people up by gender. For variety, consider some discussions in smaller groups of three to four to allow quieter ones to talk. As a leader of a discussion group, one of your main roles is to try to get others to talk rather than talk yourself. Don't be afraid of silences.

In addition to the questions given, you could start any Pause For Thought with the following open questions:

- What do you think about what you just heard?
- Was there anything you heard that you didn't understand or that needs further clarification?
- How do you think what you have heard applies to you?

Try not to let the conversation wander too far from the main points and keep an eye on the time (a suggested time for each Pause For Thought section is given at the start of each session).

Draw the discussion to a close at the appropriate time by summarizing briefly. The Pause For Thought objectives in this Leader's Guide make a good basis for that summary.

At The End

Discuss the Witness question, point out the In The Coming Week suggestion (but remember that it is completely optional) and give out any notices such as the away day retreat details.

Any other hints and tips?

- Church leaders — send a message that “this is for everyone” by going through the teaching and the ministry component and writing a Stronghold-Buster (see pages 18–19) yourself first.
- Join the Freedom Fellowship, an invaluable source of advice — see page 24.

- Surround your course with prayer — see page 20.
- Emphasize that every participant will need to apply ongoing effort to maintain the freedom gained and continue to grow as a disciple.
- Take it slowly — our courses are not generally something that a church does just once but tend to become a regular part of church life. As such it is worth taking the time and effort at the outset to make sure that the courses run as well as they possibly can.
- Look out for the enemy's attack — often through the least expected people.
- Decide early on how you are going to approach running *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* (there are more details in *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* Session). If you decide on the away day retreat approach, ensure that you book a suitable venue in good time and give everyone the date as early as you can. Make sure that participants understand that this is an integral part of the course and not to be missed!
- Keep emphasizing that this is discipleship for everyone — not just for “hard cases” or any particular section of the church.
- “Transformed lives transform lives” — be prepared for the course to make a positive difference throughout your church and beyond as people come to a fresh understanding of God's grace. Think about how it could impact your community as Christians discover afresh for themselves that Jesus really is the answer to the issues out there.
- Remember that Freedom In Christ Ministries exists to equip leaders. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have a question or need any advice.

Renewing the mind — “Stronghold-Busting”

Throughout the course, we want to encourage people that, as new creations in Christ, they have the ability and responsibility to be active in their Christian life. That is why, for example, we have included a declaration at the start of each session — we want participants to get used to wielding the power and authority they have in Christ. In short we want to see them transformed in their Christian walk. In the New Testament, the word “transformed” is a strong word. Its literal meaning is “metamorphosis”, the change a caterpillar undergoes in order to become a butterfly. In Romans 12:2, Paul tells us what it is that will cause this transformation in us: “be transformed by the renewal of your mind”.

Most people will come to *The Grace Course* expecting to “receive”. Of course, we expect them to receive some really helpful teaching but it's unlikely that they will be transformed if all they do is “receive”. In order to be transformed, they have to work on the renewal of their mind, throwing out old ways of thinking based on lies they have come to believe and replacing those ways of thinking with what God tells us is really true in His Word.

All of us have been conditioned by past experiences to believe things that do not line up completely with God's Word. Given that God's Word is the truth, we can legitimately call these false beliefs “lies”. When a lie becomes deeply ingrained it becomes a “stronghold”, a habitual way of thinking that is inconsistent with what God says in His Word (or, if you prefer, any wrong belief or action that has a “strong hold” on you). It's like having a solid wall in your mind that prevents you from going the way God wants you to.

In Sessions 3 and 4 and during *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* session, we introduce a strategy called “Stronghold-Busting”. It is a 40-day process of replacing lies with truth — see pages 139–141. Why 40 days? Psychologists tell us that it takes around six weeks to form or break a habit. Once you have dealt with any footholds of the enemy, a mental stronghold is simply a habitual way of thinking. We cannot emphasize enough how significant Stronghold-Busting is to participants who actively engage with it. They really are transformed at a deep, core level. The challenge is to help people believe that genuine transformation really will take place so that they will follow through on the process.

In order to help participants become aware of faulty thinking, we pause at the end of each session and invite them to allow the Holy Spirit to bring to their mind any lies they are believing. We suggest some possible lies but there may well be others. We then encourage them to write those lies down in the *Lies*

List at the back of their Participant's Guide. For some, those two pages will not be enough and they may need to use separate sheets of paper or a separate notebook. Make sure you set aside enough time at the end of each session for people to complete the exercise.

Once participants have identified faulty thinking, they will need to be encouraged to go and find what is actually true from God's Word. This can be quite difficult because by definition the lie feels absolutely true to the person who believes it. Be prepared to spend some time helping people find appropriate verses and talking it through with them. Then participants will need strong encouragement to sit down and write their Stronghold-Buster and, particularly, to persevere with it for 40 days.

In our experience the best way for people to be encouraged to do that is testimony of transformation in others. That is why there are testimonies on the DVD about Stronghold-Busting. Even if you are not using the DVD for the teaching, it would be well worth using it to show these particular testimonies in Sessions 3 and 4. Even better would be for those leading to have their own testimonies. So one of our key recommendations for leaders is that you develop a Stronghold-Buster of your own and go through it before running the course for others. Then you can share your own experiences.

The Steps To Freedom In Christ

The Steps to Freedom In Christ is a structured process of prayer and repentance written by Dr. Neil T. Anderson (founder of Freedom In Christ Ministries) which has been used by millions of people around the world. It has been published in many languages and formats and is the ministry component of *The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course* (see page 223).

The person going through the Steps (whom we will call "the freedom seeker") takes responsibility for their life and growth by asking the Holy Spirit to show them any area in their life where an issue needs to be resolved. They then choose to repent of everything He shows them thus removing any grounds the enemy may have had in their life. It is a very straightforward approach that is kind and gentle — but amazingly effective.

Each Step starts with a biblically-based prayer of repentance which the freedom seeker prays as a general preliminary, asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the specific areas that apply to them. Then there are particular instances listed and a short written prayer of renunciation which the freedom seeker will use to deal with specific areas they want to renounce. Some sections also include doctrinal affirmations which are declarations of the freedom seeker's choice and acceptance of primary scriptural truth set out in a very straightforward way.

It has seven Steps which cover: Cult and occult involvement, idols; Deception including self-deception and ingrained defence mechanisms; Forgiveness as a choice of the will, not dependent on feelings; Rebellion, for example against family, church leaders, work and God Himself; Pride; Habitual sins and attitudes including sexual sins and deeply-rooted issues; Generational sin.

It is a process that every Christian will benefit from (not just "hard cases") and we recommend that people go through it as a regular spiritual check-up on an annual basis. It is possible for people to go through the process either in the context of a group "away day" retreat or in an individual "freedom appointment" in the context of their local church.

The Steps To Freedom In Christ and The Grace Course

The ministry component of *The Grace Course* (*The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*) is based on the same principles of the believer taking responsibility for their life and choosing to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7). The format will be very familiar to those who have been through *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* but it focuses on different areas (apart from an overlap on the key area of forgiveness).

We recommend where possible that participants on *The Grace Course* go through *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* before *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace*. Many will already have been through them as part of *The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course* but, if you have a group that has not done that course,

you could choose to do *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* instead of *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* between Sessions 5 and 6 and then come back to *The Steps To Experiencing God's Grace* at a later date. In order to do that, you would need to purchase *The Steps To Freedom In Christ* book for participants and possibly *The Steps To Freedom In Christ DVD* which guides a group through the process. We recognize that this involves a small amount of additional cost but if you want to make these principles a "way of life" in your church, it would be well worth it.

It is not, however, essential to do this and you can run *The Grace Course* just as it is and expect great results! Feel free to contact us (see page 222) if you want to discuss the best approach for your church.

Prayer for *The Grace Course*

Prayer is a vital part of preparation for your course and should not stop once the course gets underway. If you can assemble a group of people to pray for your course, you will really notice the difference. Here is a prayer they might like to use to get started.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for *The Grace Course*.

We ask You to use it to give Your people a new revelation of who You are and how much You love them so that they see how good it is in Your house, come to their senses and return to You again from their "distant land". In You ALL the treasures of wisdom and ALL the riches of wisdom are stored up (Colossians 2:3). We ask that Your people will go deep into You to know You as You really are.

Lord, please set Your sons and daughters free from dark dungeons and bring them into the light to be conformed more and more to the image of Jesus Christ!

Please cleanse Your Church now of our filthy rags, those works done in independence of You (Isaiah 64:6) and any striving to live up to certain standards and reliance on external actions which only bring more distance between us and You.

We choose Your light and easy yoke, Lord Jesus. We throw off any other yokes that would seek to make us slaves again (Galatians 5:1). We particularly renounce guilt, shame, fear and pride, and declare that they are not part of the inheritance of the sons and daughters of God. We ask You, Father, to break the hold they have on Your people and bring release of abundance of fruit that glorifies You.

Father, we ask for Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation to come to those who are leading the course so that they would know release from heavy burdens of striving and perfectionism and in turn release others.

We refuse any spiritual intimidation and instead ask that You please fill us with the Spirit of Truth, who brings light and freedom as we journey through *The Grace Course*. We declare that the schemes of the enemy against the course will not succeed (Isaiah 54:17).

God of all Grace, we give You glory for what You are going to do through *The Grace Course*. May all praise and honour and thanks return to You, the Worthy One.

In the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.