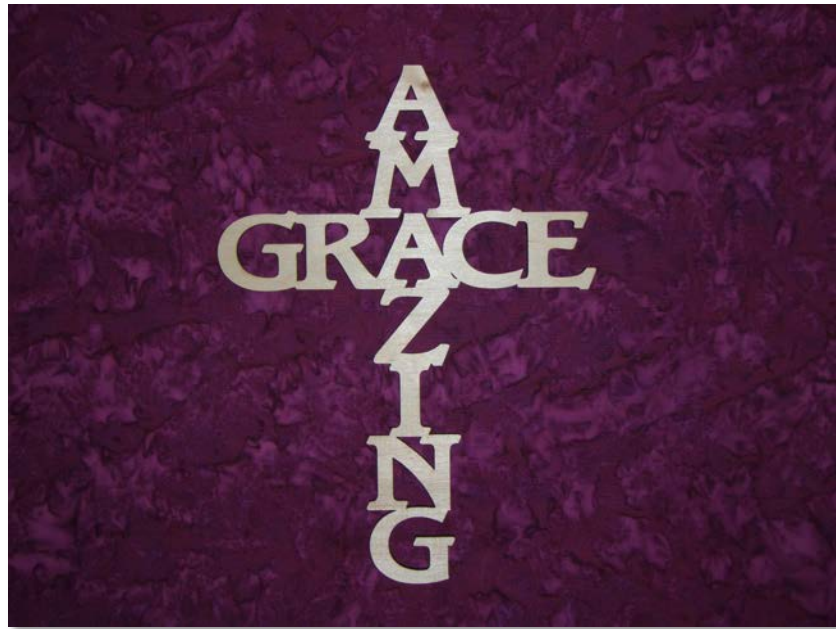


# HELPING YOURSELF TO GRACE



GRACE FOR YOUR TIME  
OF NEED: PART 5

T. M. MOORE

A REVISION STUDY FROM  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF AILBE

*Helping Yourself to Grace*

Helping Yourself to Grace  
Grace for Your Time of Need: Part 5  
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*Helping Yourself to Grace*

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## Welcome to *Helping Yourself to Grace*

Christians are a singing people, and one of the reasons for this is that we have so much to sing about. This is especially true where the grace of God is concerned. Singing of God's grace can make us more aware of it, help us to delight more in it, and lead us to seek it more consistently for all our times of need.

The history of Christian hymnody has left us many excellent works which, if we could make better use of them, would bring us into more of the grace of God for every aspect of our lives. In this final study in our series on "Grace for Your Time of Need" we will consider six of the great hymns of grace Christians have sung through the years. And we'll try to make these great hymns more consistently part of our practice of helping ourselves to the wonderful grace of Jesus.

*ReVision* studies are designed as brief introductions to the subject under consideration. We hope they will enlarge your worldview, help you to become more firmly rooted in Scripture, equip you to minister to others, and stimulate you to want to learn more about the Word of God and the Biblical worldview.

We're happy to provide this study at no charge. If you find these studies helpful, we hope you'll consider sending a gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, to help us in making these resources available to others.

And if you find this study helpful, please let us know. How have you benefited from this study? Go to our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), and use the Contact Us button to share your story.

May the Lord bless your study of His Word.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Grace for the Asking

*For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
The LORD will give grace and glory;  
No good thing will He withhold  
From those who walk uprightly.* Psalm 84.11

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* Hebrews 4.16

### *Our time of need*

The promise of Hebrews 4.16 is among the most precious of all Scripture: Grace is available for the asking, whatever our time of need. We have a standing invitation to seek the Lord for His Presence, favor, and strength, any time, any place, for any need. Amazing grace!

As we have seen, we need grace all the time. Our existence, health and wellbeing, salvation, growth in the Lord, ministries, witness, and perseverance in faith all depend on God's grace. There isn't a moment of our lives, waking or sleeping, when we don't require the grace of God.

The fact that we so *infrequently* request God's grace is a testimony to our churlishness in the face of God's abundant lovingkindness. We take the grace of God for granted. It's always been there, and it always will be there, because that's just how God is. We know that He is kindly disposed to us, and He is always reminding us of this in His Word. So we just assume He'll be there when we need Him, and we don't consider it necessary always to be seeking more grace.

We presume on the goodness of God when we do not acknowledge our need for grace at every moment, and when we fail to call on His grace for all our times of need. Gratitude demands that we seek the Lord for grace. Our constant need of grace demands it. And God Himself commands it: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5.17).

More grace is available to us – wave upon wave of grace! But to know such abounding grace, we must seek it more consistently.

### *Grace available and abounding*

God's grace abounds to us. And the amazing thing is that it can abound even more, when we get in the practice of seeking His grace rather than merely taking it for granted.

God wants to give us grace, so that He can be glorified in us. He wants to flow grace toward us in wave upon wave, so that we are filled, transformed, and overflow with grace to the people and the world around us.

How can we set our minds and hearts to seek more of God's grace? What can we do to remind us to enter the throne room of Christ, seeking grace for all our times of need?

Making prayer a more vital part of our daily lives is a good place to begin. Set aside times to seek the Lord in prayer throughout the day, even if only for a few minutes. Pray before each task or meeting, or as you are going from one activity to the next. Thank God for the grace that has sustained you thus far during the day, and call on Him to supply abundant grace so that you may glorify Him in whatever is coming next. Praise Him for the evidence of His grace abounding in the world, and let the people and things around you serve as cues to more specific prayers for grace to help in your times of need. Find a prayer partner to meet with regularly, and to encourage one another in the work of prayer.

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The more we bring prayer into the daily routines and activities of our lives, the more opportunities we'll have for seeking God's grace. And the more we will overcome the tendency to take grace for granted, and thus to fail in seeking it from Him Who is willing to give it, abundantly and abounding.

### *Singing the grace of God*

Consider also that singing about the grace of God can remind you to seek Him for it. The sons of Korah sang of the grace of God in Psalm 84.11, celebrating the power of God's grace both to enlighten our path and to guard us against all adversity. Singing the grace of God can be an effective way of growing to appreciate His grace more, and of seeking more of it.

For the remainder of our series on "Grace for Your Time of Need", we're going to take a closer look at some very familiar hymns. It is often the case, especially with familiar hymns, that we can underappreciate the depth, scope, and power of the lyrics and music. If we slow down, contemplate what we're singing, and dwell within the words and melody, we may realize more of the Lord's Presence – since He inhabits the praises of His people (Ps. 22.3) – and discover that our understanding and appreciation of the grace of God will grow. And this can lead us to seek more of the grace that we sing about with renewed insight and conviction.

Six hymns in particular will guide us more vividly and vitally into the Presence of God and His grace. We're going to learn what's so wonderful and matchless about the grace of Jesus. We'll discover what makes it so amazing, and how and why grace pardons, cleanses, and renews us within. We'll be humbled, and we will increase in love for God as we focus on the debt we owe to His grace. And we'll learn to ask for more of Jesus – more of God's grace – to show to the people around us.

I'm going to challenge you to sing each of these familiar hymns with renewed understanding, to sing them aloud during the day, with family or friends, and as part of your devotional times with the Lord. I want these songs to become welcome earworms, not so that they irritate you, but that they stimulate you frequently to a greater appreciation of God's grace, and move you to seek it more consistently.

Grace greater than all you could ever ask or think is waiting to be channeled your way. Seeking that grace for all your times of need is the key; and prayer and singing can unlock the way to an ever-increasing experience of the grace of God.

### *For reflection*

1. Why do you suppose we tend to take the grace of God for granted?
2. How can you improve your prayers to include more direct pleading with God for grace to help in your times of need?
3. Why is singing a good way to engage the grace of God? How can singing engage us, soul and body, in seeking more of God's grace?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Begin asking God for grace for specific needs in all your prayers. Remember that grace describes God's disposition toward us – He wants to give us grace; it consists in His communicating that disposition – His Word of grace in Scripture; and it issues in power from the Holy Spirit to do good works for God's glory. Pray accordingly about your day, and throughout your day.*

## 2      Wonderful Grace of Jesus

*Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
For His name alone is exalted;  
His glory is above the earth and heaven.  
And He has exalted the horn of His people,  
The praise of all His saints—  
Of the children of Israel,  
A people near to Him.  
Praise the LORD! Psalm 148.13, 14*

Wonderful Grace of Jesus  
Haldor Lillenas, 1918

Wonderful grace of Jesus,  
Greater than all my sin;  
How shall my tongue describe it,  
Where shall its praise begin?  
Taking away my burden,  
Setting my spirit free;  
For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

*Refrain:*  
Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,  
Deeper than the mighty rolling sea;  
Higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,  
All-sufficient grace for even me!  
Broader than the scope of my transgressions,  
Greater far than all my sin and shame;  
Oh, magnify the precious Name of Jesus,  
Praise His Name!

Wonderful grace of Jesus,  
Reaching to all the lost,  
By it I have been pardoned,  
Saved to the uttermost;  
Chains have been torn asunder,  
Giving me liberty;  
For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.  
*Refrain*

Wonderful grace of Jesus,  
Reaching the most defiled,  
By its transforming power,  
Making him God's dear child,  
Purchasing peace and heaven  
For all eternity—  
And the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.  
*Refrain*

*The end of Christian life*

Why has God saved us? To know, enjoy, glorify, and worship Him forever, that's why. Is that the best we can do?

Absolutely.

What happens when we worship the Lord Jesus? We sound our loudest horn of battle and celebration, blaring forth with joy to have been made recipients of the wonderful grace of our Lord. And in so worshiping and praising the Lord, we enter His throne room, and take our seat with Him at the Father's right hand (Ps. 22.3; Eph. 2.6), thus realizing fullness of joy and holy pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16.11). Don't feel sorry for the saints in heaven, who spend all their time in glorious worship of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 4, 5). They're doing what they were made for, and what they and we will be doing – whatever *else* we're doing – through all eternity in the new heavens and new earth.

Worship is what we're made for, and where we realize the fullness of what it means to be you and me. But we will never realize the glorious transforming potential of worship as long as we consider worship a one-hour commitment once a week. Paul calls us to take worship into every aspect of our daily lives, saying that this is, after all, only *reasonable* (Rom. 12.1, 2). Singing can be a most effective way of filling your day with worship, and when we're singing about the grace of God, we're being reminded of His infinite goodness and love, and lifted into the throne room of heaven, where we join our voices with departed saints and angels.

All that, right there while you're getting ready for the day, driving to work, cleaning the bathroom, preparing for a meeting, or taking an exam. When you're blowing your horn in praise for the Lord, celebrating the wonderful and matchless grace of Jesus, you are realizing the fullness of who God made you to be.

*Grace so wonderful*

As Haldor Lillenas understood, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is wonderful and matchless. You can never fathom the great depths, soaring heights, and unbounded power of grace; and there is nothing anywhere in the cosmos that compares with it. Grace is deeper, higher, broader, greater, and more effervescent with the love and goodness of God than our tongues can ever completely describe.

Where to begin to praise such wonderful and matchless grace? By its saving power in your own life! By His grace God has taken away the burden of your sin and set you free to live in the Kingdom of Christ unto righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit. And His grace continues to reach you every day, reviving your soul, eliciting your praise and wonder and thanksgiving, directing your steps, and empowering you to do all things for the glory of God.

Through you, this wonderful grace can reach the lost – just like it reached you! We may think some of the people in our Personal Mission Field to be so defiled by the ways of the world, that the grace of God can never reach them. But He made us His children out of such defilement, for His grace is wonderful and matchless.

Make yourself available as an agent of that grace, and fortify your soul by singing of the wonderful grace of Jesus throughout the day.

*Grace all-sufficient*

Whatever your need, whatever you require to sound the praises of Jesus to your world, God's grace can provide. His all-sufficient grace is even for you, and through you, even to the people you will see today.



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God's grace can transform you. It can transform the people you love, and those to whom God sends you as a witness to Jesus. It can transform our culture. It can transform our sad and angry world, turning it rightside-up for Jesus Christ. This is grace worth singing about, even throughout the course of our grace-redeemed day.

And the more we sing of this grace throughout the day, the more we will magnify the precious Name of Jesus by our words and deeds, and find that others will want to join us in praising His Name.

Want to live in the Presence of Jesus, really, transformingly, and joyfully? Then blow your horn in praise by singing the [Wonderful Grace of Jesus](#) throughout your day.

#### *For reflection*

1. As Christians, we are commanded to sing praise to the Lord. God has given us songs to sing. Great saints of the past and present have composed wonderful songs to help us fulfill this calling. Singing can be a sign that we are filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5.18-21). So why don't we sing any more than we do?
2. Take a moment right now to sing the three stanzas of "Wonderful Grace of Jesus." If you don't know the melody, YouTube is just a click away. How does singing this hymn aloud help you to appreciate just how wonderful and matchless the grace of Jesus is?
3. Pick four times today to sing one of the stanzas of this hymn. At the end of the day, sing it to reflect on all the grace God has shown you. Then pray and thank Him for the wonderful grace of Jesus.

*Next Steps – Transformation: Talk to a Christian friend about singing more throughout the day. Why should we? How can we? Encourage your friend to join you in taking up this discipline.*

### 3 Marvelous Grace

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5.1, 2*

#### Marvelous Grace

Julia H. Johnston, 1911

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.

#### *Refrain*

Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,  
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

#### *Refrain*

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.  
What can we do to wash it away?  
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,  
Brighter than snow you may be today.

#### *Refrain*

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
You that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?

#### *Refrain*

#### *Standing in grace*

We stand, Paul insisted, in the grace of God. Grace is where we have landed. Grace is where we live. Grace defines the boundaries and parameters of our lives. Grace directs our stance toward God and the world. And because of the marvelous grace of our loving Lord, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Marveling is a most appropriate response to the grace of God. To marvel is to be filled with wonder and astonishment. As we reflect on the fact that the God of heaven and earth both loves us, and communicates that love to us daily; and that He embodied that love for our salvation and life in our Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot help but wonder: How could I be so loved by one Whom I have so offended? How could my stony indifference be so completely overcome, so that now I long above all else to know Him Who has saved me? What wondrous love is this, O my soul, that reaches down to save, renew, transform, and empower me as an agent of grace every day of my life?

The grace we stand in leads us to hope that we may see God in His glory and glorify Him in all aspects of our

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lives. And this is because the grace in which we stand is greater than all the sin we've ever committed or ever could commit. We have no power to insinuate ourselves into the very Presence of God. We have no strength to be break free of our sins, so as to present ourselves clear and new to the Lord. Only His grace can do this, and does do this, as it is freely bestowed on all who believe.

### *The greatness of grace*

Julia H. Johnston captured much of the marvelous nature of the grace in which we stand in her 1911 hymn, "Marvelous Grace". Her lyrics remind us of just how great is the grace in which we stand, first, to overcome our sin and guilt, so that there is therefore now no condemnation for us who believe in Jesus (Rom. 8.1). Only grace can do that.

Grace cleanses and renews us within, changing the way we think, the desires that animate us, and the priorities that guide our steps. Grace lodges our soul in Jesus, and He transforms us, from glory to glory, to be more like Him (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

In the process, grace lifts us from despair and fear and doubt into the assurance of salvation and the hope of greater glory to come. It renews us within and without, removing the dark stains of sin as far as the east is from the west; breaking us free of sin's grip, throwing off the pall of guilt and shame, and conveying us into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, that realm of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit where Jesus, exalted in glory, is making all things new.

And all this was set in motion by the mighty cross of Jesus, which is our true and lasting refuge, shelter, and stronghold. There grace stretched forth bloody hands to embrace sin and death, to lay hold on them and tear away their grip on us; and, at the same time, they reached out to us, from the midst of that crimson flood, for forgiveness and everlasting life.

Marvelous indeed is the infinite and matchless grace of our Lord!

### *The end of grace*

All who stand in the grace of our Lord Jesus have no greater longing than to see Jesus face to face, and finally to be like Him (1 Jn. 3.1-3). And grace will take us even that far.

Where you stand says a lot about who you are, what you believe, and what you aspire to in this life. Standing in the grace of Jesus, we know that we are unworthy, undeserving, and yet undeniably forgiven and saved. Untold grace awaits us each day, to sustain and keep us, nurture us in our great salvation, and make us daily more like Jesus in every way. We cannot exhaust the marvelous grace of our loving Lord. That grace cannot fail to reach us at the point of our need, and to empower us to live each day out of the newness in which we stand.

If your life has lost some of the wonder and mystery that come with knowing we are forgiven and saved, then be renewed in the marvelous grace of Jesus. Sing of His marvelous grace, and be astonished anew, every day, at how grace, grace, God's grace has established you in the hope of glory, on a journey to the Presence of Jesus Christ all the days of your life.

### *For reflection*

1. We don't much marvel at the grace of God these days. Why not? How would you encourage a new believer ever to marvel and be astonished at the grace of God?
2. What does it mean for you each day to know that, by the grace of God, you stand in the hope of glory?
3. How can believers encourage and help one another to marvel at the grace of God that brings us ever more

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deeply into our great salvation?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Pick four times today to sing one of the stanzas of this hymn. At the end of the day, sing it to reflect on all the grace God has shown you. Then pray and thank Him for the marvelous grace of our loving Lord.*

## 4 Amazing Grace

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* 1 Corinthians 15.10

Amazing Grace  
John Newton, d. 1807

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.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead 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.

Yea, 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 called me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

*Not just at the beginning*

We narrow the scope of God's grace, and of our awareness of its abounding presence and transforming power, without even knowing it when all we think about is the grace that works in us at salvation. Every believer knows that salvation is by grace through faith. It is the gift of God, and not something we attain by our own efforts (Eph. 3.8, 9). But this is just the beginning of knowing the wonderful, marvelous, and amazing grace of God.

Our understanding of grace is deficient as long as this is the primary way we think about it. Grace is indeed required for us to be saved. But, as we have seen, grace was also necessary to make us alive and keep us alive until we could be saved, and to continue sustaining and transforming us through all our days on earth, in every aspect of our lives. And grace will continue to enable us to live on for eternity in the new heavens and

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new earth. Grace is thus truly amazing, as John Newton leads us to sing in his very familiar hymn.

We need grace not just at the beginning of our walk with the Lord, but every day of it, in every way, for all our times of need – which are all the days and moments of our lives. The truly amazing thing about grace is that it operates continuously, lavishly, effectively, and unfailingly, and yet the reserves of grace are never exhausted. They are vaster and more varied than all God’s people will all together ever need. The grace of God is infinite, because it derives from God Himself. And it is amazing because by it, God does all things well, and makes all things work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8.28).

### *A journey of grace*

The amazing grace of God is with us through all our journey in life. John Newton understood that the grace of God had kept him through the early days of his journey. Though he was a coarse man – a sailor in the British navy – who served on a slave ship after going AWOL from his post, yet God’s grace was sustaining and preparing him even then. He referred to himself, in those days before knowing Jesus, as a “wretch”, and he understood that only the grace of Jesus could change that.

Newton came to Christ through “many dangers, toils, and snares”, culminating in his experience of being nearly shipwrecked in a storm. That brought him to his senses, as he understood that the grace of God had delivered him “safe thus far” – just as it has for us, through all our own trials, foolishness, setbacks, and disappointments.

And he knew that grace would lead him home to glory with the Lord as well. The entirety of our lives is immersed in the grace of God. He shields us through stormy times; He is our daily portion for all that we need; He does good to us in every way; and He fills our souls with the hope of glory. And when our time comes to quit this life, and put off this mortal tent, grace will be there to carry us through the veil and fit us with glorious new lives in the Presence of the Lord.

It’s grace all the way, every day, for every aspect of our lives! Amazing!

### *Cosmic grace*

The grace that saves and sustains us also embraces and envelops the entire universe, every created thing. Newton could see, with the eye of his heart, the coming day when the cosmos as we know it will be changed, fused with the holy spiritual realm into one new creation, without sin, without sorrow, without tears, and without end.

And even when we have been there, safely ensconced and rejoicing for 10,000 years in that glorious new realm, we’ll still have unlimited days to bask in the grace of Jesus and sing His glory and praise.

For the wonderful, marvelous, amazing grace of Jesus is not only infinite and all-pervasive, it is eternal, irrevocable, and prevenient. It goes ahead to prepare for us an eternal dwelling in glory, even as it went ahead to enlighten our minds and open our hearts to the Good News of Jesus.

Grace is amazing, and as we sing of this amazing grace, we are reminded of just how much our heavenly Father loves wretches such as we, and of what He has done, is doing, and will do to ensure that His grace flows unfailingly to us through Jesus Christ, now and forever, world without end.

### *For reflection*

1. Which aspects of God’s “amazing grace” do you regularly experience? How do you respond?
2. Why is it important that we know that grace goes ahead of us into eternity, and will always be available to

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us there?

3. How can Christians encourage one another in singing these wonderful hymns of grace, and why should we do so?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Pick six times today to sing one of the stanzas of this hymn. At the end of the day, sing it to reflect on all the grace God has shown you. Then pray and thank Him for the amazing grace of our loving Lord.*

## 5 How Great a Debtor!

*Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!  
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.  
Sing to the LORD, bless His name;  
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.* Psalm 96.1, 2

### [Come, Thou Fount](#)

Robert Robinson, 1735-1790

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come;  
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;  
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;  
here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

### *Never ceasing grace*

There is never a moment in our lives when we don't need mercy and grace from God. So it's a very good thing that He Who is the Fount of every blessing streams His mercy and grace toward us continually, sustaining and enriching all aspects of our existence, every moment of our lives.

Every good and perfect gift comes from God (Jms. 1.17). By His will we have been created, and by His will we exist. He loves all His creatures, including those who deny, reject, and despise Him. It is in the nature of God to bless whatever He has made, and we are the moment-by-moment beneficiaries of never-ceasing streams of mercy and grace.

How should we respond to such torrential goodness? The psalmist tells us: "sing to the LORD". While all religions, and many secular organizations and groups (think: college fight songs), use music to express their views, hopes, and traditions, Christianity is above all others an epicenter of singing. No one sings like Christians. No one has as many songs to sing as Christians. No one learns as many songs by heart as Christians. For believers in Jesus Christ, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of praise to God is evidence that the Spirit of God is lively within them (Eph. 5.18-21). God has given the gift of song to His people, and He commands us to sing as a primary response to His unceasing streams of blessing and grace.

### *Never ceasing praise?*

But we are not nearly as consistent in this as we could be. Most Christians only sing praises to the Lord when they are together with other Christians in a service of worship. During the rest of the week – when we're driving or working out – we might sing along with a CD or an mp3 download of a Christian song. But to sing spontaneously, robustly, joyously, and consistently throughout the day, well, that's just not what we do.



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It is what they do in heaven, however; and perhaps our prayer that God's Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven could be answered in part by our singing more throughout the day.

Further, singing more frequently and joyously to the Lord would demonstrate the hope that is within us to the world around. And would such bold and glad singing prompt others to ask a reason for that hope (1 Pet. 3.15)?

We don't need to have a great voice to sing praises to the Lord; a joyful noise will do (Ps. 81.1). We can ask the Lord to give us grace to sing more, and to teach us new songs – some melodious sonnet – resonant with those that are sung continuously in heaven; and singing aloud can lift us into the presence of God, Who inhabits the praises of His people.

The more we are mindful of the continuous grace of God, streaming unto us at every moment, and the more we fix our minds on the mount of glory where Jesus reigns at the Father's right hand, the more we will open our mouths in songs of praise, joining our voice with those flaming tongues above to give God the praise and thanks He is due.

*Where would we be without grace?*

In singing to the Lord we raise our Ebenezer – our “Stone of Help” – and celebrate God's goodness to us for anyone who hears. Where would we be without His grace to lift us up above the fray of life? His help has been with us every step of the way, and His help will bring us safely home to Him.

We are debtors in every way to the wonderful, marvelous, amazing, matchless grace of our God. Surely it's not too much that we should acknowledge that debt by singing our praise to God throughout the day. Singing can help us keep on track with the Lord, and prevent us from wandering away from His Presence. And these wonderful old hymns that we have been considering are as good a place as any to begin tuning your heart and voice as a witness to God, by singing of the grace that created, keeps, sustains, saves, and transforms us day by day, every day of the year.

Offer your heart to the Lord in song throughout the day. He'll seal your heart to Him as you sing His praises and celebrate His grace. We can never repay the debt of gratitude we owe to the Lord, but we can remind ourselves of it throughout the day, and show our gratitude for it by tuning our hearts to sing His grace more consistently.

*For reflection*

1. In what sense are we debtors to the grace of God? How has He been a “Stone of Help” in your life?
2. What would people think – in your home, at work or school, or while you're out shopping – if they heard you quietly singing songs of praise to God? Why don't we do this more?
3. How can singing praise to God help keep us in the path He has marked out for us?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Choose three times today to draw back and meditate on the stanzas of this song. Sing those stanzas throughout the day. Reflect on this at the end of the day. Have your meditation and singing had any effect on your awareness of the Presence of God?*

## 6 Free and Infinite Grace

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8.9*

### [And Can It Be?](#)

Charles Wesley, 1738

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

*Refrain:*

Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis myst'ry all: th' Immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.  
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above—  
So free, so infinite His grace—  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race:  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

*See Jesus, see grace*

The grace of God is most fully and completely observable in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the grace of God in human form – God in the flesh, living out and dying in the grace of God for lost sinners. We will never truly understand nor fully appreciate the enormity and infinite nature of God's grace until we see it displayed in

Jesus.

Charles Wesley understood this, and his hymn *And Can It Be?* invites us to consider the wonder, marvel, and power of the grace of God in Jesus, and its effects on those who believe.

The song doesn't begin with Jesus, but with us as believers wondering over the mystery of our having gained "an interest in the Savior's blood". How can this be? We are the cause of His death. Had we been there when Jesus walked the earth, we would have hounded and pursued Him all the way to the cross, all the while believing we were only doing what was right. We caused His pain; but through His pain and suffering and death, the infinite grace of God remains, reaching to wretches such as we with forgiveness and new life.

See Jesus, healing the sick, teaching the Good News, and suffering on the cross, and know that, while you and I put Him there, God ordained His suffering as the means whereby His wonderful and marvelous, free and infinite grace might reach even to the likes of us.

*A strange design*

This seems like a strange design to many. Why would the eternal God freely die to save us? Shouldn't we rather work hard to save ourselves, if saved we would truly be?

The eternal plan of God is fraught with mystery, impenetrable to puny human reason, but clear enough in the details for us to understand and embrace it. The eternal Word of God left His Father's side to become a Man. He emptied Himself of certain divine prerogatives, bringing with Him to earth full Deity into sinless humanity, and demonstrating the love of God for fallen sinners by all His words and deeds.

His death on the cross was *sufficient* to pay the debt of sin owed by every human being. Through His death, the grace of God is *efficient* to find out those whom God has chosen, and to lay hold on them with saving and transforming power. The immense and free mercy of God finds and confronts us in our rebellion, arrests us in our ignorance, renews us in our apathy, and sets us on the path that leads to abounding grace for our every need.

What a strange design! As Anselm explained in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in his treatise, *Cur Deus Homo* (Why the God-Man), God in His infinite grace became a Man to pay a debt He did not owe, an incalculable debt of sin – sin which had imprisoned us in disobedience, and the debt of which we could never pay apart from the grace of God.

*"Follow Me!"*

The infinite grace of God, which has paid our debt and freed us from the bonds of sin, now compels us to follow Jesus in the Kingdom of God. There is no longer any condemnation to fear: Jesus has paid the price to free us (Rom. 8.1). We are alive in Him, abiding in the life-giving Vine that enables us to bear abiding fruit to the glory of God. When the holy God looks on us, He sees us clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He therefore welcomes us before His throne and into His Presence, where we may find grace to help in our times of need.

"'Tis mystery all"! Were truer words ever written or sung? That the infinite, eternal, Son and Word of God should condescend to become one of us, show us the ways of grace, by grace cleanse us of every obstacle to abounding grace, and fit us by grace to follow Him through all the days of our lives!

Can it really be so? It is, and it is this very same Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the people in our Personal Mission Fields, by our singing and serving and testifying, letting them know that grace greater than all our sins – marvelous, free, and infinite grace – is available to release them from the bonds of sin and self into the light of truth and love that are in Christ Jesus.

*Helping Yourself to Grace*

*For reflection*

1. How is Jesus the very embodiment of God's grace?
2. The Good News of God's grace is at once unfathomable and yet easy for anyone to understand. Explain.
3. How can you see your own testimony of God's saving grace in Charles Wesley's hymn?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Set aside time to sing the five stanzas of this great hymn today. As you do, think of how the grace of God has found and reached you, and give Him abundant thanks and praise.*

## 7 More Jesus, More Grace

*But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5.20, 21*

### [More about Jesus](#)

Eliza Edmunds Hewitt, 1887

More about Jesus would I know,  
More of His grace to others show;  
More of His saving fullness see,  
More of His love who died for me.

*Refrain:*

More, more about Jesus,  
More, more about Jesus;  
More of His saving fullness see,  
More of His love who died for me.

More about Jesus let me learn,  
More of His holy will discern;  
Spirit of God, my teacher be,  
Showing the things of Christ to me.

More about Jesus, in His Word,  
Holding communion with my Lord;  
Hearing His voice in every line,  
Making each faithful saying mine.

More about Jesus on His throne,  
Riches in glory all His own;  
More of His kingdom's sure increase;  
More of His coming, Prince of Peace.

*This way to more grace*

Jesus Christ is God's grace incarnate. The more of Him we know, the more grace will be ours. It's just that simple. It will do us little good to beseech the Father for grace to help in all our times of need if we are not growing in Jesus at the same time. While He will always sustain and care for us, He does not entrust the new vintage of His abounding grace to the old skins of our sinful, selfish lives. He prefers His abounding grace to enrich the world, not to be wasted and spilled by unreliable vessels.

But let us be increasingly transformed into the new wineskin of Jesus, and the new wine of grace will be ours to enjoy and share abundantly.

Grace will reign in us unto righteousness as Jesus increases in us. We must "learn Jesus", as Paul puts it (Eph. 4.17-24), for in learning Him, we become more like Him, with more of His grace to share with the people around us. Grace abounds to us and through us in proportion to the effort and progress we make in learning and knowing Jesus Christ.

Eliza Edmunds Hewitt understood this, and in what is my favorite of all hymns, she gives us words to guide us, and to encourage ourselves and one another, for knowing God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent (Jn.

17.3). When our heart's constant cry is "More, more about Jesus!" then our life's issue will be grace upon grace, showing Jesus, proclaiming His Kingdom, and advancing His rule of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit on earth as it is in heaven.

*To learn Jesus*

What does learning Jesus entail? First, we must nurture the desire and commitment to learn more about Jesus. Knowing Jesus must become the driving force of our soul. We must be renewed in this every day, until delighting in the Lord and setting Him always before us is the defining motif and orientation of our lives. We cannot be lackadaisical about this; and we cannot segment learning Jesus to our weekly gatherings for worship. We must daily seek the Lord, daily pledge our love for Him anew, daily let our heart's cry be "More, more about Jesus!"

We seek the knowledge of Jesus in His Word, where the Holy Spirit guides us, line upon line, precept upon precept, to discern the will of our Lord, and to embrace that will as our own. Jesus is the theme of all Scripture (Jn. 5.39), every line, every faithful saying, every story, every book, every doctrine, and every text. He is like the autostereoscopic image hidden in a Magic Eye™ painting, which only presents itself to those who look long enough, deeply enough, and with conviction and faith. As we daily read and study the Bible, let it be our prayer that we will not let go of our meditations until the Spirit blesses us with some deeper knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Learning Jesus is also seeing Him as He is today, exalted in glory, ruling over the nations and cosmos, upholding all things by the Word of His power, putting His enemies under His feet, and preparing an eternal place of glory and bliss for all who believe in Him. With the apostle Paul, we must learn Jesus by setting our minds on the things that are above, where Christ is seated in the heavenly places (Col. 3.1-3), using the eye of the heart to flesh out a growing vision of the landscape of unseen things. Scripture offers us many glimpses of and insights to this glorious realm, and we must work hard to assemble them all into an increasingly clear and compelling vision of our exalted Savior and King.

Learning Jesus means seeking Him in His Word, meditating in His presence, communing with Him by His Spirit, and hearing His voice in every line of Scripture. Do this, and you will surely grow in Jesus, and increase in His grace.

*Proof of learning*

How can we know when we are truly learning the Lord Jesus? We must not mistake true learning with mere head knowledge. Nor does true learning consist in being excited or pleased by something we've read or heard. Such insights and affections are fleeting and unreliable indicators that we are learning Jesus.

We are learning Jesus when we are becoming more like Him (2 Cor. 3.12-18), so that the grace Jesus *is* becomes the grace that flows through us to others. "More of His saving fullness see": This is where the grace begins to flow more abundantly to us, as we seek Jesus in His Word and glory. "More of His grace to others show": This is the proof that the wonderful, marvelous, amazing grace of Jesus is transforming us into His image, as the love He bears for us issues in love for all the people to whom God sends us each day.

"More, more about Jesus!" I can think of no better refrain to sing throughout the day, no greater desire to fix our hearts on, no more expansive vision to thrill our minds, no more powerful prayer to help us grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, and no surer way to have the grace to help in all our times of need, for being, showing, and proclaiming Jesus to our world.

*For reflection*

1. What does it mean to *know* Jesus? How do we know when we know Him?

*Helping Yourself to Grace*

2. What can you do to improve your efforts to learn Jesus?
3. How could singing this hymn throughout the day help you to increase in Jesus and His grace?

*Next Steps – Transformation: Set aside time to sing the four stanzas of this great hymn today. As you do, think of how the grace of God has found and reached you, and give Him abundant thanks and praise.*

*Helping Yourself to Grace*

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Why is singing a good way to help us increase in the grace we need?
2. Have you sung the hymns discussed in this series as directed in the *Next Steps* sections? If not, go back and do so, and spend time at the end of the day reflecting on how these hymns help you know more of the grace of the Lord?
3. How can you improve in your efforts to know Jesus? Why should we always be trying to improve?
4. Which of these hymns has been most helpful for you? In what ways?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned about grace from this series? How are you putting that lesson to work? Share your experience of this study by going to our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), and using the Share Your Story button. Let us rejoice with you over what God is doing in your life.

*For prayer:*



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Thank you.