

**GRACE  
WALK**  

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**DEVOTIONAL**

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**Steve McVey**



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## THE GRACE WALK DEVOTIONAL

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## The Way of Grace

An everyday lifestyle that is consistent with our faith isn't something that naturally fits contemporary culture. In a pluralistic society like ours, where many people are developing an increasing distaste for anything that even hints at religion, how is a believer to live so the people in our sphere of influence are impacted by divine love...and aren't turned off by what they perceive as nothing more than another religious person's perspective?

The answer is grace. Walking in grace is very different from living religiously. When we attempt to live a religious lifestyle we focus on doing the right things so we can please God. We focus on how we are acting in our everyday circumstances. Plain and simple, religion focuses on behavior.

The way of grace is very different. It's not that our actions don't matter when we walk in grace. They do—but the difference is that the grace walk isn't centered on doing the right things. Instead, it finds its motivation in the love we have for our God and for the people around us. Instead of revolving around a religious performance, the grace walk is about personal relationships—our relationship to God and to others.

Jesus once talked about how we are to be the salt of the earth. A life lived in grace causes those we meet to become thirsty for the Water of Life, Christ Himself. The amazing thing about the grace walk is that, when we understand what it means, we discover that it is an effortless lifestyle. We stop struggling to do the right things so we can make our spiritual mark on the world. We simply relax, be our authentic selves, and allow the love of God to flow through us in a natural and unforced way. As we do that, people are attracted to the One they see in us.

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of the grace walk is that we stop

living with the constant self-introspection that is created when our lifestyle is motivated by religious duty instead of love. Most people know that heavy, internal sense that they haven't done enough to please God. Religious introspection is characterized by a constant awareness of where we think we have failed. Grace takes that away by causing us to realize that God doesn't set some standard we're expected to meet. He simply wants us to relax and let Him be who He is in and through us.

Jesus calls us to a lifestyle of calm confidence in Him, not one of frantic fear that we need to do more so that we can be more. He described the grace walk in Matthew 11:28-30. Here's how *The Message* paraphrases it:

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

Jesus' words perfectly describe the grace walk. *The Grace Walk Devotional* was written to help you experience what it means to live the lifestyle He described. If you've tried to live in a way that honors God only to consistently be more aware of your shortcomings than your progress, this book is going to help you.

If your spiritual life seems to have been driven by self-discipline and determination to do the right thing, you're going to love it when you discover what it means to live in a way that honors Him simply by being yourself. Your Father created you and lives in you. As your mind is renewed through these devotional thoughts, you will learn how the unforced rhythms of grace produce an internal rest while at the same time making an external impact on people to a degree you haven't known until now.

*The Grace Walk Devotional* is intended to encourage you by showing you how to live the life you were created to enjoy without a struggle. You'll gain the most benefit if you read one chapter each day. Read each chapter prayerfully. Then, as you go through your day, ask the Holy Spirit to work into your life what you've understood as you read the devotion. Watch

the way He puts into practice the things He is teaching you through this book. The best part is that it will happen naturally, without a struggle on your part.

The grace walk is the life your Father intends for you to know. Go forward through the chapters of this book with anticipation. You will encounter the One who loves you more than any other as you read these chapters. Then, having encountered Him, you will experience His divine love flowing through you and affecting everybody around you.





## A Biblical Case for Optimism

*The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,  
That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*

—PROVERBS 4:18

What do you see when you look down the road of life? The foundation for optimism is Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is the conduit through which He is able to pour out into your life all the good He has planned for you to be, to have, and to do. It all boils down to one simple question: Do you believe that God wants you to experience and enjoy His blessings? Jesus once said, “It shall be done to you according to your faith” (Matthew 9:29). It is important for you to believe in God’s goodness and know that you are a recipient of that goodness.

As you look down the path that lies ahead for you, do you anticipate good things from God? Do you expect things to become better or worse? Make no mistake about it—what we believe about God’s working in our lives in this area has an inestimable effect on how we move forward and what we will experience and enjoy in the coming days.

Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, although the journey from Egypt to Canaan should have taken only 11 days. Why did it take them so long to enter into the Promised Land? The Bible says, “They were not able to enter because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19). With paradise only 11 days away, they lived in self-imposed misery for 40 years, all because they refused to believe God.

How long have you wandered in circles? Maybe, like Israel, you've been in the wilderness for many years. God says through Isaiah that it's time for you to accept and appropriate *good* news. Get ready because good news has arrived. Your Father is bringing you out of the wilderness.

What do you see when you look down the path that lies ahead? Will you believe what God says about it? He says, "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day." The good news is that you *are* righteous! Jesus Christ has made you righteous.

Romans 5:17 tells us, "If by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." Righteousness is not something earned by good behavior. The Bible calls it "the gift of righteousness" in this verse. The verse assures you that if you will receive this reality you will *reign* in life! Does that sound like a biblical reason for optimism?

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus took your sin upon Himself so that you can now enjoy His righteousness as your own. The fact that you are righteous gives you reason to know that your path is like the dawn that will only become brighter and brighter!

Jesus Christ in you is the gateway to an eternally bright future. There is no reason to be anything but positive! Consider what the Bible says: "Be strong and take courage, all you who put your hope in the LORD! ...The LORD delights in those...who put their hope in His unfailing love...Surely you have a future ahead of you; your hope will not be disappointed... 'I know the plans that I have for you,' saith the LORD, 'they are plans for good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope' ... There is hope for your future."\*

Will you believe what Scripture says and trust the indwelling Christ to bring it to pass in your circumstances? You have the enabling grace of Jesus Christ within you to live a supernatural life. Will you accept and appropriate the good news? Will you lay hold of the hope of fulfilling the God-given dreams of your heart?

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\* Respectively: Psalm 31:24 NLT; Psalm 147:11 NIV; Proverbs 23:18 NLT; Jeremiah 29:11 KJV; Jeremiah 31:17.

The apostle Paul did. He wrote triumphantly, “Now glory be to God! By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope!” (Ephesians 3:20 NLT).

Regardless of how your circumstances may look right now, don't give up on God! You will certainly experience some trying days, but He is with you in them. So don't lose hope. Look ahead with a hope energized by grace. “Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for God can be trusted to keep His promise” (Hebrews 10:23 NLT). He certainly can be trusted, so never lose hope.



## Having Eyes to See

*Having eyes, do you not see?*

—MARK 8:18

In his novel *Until We Have Faces*, C.S. Lewis told the story of two sisters—Orual and Psyche, who were princesses happily living in the Kingdom of Glome. Everything in their lives was well until the priest of the goddess Ungit came to the king and told him that Psyche must be sacrificed to the goddess. Psyche is drugged and chained to the sacred tree, where she is left to be eaten by the Shadow-brute.

A few days later, Orual returns to the tree to give her sister's bones a proper burial. When she arrives, Psyche's bones are nowhere to be found. She wanders over to the river, crying, when she looks up to see Psyche standing on the other side. Orual is shocked. She doesn't know what to think. How is it possible? She knows that her sister is dead. How can this be true?

Orual crosses the river, she and Psyche embrace, and her sister tells her the story of how the god of the west wind saved her from the Shadow-brute. She describes how he has brought her to his palace to be his bride. Orual wonders whether she has lost her mind, but to humor her she listens to her sister's story as if she believes it.

Psyche leads Orual a short distance away to sit in the heather. There she serves her a glass of wine—the choicest of wine in an exquisite goblet. She asks Orual if she likes the goblet and the wine. Orual goes along with

her and nods, but what she actually sees is her sister cupping her hands in a pool of water. Now she is sure Psyche has lost her mind.

Psyche goes on to tell Orual stories of gods and palaces and how she wears the most beautiful gowns. Orual sees no palace, only woods. No gowns, only her sister dressed in rags. After a while she can bear it no longer and demands that her sister show her the palace.

Orual is dumbfounded when her sister nods with a smile and says, “Of course I will. Let us go in.”

Orual asks, “Is it far?”

“Far to where?” Psyche responds.

“To the palace,” Orual shouts. “To your god’s house!”

Psyche starts to tremble. “Orual, what do you mean, is it far?”

“Mean?” Orual asks. “Where is the palace? How far have we to go to reach it?”

Psyche starts to weep. Through her tears and cries, she stares into Orual’s eyes and answers, “But this is it, Orual! Can’t you see it? You are standing on the stairs to the great gate!”

Two people were in the same situation. One saw a palace. The other saw only the woods. One tasted expensive wine while the other tasted only muddy water. One saw a beautiful gown. The other saw rags. One saw great pillars at a palace entryway. The other saw only trees.

Orual was right on the steps of the palace, but she couldn’t see it. Her perspective was skewed by a faulty paradigm. What Psyche saw was real, but Orual just didn’t have eyes to see it.

What do you see in life? Do you have eyes to see what is real? To see Reality is simply to see through the eyes of faith. It means looking beyond the temporary aspect of this world and seeing the eternal. It means living by faith. Faith doesn’t create anything—it simply sees what is already there. It looks beyond superficial senses and sees supernatural reality.

The apostle Paul described this kind of vision, saying, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

As you move through your day, remember that what you see is only temporary. While the world around us is certainly real, it is not eternal.

You are an eternal being, and as such you can choose to not become a victim of superficial circumstances. This world is not your home. The Eternal defines who you are. Open your eyes and see it! Your destiny is to live with the King of kings in His palace. Hold that reality as the truth that can anchor you in the daily routine of life.

To become bogged down by things that are superficial can quickly cause you to be blinded to the things that are supernatural. While there are many things in this world whose urgency almost seems to capture your focus, it is possible to set your mind instead on the things that define you. Those are the love of God for you and your daily grace walk in the power of His Spirit. Choose to live intentionally within those realities, and don't let the flow of day-to-day frustrations cause you to become distracted from what really matters.

Choose to look beyond what can be perceived with natural senses and see the world that is really your home. As you perceive that world, everything in this life will be put into proper perspective.





## A Busy Mind

*You will keep in perfect peace  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you.*

—ISAIAH 26:3 NIV

A too-busy mind can be a distraction from our daily grace walk. Some people can't even sleep well at night because of all the thoughts running through their heads. They're thinking about all that happened during the day; thinking about their plans for tomorrow; thinking about children, finances, past mistakes, future plans. Some even have imaginary conversations with people, picturing what they'll say if this happens or if that happens. Sometimes they even rehearse conversations of the day, thinking about what they *should* have said. Thinking, thinking, thinking!

Do you sometimes find yourself in a similar situation? It's not uncommon. Jesus even told His disciples on more than one occasion, "Take no thought." His instructions literally meant, "Don't take on the least bit of anxiety." Nothing drives away our sense of peace more than overthinking things. An overactive mind can keep you awake at night, leaving you tired during the day. It can prevent you from being able to stay focused on things that need your attention. It can cause you to start and then stop one project after another before you have completed them. It can cause you to wonder about your relationships with people, the security of your circumstances, the stability of your future...and it can certainly negatively affect how you perceive your relationship to God. The reason Jesus

cautioned His disciples about anxiety is because He knows the extent to which a busy mind can weaken us in our grace walk.

It doesn't have to be that way. You aren't helpless over the thoughts that may bombard your mind. You might not be able to control what thought appears in your consciousness, but you can decide what you're going to do with it. The Bible tells us to bring every thought under the control of Christ. Paul wrote, "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). You don't have to be swept along by involuntary thoughts that flood your mind—instead, you can choose what to do with them as they come.

A busy mind can be the result of divided loyalties. In contrast, the more you understand how much God loves you and the more you learn to find contentment in that, the easier it will become to properly handle the thoughts that flood your mind. It is important to nurture yourself with the constant affirmation and realization of your Father's love and care in every area of life. Remember, anything that's important to you is important to Him.

Paul closed his letter to the Philippian church by instructing them about controlling their minds. He wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things" (Philippians 4:8). You can decide what you think about. You can direct your mind in such a way that peace will be your companion.

You can trust your way through your day or try to think your way through your day, but you'll soon learn that the first approach is far less stressful. Relentless reasoning about your circumstances is a way of trying to figure out how to control your own life independently. But we humans weren't created to live independently. Your Father's intent is that you learn to live in dependence on Him.

The mind must be brought in subjection to Him at each moment. It's not something you decide to do one time and then it is never a problem again. It is important to live each moment in surrender to Him. This isn't something that you have to consciously do. It can be the default you set for yourself each day.

That doesn't mean a barrage of thoughts won't ever rush in on you, disturbing your peace. While it may not be possible for you to silence thoughts that sometimes flood your mind, you can consciously submit the thoughts to your Father. As you grow in His grace and develop the habit of submitting a hyperactive mind to Him, He will bring growth to you. You will find rest while you learn more and more about continuously giving the details of life to Him.

There will always be outside influences that try to invade your thoughts and shift your focus away from Christ. When your mind runs wild, simply submit it all to Him. It's a choice you make. Some things in life you just aren't going to be able to think your way through—so you might as well save yourself the stress by simply *trusting* your way through them. Sure, we want answers now, but answers don't always come when we want. Learning that can bring tremendous peace to your life.

In Isaiah 26:3, the Bible says, "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!" (NLT). The key to managing a barrage of thoughts is to set your mind on God. It is impossible to gaze into His loving face and be obsessed with the threats of your troubles at the same time. One glimpse into the face of the One who loves you more than you've ever been loved will reassure you that He superintends the details of your life.

The matter that is bringing you stress will most assuredly be resolved by your Father. Until that time comes, rest in His goodness and grace. Direct your mind to Him and to His goodness and love toward you. As you develop the habit of simple faith in His grace, you will experience peace. It is a peace that can come only when we keep our minds on Him.