

Various
excerpts
of
Shades of Grace
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His Gentleness

“Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants.”

Deuteronomy 32:2

God penned the story of humanity honestly. Men and women who loved Him and desired to follow Him with utter abandonment – fell, and sometimes fell hard. Aaron’s creation of the golden calf, David’s affair with Bathsheba, the sexual immorality of the believers in Corinth - the Bible gives an honest account of mankind transgressions. The rules of cause and effect God created at the beginning of the world gave consequence for these actions. Yet, God’s love and compassion resonates amid the pages of humanity’s indiscretions.

Elijah, a man of great faith, struggled with fear in 1 Kings 19. A chapter earlier, he and God had a show down with the prophets of Baal and won - an incredible story of God's power. The Queen, however, was an avid Baal worshiper. She was outraged and sent a message to Elijah threatening his life. Elijah was afraid and fled. Depressed and exhausted, he collapsed under a broom tree and fell asleep.

Verses 5 – 8

'...But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and

forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.'

A man of great faith had given in to fear. Rather than entrusting his life to God, he ran. What was God's reaction? He nurtured and provided for Elijah. He did not address Elijah's fear right away. God knew Elijah's physical man was exhausted and his body needed rest and nourishment. Twice, He let him sleep and twice, He gave him food.

Verses 9 - 12

'There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

Alas, it was time to discuss Elijah's fear. God asked him "What are you doing here, Elijah?" It's as though God is asking Elijah 'My child, why are you running?' Elijah replies by revealing his fear of the death threat that was announced against him.

Verses 11 - 13

"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper."

In this passage, God gave three demonstrations of His Power. Why?

Elijah certainly understood that God is powerful when he asserted his faith and took on the

prophets of Baal, as well as when he was given special strength to run ahead of Ahab's chariot (1 Kings 18:22-46). Elijah fear was not a question of whether or not God *could* save him, but whether or not God *would* save him. In essence, Elijah was asking if God loved him enough to take care of him.

God's answer?

He revealed *Himself* to Elijah. Though He is indeed the All Powerful God, The *Person of God* was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. The *Person of God* was in the sound of a whisper, as He is Gentleness.

Knowing Him in power is not enough. Elijah needed to experience the *Person*. Understanding the Person, the Gentle God who loves with an everlasting love quiets our fears and reassures us of His care.



Our Hearts

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth
in order to strengthen those whose hearts
are fully committed to him...”

2 Chronicles 16:9

As a treasure hunter seeks precious gems, Your Dad
searches the whole world for His treasure – you.

You are His diamond.

Though there may be roughness in your
character, it does not change His Mind regarding
your value. Your heart is committed to Him, and
there is nothing that brings Him more joy than a
heart that loves Him.

Once He has found His treasure, He begins to bring out the beauty within. It entails some cutting away and some cleaning, but His excitement builds as He reflects upon just how much you will shine.

Choose to shine. Choose the high road, the narrow path. Choose to allow Him to change you on the inside. Choose to give Him all the deep places within yourself that need His Touch.

Choose His Love.

Psalm 27:8

‘My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “Lord, I am coming.”’



“love the Lord your God with all your heart,
all your soul, and all your mind.”

Matthew 22:37

Our Relationships

“...Love each other as brothers and sisters...”

1 Peter 3:8

My son is four years old, and my daughter is one. Their relationship is a blend of irritation and affection. They frustrate and annoy each other; they also love one another – deeply. My daughter randomly bear hugs her brother, and my son gently nurtures and cares for his sister. He tells me she is his friend and he loves her.

There is something strikingly beautiful about their acceptance of one another. It does not matter how many times they injure or annoy each other – their forgiveness of one another has no limit. They hold no grudges; neither is there bitterness or

resentment of each other. They seem to have an innate understanding that since they are both young and immature, they occasionally act in ways which are not in line with their love.

Ephesians 4:32

“...forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”

There are two aspects of forgiveness. The first is forgiving the person for a *wrongdoing*. The second is forgiving the person for his *imperfection*. Forgiving an imperfection is how we forgive seventy times seven; for in his imperfection lies the tendency to repeat the offense. This aspect of forgiveness of requires an additional element – acceptance.

Romans 15:7

“...accept each other just as Christ has accepted you...”

The Potter does not judge the clay for it's unfinished condition. Likewise, our Dad does not condemn us for the areas yet to be perfected. In His Eyes, we are accepted and loved in this moment of

our immaturity. He sees our heart's intention is to be like Him; therefore, our failures and immaturity are covered by His Loving Grace. It is through His Eyes of Love and Acceptance we must view one another.

Ephesians 4:2

“always be humble and gentle. *Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love*” (italics mine)

I believe the disciples must have learned this concept as they began to collaborate together in ministry. They were a hodgepodge group of men with varying backgrounds and personalities. James and John were “Sons of Thunder” for their fiery tempers and religious zeal. Matthew's prior profession as a tax collector made him an outcast of the Jewish community and thereby, he spent his time with the “scum” of society (Luke 5:29-32). In contrast, Nathanael was “...a man of complete integrity” (John 1:47).

“So we have stopped evaluating others
from a human point of view.”

2 Corinthians 5:16

Our world is a kaleidoscope – a vast array of colors, shapes and sizes. As we swirl through life, we collide and conflicts immerge. However, the colors of conflict have great potential to produce remarkable beauty. We need only the Perspective of the One who holds the kaleidoscope.

Our response to conflict will either bring guilt, shame and condemnation, or forgiveness, grace, truth and love. Weighing the various options for how to best handle a conflict, we must seek His Perspective. As we understand His View of the circumstance, our eyes begin to see the hurt present in the hearts of those involved. Our Dad also provides insight regarding how the hurt influenced their choices in the situation.

Upon seeing His View, our Dad asks us a question:

*What is love? Which one of the options for
how to handle this conflict displays My Love?*