

Lavish Grace

An 7-Week Study of God's Lavish Grace

Experience a fresh awareness of the overflowing, ever-present lavish grace of God

Week: Nine

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Title of Lesson: The Glory of Grace

Throughout this study we have been examining how God's lavish grace intersected and changed the life of Paul. In this lesson Kathy challenges us to discover that "God graciously uses our trials as a testimony to others."

I clearly remember telling God I didn't want to do it. I couldn't and I wouldn't do it. It was way too hard and there would be people who would judge me and misunderstand me. And I wasn't going to do it.

Then He reminded me of something. A few years earlier when I experienced my second tubal pregnancy and faced the loss of my natural fertility I had prayed a powerful prayer. I asked God that if I had to endure that dark and painful time that He would use it to bring Himself glory and further His kingdom. I expected I to have the opportunity to share my faith with a nurse or physician. But God had something else in mind. Something more public and a much wider audience. He had me start a blog and begin work on a book to encourage women facing infertility. And I am so glad I finally said, "ok," to His call.

To this day I am humbled by the e-mails and comments I get from women I do not know, but are struggling to find God and cling to Him in the midst of the pain of infertility.

You see God, He never wastes a thing.

Your darkest dark, your brightest bright, your lowest low, your mundane, none of it is wasted. Ever.

That is the glory of God's grace. His grace doesn't only give us strength to make it through the trials and mundane of life, but His grace gives meaning and purpose to it all.

That means that no day of washing laundry, cleaning dishes, changing diapers, weeping, job stress, strained relationships, or rejoicing is ever wasted.

Paul discovered this truth as he continued to spread the gospel in his darkest trials.

Read Romans 8:28

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What did Paul believe about all circumstances of life?

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11a

What did Solomon the wisest man to live say that God does with all things?

You may be asking how can God make this (trial, relationship, struggle, etc.) beautiful? We may never fully understand the purpose of the trials in our lives or even how God can receive glory in them, but we can be sure He will not waste those times.

How do we allow His glory to be seen?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:6-9

What is the treasure that we have in jars of clay?

Our treasure is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which we find in Jesus.

Why jars of clay?

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Have you ever noticed that beautiful things sparkle even more stunningly against broken things? We are imperfect people and God's glorious treasure shines ever brighter in our lives when we are honest about our struggles and hardships. Then God gets the glory and not ourselves.

How is it that we are afflicted, but not crushed, perplexed, but not despairing, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed?

This sounds like a pipe dream. I mean reality is that there are days I feel crushed, I despair, I feel forsaken, and that my life is destroyed. So how do we experience the affliction, the perplexing, the persecution, and being struck down without the negative consequences?

The simple answer is we trust God. We must stand and face the fire of affliction like three young men did. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They stood before a literal fire, one they would be thrown into unless they denied God and worshiped an idol.

Read their response to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:16-18

In the midst of trials these brave men chose to trust God regardless if He saved them from the fire, in the fire, or on the other side of the fire.

In what ways when you are facing trials do you need to say "My God is able, but even if He doesn't I am not going to bow down to (stake my happiness on, cling to my dreams, get angry at God if He doesn't) anything or anyone else?"

Write a prayer asking God to help you face trials as Paul and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did.

Your testimony like Paul's and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's may be what helps others walk through their trials in the grace and power of God. It may be what challenges fellow believers to trust God in their difficulties. It may even be the reason someone wants to understand more about the God who can help someone face dark times with joy and peace.

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WHAT THIS MOMMA LEARNED this week about GRACE: _____

WHAT THIS MOMMA WANTS TO WORK ON (OR THROUGH) NOW: _____

TIME TO PRAY ABOUT IT: *Father God, help us to be women who trust You in our dark times. It is amazing that Your grace not only empowers us to handle difficult times, but also gives purpose to the darkness. Help us stand with Paul and others who are walking through dark times that our testimony may bring You glory and point others to Jesus. Amen.*

Angela Mackey is a stumbling child of God who longs to make much of her Savior. She is a wife and mother to three children. Angela also is a writer, speaker, and seminary graduate. She encourages her audiences to rethink their thinking in light of God's Word so they may live transformed lives. You can find Angela at her blog [Rethinking My Thinking](#), on [Facebook](#), or on [Twitter](#).

