

AMAZING GRACE INTERFAITH MINISTRY

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To: All Friends of Amazing Grace & News From The Heart Readers

THINGS THAT MATTER

The things that matter most in our lives are not fantastic or grand. They are the moments when we touch one another, when we are there in the most attentive or caring way. This simple and profound intimacy is the love that we all long for. These moments of touching and being touched become a foundation for a path with heart, and they take place in the most immediate and direct way. – Jack K.



LEAP OF FAITH

We humans are big on planning and control. We want to map out our next move, our next day, our next year! We don't like surprises – at least not the kind that put us at the mercy of someone or something else and force us to go places we desperately want to avoid. A health crisis, a job loss, the death of a loved one, can throw us onto an uncharted path and shake us to our course. Most of us say a prayer and hope for the best, those who've gone through those experiences can offer us some perspective. They reveal that is often the very thing they feared that wound up generating the greatest growth in their personal and professional lives, pushing them to look at things in a new way and leaving them feeling blessed and grateful. Over the course of our faith lives, and the lives of the holymen and women who serve as our role models, we see that very thing pay out again and again. The key, it seems, is to continually come back to God, to trust even when we have no logical reason to trust, to pray even when we think our prayers are falling on deaf ears, to reach out to those around us even when we want to retreat into our fears. Some of the best stories come out of "failure" and rejection. For instance, Dr Seuss's first book, *To Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was rejected 27 times before a publisher took a chance on it. There's also Steve Jobs, who dropped out of college and founded Apple only to be dumped by his own company, strike out on his own, and come back to take Apple to the top of the heap. Change is tough and you can always come up with 100 reasons not to do something to quit in the process, but reaching a goal that you bravely fought for and won is invigorating and worthy.

Tips For Reinventing Your Life

1. **Focus on the positive and count your blessings.** Even in the most trying circumstances, God's blessings still surround you.
2. **Consider what you do want, rather than what you don't want.** By focusing on your passions and talents, you increase feelings of fulfillment.
3. **Get inspired.** Pray, meditate, take a walk in nature.
4. **Connect with others for support.** As Jesus says, "With God all things are possible."



BORROWING FAITH

I first attempted to get sober the week I turned 16. I had been drinking consistently for five years, and as much as I didn't want to stop, I knew deeply that I had a problem. I was harming myself and everyone around me. My older brother had just recently passed away in a car accident. That was when my drinking really hit an all-time high. I lost all purpose and care for my life after that. I blamed myself for what happened to my brother and resented God for allowing it.

I first got sober in a treatment center program. At the time I didn't have nay faith that God would take care of me. After a couple of years of debates about this with multiple AA sponsors, the friends I got sober with and my counselors – along with a few relapses in between – I finally surrendered. I decided I couldn't go on like that anymore. I don't fully know how to explain it other than that a whole lot of God hit me one day.

I finally got sober for hopefully the last time on October 10, 2023. I just borrowed the faith of others that I would be taken care of and I just kept showing up every day to meetings until I was able to genuinely have faith in God myself. Since then, my life has exponentially gotten better. With time, a lot of prayer and meditation, a few inventories and a whole love of love, my heavy grief passed and I was able to change my perspective on my brother's death, as well as my life. I will hit two years sober in a few days and can't believe it. The Steps, my Higher Power and the loads of people who have helped me are who I have to thank. I'm now able to show others the love and kindness my brother always showed me. I like to think he would be proud of how far I have come. – *Campbell R.*

SMILE GOD LOVES YOU

Our fourth grader celebrated his birthday on crutches, so he couldn't carry the cupcakes into school without help. I asked our sixth grader, Noah, to help his brother carry them in. "I could," he said, "but I'd prefer not to." Spotting a teaching moment my husband asked Noah, "What would Jesus do?" Noah answered, "Jesus would heal him so he could carry his own cupcakes." – *Rachel N.*



POWER OF PRAYER

A child kneels at her bedside asking God to bless her family. A soldier prays to come home safely from war. A cancer survivor offers a prayer of thanksgiving. In churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, holy sites and homes throughout the world, prayer springs from the souls of people of every creed and culture. We pray for guidance, to offer praise or to ask for strength. common thread is the desire for a relationship with God in prayer. Long before Moses parted the Red Sea, before Budda described the path toward nirvana, before Christ died on the cross, and before Mohammed revealed the message of the Koran, there was prayer.

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." – Isaiah 56:7

PRAYER

is the fastest thing on earth...
it reaches God before you even say it.
That's powerful.

A SOURCE OF QUIET STRENGTH

At a family gathering, 6-year-old Ray announced: “I have something important to say.” By the time everyone quieted down Ray had forgotten what he wanted to say and ran out of the room in tears. A few weeks later, Ray was in church and noticed people bowing their heads in silence. He said to his Uncle, “Those people are talking to God in their heads.” When we are still, we can hear God. In addition to vocal prayer, there are two other forms: mediation and contemplation.

When asked how she was able to aid millions through her ministry to the poor and powerless, Mother Teresa of Calcutta answered, “My secret is simple: I pray.” Civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks said in her book *Quiet Strength* that “Every day before supper, my grandmother would read the Bible to me, and my grandfather would pray. We even had devotions before going to pick cotton. Prayer and the Bible became a part of my everyday thoughts and beliefs. I learned to put my trust in God and seek Him as my strength. The most effective way to nourish prayer life in children is for parents to show good examples.

Here are some ideas:

1. Say a blessing at mealtime: pray at bedtime
2. Read the Bible or stories that have a spiritual message with your children.
3. Encourage children to participate in worship.
4. Use time such as the death of a pet to help children turn to God in sorrow and loss, as well as in times of joy.

“Let the little children come to Me.” – Luke 18:16



WORRY & FEAR

If I ever find myself worrying or struggling with something, I remember that the Universe is eternally there for me, even if it may not seem that way. It is like the sun, which is always shining even though clouds may obscure it for a while. When fear or worries come, I choose to see them as temporary, passing clouds in the sky. I am safe, no matter what. I trust the Universe to take care of me, and I release all control of it, I am at peace with myself and with all of life.

PRAYERS OF THE HEART

“It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than without a heart.” – Gandhi

Hasidic Jews also believe God is know first with the heart. In a story, a rabbi was praying when an angel appeared and told him to visit a poor farmer whose prayers “had reached the highest heavens.” When asked how he prayed, the farmer answered, “I cannot pray. All I know are the first nine letters of the alphabet.” The rabbi, wondering if he had been sent to the wrong place, he asked the farmer what he did on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The farmer said, I went to the synagogue and saw how intently everyone was praying, and my heart broke. So, I recited the letters I know of the alphabet. I said, “Dear God, take these letters and form them into prayers for me that will rise up like the scent of honeysuckle. For that is the most beautiful scent I know.” And I said that with all my strength, over and over.” The rabbi understood why he had been sent to learn this prayer of the heart.





AMAZING GRACE INTERFAITH MINISTRY

Thanks to all volunteers from Amazing Grace, Olivet Presbyterian and Calvary Churches for setting up and distributing to our monthly Amazing Kids Connection for needy children. Blessings to all who donated clothing and made contributions. Without your constant support, we could not do this outreach. You are all God's angels on earth. We will be collecting school supplies and new backpacks over the summer for our September giveaway. See flyer. In June we had our "Tree of Life" service where all those on the tree are remembered that have gone before us and for special life occasions. It was very moving to remember all those people we've met over our last 30 years in Ministry! God is so good. Again, we could never do this alone!!! God bless all of you.



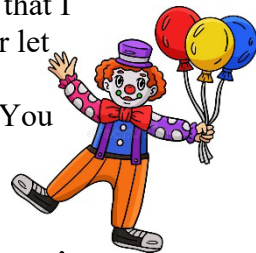
Prayers: for Fran & Dick, Rachel, Rob & Robbie, Mary Margaret & Willy, Susan L., Gale LaForge whose sister passed, Pam & Lauren, Rosalie, Gene & Linda, Alisha & Family, Alisha husband Chris needs surgery, Mike traveling, Magen & Ethan's so many baseball games this summer. Morgan & Adam traveling, Anwen's recital. Bob and all his workers. Lois and to Adonia on her teaching degree, Ian college graduation Masters and Anwen 5th grade graduation.

AN ESSAY ON GOD— Danny Age 8

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes these to put in place of the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things here on earth. God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, as some people, like preachers, pray other times besides bedtime. God doesn't have time listen to the radio or TV to account of this. God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere. Which keeps Him pretty busy. Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and doing miracles and trying to teach people about God who didn't learn. They finally got tired of His preaching to them and they crucified Him. God appreciated everything He had done and all His hard work on earth so God told Him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore. Now He helps His Father out by listening to prayers and seeing which things are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary only more important, of course. You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to hear you because they've got it worked out so one of them is on duty all of the time. And that's why I believe in God.

A CLOWN'S PRAYER

Lord, as I stumble through this life, help me to create more laughter than tears, dispense more happiness than gloom, spread more cheer than despair. Never let me become so indifferent that I will fail to see the wonder in the eyes of a child or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged. Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people, make them happy and forget at least for a moment all the unpleasant things in their lives. And, Lord, in my final moment, may I hear You whisper, "When you made My people smile you made Me smile." - *Author Unknown*



Wishing you all a beautiful Spring and Summer and Until we meet again may God hold you in the palm of His hand. - Many blessings Love Mary