



## Week Two

### Opening Prayer

God, thank you for your active kindness and this intentional time and space to be together. Help us to hear what you have for us today. Amen.

### Talk It Over

This weekend we continued our series that is intended to help us see the ways we are all called and invited to live on mission with Jesus. In old-school skating terms, we have been looking at the idea of what it means for everyone to get on the floor for an “all skate”. This idea of “all skate” has driven the mission of our church — people helping people find and follow Jesus.

- By nature are you quick to jump in and get involved or stand back? Explain your answer.

Today’s talk is built on two EastLake Church core values: As Jesus disciples, we (1) reject religion and (2) encounter Jesus. These values flow together in the sense that encountering Jesus is hard when you don’t reject religion or the man-made walls we think we need to scale to earn acceptance or rightness with God. Encountering Jesus is about saying ‘yes’ to God’s grace.

- What were your first messages or experiences around religion?
- When did you first hear messages about a gracious God?

### Read John 2:1-9 (NIV)

From the first miracle of Jesus, we see him ushering in a message of grace. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus all reinforce the idea that an old system of religion is being set aside and something new — a gospel of grace — is here.

- How are you connecting with God’s grace this season of your life? Where do you see grace moving, meeting you, showing itself, or so forth?

### Read Matthew 23:25 (NLT)

While religion focuses on the external checkboxes and details to gain approval from God, grace focuses on God’s open, unconditional posture towards us. Grace teaches us that our job is not to be perfect or to try harder but to walk and live open to grace.

- In what ways do you see the pressure of religion in your life?
- In what ways would you like to grow in your ability to be open to grace?

### **Read Luke 18:9-14(NIV)**

Religion has a way of promoting spiritual pride. It can lead us to believe that by following the rules, we deserve to be set apart from others. Along these lines, religion can confuse us into thinking that the goal is to be fixed from the outside in. On the other hand, the stories of Jesus tell us that it is through our encounters with him — which depend on grace — we find the power to change from the inside out.

- In what ways do you see spiritual pride popping up in you?
- Why do you think it's so easy for followers of Jesus to struggle with spiritual pride?

### **Read John 10:10 (NIV) and Galatians 2:19-21 (NIV)**

Jesus didn't come to change our behaviors, he came to change our lives. And while we can so easily look to religion for our power, it is grace that delivers what religion promises.

- In what ways have you ever settled for changed behavior over a changed life?
- In your own life, what does it mean to choose grace over religion?

### **Read John 1:14 (NIV)**

While grace is the pathway, Jesus makes it clear that there is still a need for truth and that grace doesn't mean the absence of truth. Jesus teaches us that grace and truth can co-exist.

- This week's talk noted that most often we gravitate towards grace or truth. Do you have a bent towards either grace or truth? Explain what you notice about your bent.
- How do you see the tensions of grace and truth playing out in your life this season?

### **Read John 8-11 (NIV)**

This story is one story that helps us make sense of one way truth and grace can stand together.

- Tell us about a time you needed grace and truth to coexist strongly together.
- Look at your various relationships — home, work, your community, and so forth. In what ways could your relationships benefit from more grace and truth? Feel free to talk about a general theme or a specific relationship.

### **Closing Prayer**

God, thank you for the gift of grace. We want to encounter you and all that you have to offer us. We want you to change our life for the better. Help us to say 'yes' to grace and to the truth that you have for us. Amen.

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### **How To Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressured to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.