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Daily Devotional - Grace Upon Grace

AUGUST 15TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Grace Upon Grace

Colossians 1:6-12

Have you ever stumbled onto an opportunity that far exceeded your original expectations? Or maybe you've encountered a source of treasure that no one else even knew existed? The theme of unanticipated riches appearing in unlikely places occurs in all kinds of literature. Jesus tapped into that theme with His story of the man who found a treasure hidden in a field. Apparently no one else knew of its existence, so he quickly covered it and ran in haste to secure the new property ([Matthew 13:44](#)).

Believers have inherited a vast treasure called the grace of God. For years, its great wealth may remain somewhat hidden from our view, but as we seek out its true dimensions, we are astonished to find how wealthy we are. This is what John was getting at when he exclaimed, "For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace" ([John 1:16](#)). Another version puts it like this: "From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another" (NLT).

Paul describes these successive blessings in Colossians 1: We can be filled with the knowledge of God's will "in *all* spiritual wisdom and understanding" and then we'll be able to please the Lord in "*all* respects" and bear fruit in "*every* good work." What's more, we will be strengthened with "*all* power" and thereby be able to attain "*all* steadfastness and patience" ([Colossians 1:9-11](#), emphasis added). Indeed, the Lord has an abundance of goodness and blessings for His children, and that is why we are richly endowed with "grace upon grace."

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Daily Devotional - God's Grace and Holiness

AUGUST 14TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Titus 2:11-12](#)

One of the grandest expressions of the gospel is contained in Titus 2:11, where Paul tells us, “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” How could there be any better news than that? What was invisible for many centuries and what was once unavailable has now come into view. Moreover, this grace has appeared not simply for the benefit of a chosen few but for “everyone.” It is what the apostle elsewhere calls “the power of God for salvation” ([Romans 1:16](#)).

With such power at our disposal, we are sometimes disappointed when we find there are a number of painful chapters in the book of grace. To most people, the word “power” suggests instant transformation and easy accomplishment. We often forget that grace is a

schoolteacher who has appeared with very specific instructions.

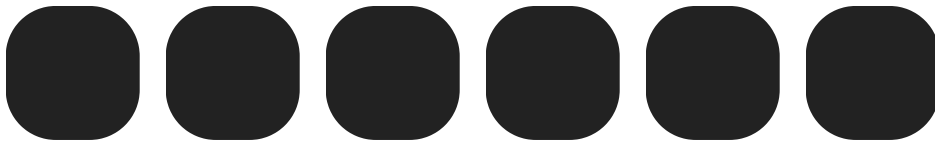
In Titus 2:12, we learn the lesson plan. This teacher has appeared, “instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” We can learn to say no to sin and worldly appetites. We can learn what holiness consists of, and we can find sensible ways to acquire and display it. What’s more, we can do it here and now, even when the cultural climate seems unreceptive. And it is only through God’s grace that we can even attempt to live a righteous life.

Such learning may take time, but progress in this school is just as much a tribute to God’s grace as are the instant changes that sometimes occur right after a person gets saved.

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A Parent's Back to School Prayer

AUGUST 13TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

A Parent's Back to School Prayer

Dexter, Missouri - At the recent Prayer Walk at Dexter Schools event, Roxanne and Greg McGhee shared with everyone a Parent's Back to School Prayer. Below is the prayer.

A Parent's Back to School Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the beautiful gift of my children, and for the blessing of their education.

I trust in your providence and your promises, and ask for your blessing on them as they begin this new school year. Be near them in times of fear, anxiety and stress.

Give them confidence and hop in you. I know you made them unique in your image, and that you have great plans for them!

As they bump into challenges, disappointments, joys, and achievements, please be present in their lives, and give me the wisdom to guide them and point them toward you every day, and in every thing.

Please give the teachers, staff, and administrators wisdom and endurance as they begin the long school year.

What a gift these men and women are! I thank you for them all.

Please surround my children with good community, with kind friends, and wise teachers. Please keep them safe at school as they travel to and from there.

Let my children be a light for you in their classrooms! Let them spread joy and gratitude each day.

Thank you Father, for your many blessings! Amen.

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Daily Devotional - An Invitation to Intimacy

AUGUST 13TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - An Invitation to Intimacy

[Genesis 12:1-8](#)

God, the Creator of the universe, chooses us. And when He does, His purpose is not simply to save us from eternity in hell. His love goes beyond that. He wants an intimate relationship with each one of us. Building this intimacy requires . . .

Commitment. God pledged that He would make Abraham into a great nation. He asked the future patriarch to demonstrate his allegiance by obeying the command to leave home for an unknown land. The Lord's commitment to us is clear. He rescued us from sin through His Son Jesus, sent the Holy Spirit to live within us, and promised us eternal life. Our pledge is obedience in both inner attitude and outward action.

Clear Communication. To develop an intimate bond, two people will express deep thoughts and feelings, and they'll also listen carefully to one another's words. God speaks to us through Scripture about Himself and His plans, and He also stands ready to listen ([Psalms 10:17](#)). The time we spend praying and meditating on His Word reveals our commitment to communication, which includes listening, speaking, and understanding.

Openness. God speaks honestly about who we are, the condition of the world, and the only solution: Jesus Christ. He willingly tells us the difficult truths about ourselves but also encourages and affirms us in our efforts to follow Him. Our part consists of being honest with Him about our thinking, actions, and emotions.

Salvation is only the first step of life in Christ ([John 3:16](#)). Have you accepted the invitation to intimacy with God?

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Daily Devotional - Our Firm Foundation

AUGUST 12TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Our Firm Foundation

[Luke 6:46-49](#)

The Lord has ways of shaking the world when He is at work. He literally caused the ground to quake when Jesus died on the cross, and [Hebrews 12:26](#) describes a time to come when the earth will undergo a similar display of His power and presence.

Likewise in our day, God often lets the foundations of our world be shaken—whether political alliances, financial systems, or other forms of human security. Then we can see the flimsiness of the structures on which we’ve based our pride and hopes. Individual lives are also often shaken when a family experiences crisis or a marriage begins to unravel. If we have built upon the fragile foundation of human wisdom, pride, and conditional love, things may look good for a while, but everything collapses when storms hit.

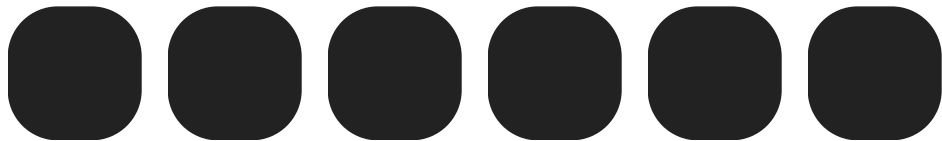
Though adversity affects everyone, we can have peace in knowing that God always has a greater purpose when He allows upheaval in our world. Hard times can also shake believers out of apathy and self-focus, reminding us not to trust in ourselves or the temporary structures of this world. There is only one secure foundation: a genuine, deep relationship with Jesus Christ, which will carry you through any and all turmoil. No matter what storms are raging all around, you’ll have a solid footing if you stand on His love.

It’s not enough for believers to simply enjoy the security of knowing that our “house” is built on a solid foundation. As God’s ambassadors on earth, we have a responsibility to extend His compassion to people whose lives are crumbling. Be a living message of hope to those around you today.

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