

# SHOULD I SHOW MERCY?

LESSON 157 → John 8:1-11; Titus 3:3-7

*In my position as judge, I had never heard such an unusual case.*



I stared in amazement at the nicely dressed, well-groomed man in front of me. A murderer? Armed robber? Man of the underworld? I could hardly believe it. This man before me had just presented the most unusual case I'd heard in all my thirty years as circuit court judge. The string of crimes he confessed to took my breath away.

*What a story he told! At the close of his testimony, with tear-filled eyes, I looked down at my podium and then spoke briefly to him. "You are dismissed from this courtroom. Be here tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock for sentencing."*

*I couldn't wait for the stenographer's copy to reach me; I immediately began going over the testimony in my mind. This young fellow's early home life had been good. His dad was an engineer on the railroad and earned good money. His mother was a Christian. She read from the Bible each morning and prayed with her boys. So why had this man, Bruce, gone so far astray, I wondered. With such a seemingly stable upbringing and loving family he shouldn't have had such an incredible story to tell.*

*By his own admission, he hadn't come under his father's rule. At fifteen, he dropped out of school and ran away from home—straight to the oil fields of Oklahoma. There he got a job his first day in town. He started gambling and, because of that, soon saw he would need a lot more money than his salary provided. So when he noticed his boss's long-barreled pistol lying under the counter he decided to steal it, and use it to get more money.*

*For the next ten years he wore a mask and carried two big guns. He stole automobiles, held up people, and robbed businesses. And then came the fateful day. In one of the holdups, he accidentally shot and killed a man. Oh, the remorse Bruce had carried through these years. The man's haunting cry rang in his ears, "Why did you have to kill me?"*



## GOD'S MERCY IS FOR YOU.

*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. —  
Psalm 106:1*



*There was a knock on my door and the court reporter brought in the copy of the admission plea. Glancing through part of the transcript, I noticed where Bruce told about being picked up by the United States marshals.*

*“I slipped out of the handcuffs and escaped. It was just God’s mercy that I didn’t get killed. The officers’ bullets flew all around me. I looked up to the sky and said, ‘God have mercy—don’t let them kill me!’ I knew too well where I would go.”*

*I tried to imagine this fine-appearing man wrestling his way out of handcuffs, then escaping with bullets flying around him. The effort failed. It seemed impossible to believe. How could it be the same man who had stood before me this morning?*

*Looking back at the document, I skimmed the part where he had almost been caught another time. For fifteen days he had been hiding in the swamps of Arkansas. With a Winchester rifle strapped to his back, he had caught snatches*

of sleep up in a treetop. A posse of about twenty-five men were instructed to take him dead or alive. They came within thirty yards of him, but again he escaped by the “mercy of God.”

*Then one night, when he decided it was time to move on, the Lord spoke to his heart and told him to go out West. I continued reading, “It was God’s great love and mercy that brought me to a street corner in Portland, Oregon, where I chanced to hear a group of Christian people telling what God had done for them. They spoke of having peace and happiness—something I knew nothing about. If they had asked me about misery, heartache, and remorse, I could have told them about that from A to Z.*

*“They invited me to church, and I knelt one night before a holy God and told Him, ‘Lord, if You will save me I’ll go to work and be the man I should be. I’ll confess out that old life, let them do to me what they want to do.’ Oh, the change! There on my knees the Lord saved me. I now had peace and happiness. Misery moved out. I walked the streets for days saying, ‘Oh, it’s wonderful! It’s wonderful!’*

*“And now I stand before you, Judge, to confess all. I am saved. I am going over my old life. I have already begun to pay back stolen money—thousands of dollars. Now do to me what you will.”*

*I realized tears were dropping onto the paper as I finished reading. If only all cases ended like this! Justice demands a penalty—years behind the jail bars—but I will recommend mercy.*

*From the beginning of time, the breaking of God’s laws required a penalty. Society also demands payment for lawbreaking—a jail term, a fine to be paid or worked out. Such sins as Bruce’s cry out for justice, for a punishment. But as Jesus Christ can extend mercy to a sinner, and freely forgive and forget all sins, so Bruce was freely pardoned and forgiven. He was a free man and never had to spend even one day behind bars. You may read Bruce Archer’s own testimony in Tract No. 64, “Pardoned!”*

**IT'S FOR ME!**



God's mercy is for anyone who seeks it. Titus 3:5 tells of one thing His mercy can do for us. Write the verse on the lines provided. Then fill in the grid using all those words. One word, MERCY, and two letters, H and G, have been provided for you.

A crossword puzzle grid with the following pre-filled letters:

- Vertical word on the left: M, E, R, C, Y
- Horizontal word in the middle: H, G

The grid consists of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The crossword puzzle is designed to be filled with words from the verse in Titus 3:5.

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