

“What is the difference between mercy and grace?”

Mercy and **grace** are often confused. While the terms have similar meanings, **grace** and **mercy** are not the same. To summarize the difference: **mercy** is **God not punishing us as our sins deserve**, and **grace** is **God blessing us despite the fact that we do not deserve it**. **Mercy** is deliverance from judgment. **Grace** is extending kindness to the unworthy.

According to the Bible, we have all sinned ([Ecclesiastes 7:20](#); [Romans 3:23](#); [1 John 1:8](#)). As a result of that sin, we all deserve death ([Romans 6:23](#)) and eternal judgment in the lake of fire ([Revelation 20:12-15](#)). With that in mind, every day we live is an act of God’s mercy. If God gave us all what we deserve, we would all be, right now, condemned for eternity. In [Psalm 51:1-2](#), David cries out, “**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.**” A plea to God for mercy is asking Him to withhold the judgment we deserve and instead grant to us the forgiveness we in no way have earned.

We deserve nothing from God. God does not owe us anything. Anything good that we experience is a result of the **grace of God** ([Ephesians 2:5](#)). **Grace** is simply defined as **unmerited favor**. God favors, or gives us good things that we do not deserve and could never earn. Rescued from judgment by God’s mercy, grace is anything and everything we receive beyond that mercy ([Romans 3:24](#)). **Common grace** refers to the sovereign grace which God bestows on all of mankind regardless of their spiritual standing before Him, while **saving grace** is that special dispensation of grace whereby God sovereignly bestows unmerited divine assistance upon His elect for their regeneration and sanctification.

Mercy and **grace** are best illustrated in the salvation that is available through Jesus Christ. We deserve judgment, but if we receive Jesus Christ as Savior, we receive **mercy** from God and we are delivered from judgment. Instead of judgment, we receive by **grace** salvation, forgiveness of sins, abundant life ([John 10:10](#)), and an eternity in Heaven, the most wonderful place imaginable ([Revelation 21-22](#)). Because of the **mercy** and **grace** of God, our response should be to fall on our knees in worship and thanksgiving. [Hebrews 4:16](#) declares, “**Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**”