

J. B. SISAM

GRACE

what's so amazing about it?



CROSSTALK
SERIES

sneak
PEAK

How do I use this book?

Each reading in this book is to be read for the next thirty days. There are six daily readings for each week, there are no readings the seventh day.

To get the most from this devotional, it would be beneficial to set aside a specific time each day to read and work through each step. Each day's devotional is designed to be completed in no more than twenty minutes. I encourage you to not rush through each day. Allow it to sink deep into your heart. Each day is designed to build on the last, so I encourage you not to skip ahead and only read one reading per day. This will give you time to digest, think and pray about what you've read. Also, try and not play catch up. If you have to, that's okay

In this book, you will find the following:

Devotional:

Each day will start with a short reading. The goal of each reading is to help you think about the weeks topic. It should take no more than five minutes to read, depending on how fast or slow you read.

crossREFERENCE:

Following each day's reading you will find some passages of scripture. These are here to add context to the daily readings. I encourage you to read them through in your Bible

prayerPOINT:

Following the daily scripture reading, you will find a prayer written out. I encourage you to carefully pray this prayer. Feel free to even add to the prayer. I believe prayer is one of the best ways we can personalize our response.

journalSPOT

I've included two pages for you to jot down your thoughts, as the Lord speaks to you. Here you can write any questions or thoughts you may have. I would encourage you to utilize most of your time in this section, as I believe will produce the greatest amount of fruit.

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WEEK ONE

Ephesians 2:8

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"*

DAY 2: TUESDAY

LOST CHILD

The story of the Prodigal Son is one we've all grown up with. I remember sitting in Sunday School listening to the teacher act out the story on a flannel board. A lot of the time the fabric men would fold in half and fall off the board. However, the story would captivate me. It was my favorite one!

Yet, I always wondered what happened to the older brother. The younger returns home after devouring his father's wealth, sleeping with the prostitute, eating with the pigs and when he returned home, his father opened his arms. But the older brother, who'd never left home felt gyped. Did he ever go into the home and welcome his brother? How could the father extend grace to a son who'd squandered his livelihood away, when the older brother had not?

The younger lived a fruitless life. The older worked hard. The difference between the two men is simply this; one received his Father's grace, and the other shunned it.

What is grace? Can it be obtained or do we have to earn it?

Most people believe that grace has to be earned, that it is not a free gift. The bible is filled with countless stories of men and women falling from grace and finding it again. Yet, in today's society we find the church, more often than not, talking about a grace where you have to earn it/work for it.

Jesus was abundantly clear when he said to Nicodemus

in John 3, "...and whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." This is where grace begins—where God opens up His arms for a man to come running from the miry clay into His everlasting arms of love.

For the prodigal son to return home, after he totally screwed up, took tremendous amounts of faith. I can't imagine what was going through his mind, while sitting in a pigpen, wreaking of the stuff. For him to rehearse, "Father I've sinned against you and heaven..." had to have been hard. He didn't stop at saying he needed to change his life, he took it a step further and took a leap of faith and walked home.

Our heavenly father loves us so much that the moment we decide to come home, he runs to us, scoops us into his arms and welcomes us into his house. The father covered his son's filth with a robe. Likewise, when we take a leap of faith and come to God, he cleans our sin, takes it away and welcomes us back into the family.

We cannot earn grace; we cannot do anything to merit God's grace. He just gives it freely. That's why there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus—because he already paid the price that grace demands for us to have it free of charge. But, in order for us to receive it, we must take a leap of faith, reach out and take a hold of it.

Grace is simply this... "the free and unmerited favor of God." In other words, we don't deserve God's grace—we should die in our sin. That is why grace is such an amazing thing God gives to us. This is why Jesus is called the Great Shepherd. He rescues the little lambs who've gone astray. He goes after them with reckless abandon—he shows no restraint in searching for his lost.

crossREFERENCE:

Rom. 8:1-2

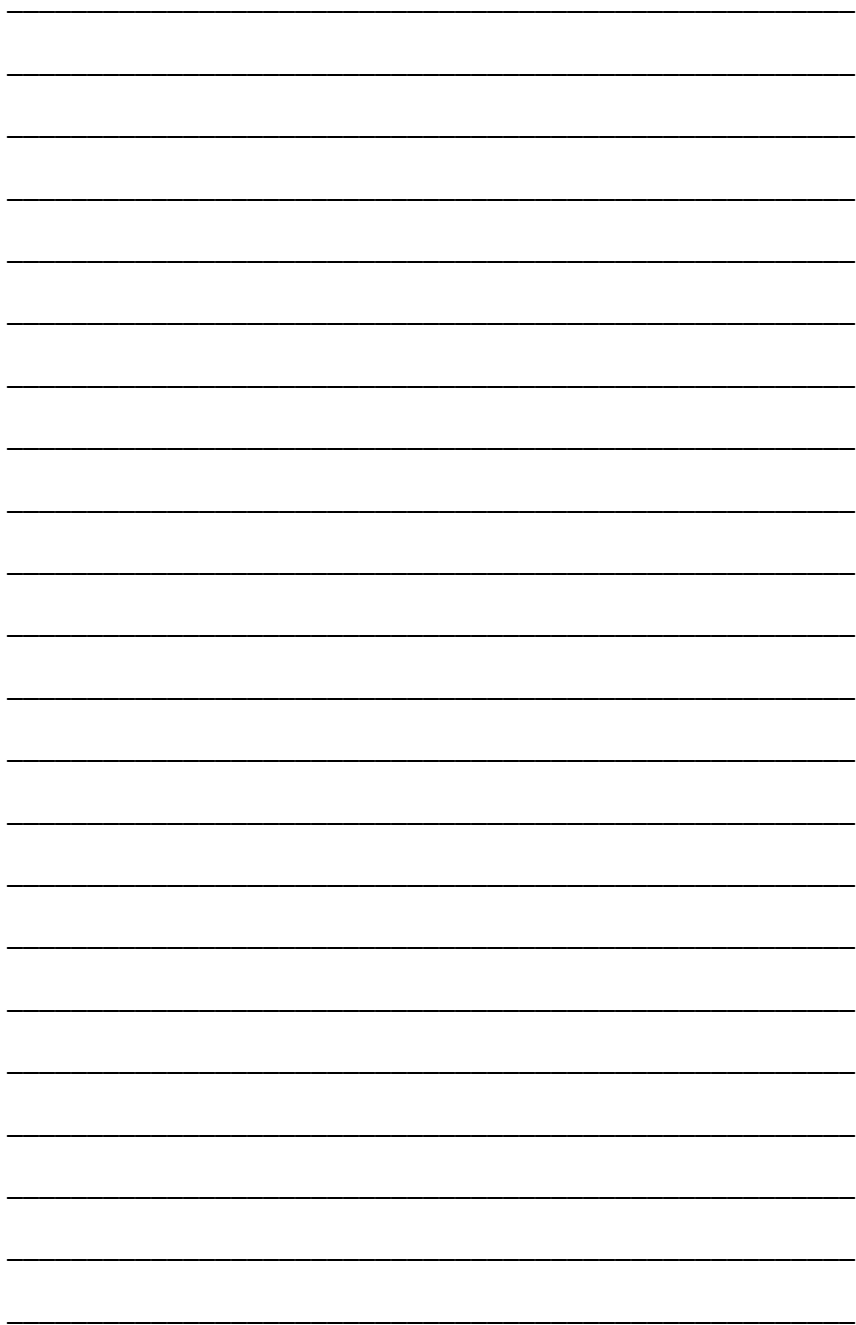
There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Luke 15:11-32

20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

prayerPOINT:

Father, I thank you for your Amazing Grace. I thank you for the gift you've given in setting me free and lifting me up. I pray I begin walking in light of the forgiveness you've poured out into my life. Amen



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WEEK FOUR

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

DAY 20: TUESDAY

PRAISE IS MORE THAN LIP SERVICE

We all understand and realize life has its ups and its downs. Life will throw our daily routine into the spin cycle. Everything is crazy, it's hard and it is sometimes difficult to find some sort of normalcy in our daily life. We know that He says, "...and my grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9). This is the reasoning we can offer up a sacrifice of praise.

Our praise should never be contingent on how we feel. The writer of Hebrews calls us priests of God. As priests it is our duty to help others through acts of service by sharing the grace God has poured out in our lives. If our praise was contingent on how we felt, we would never have times of worship. Our relationship with God is something that should be cherished and not something we do out of blind obligation.

Our hearts should be established in grace, which allows faith to well up and allow us to appreciate that grace. When life happens are we going to sit back on our own altars and watch life spin by, or will we come to the cross of Christ and offer up a sacrifice of praise?

There are times when we come to the Lord and it's easy

to praise; and there are times when praising is not so easy. It tends to be the last thing on our minds and the last thing we do. Yet, it is in these times we are called to offer up that sacrifice of praise. "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God..." (Hebrews 13:15).

A sacrifice is the giving up of something that is important. It's something that can only come from the heart. A sacrifice is not a sacrifice unless it costs something. There's an old song... "We bring a sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord..." yet, in-fact we're really not bringing a sacrifice. We may think we're bringing a sacrifice of praise, when we really are praising simply because we are desiring to praise. We say we're offering a sacrifice of praise, when really, we're not offering anything that costs us dearly to God.

Sacrifice is something that calls for death. In the Old Testament, people had to give up something of their own to sacrifice; it had to cost them dearly; it had to be expensive. As believers in Jesus, we are called to bring a sacrifice of praise. This sacrifice must be painful and hard. We are called to give up our comfort zones, our ego, our pride, our hurts, our pain, our desires. We are called to let these things die. A sacrifice of praise is painful, but it allows our hearts to come to a place where we allow the presence of God in so we can worship.

We may believe singing about a sacrificial praise is fun, but reality is, it will cost and it will cost dearly. This is a part of life. When my wife and I married, I had to realize every-day was a sacrifice for our marriage. We give up our own desires, thoughts and wants to please the other. I am no longer my own, I'm my wife's. Our relationship with Jesus is the

same. Life is not meant to be easy, it's meant to be sacrificial. We are no longer our own, we are God's.

"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol" (Psalm 24:3 – 4). Our lives must be clean, and sometimes we need cleaning out to be free to enter into the grace of His presence. If we want to experience the King of Glory coming into our lives, we must allow our lives to die so we can praise Him for who He is; the King of Glory!

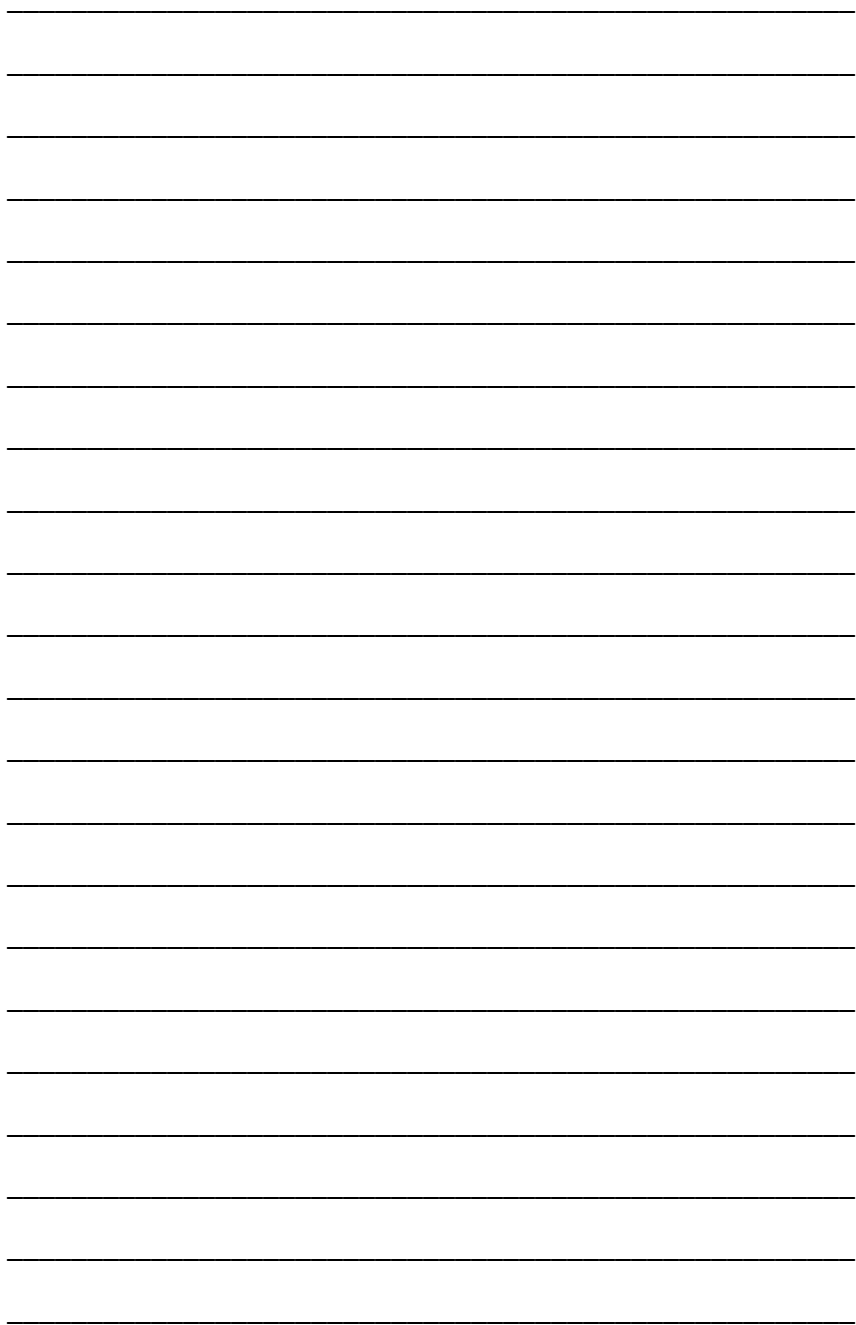
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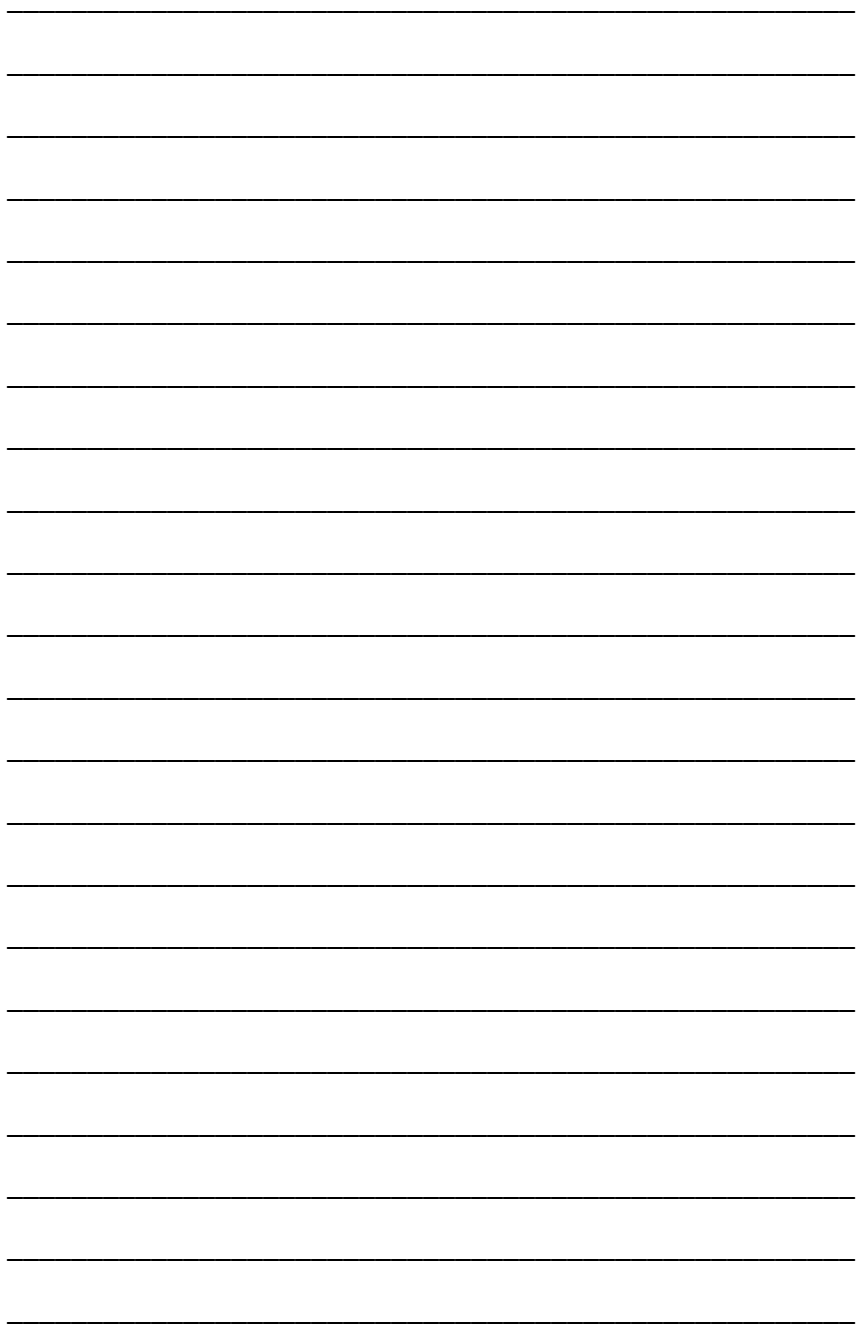
Hebrews 13

"15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Psalm 24

"3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart... 7 Lift up your heads O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in."





THIS IS A SAMPLE AND IS TO BE USED AS SUCH

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Cross Talk Series
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