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# The Writer's Inkhorn

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Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

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## *Grace That Covers All My Sin*

Various Scriptures Included

### THE TEST

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I left work early so I could have some uninterrupted study time right before the final in my seminary Youth Issues class. When I got to class, everybody was doing their last minute studying. The teacher came in and said he would review with us for just a little bit before the test. We went through the review, most of it right on the study guide, but there were some things he was reviewing that I had never heard of. When questioned about it, he said that they were in the book and we were responsible for everything in the book. We couldn't really argue with that.

Finally it was time to take the test.

"Leave them face down on the desk until everyone has one and I'll tell you to start," our professor instructed.

When we turned them over, every answer on the test was filled in! The bottom of the last page said the following:

"This is the end of the Final Exam. All the answers on your test are correct. You will receive an 'A' on the final



exam. The reason you passed the test is because the creator of the test took it for you. All the work you did in preparation for this test did not help you get the A. You have just experienced...grAce."

He then went around the room and asked each student individually, "What is your grade? Do you deserve the grade you are receiving? How much did all of your studying for this exam help you achieve your final grade?"

Now I am not a crier by any stretch of the imagination, but I had to fight back tears when answering those questions and thinking about how the Creator has passed the test for me.

Discussion afterward went like this: "I have tried to teach you all semester that you are a recipient of grace. I've tried to communicate to you that you need to demonstrate this gift as you work with young people. Don't hammer them; they are not the enemy. Help them, for they will carry on your ministry if it is full of GRACE!"

In talking about how some of us had probably studied hours and some just a few minutes but had all received the same grade, he pointed to a story Jesus told in Matthew 20. The owner of a vineyard hired people to work in his field and agreed to pay them a certain amount. Several different times during the day, he hired more workers. When it was time to pay them, they all received the same amount. When the

ones who had been hired first thing in the morning began complaining, the boss said, "Should you be angry because I am kind?" (Matthew 20:15).

The teacher said he had never done this kind of final before and probably would never do it again, but because of the content of many of our class discussions, he felt like we needed to *experience* grace. Have you thanked your Creator today because of the grace you have experienced?

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

The above verses are probably not new to you, but how many times do we actually take the depth of those words into account? The story I shared at the opening helps to bring the point of **grace** to light in a different and compelling way, don't you think?

The death of Christ on the cross was an *extreme* act of **grace** from God the Father on our behalf. It was, as the Apostle Paul points out, the **gift** of God. And to be clear about what he is saying, he adds, "*not of works, lest any man should boast.*" We could not have done anything or done enough to have earned this kind of **grace**. Consider these verses:

Ephesians 2:4-5

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by **grace** ye are saved).*

Romans 3:23-24

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His*

*grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Romans 5:8

*But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Titus 2:11-14

*For the **grace** of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

2 Timothy 1:9

*Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and **grace**, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

John 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 5:15

*But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the **grace** of God, and the **gift by grace**, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

Hebrews 4:16

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

With what are you struggling, that you have not allowed God's grace to cover? Surely these verses have spoken to you and shown you that God's grace is *indeed* sufficient. The shed blood of Jesus is enough to cover our sins **and** bring us salvation, to bring us peace of mind **and** to heal our sicknesses and diseases. Our wholeness is complete in Him. Recall the words of the prophet in the verse below:

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*

We too often struggle needlessly because we fail to take things to God in prayer. We may even read and have the assurances that are in His word, and still allow Satan to make us forget in the heat of the moment. That is Satan's job so don't blame him for what he does so well.

The better thing, however, is to know *our* job, namely, to know the power that is within us, and to know to whom we belong. If we can keep this in perspective, and live accordingly, all will be well.

### **WHAT HAVE I DONE IN THE TEN YEARS SINCE THE ACCIDENT OF 02.22.10?**

Grace can and does show up in our lives in so many different ways. Less than one week ago, I was reflecting upon the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of a terrible car accident that I endured. I looked back at something I had read in John Maxwell's *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect*, where he recounted what he had done in the ten years since his heart attack. So when the anniversary date of my accident arrived, I was challenged to see for myself

what I have done in the ten years since God spared *my* life.

Just for context, here are two of the photos of the car after the fact, taken on the lot where the car had been towed. In the second photo, notice how the front seats had been bent into a V-shape. I was covered by the **grace** of God. Both of the airbags deployed but neither of them hit me. That little space in the center is where God literally covered me.



There were a few cuts and bruises, and after seven weeks, the fracture on my seventh vertebra had healed without surgery. However, therapy continued for a time on my upper back to heal the damage to my trapezius muscles. I went back to work essentially full-time, teaching and doing my administrative duties in the education department.

**But what else have I done in the ten years since?** I wanted to know how I have used the time, how have I been of benefit to others. I often like to share with people that our lives are never just about us, and that we owe rent for the space we are taking up and the resources we are using up on this planet, in addition to fulfilling our God-given mandate – to occupy until He comes.

So, I need to know for myself that I am being faithful to what I have been called to do. I simply share some of what I found, with you in this issue, to encourage you, inspire you, or otherwise “*provoke you to love and to good works*” (Hebrews 10:24). This is what I found:

- Started this teaching letter, *The Writer’s Inkhorn*, the first of which was issued just four months after the accident
- Continue to write and distribute *The Writer’s Inkhorn*; a total of 39 issues (including this one) have been distributed; it became a regular bi-monthly publication in January 2015
- Completed my Ph.D. in mathematics education at Illinois State University and graduated with high honors (March 2011)
- Was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor (2013) and became the first tenured African American professor at Trinity Christian College
- Wrote eight **new** books and reissued my first book (initially released in 1996)
- Retired from a 41-year career as an educator and college professor (August 2015) and joined the John Maxwell Team one month later, as an act of obedience to continue to grow myself so that I may be of more benefit to others in their personal and professional growth
- Traveled in three more countries (Costa Rica, Malaysia, and Ireland) for professional work and personal growth (bringing the total to 42 countries in which

I have traveled for missions, professional work, and personal enrichment)

- Been part of teams conducting institutional reviews for the Illinois State Board of Education
- Done collaborative in-service presentations with other colleagues in Chicago and surrounding suburbs
- Conducted in-service teacher workshops independently
- Done numerous presentations at churches and conferences, schools and colleges (Memphis, Joliet, New Orleans, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Orlando, Chicago, Evanston, Grand Rapids, Canada, and more)
- Done commencement addresses at college, high school, and elementary levels
- Conducted several Youth Leadership Empowerment Conferences at local churches
- Lead numerous leadership and personal growth mastermind groups across the following content: *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*; *Put Your Dream to the Test*; *15 Invaluable Laws of Growth*; *Becoming a Person of Influence*; *Developing the Leader within You*; *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect*; and currently completing the most recent one, *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions*

I could find more, but I will stop here since this gives you and me a good sense that these ten years have not been time wasted. I **want** to work until my day is done. What about **you**?

The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all (Revelation 22:21). Amen.

Your Teacher and Sister,  
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