

Gracie's Way

Isaiah 43:19 ...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.



Enough

Ever had days when you've just had "ENOUGH"?

Gracie Ankles, Today's Busy Teen, has...and today was one of them! Her Monday morning started off right because she couldn't drag herself out of bed! She got in the shower and the water turned ice cold. Her big brother, Matt, had struck again with his steamy bathing!!! Ugh!!!

Gracie was freezing! It didn't help that it was the coldest day of the year. And, she just couldn't let it go. She screamed at him as he sat there, clueless, eating his big bowl of cereal. She screamed even louder when she realized he was eating the last bowl and she had no time to fix herself anything else. The argument became a name calling contest that Mom came in and ended in ways neither of them liked. It included her losing her phone through that evening. Oh, joy!

The ride to school with Mom and her little brother was so quiet, but on the inside Gracie was arguing. They got to her school just after the bell rang. Oh great! All this and a tardy too!

In first period, her teacher's first order of business after calling the roll (which, of course, she missed) was to give out the tests they'd taken last week. It counted for a third of the grade for the semester. She had studied so surely she had a decent

grade. Nope, a "D"! "You've got to be kidding me?" She almost said it out loud.

And to top it off, today was when they got Progress Reports. She knew it would mean restriction because this "D" would certainly guarantee her another "D" on the Progress Report. Oh boy, was she having a "D" day!!!

Well, at least she would see her boyfriend at lunch—one bright spot in her dreary day! She finally made it to lunch, but he never showed. Just before lunch was over, his friend, Chad, came up and told her he was out sick. She felt terrible that he was sick and then she felt sick herself when she realized she probably wouldn't get to talk to him that night because she'd lost her phone, and with restriction maybe for quite a while.

She made a stop by the girl's restroom on the way back to class and ran face-to-face with the most popular "mean" girl in school, Rude Ryanna Rogers. Ry looked her up and down and asked, "Where'd you get that sweater? Steal it off your little brother?"

Gracie flew to the stall as the tears began to trickle down her face. Then it happened, MELTDOWN!!! After everyone left for class, she walked over to the mirror and sobbed into it. "No matter what I do, it's never enough!"

By Sharon Hawkins

Today's Busy Teen lives in a Wilderness full of pressures—dating pressure, peer pressure, schoolwork pressure, appearance pressure, family pressure and other relationship pressure, pressure, pressure...AGHHHH!!!! Sometimes she feels so empty, so inadequate, so weary. Why can't she be all things to all people all the time?

Truth is that job is already filled by Jesus, and, actually, He doesn't need her help at all! But, Boy, she sure needs His! You see, she can't do enough or be good enough to deserve Heaven or Christ's forgiveness for her sins, either. She needs a hero who can save her at every turn. There is only One who can—Jesus, the Way, the Truth and The Life (John 14:6) is her only hope in this chaos. His unconditional, everlasting love for her is strong enough to help her no matter what she needs or what she has to do. He longs for her just to ask Him for help, to be everything to her, to be the Lord and helper of her every minute.

2 Corinthians 12:9 says, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Thank God, His Grace is ENOUGH!!!!

Inside this issue:

Enough	1
A Robe of Righteousness	2
Facing the Giants	2,3
Daddy's Girl	3
Posing	3
The Interview: Kirbi and Donovan	4
Quiet Time	4
Letter to my Teenage Self	5
The Shepherd	5
Lessons on Life from a Doodle	5
About Us	6

Special points of interest:

- Watch for our Grace In The Wilderness Teen/College Age Girl Conference in October of each year.
- We're on Facebook. Become a fan of the Grace In The Wilderness Page. Look us up...



2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.



A Robe of Righteousness

By Christine Hall

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10

Throughout my life I have felt the pressure to be the best I could be. I was raised in church and accepted Christ at an early age, so I was aware of my responsibilities as a Christian as a young person.

But, I found myself defining who I was by what I had accomplished. I tried to be better than everyone else at each thing I did. This was a good thought, until my desires began to consume me. I spent more time on homework and getting an A on every assignment in school instead of reading my Bible and being compassionate toward others. I wasn't looking for instances in which God could use me because I was too worried about my own 'problems'.

Even though I had been taught and knew that being perfect was not even possible, I tried to do it every day. I had taken the teaching, that as Christians we are to look at Christ as our example, too far. I was now only focusing on myself, my accomplishments, and my needs.

I am still learning that God already knows that I am going to fail - everyday. He knows that there is no way that I can be perfect; He only asks that I stay focused on Him and His people. He wants my praise, not my 'perfectionist' attitude. He wants my worship, not my worrying. He wants my attention, not my asking.

As I read Isaiah 61:10, I am reminded that God has already given me all the equipment I need to do the job He has called me to do. He has given me a 'garment of salvation' which hides all my imperfections and mess-ups.

Even though I will fail every day, God has given me this garment to protect me from the elements of the world, just as the physical garments we wear on our bodies

do. No matter what Satan may try to throw at me, I am safe behind God's salvation. And, on top of that, God gives me a 'robe of righteousness.' This robe is a little more flashy than the under garment because God wants everyone around me to see this gift from Him. He wants me, and everyone else, to see that I am given the priceless gift of being close to Him on earth and in eternity.

This verse is changing my attitude on what I need to spend my time on and what I can be doing for others in Christ. I am beginning to see that I no longer need to feel the pressure of school, family, and society because I am doing everything for God and not for men (Colossians 3:23). I don't need to be bogged down by anything anybody else is doing. I just need to rejoice in God because He will take care of the rest. I challenge you to take this verse to heart. Allow God to use you as you simply praise Him for His priceless gifts of salvation and righteousness.



Facing the Giants...

By Brenda Horne

Your boyfriend loves you. But, sometimes he hits you when he gets mad. It's embarrassing to tell anyone. Should you "overlook" his faults and try to treat him better, so he doesn't get so angry? (Besides, you probably deserved it.)

No, you don't deserve for anyone to hit you. You should try to witness to him. Madison 16 yrs old

You should not overlook his faults! If he loves you he needs to treat you right! He should not hit you! Savannah 13 yrs old

No, overlooking his faults will only make the situation worse. He will begin to think that he controls you and will start to do anything to make you do what he wants. No girl ever deserves to be hit and if he really loves you he wouldn't treat you that way. Any type of abuse is NEVER acceptable. Brett 16 yrs old

No, you shouldn't! Faith

No, there is no reason for your boyfriend

to hit you and it is never your fault. There is never a reason why your boyfriend should hit you. If he really loved you, he would never want to hurt you and should have enough self-control to control his anger. Anonymous

No, because if he loved you, he wouldn't treat you that way. Heather 13 yrs old

You, as young ladies, as well as we, as women, must realize the difference between "overlooking" your boyfriend's faults and "accepting" abuse.

If your boyfriend forgets your birthday, that's a fault to "overlook" but allowing him to hit you and then making excuses why he hit you - is "accepting" abuse. You do not have to nor should you ever allow anyone to hit or verbally abuse you!

I do understand that he **says** he loves you, that he didn't mean to hit you, that you feel you caused it, that he won't hit you again and that he is not normally like that. I understand all of

these excuses you make for him. But the fact remains that no one should **hit** you - EVER!

OK, so you say your boyfriend loves you but someone else loves you more! Jesus loves you and tells you to respect your body. He says that no one should abuse the temple that He created. He knows every hair on your head and loves every one of them. Love should not hurt. Jesus Christ says YOU are more valuable than that!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body. (Your body belongs to God.)

For abuse, call DSS at (864) 898-5810.

Luke 12:7

Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.



By Lynn Cowell

Deuteronomy 33:12 "...Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders." (NIV)

Devotion:

Dad. What type of images or thoughts come to your mind when you hear that name? Do you think of someone who is close; always available? Or does that name produce a less than perfect image?

If you fall into the second group, I can relate. I come from a family with 8 children, so my dad had to work a lot! He just simply wasn't home. He was also quiet. He didn't tell me things like, "Lynn, you sure look pretty today." "Be careful what kind of guy you like. Don't let anyone use you." He never told me that I was precious or his girl.

In fact, he didn't tell me he loved me until just before he died. So, if the word "father" doesn't carry a perfect image in your mind, I get that.

That's why I love Psalm 68:5. God says that HE is a father to the fatherless. I need a father!

Maybe some of you are fatherless or your dad is around, but you wish he wasn't. He has a temper, an addiction or just won't turn off the TV. In Hosea 11:9, it says that Father God is not like a man; He doesn't have a temper!

Jesus knew we would need to know what He is like, so there is a story in Luke 15:11-32 often called the Prodigal Son. Read it!

This is a story of your perfect Father and

his true heart towards you. The father demonstrated three traits that are just like God:

He Loves You

Father God is love. It is WHO He is! A person can act loving today, but tomorrow is mean or cruel, but God IS love. That doesn't change; He doesn't change. Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

He Accepts You

Not only does God love you; He **accepts** you for who you are. Remember, He's the one who created you! I used to have a real problem with this one. I used to look at other people and think, "If I was more like Loretta, maybe the Lord would be more proud of me!"

Someone shared with me, "If He wanted you to be _____ (Go ahead - you fill in the blank with your own word), He would have made you that way!" He took 5 days to create the world, but He took 9 months to create you so surely He did it exactly the way that He wanted!

He is Forgiving

Our Father is forgiving. Psalm 103:12 says that He throws our sins as far as the east is from the west. Gone! Permanently.

This is what God is like. He is loving, accepting, forgiving. He is the perfect Father who wants to love on you and walk beside you.

Prayer:

Dear Father God, I need a father like you. Please take my life and give me

yours. I know that as you do that, you become my Father. Teach me to know you as one who loves, accepts and forgives me...perfectly! Amen

Think About It:

Do you often find yourself frustrated with your earthly dad? What can you do to give those feelings to the Lord and ask Him to fill the gap that your earthly father leaves?

Live It:

Write out a letter to your Father God. Let Him know what you need from Him as Your Father.

Power Verses:

Luke 15: 22-24
"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

Lynn Cowell is a part of Proverbs 31 Ministries and writes from her home in Charlotte, North Carolina. She loves hiking, peanut butter with chocolate and sushi. Read more of Lynn's writings at www.RadRevolution.org.



Posing

Most teenagers do it. It's hard to find teens that don't. The ones who do it, the ones who pose, are setting themselves up for identity loss.

Posing is a good way to forget who you are. When you act like someone you're not, you lose integrity. Take pride in who you are! Being unique is a beautiful thing. God created us to be different. Why conform to this world when you can be set apart from the rest and be your own person? Have you ever noticed a

group of people who talk the same? What about dress the same? Walk the same? Do you know what else they share? They don't know who they are through Christ. And what's really sad is that most of them have posed for so long that they don't realize they are doing it.

Posing is not the answer for acceptance. Let it never be a route you take. God has accepted you from the beginning. Being the person God created you to be makes others see Jesus through you. What an awesome way to show others that He is

alive! Who knows, being yourself could bring along incredible friends into your life that you never knew you could have.

Ephesians 2:10
For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The Interview: Kirbi and Donovan (PART 3)

By Brenda Horne

OH NO, I'M 17 AND I'M PREGNANT !

Meet Donovan and Kirbi Bliss. they are very active members of their church, Clearview Baptist. They have two beautiful little girls and they are happily married....but that was not always the case. In the beginning, Kirbi and Donovan's relationship was not an easy one, especially when she became pregnant at age 17. I had the privilege of interviewing Kirbi and Donovan about their relationship at that time and how difficult it was for them both. Here's the end of that interview:

Did you get pregnant to get out of a bad situation at home? **Kirby:** I moved out of my house first because of a bad situation, and then I got pregnant accidentally after I moved out.

Donovan: No, our pregnancy was simply bad decisions and stupidity.

Do you think that other girls get pregnant to get out of bad situations in their home life? **K:** I'm sure sometimes they

do get pregnant to get out of a bad home life. But I also think that girls just sometimes try to "fit in" and get themselves in bad situations and let things go to far then accidentally end up pregnant.

D: Yes. I think some girls think that if they get pregnant then maybe they will get married and everything will be ok. IT WON'T.

What advice would you give them? **K:** If you have a bad home life, getting pregnant will only make things more difficult, it doesn't help with the problem, it actually adds to the problem. In today's society, the world makes it seem normal or ok for teenagers to have children when, in reality, it is so difficult to raise a child when you are still trying to grow up yourself.

D: Don't have sex until marriage, and I would wait two years after marriage to have a kid. If a guy tells you he wants to have a kid and you are only a teenager, he just wants sex. You may think you love each other, and you might. But you need

to let that love mature before you consider a baby. A baby can destroy what love you think you have, simply because kids are hard.

Kirbi, what would you like to say to Donovan after all you two have been through? **K:** It has been a long road but we made it! I love you and I am so proud of the husband and father that you have become.

Donovan, what would you like to say to Kirbi after all you two have been through? **D:** Kirbi, I'm truly sorry for making your life more difficult than it had to be. I love you.

What would you like to say to God after all you've been through? **K:** I'm sorry! Thank you for being there for me and never forsaking me. But most of all thanks for forgiving me!

D: Lord, I thank you for what all you have done in my life. I know I fail you daily but you still love me. Thank you.

By Bailee Gillespie, 11



Quiet Time

Do you ever get a quiet time?

Well, first let me ask, what is a simple quiet time to you? Is it relaxing without someone screaming in your ear 24/7? Is it going to a restaurant without paying for five meals? Or is it spending alone time with God?

To me it could be either, but to God the definition of a quiet time is spending time with him. I'm writing this because everyone has one time in the day for a little quiet time. Some people say they're busy and some people say no way!

I can simply give you a few definitions of what a quiet time can be. It could be reading your Bible, praying, witnessing. Do you love to text, text, text? I do!!!

Well, one way we can have a quiet time, is sitting on the couch and inviting people to Church, or witnessing. But if you say you don't have enough hours in the day to spend a little time with God, it's not true. You can take off time on the internet, phone, and TV, the things we LOVE, and open our Bibles.

You could relax and read your Bible at the same time. How? Get a pillow, blanket, and start reading!

In Galations Chapter 6, Verse 9, it tells us "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." What does that mean? Well, it says in this verse, Let us not get tired, of reading our Bibles, praying before you eat, witnessing, and at a proper time, we will reap a harvest, enjoy the victory, if we do not give up.

I couldn't quite grasp that verse and understand it at first, until I asked my dad. That's crazy, but once you finally understand it, you think about it, like I did, and well, for me now I want quiet times with God.

Right now, list things God has given or done in your life, or helped you get through, and THANK him.

I read in my Bible a passage written by a girl named "Rachel." Through this profile, she wants to live a close life to God, but apparently, she's just too busy. She tells us through the profile, she used to have a Bible study group in the summer, but once school started and her favorite sport, field

hockey, she just became too tired. She could have read her Bible on the way to school or field hockey, right?

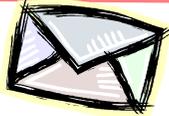
Some people just don't really understand the little opportunities they have to have a quiet time, and one of their excuses is "Not enough hours in the day." Totally wrong.

God wants you to love Him, and to show Him, spend time with Him, pray to Him, most importantly, thank Him!!! You don't have to tell anyone, but think to yourself, when is the last time you have prayed? When is the last time you have witnessed? When is the last time you have had a quiet time? It's never too late to get one.

So right now! Pick up that Bible, blanket, and pillow. Don't fall asleep, but have you a quiet time with God!!! :O!

[Psalm 46:10](#)

Be still and know that I am God...



Letter to My Teenage Self

Dear Me,

First of all, you will make it through these years, as hard as they seem, you will make it. God is with you, guiding you, if you will just draw close to Him. Study your Bible. It is the most important book you will ever read. Read it over and over again-I promise it will speak to you each time. I know you feel alone-you are never alone-God is right there beside you seeing and knowing all the things you are going through. And, while it does not seem fair to you that you have to be

the grown up at such a young age, God is teaching you such valuable lessons; patience, love, forgiveness, mercy.

Don't gossip-it makes you untrustworthy. Don't compromise yourself-you will regret it later.

Take school more seriously-yes, you will need all that Math in real life! Prince Charming is on the way and he is a Godly man who loves God with all his heart and will love you and treat you like the jewel you are. He will be your biggest

fan, your best friend and he will also be an amazing father. Be patient and wait on God to send him to you.

I can honestly tell you that every trial you go through will equip you to help others who are going through similar situations.

And one last thing, your snotty little brother-he will grow up and be one of your best friends- take it easy on him.

Love, A much older, wiser You



The Shepherd...

His love is hard to comprehend.

I thank him for this life & in the time that we're in.

Though times are hard, I praise him for the nearby end.

No tears past the gate, won't have to ever wipe again.

Broken heart? He can mend.

Ask him, "Is there something you can send?"

"Is there a hand you can lend?"

The Shepherd, to His sheep he'll tend. Feel but no see like wind.

What I said I did not bend.

By Reid Long, 16



Lessons on Life From a Doodle

Junior high was a greatly anticipated season of my life. I planned for weeks what I would wear from the top of my crooked pony tail all the way down to my white converse shoes. This year, was no joke. I had arrived -made it to the big league. *Life* would begin in...junior high.

As my friends and I giggled with excitement through the halls, we made our way to our first class. I sat down and took out my fresh, new, blue binder. I feverishly took notes and tuned in carefully to every word that teacher said. This was junior high wisdom - not to be taken lightly.

I was serious. For the life of me, I couldn't understand why my friends were all in such a crazed mode that day. All they wanted to do was squander the day by passing notes in the halls, whispering about boys and groaning about the cafeteria food.

And during class all they did was doodle. Doodle! You know, the little drawings that you create on the side of your paper for no apparent reason? Doodles. No one really knows why we do them and they seem to be just an odd fragment of our mind. I just couldn't understand their need to doodle during the most important first day of our lives.

But what I was about to discover during that first year of junior high, was that doodles do mean something at some point.

The year went on and my fresh new binder soon began to fill up with papers, notes,

quizzes and yes, (you guessed it) *doodles*. Each senseless doodle of hearts, initials in bubble letters, crosses, smiley faces and flowers began to represent a small layer of me.

On the very back of that binder I saved a special place for a specific set of doodled initials. These initials were added next to mine and would one day equal marital bliss, *forever*. He had no idea of the doodle crush I had on him. And if anyone really knew that? Well, I would just die.

However, one day, I was running late. I had a ton of books in my arms with my blue binder. The bell dinged and I knew that time was of the essence so I jetted through the breezeway to the next building.

And there he stood. All 5'6, blonde hair, big ears and a goofy smile...my doodlelicious crush.

He smiled and waved, my heart fluttered with excitement and, of course, my first instinct was to wave back. Major mistake though, I forgot about the bell, the books and...*the blue doodled on binder*.

He rushed over to help me, while I panicked that the boundary that would forever hold my secret was about to be crossed. The blue doodled binder was too far for me to grab in time and so, he slowly bent down to pick it up.

Fire-engine-red had nothing on me at that moment. *I was mortified*. He saw it. The doodled initials. And our eyes interlocked and then began the most awkward 30.5

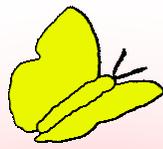
seconds of my life. To my perpetual amazement, he smiled, handed the blue binder back to me and said, "See ya, Nicki."

While I hadn't ever welcomed embarrassing moments to my junior high status updates, this one taught me a valuable lesson. Even though my doodle had been discovered...I survived. Internally, the many fears we face daily revolve around this thought: *what if someone finds out?*

We can become so seriously consumed about what others think of us it numbs us. We never allow the things of our hearts to be shared because we fear rejection. So...we doodle. We keep it a secret because there, it's safe on the back of a binder. But the truth of the matter is, while telling the depths of my heart may not always be received the way I'd like it to, survival through the process has never betrayed me.

Beyond survival, there's a whole world waiting to know who you really are, what makes you tick and what you doodle on your paper. It's not so bad (I promise) and if you will open your heart and let others in you might just be surprised at how things turn out.

Nicki Koziarz is with Proverbs 31 She Seeks (<http://www.sheseeks.org>) and is a gifted Speaker and Writer. She "wowed" speaking at our Teen Conference in October of 2010. Visit <http://nickikoziarz.com>



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FOCUS SCRIPTURE VERSE:

Isaiah 43:19

...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Grace In The Wilderness is an out-reach ministry for Today's Busy Woman. Our mission is to encourage women of all ages:

- To look upward to God as they discover Him in a new and deeper way,
- To look inward as they discover who they are in Christ, and
- To look outward as they discover God's plan for their lives.

We appreciate your prayers and support. Donations are also appreciated and may be made payable to Grace In The Wilderness Ministries (address to the left).

This is a free bi-monthly email newsletter. To subscribe for an electronic or paper copy (\$5/year), please just call or email us.

*Watch for our
Grace In The
Wilderness Teen
Conference in
October, 2011 at
Blue Ridge View
Baptist Church,
Pickens, SC*

Check us out at
www.WildernessGrace.org

Preach the gospel always. Whenever necessary, use words. —Francis of Assisi

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