

Homework for Lesson 15: Accepting Grace

As we grow up, there are more and more things that we take responsibility for in our lives. We come into this world pretty vulnerable and unprotected, not to mention totally incapable of providing for ourselves. We rely on the adults around us—usually our parents, but sometimes other family or guardians—to provide for us until we are able to do so for ourselves.

What things did your parents once do for you that you now do for yourself?

What things haven't you taken over from your parents but will one day?

This has all been working toward talking about the presence of grace in our lives. Grace is a little different than the other things we've named so far. Your parents aren't responsible for grace being part of your life; that's the work of God. But your parents have the opportunity to recognize the presence of God's grace in your lives and even ask our congregation to join in helping raise you to recognize it for yourself.

Grace is one thing that our parents have the opportunity to recognize in our lives before we're old enough to understand it for ourselves.

The central character in the scripture we will be exploring today is an "Ethiopian eunuch." A eunuch was a highly placed official who had been castrated to place him above reproach—no way there would be a sexual scandal from him. This man was a highly respected government official, but treated as an outcast by the Jewish people.

As an Ethiopian he is presented as a foreigner, an early indicator of God's intention that the gospel be presented to everyone. However, the fact that he's returning from worship at the Jerusalem temple suggests some tie to Judaism.

Read Acts 8:26-39.

What do you think the Ethiopian trying to understand?

Why couldn't he understand it on his own?

What role did Philip play in the Ethiopian coming to an understanding of the good news about Jesus?

How do you think the Ethiopian's story would've been different if Philip hadn't come alongside him?

The process of confirmation offers you not only some grounding in the ways of United Methodism, but a very intentional opportunity to consider making a faith commitment of your own. To this point in your life, your families, their church, and other invested individuals have engaged in your spiritual care,

recognizing the movement of God's grace in and around them—confirmation is the first time the church asks them, "Are you ready?"

DISCUSS

What's your earliest memory of any awareness of God?

Do you know if you were baptized as an infant or as a small child?

How have your family and church introduced you to understanding God better—like Philip did with the Ethiopian?

Why do you think we go through confirmation at our church?