

BE A WORLD-CHANGER

The *Amazing Grace* Small Group Bible Study Guide

**“IN AN AGE AND COUNTRY FERTILE IN GREAT AND GOOD MEN,
HE WAS AMONG THE FOREMOST OF THOSE WHO FIXED
THE CHARACTER OF THEIR TIMES....”**

Westminster Abbey inscription of William Wilberforce

The BE A WORLD-CHANGER Bible Study Guide explores the life, faith, and vision of the great 19th century British reformer, William Wilberforce, as portrayed in the major motion picture *Amazing Grace*.

Wilberforce believed that he and his circle of friends were called by God to pursue two great objects: the abolition of the slave trade, and the reformation of society. The slave trade was the economic and political strength of 19th century Britain – no one dared try to defeat it.

After decades of defeats, Wilberforce’s legislation to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire became law on March 25, 1807. Along the way, he and his friends launched more than 65 social reforms, including the first animal welfare society, the first Bible society, free education, and laws to protect children and reform prisons.

What would it look like to be a William Wilberforce today? What “great objects” are you most passionate about? What would it take to be a world-changer in your work, church, and neighborhood?

In addition to a comprehensive study on the themes of grace, calling, and perseverance, this five-week BE A WORLD-CHANGER Bible Study Guide gives your small group the opportunity, like Wilberforce, to put your faith into action in a specific “world-changing” community missions project. It is the small acts of service that cause great changes in our homes, our neighborhoods, our churches, our cities, and indeed, our nation and world.

The BE A WORLD-CHANGER Bible Study Guide is best used in conjunction with the major motion picture *Amazing Grace*. The DVD’s Bonus Features contain exclusive scenes that correspond with each week’s study. After viewing the entire film, use the questions provided to begin a general discussion about Wilberforce and his remarkable life-story. This will serve as a good introduction to the rest of the study.

The BE A WORLD-CHANGER Bible Study Guide is divided into a four-week study (five weeks with the viewing of *Amazing Grace*). Each includes opportunities to explore a general theme, to discuss the story, to study the Bible, and to apply the lessons to our lives in a practical way.

The five-week schedule is:

- Week One:** *Amazing Grace* Film Night
(film is approximately 2 hrs. long)
- Week Two:** PARDON, Understanding
God's Amazing Grace
- Week Three:** PURPOSE, Discovering God's Call
- Week Four:** PARTNERS, Pursuing God's
Passions Together
- Week Five:** PERSEVERANCE, Cultivating Spiritual
Disciplines for a Lifestyle of Service
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“SERVE DAY”: A Practical Way to Serve Your Community

At the completion of the *BE A WORLD-CHANGER Bible Study Guide*, your small group is encouraged to participate in a “Serve Day,” a time for concrete acts of service in your community. This could include visiting a nursing home, serving at a Gospel Rescue Mission, cleaning an elderly member's home and yard, or collecting coats and blankets for the homeless. You may want to encourage a church-wide “Serve Day,” as a unified and practical way of living out the Gospel in your community.

*“Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds.”
Hebrews 10:24 NLT*

It was Wilberforce's biblical worldview, his contagious optimism, and his never-ending belief that faith leads to action that set in motion “the great turning point in history,” as one historian wrote. In the end, we pray that your study, your conversations, and your service will raise-up a new generation of men and women who, like Wilberforce, change the world through the grace of Jesus Christ.

For more information on the life of William Wilberforce, please visit www.amazinggracemovie.com or review the resources available at the end of the Guide.

To let us know how your small group is living out a life of service, like William Wilberforce, please email us at WorldChanger@amazinggracemovie.com

WEEK ONE: MOVIE NIGHT

Watch *Amazing Grace* as a group, then discuss the following questions:

1. In what ways has this film inspired you? Challenged you?
2. How did Wilberforce's faith motivate his campaign?
3. What role did his friends play in shaping his life and cause? His wife, Barbara? Hannah More? Thomas Clarkson? Equiano? William Pitt? His cousin, Henry Thornton?
4. What lines or scenes particularly stood out to you?
5. What were the central themes of the film?
6. What causes do you care about? Do you have the perseverance, like Wilberforce, to carry-on year after year, defeat after defeat?
7. Why do you think Wilberforce argued that effective social reform should have a spiritual center?
8. Compare the end of Wilberforce's life to the "retirement mentality" of today?
9. Why might the "reformation of society" be considered an even more challenging task than the "abolition of slavery?"
10. How are the two "objects" related?
11. What are some of the residual effects on our society resulting from the Transatlantic Slave Trade?
12. What are some injustices that are culturally acceptable today?
13. Experts claim that more than 27 million men, women, and children are living in slavery today. Why do you think human trafficking and slavery still exist?
14. What is the biblical response to those living in slavery?
15. What are three practical actions you can take to "reform society"?
16. At the end of his campaign, Lord Fox delivers a moving tribute to Wilberforce. Write a few sentences on how you would like to be remembered at the end of your life.

WEEK TWO: PARDON

– Understanding God’s *Amazing Grace*

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2

THEME

The first character trait that made Wilberforce a WORLD-CHANGER is what we will call PARDON. After years as an aimless politician – more concerned about his social status than social causes, Wilberforce experienced what he called a “great change” and became a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

He witnessed the power of repentance and forgiveness through his spiritual mentor, John Newton, who was a slave-trader turned hymn-writer and pastor. Newton had transported more than 20,000 slaves from Africa to the West Indies. God miraculously intervened in his life and showed him that the grace of Christ is available to even “a wretch like me,” a phrase he later included in the lyrics to the timeless hymn, *Amazing Grace*.

Jesus said “The time has come, The Kingdom of God is near, repent of your sins and believe the good news!” Mark 1:15 NLT

No matter how far we have strayed or how dark our past, Jesus has promised to forgive our moral failures, our sins, if we ask Him. He said that He will wipe away every sin and remember them no more. This is the ultimate gift of grace – that God, in his mercy, offers us His son, Jesus Christ, so that we can experience an abundant life with God.

The Apostle Paul experienced this life-transforming grace in Christ on a dusty road to the city of Damascus. Read his account in Acts 9:1-20.

SCENE

On the Bonus Features of the *Amazing Grace* DVD, select and play #5 “Once Was Blind.”

Wilberforce visits his dear friend and mentor, John Newton, who at the end of his life, and with eyesight fading, is chronicling his years as a slave-trader. It is Newton’s “confession.” The weight of his life and the glory of God’s grace break him. He weeps and tells Wilberforce, “Though my memory is failing, I remember two things very clearly, I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.”

FROM THE FILM

1. Compare Wilberforce's first conversation with John Newton to his second. What is different?
2. Newton professes that "I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior." How does understanding one's sinfulness deepen one's appreciation of grace?
3. How does Newton acknowledge God's forgiveness? What is his response to Wilberforce at the end of his confession? How does our belief in God's pardon allow us to rise up and do His work without guilt or fear?

FROM THE BIBLE

1. Why does one's sense of guilt vary?
Read Romans 1:18b-19, 21, 25, 28 and Judges 21:25.
2. What is the difference between guilt that leads to death and sorrow that leads to life? 2 Corinthians 7:9-10
3. How should guilt be assuaged or remedied? Colossians 2:3-14, Isaiah 53:5-6
4. Earlier in the film, Wilberforce's butler asks, "You found God, sir?" Wilberforce responds, "I think He found me." What differences are implied about the process of salvation from the perspective of the butler and of Wilberforce?
Romans 4:5; 3:24, Ephesians 2:8-9
5. What does it mean to be "found"?

YOUR TURN

1. What is so amazing about grace?
2. Reflect upon a moment that you experienced the power of God's grace.
3. How does your understanding of grace impact your view of forgiveness?
4. What is the difference between confession and repentance? Read Mark 1:15.
5. How can you be an instrument of God's amazing grace?