



I HAVE ABUNDING GRACE FROM GOD!

Of all the gifts God has given us, grace stands near the top as the most beautiful — and the most misunderstood. People don't usually light up at the mention of grace. An employee breathes deeply as they tentatively ask their boss for grace on that deadline they are struggling to hit. A motorist looks away from the police officer that pulled them over for speeding as they hope quietly for grace to be let off with a warning. And a Christian tries with every ounce of their being to figure out how to get through that struggle all on their own before they apologetically receive something God said he died to give them: grace. You've likely heard it said that grace is "unmerited favor" — with the lion's share of the focus going toward that "unmerited" part. And it's true: we don't deserve grace. We could never earn it. But such a definition tends to fill us with a sense of apology, unworthiness, even the feeling of failing at something we *should have* been able to do correctly. We've missed the point. Actually, the literal definition of grace is "love and favor from God that fills us with delight and joy!" It is undeserved, yes, but the focus of grace is on the "love and favor" part. Grace is God shouting from the rooftops that he loves us; he adores us, and he is presently extending the maximum amount of his favor to us. Far from leaving us apologetic and guilty, this kind of grace is supposed to fill us to overflowing with delight and joy! It's supposed to leave *us* shouting from the rooftops. If it doesn't elicit that kind of euphoria and excitement in your spirit, you're seeing it incompletely or just flat out incorrectly. Grace says that all God expects you to be is his kid, not an expert. Grace says he holds you even when you have isolated yourself; he forgives you even when you're condemning yourself, and he loves you even when you don't like yourself. Grace says he wants you to be delighted in his delight that you are his. Forever.

"We have gained access by faith into this *grace* in which we now stand" Romans 5:2 – Emphasis added.

"Just as sin reigned in death, so also *grace* might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 5:21 – Emphasis added.

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his *grace*, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by *grace* you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast" Ephesians 2:6-9 – Emphasis added.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. *Do you view God's grace as something you delight in or as something you resist or as something you take advantage of? Why?*
2. *If you wrestle with receiving God's grace, read Chapter 4 in "Life in the Overflow": Intimacy is Everything, and talk with God about the questions at the end of the chapter!*

3. *In what situation or mindset do you specifically need to embrace God's grace for **you** in a practical and "rubber-meets-the-road" way in your life today? What areas is God speaking to you about? Is there anyone you need to extend grace to?*

WORSHIP RESOURCE:

"You are the Rock when I roll. You are the wheel when I lose control!"

Listen to "There for Me" by Ruth Spiegel. Find more info about Ruth's album at the back of the devotional.

PRAYER:

Father, teach me about grace. I can be so hard on myself, but you say you delight in me. Open my eyes to see me as you do and to embrace grace as a gift in which I delight. I choose to reject self-condemnation and extend grace to myself even when I don't get it right or when I make a mistake. (Ask him to bring any areas to your mind in which you have held yourself in judgment or where you feel ashamed or disappointed in yourself. Break shame and receive his grace.) Thank you for not holding my shortcomings or sins against me. Help me to extend grace to those who haven't earned it, just as I didn't earn it from you. Thank you for this blessed gift.

LISTENING TIME:

Stop for a few minutes and ask the Lord what he wants to say to you. He might bring to mind a picture, a word, a song, an encouragement, a Scripture or an answer to a burden in your heart. Don't rush or feel pressure to figure out the meaning of your impressions. Just invite him to speak and draw or write down what you sense. Afterward, ask God to help you discern and understand what he is saying to you. You might want to ask other trusted friends in the Kingdom for their input as well.

USE THE FOLLOWING SPACE TO RECORD WHAT GOD IS SAYING



TOOLS FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS:

Sing "Amazing Grace" together and talk about the lyrics of the song and their meaning. Thank him for his amazing grace.

TOOLS FOR PRAYING FOR OTHERS:

Pray that your church would be a place of grace: where people would receive grace from God, extend it to one another and be powerful carriers of grace in your community!