

The  
*Grace*  
Impact  
a devotional

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THE GRACE IMPACT  
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To my husband Rick — who has shown me  
much of God's grace in our marriage and ministry,

To my son, Erick and daughter, LeeAnne —  
who've shared many family adventures in grace,

To my Savior — Who gave the  
ultimate life-changing grace.



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## INTRODUCTION

# Exasperation or Grace

**T**he giggles of two small children from behind the closed door hushed into whispers. Moments later, the squeals and giggles resumed. I leapt from the sofa to investigate the activity in the next room.

As I opened the door, the laughter stopped and coughing began. Billowing clouds of fine white powder hung in the air, making it hard to breathe. The partners in crime stood like statues, covered from head to toe in baby powder. Blue eyes framed with white eyelashes looked up at me, blinking. Little arms stretched toward me for hugs. The two playmates had shaken a brand new canister of baby powder until it was empty. I was fuming at the huge mess they had created, and now they wanted hugs. However, I was grateful they could breathe in spite of the opaque air. The pair received a scolding with instructions not to do it again.

As the powder settled, it lay thick on the window blinds and deep in the crevices of the woodwork. Cleaning it took several days — vacuuming the floor multiple times, wiping down the blinds, and washing the curtains. The powder was stirred up every time I cleaned in the room. Finally the mess was gone, and we could breathe easier.

A few days later, I again heard familiar giggles. Rushing into the nearby room, I caught them in the act of doing the

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same thing. Powdered blue eyes stared at me.

By the grace of God, this time I was more exasperated than angry with them. I extended my arms for hugs before giving a gentle correction. Love was given to the guilty ones, forgiveness extended when a penalty was deserved.

This is how the Holy God interacts with us — unconditional love through His grace.

### The Expanse of Grace

Grace is defined as “favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that person deserves. Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.’ (Ex. 34:6) Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience.”<sup>1</sup>

Grace is present throughout the Bible. In the opening pages, God created humankind in His own image and gave us free will. But Adam and Eve chose something outside of God’s will. Even when sin occurred, God responded with grace. Although He banished them from the garden, God’s grace was extended to them allowing them life instead of the deserved penalty of death.

Grace is revealed throughout both the Old and New Testaments. God reached into the world with grace, bringing redemption to the failures of people and transformation to those who were weak. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word rendered as *favor* can also be translated as *grace*; these words can be used interchangeably.<sup>2</sup> Noah found grace in the eyes of God and was saved from destruction. Job persevered through misery by God’s grace. Moses made excuses, but God overrode them and used him to set the Israelites free. Hannah cried



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out to God in faith, believed the promise spoken to her by Eli, waited in hope, and was granted favor from God in the fulfillment of the birth of her son, Samuel. Mary found favor with God, believed the word spoken by the angel, and carried The Promise to life. That Promise, Jesus Christ, lived a life of grace, forgiving and loving with extraordinary power. The power of grace was fully displayed in His resurrection, but it didn't stop there. God went on to share this grace with the disciples who had abandoned Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the disciples went on to spread their story and experiences with God. Lives were transformed over the millennia.

God's grace reaches us even today. His forgiving love is available to anyone who will accept it. God accepts us as we are, with all our imperfections and sin. He loves us too much to leave us in our broken, sinful condition.

The truth of unconditional acceptance is explained in Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. ...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.

We can do nothing to earn grace. We can only accept the gift. Our eyes need to be opened to see the grace around us. Then, God calls us to extend His grace to this hurting world.

### Captivated by Grace

I have been captivated by grace for many years, not only because of my name — in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testa-

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ment, the name “Nancy” means “grace” — but also because grace has transformed me, strengthened me, and sustained me through difficult times. It is a crown jewel with many facets given by the Lord for our relationship with Him. Too often we get wrapped up in trying harder, comparing ourselves to others, and straining toward unreachable perfection. Only the grace of Jesus Christ can help us relax and grow into who God designed each of us to be.

This book began through my own exploration of grace when I started a monthly e-mail devotional, *GraceNotes*, showing how God’s grace is active in today’s world. I have expanded the monthly e-mails into a blog on my website ([www.NancyKayGrace.com](http://www.NancyKayGrace.com)), Facebook (Nancy Kay Grace/GraceNotes), and Twitter posts (@nancykaygrace).

*The Grace Impact* is a compilation of some of those devotionals. This book can be used as a devotional or as a Bible study. It is divided into four sections exploring elements of 2 Corinthians 9:8, “God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things* at all times, may have an abundance for every good work.” (NKJV) The Amplified Bible further explains and expands the meaning.

And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always *and* under all circumstances *and* whatever the need be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation.]

In section one, we will examine the grace found in God’s character and why He is able to make grace abound. Section two is about the sufficiency of God’s grace, giving us what we need to live the Christian life. In section three we’ll explore the sus-

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taining power of grace in all things at all times. Section four encourages us to have an abundance of grace for every good work, sharing the blessing of grace with others. Each daily reading begins with a Bible verse and has an observation about grace. The section at the end of each day, “Deepening the Grace Impact,” includes questions for meditation, additional Bible verses to study, and a prayer. In 2 Peter 3:18 the apostle Peter wrote, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” This section is designed to help you dig deeper into understanding grace and its impact on you. I pray you will be encouraged in practical ways to live in His grace.

### Amazing Grace

Many have written about grace — this marvelous gift from God. Most notably is John Newton, a harsh slave trader who was transformed by God’s grace. Two decades after his dramatic conversion he wrote a poem entitled “Faith’s Review and Expectation,” based on a statement when King David reflected on the Lord’s goodness in his life: “Who am I, LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?” (1 Chronicles 17:16) This passage is reflected in the phrase of the song “Amazing Grace:” “Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come, ‘tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will bring me home.”

The poem “Faith’s Review and Expectation” became the beloved hymn “Amazing Grace.”<sup>3</sup> Looking at faith, grace, and the expectation of hope in the Lord is the essence of this book. My prayer is that God will meet you in these pages, increasing your awareness of His grace. Like Newton, perhaps you will have your own faith review and expectation. Read the words to this great hymn and reflect on the immensity of God’s grace, and may God’s grace abound to you!

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Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come,

'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will bring me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures;

He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease,

I shall possess, within the veil a life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine;

But God who call'd me here below, will be forever mine.<sup>4</sup>



### Deepening the Grace Impact

**QUESTIONS:** What do you know about the grace of God from your own experience? How do you understand the grace of God as it applies to your life?

**SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:** John 1:14,17; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9

**PRAYER:** Lord, open my eyes to see, my mind to learn, and my heart to share more of Your grace. Amen.

## SECTION ONE

# “God is Able to Make All Grace Abound Toward You...”

**T**he grace impact originates with God revealing His character to us. In section one, we will begin to grow in understanding the complexity of God’s grace. He is able and chooses to make grace overflow, revealing His character to us. Like a light shining on a multifaceted diamond, grace radiates through God’s magnificent nature. He is even called the “God of all grace” in 1 Peter 5:10. He is the source and creator of grace. We don’t deserve it, but God pours grace out on us that we may know Him. He does not remain aloof, but through grace, reveals Himself to you and me. God yearns for relationship with us.

We’ll look at a few of God’s qualities that reflect this marvelous grace that impacts us: how grace draws us to God’s holiness, how grace nurtures us through God’s care, how grace gives us hope in God’s promises, how grace reveals God’s faithfulness, and how grace lets us savor God’s love. Because of God’s great love, we behold the wonder of His grace as He became like us through the birth of Jesus. Section one concludes as we see the power of God’s redeeming grace through the resurrection.

God alone is able to set into motion what I call the “grace impact” — His ability to work in and through any situation, revealing His love and forgiveness to us, thereby drawing us to Him-

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self, ultimately through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The initial impact of God's grace to each of us comes by accepting salvation through Jesus Christ. It continues in us and through us as our lives are transformed by yielding more to the Lord. As we grow in faith, we share God's grace with others. Like a drop of water released on a smooth lake, the ripples of the grace impact continue to reach outward to many.

## DAY ONE

# Grace Draws Us to God's Holiness

*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory. — Isaiah 6:3*

**P**itch black engulfed us; nervousness settled over me. Unable to see my hand directly in front of my nose, I gripped my young daughter's arm, assuring her of my presence.

Our family participated in a cave tour while on vacation in the Black Hills of South Dakota. A college-age guide led us through narrow passages to the bottom of a large cavern. Her flashlight and a few dim light fixtures lit our way. Once in the lowest opening, our guide explained the geologic formations. She then clicked off the flashlight and flipped the light switch.

A collective gasp echoed through the room. Anxious, we huddled in absolute darkness as she explained how our eyes would adjust in a few moments. However, when a thoughtless tourist in the group flashed his camera, it blinded all of us. My eyes ached from the intense light. I squinted, seeing nothing except bright spots.

The above experience illustrates our reaction when we encounter light in the midst of blackness. When we begin to understand God's holiness, we shield our eyes spiritually from the brightness. Such holiness is so pure it is blinding in the

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darkness around us. God is described as the one “who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.”(1 Tim. 6:16a)

The word *holy* comes from a root word meaning “to separate.” God is separated from — or exalted above — all things.<sup>1</sup> His qualities of purity and holiness set Him apart from everything He has created. His holiness is almost incomprehensible to our limited, inadequate minds. God is perfect and pure — deserving our reverence and adoration. When we learn more about God’s nature as revealed in His Word, we can begin to recognize His holiness.

The prophet Isaiah witnessed God’s holiness in the midst of despair. He lived during the time of King Uzziah who reigned fifty-two years as a godly and powerful king. His death was a national tragedy in the ancient world, causing fear and uncertainty for the future of the nation. It was at this point of discouragement that Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord described in Isaiah 6:1-5.

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.

When faced with the astounding holiness of God, Isaiah



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saw his own ungodliness and unworthiness. He realized his despair and sin, but God didn't leave him in his hopelessness. Isaiah 6:6-7 continues:

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

God initiated an act of grace by reaching out to Isaiah with forgiveness so he could stand in God's holy presence. The impact of God's grace on Isaiah changed his life. He went from fearful and discouraged to bold and courageous as he responded with a willingness to serve the holy God of the universe.

Likewise, we decide how we will respond to God's holiness. We have sinned and are unworthy of being in God's presence. In spite of our unworthiness, God beckons us to consider His holiness as Isaiah did and be moved — by a crisis if need be — to see how much we need Him.

God does not remain unapproachable, but desires personal reconnection with each one of us. He initiates the relationship by extending grace. At the crossroad where God's grace and our lives intersect we have a choice to turn away from God or to embrace Him. That is where the grace impact begins for us. By accepting His grace, we receive total forgiveness, complete acceptance, and unconditional love from God. At this point, the Holy Spirit initiates transformation in the yielded heart. Pastor Charles Swindoll defines grace as:

Unmerited favor. Grace is what God does for mankind, which we do not deserve, which we cannot earn, and

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which we will never be able to repay. Awash in our sinfulness, helpless to change on our own, polluted to the core with no possibility of cleaning ourselves up, we cry out for grace. It is our only hope.<sup>2</sup>

Grace allows us, as imperfect sinners, to have a connection with God. Only by God's initiative of extending grace to us, can we enter such a relationship. This invitation of grace is further explained in Isaiah 57:15.

For this is what the high and exalted One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Here is a magnificent mystery: the holy, exalted God of the universe chooses to restore our relationship with Him. He does not cast us away from His presence because of anything we have done or not done, but desires to connect with us in spite of our undeserving condition.

I first responded to God as a scrawny, teenage girl struggling with low self-esteem. I felt distant from my family and from God. To me, the mirror reflected loneliness and emptiness. I believed I had little worth. Though I tried to be happy and carefree, inside I felt the sting of self-condemnation. Driven by perfectionism to excel, I also lived in the shadow of comparing myself to others. A web of tension kept me wrapped in insecurity, self-pity, and desiring acceptance. A turbulent home life created by a lack of communication and an alcoholic father brought further distress. I found peace in music; playing the piano brought solace to my heart.

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One weekend a visiting choir came to my church, and it changed my life forever. I first experienced the grace impact through hearing a verse from the Bible. In the midst of their song, the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17 were spoken as an antiphonal chant with a catchy rhythm. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

Those words penetrated my mind and went straight to my heart. My soul stirred with an awareness of God’s presence reaching out to me. When I found the passage in the Bible, the words jumped into my empty heart. I received His acceptance, forgiveness, and love. I traded my sin-stained self-image for one that reflected the image of the loving God. The holy, exalted God of the universe extended grace to me, and I gratefully took hold of it.

The holiness of God requires a decision from us. We can be fearful and turn away from Him, as if turning away from a bright light exposing us in our darkness; or we can draw closer to Him through His grace. God’s holiness leads us to look inward to see where we sin, or fall short of God’s standard.

We cannot reach God by ourselves. God made a way to span the chasm created by sin that separates us from Him. He sent His son Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sin through the sacrifice of His life on the cross. Through His resurrection Jesus became the bridge that connects us to God. By acknowledging our position of sin and imperfection, we can receive God’s forgiveness through His grace, and then we see a glimpse of His holiness. We are transformed by His grace, right where we are, when we are in His presence.

God’s grace draws us to Him, and has redeemed us from sin. We are empowered by the Lord to face the challenges of our lives with new strength and hope because of the grace impact.

## Deepening the Grace Impact

**QUESTIONS:** What comes to mind when you think of the holiness of God? How have you been changed by God's grace?

**SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:** Exodus 15:11;  
I Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 57:15

**PRAYER:** Lord God, I praise You for being holy and pure. I praise You that Your holiness does not remain far off, but reaches me in my everyday life. I thank You for drawing me to Your holiness by Your grace, for creating a crossroad of grace in my life. Thank You for the impact of Your grace that reaches to me. Help me, by Your grace, to live for You. Amen.