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Daily Devotional - The Grace of God

JULY 19TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Grace of God

[Romans 5:1-2](#)

Grace is far more than a mealtime prayer. The word communicates the idea of blessing. As children of God, we are the recipients of grace, which is poured out on us by our heavenly Father. Let's look at how we experience this amazing benefit of His love.

God's favor is seen in our salvation, as [Ephesians 2:8](#) tells us: "For by grace you have been saved." The blessing is undeserved and unearned—nothing about us prompted God to save us. He acted purely out of His goodness, sacrificing His precious Son Jesus Christ in our place. In that way, we could be reconciled to the Father and adopted into His family.

Grace is also the sphere in which we live the Christian life. At salvation, we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light ([Colossians 1:12-13](#)). Here, we live out our new identity as God's children and carry out His purpose of glorifying Him—both of which result in manifold blessings.

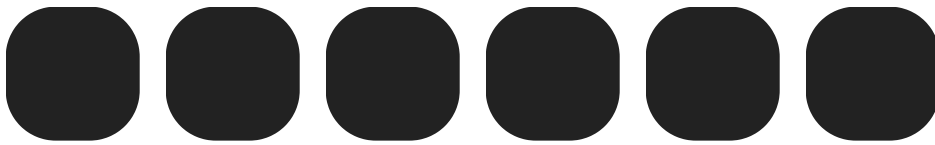
The beauty of grace becomes especially clear when we consider who we once were—a people hostile to the Lord and alienated from Him. We were spiritually dead, living according to our own selfish interests ([Ephesians 2:1](#)). But now, through faith in Jesus as our Savior, God has justified us and given us new life. He has declared that we have right standing before Him ([Romans 8:1](#)). All of our sins were placed upon Jesus, and His righteousness has been credited to our account permanently.

Picture yourself living in the favor of God. Internalize this truth, and then give Him thanks.

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Daily Devotional - Developing Faith Through Adversity

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[2 Corinthians 11:23-30](#)

It doesn't seem fair, does it? Paul spent the second half of his life serving Christ, and yet he experienced continual suffering. Why would God let one of His most faithful servants go through so much pain? This isn't a question just about Paul; it's an issue we face

today. In our minds, the Lord should protect His loyal followers from hardships, but He doesn't necessarily do so.

Maybe our reasoning is backwards. We think faithful Christians don't deserve to suffer, but from God's perspective, suffering is what produces faithful Christians. If we all had lives of ease without opposition, trials, or pain, we'd never really know God, because we'd never need Him. Like it or not, adversity teaches us more about the Lord than simply reading the Bible ever will.

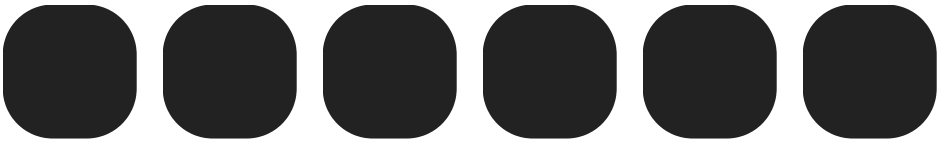
I'm not saying we don't need to know Scripture; that's our foundation for faith. But if what we believe is never tested by adversity, it remains head knowledge. How will we ever know that God can be trusted in the midst of trouble if we've never been challenged by hardship? The Lord gives us opportunities to apply scriptural truths to the difficulties facing us, and in the process, we find Him faithful. For example, how would Paul ever have known the strength of Christ if he had never been weakened by persecution, pain, and adversity?

Depending on your response, trials can be God's greatest means of building faith or an avenue to discouragement and self-pity. If you'll believe what Scripture says and apply its principles to your situation, your trust in God will grow, and your faith will be strengthened through adversity.

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Daily Devotional - Seeing Adversity from God's Viewpoint

JULY 16TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Seeing Adversity from God's Viewpoint

Isaiah 55:8-9

When adversity hits you like a ton of bricks, it could easily throw you into a pit of discouragement and despair. Although you may regard difficulties as setbacks, the Lord sees them as times for great advancement. His purpose in allowing them is not to destroy you but to stimulate your spiritual growth. In His great wisdom, the Lord knows how to take an awful situation and use it to transform you into the image of Christ and equip you to carry out His will.

Every adversity that comes into your life is sifted through God's permissive will. That doesn't mean the difficulty itself is His perfect will, but He's allowed the trial to touch you so that He can use it to accomplish His wonderful purposes for your life. Although some of the suffering we see and experience seems senseless or blatantly evil, we must recognize that we have a very limited perspective and cannot always understand what the Lord is doing.

Our heavenly Father sees every aspect of life, but our view is restricted to what is right before us. His plans include not only you but also all of His creation, and they reach from the beginning of time to eternity. Though we'll never grasp the infinite mind of God, we can know His faithfulness and love.

When you can't understand God's ways, focus on His perfect knowledge, wisdom, and power rather than the magnitude of your sorrow. Remember, He sees the entire picture and loves you more than you can imagine. This is a time to walk by faith, as perfect understanding comes only in heaven.

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Daily Devotional - The Source of Our Adversity

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Daily Devotional - The Source of Our Adversity

[Isaiah 45:5-10](#)

When experiencing hardship, we usually wonder why God allows painful situations to come our way. In our minds, this just doesn't fit with His role as our loving heavenly Father. We also struggle to reconcile our suffering with the realization that an omnipotent God could have prevented it. To understand what's going on, we must consider the possible sources of adversity.

- **A Fallen World.** When sin entered the world, suffering came with it. God could have protected us from these harmful effects by making us like puppets who couldn't choose sin, but that would mean we'd also be unable to choose to love Him, since love, by its very nature, is voluntary.

• **Our Own Doing.** Sometimes we get ourselves into trouble with foolish or sinful choices. If the Lord stepped in and rescued us from every negative consequence, we'd never grow into mature believers.

• **Satanic Attack.** The devil is our enemy. To hinder anything God wants to do in and through believers, Satan will never cease to harass us. His goal is to destroy our lives and our testimonies, thereby making us weak and useless for the Lord's purposes.

• **God's Sovereignty.** Ultimately, the Lord is in charge of all adversity that comes our way. To deny His involvement contradicts His power and sovereignty over creation.

For us to accept that God allows—or even sends—affliction, we must see adversity from His perspective. Is your focus on the pain of your experience or on God and His faithfulness? As believers, we're assured that no adversity comes our way unless He can use it for our benefit and His good purposes.

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Daily Devotional - Jesus, Our Rock

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Malachi 3:6

People will sometimes say, “The only constant is change.” Fortunately, this is not true. There is One who never changes: Jesus Christ always remains the same. What a comforting truth! But it’s hard to find refuge in someone we don’t know well. So let’s explore the Lord’s actions to learn more about His nature.

- **Jesus forgave others.** He showed mercy, not judgment, to those who recognized their sin. For example, Jesus had compassion on the woman caught in adultery and stopped her death penalty with a few wise words. Then, instead of pronouncing condemnation, He said that her sins were forgiven ([John 8:1-11](#)).
- **Jesus comforted the hurting.** He visited Mary and Martha, who were mourning the loss of their brother Lazarus ([John 11:1-45](#)).
- **Jesus provided for needs.** After spending three days healing all kinds of disabilities, He was concerned that the large crowd hadn’t eaten. He could have sent all 4,000 away to find their own food, but He provided more than enough to satisfy their hunger ([Mark 8:1-9](#)).
- **Jesus interceded for His disciples.** Just before He was crucified, He asked the Father to protect and sanctify His followers, which includes you and me ([John 17:15, 17, 19-20](#)).
- **Jesus strengthened believers and gave them power to do God’s work.** In [Acts 1:8](#), the Lord sent His disciples out to share the gospel, assuring them, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

Jesus still forgives, still comforts, still provides, still intercedes, and still empowers. What a blessing that we can find refuge in our amazing Lord!

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