



# Gracie's Way

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



## Meet Gracie

By Sharon Hawkins and Ali Pritchett

Meet Gracie..... She is today's busy teen.

She's not the most popular girl, the most fashionable, the one most sought after

by the guys or the one with the best grades. The world says she's not beautiful enough, not slim enough, not smart enough. And, she hears that pretty frequently from her "friends" too, not to mention about how her clothes and hair aren't quite perfect.

She is the daughter of parents who try hard but are sometimes lacking. Sometimes it seems like they don't even speak the same language that she does. Sometimes, she feels that she can't possibly please them although it is one of her greatest desires. If only they could understand what it's like! Her parents are so strict. Everyone else has "cool" parents, other kids have it made.

Gracie works hard to make the grade and it seems like her homework is never ending. If she's too tired to complete her last assignment, she knows there will be no sympathy from her teacher, who always gives homework, even

on the weekends.

When she steps out to do sports or cheerleading, people make assumptions about her. They think she has "princess syndrome". Boy, are they wrong! In fact, actually she feels like an uncoordinated, homely peasant girl.

She has friends but sometimes it's hard to tell who her real friends are. She is a good person, or tries to be, but sometimes she's lacking too. She's forgetful, mostly because she has too much to keep up with.

One of her biggest fears is that her boyfriend may drop her for someone more beautiful, thinner, more together, more willing to "hang all over him".

She lives in the Wilderness and it is full of pressures, which include dating pressure, peer pressure, schoolwork pressure, appearance pressure, family pressure and other relationship pressure, pressure, pressure, pressure...AGHHHH!!!!

She also faces pitfalls in her Wilderness—trials and heartaches way bigger than she is and beyond her ability to conquer. Often she's hanging by a thread! She wants to go to her parents for help, but then they might even get stricter!!! If they only knew!

Her mind is always racing and often her mouth is too. She is today's busy teen. Young Grace is struggling to be "Grace"-ful in the Wilderness. More importantly, she's every girl in need of Grace in the Wilderness. Like her Mom before her, she's juggling it all, worrying about it all, trying to do it all, all the time! And, trying to be "all that" on top of it!

There has to be help for her. Gracie's Way through the Wilderness is GOD'S AMAZING GRACE! She is not alone. She is a precious and treasured daughter of the King of the Universe and He is enthralled with her beauty (Ps. 45:11). His love for her is immeasurable. He knows she's not perfect, but that's okay, because He is. He has made a Way for Gracie, Today's Teen, even in the Wilderness!

That Way is Jesus, God's only son who came to die for her. He wants to give her the abundant life, abundant joy! He doesn't just want to help her with her life or be a part of her life, He wants to be her life!

Jesus is the answer for her anxious heart and for all of us. And, He wants to be Gracie's Way in the Wilderness!

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### Special points of interest:

- Watch for our Grace In The Wilderness Women's Conference, Extreme Makeover, "Me" Edition, coming up March 12-13, 2010!
- The next issue of Gracie's Way Newsletter will be in April 2010. If you would like to submit an article for our newsletter or have questions, please contact us (see last page).





## The Butterfly

By Marie Pritchett

Have you ever watched a caterpillar? I mean really watched it? It is slow moving and looks like a short, fuzzy worm. It isn't very pretty and people really don't pay much attention to it. It doesn't seem to have much importance nor appears to accomplish very much, but looks can be deceiving. That little caterpillar is on a mission.

The caterpillar is just like you and me. You may not look like the girls on TV with great hair, pearl white teeth or the perfect body but God has a great purpose for you, one that only you can do. You see we all have daily struggles that sometimes seem impossible to overcome. Through each of life's challenges, God is growing us.

You may look around and think that your

life is a lot harder than your friends'. Maybe your boyfriend broke up with you and your heart is broken or your parents have just told you they are getting a divorce, or maybe someone you love has died and you feel like the pain will never go away.

Romans 8:28 says that all things work for the good of those who love God. You see God can take every situation, good or bad, and help us to grow into what he wants us to be.

That little caterpillar drags himself through daily challenges and pushes forward not knowing what is waiting for him but living by faith. When I lost my son in a tragic car accident, someone sent me a card with a message I will never forget. "Just when the caterpillar thinks it's life is over, it becomes a butterfly".

This statement has a lot of truth in it.

That little caterpillar trudges through life and just when he thinks he can't take one more step something amazing happens...God changes that ugly little fuzzy worm into the most beautiful butterfly.

Butterflies are a symbol of new life. A new life that we began when we asked God into our hearts. When you wonder about life's challenges, remember the struggles may be preparing you to fly.

*Romans 8:28*

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

By Brenda Horne



## The Driving Lesson

After church, our family decided to go for a fun picnic in the park, when my 15 year old gets the crazy idea that she should be the one to drive us there in her Daddy's truck (the sacred midnight blue half-ton F-150....*men and their trucks!*).

Grabbing the keys, she hops in the driver's seat. Her Dad *reluctantly* climbs in the passenger side while my youngest and I crawl in the back. And off we go, laughing, talking, and having a good time. All is well...until...we approach a yellow caution light and she asked her Daddy which way to go. He tells her to go through the light and turn left. Now.... to a more experienced driver, this would not have been difficult instructions...."go through the light and turn left"..... but to a newly driving, blonde 15-year old girl, this is where her struggle begins.(This is also where it becomes *very clear* to me that I should pray more *specifically* for *sanity*).

The light was yellow, she has to decide should she drive *through* the yellow light or *stop* at the yellow light? Her Daddy said to *go through* the light but can she

make it through the light before it turns red? But what if she gets a ticket for running a yellow light that turns red? She definitely doesn't want her Daddy mad at her. So that's it, she'll *go through it!* Although...it's her decision, she's the driver, if she feels she can't make it, then she shouldn't try. *Go, don't go ?????* All of this goes through her 15 year old, inexperienced, blonde head within a matter of seconds. So, at the very *last* second.....**SLAM!** She hits the brakes! Everything in the truck flies forward—the food, the drinks, the picnic basket, everything.... including us.

Now her Daddy has a hard time remembering that she is inexperienced and doesn't process directions like an experienced driver. So he asked her *very loudly*, "What are you doing? Why didn't you just go through the light? This is why I don't let you drive my truck because you don't pay attention!! (ahhhh, the sacred truck is mentioned.)

At this point, the light turns green, she turns on her blinker and turns left...at the light. She doesn't go through the

light to turn, she turns left *at the light*. Once again, her caring, loving and all be it, *impatient* Daddy asks very loudly, "Where are you going? Why are you turning left? Why aren't you listening to me? You are still not paying attention!"

We now have reached the breaking point. My 15 year old has reached the point of tears. My husband's veins are bulging out of his neck and my 8 year old and I are in the back seat praying we live to see another day (and to eat the yummy PB &J sandwiches for lunch). Our confused driver, who is now completely aggravated, immediately pulls into a parking lot and stops. This is where the "meeting of the minds" occurs. (In my head, I heard the bell ding "round 1".) Her Daddy starts the round: "Where are you going?!", he says sharply. "I turned left like you told me to", she flares back. "I didn't say turn at the light; I said go through the light", says "Father Knows Best". "I didn't want to run the light", she replies. "I know because you slammed on brakes and almost threw us all out the window!", he retorted. "You confused me because you

## The Driving Lesson

were yelling," she says. "I wasn't yelling and I didn't tell you to *run the light*," he says loudly ". "It sounds like yelling to me. And you told me to *go through the light*." she explains. "You need to listen better," he says sharply. With her head lowered, she quietly replies, "I did listen, I was just confused." She then vows to never drive with her Daddy again. (While me and my 8 year old vow to picnic alone from now on.) Ding "round 1" is over.

After the "meeting of the minds" and everyone took a collective deep breath, my husband very calmly, slowly, gives her *explicit* directions on how to get to the park, since she *turned down the wrong road*. We arrive at the park safely (with much prayer from the back seat) and start unloading our picnic lunch. At which time, my husband gently approaches our young driver and puts his loving arms around her for a caring hug. He apologizes and says he will explain himself more clearly



## Be Who God Created You To Be

When I was growing up, things were pretty good. I had a Christian Mom who taught us about Christ and morals and how to treat others. We went to church every Sunday. I knew about God, but didn't put Him first much. I got saved at 14 and was a good kid up till 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

I started hanging around the wrong friends. You see, I wanted to fit in with the popular people. But most of them were self-centered, selfish, drinkers, smokers and sexually active. I was not used to any of this. My other friends weren't like them. I got so caught up with them, that I lost my good friends. For a while it was fun, but deep down I was losing sight of who I was. I was not the same person. I would argue with my parents more and lie to them. I knew that this was wrong, but did this for 10 more years.

I would pray only when something was wrong. God was last on my list. I was so much into the world and not who God in-

next time.

After we had enjoyed our picnic and ate all the yummy PB&J's, my husband held out the keys, *groaned ever so slightly*, and asked our daughter if she wanted to drive. She smiled, grabbed the keys and jumped in the driver's seat!! (So much for that vow.) My youngest rolls her eyes as she gets in preparing herself for more silent prayers and pleas of safety. Off we go, again in the **sacred** midnight blue half-ton F-150 for more driving lessons!!

Life can be like this driving lesson. We're driving along, the roads clear; then we see that yellow warning signal. "I can go on or I can stop to be safe. I should stop and wait on the Lord." That's when we hear the One over in the passenger seat saying, "Go through the light". He confuses us and never wants us to stop.

Just for the record, my husband is not Satan (even though my daughter thinks he is at times.) He's just a dad enduring his

daughter's inexperienced driving. But what an awesome lesson I saw unfold before me! My daughter questioned what she should do but in the end, made the right choice by stopping. Yet after that stop, she still made a wrong turn. Sometimes, in all the commotion we get confused. It happens to us all. The busyness of our lives can cause confusion.

Sometimes, we have to ask one more time for directions. we must constantly rely on the Lord, using prayer and the Bible as our roadmap. But even when we do make those *wrong turns*, if we truly seek our Savior and listen carefully to his *explicit* directions, He will direct us in the path we should go. Then, like my husband, He will wrap His loving arms around us and warmly hug us...Just because he loves us !!

*Proverbs 3:6*

*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*

By Brantley Capps

my life and got baptized. It was overwhelming to me. I had been running for so long, God knew I would come back. Joey surrendered his life over to God and now he is our Youth Minister! God is awesome!

I am so thankful He never gave up on me. God has transformed my life. I have two awesome, wonderful kids. He's blessed me with a great husband, family and an awesome church family. I am truly myself. I have peace that I never had before. He can save you too! If you have faith and surrender it all to Him, He is worth it! Be yourself and not what others want you to be!!!

I am still growing as a Christian, but thank God I am. Be strong and turn from these worldly things. He will help you to stay strong. Praise God, He is worthy to be praised.

*Psalms 139:14*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made....*



## What is True Beauty?

By Brenda Horne

Every girl wants it. Whether she's a 3 year old wanting to be a princess, a 16 year old looking for perfection or a 45 year old fighting off age; we all desire to be beautiful.

Yet God created beauty to come in many forms. There is beauty in sight, but there is also beauty in sound, smell, taste and touch. It is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Well, God is the ultimate "beholder" as well as, the creator of all things and in all His creations there is boundless beauty.

From the pink and purple hues of a sunset, to the beautiful smell of a sweet, red rose. Beauty surrounds us in every way.

So if our amazing God expressed beauty in so many ways, how is it that we cannot see the beauty in ourselves? We are His most beloved creation and we possess a beauty that even the angels in heaven cannot claim. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the beauty of Him abiding in us and we in Him. The beauty of holiness engulfs our being and then our God, the "beholder", can see the reflection of His Son in us and that, my friend, is ..... TRUE BEAUTY!

Our 'True Beauty' contestants at our recent Grace In The Wilderness Teen Conference shared their insightful thoughts with us about true beauty. (Scripture added.)

*-True Beauty is finding yourself in you. It is knowing who you are and being happy with the way God made you.*

*—Allie Webster*

*-God doesn't focus on our outward appearance. It is what's on the inside*

*that matters most to Him.*

*—Andrea Vazquez*

*-The most beautiful person a girl can be is herself.*

*—Jessi Finley*

*-It doesn't matter if your outer appearance isn't perfect because no one's is. Beauty is being yourself. —Nicole Darnell  
Psalms 139:14 "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well."*

*-One of the most important things to make a heart beautiful is when it has God in it.*

*—Josie O'Bryant*

*Deuteronomy 6:5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."*

*-I wasn't born a Godly woman. I won't become one when I marry a man, have a child or do the laundry! No, I will become a woman when I become what God wants me to be.*

*—Joanna Deaton*

*Philippians 3:14 "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

*-True Beauty is achieved when we allow God to shine through our lives.*

*—Ali Pritchett*

*-True beauty shines on the inside. Your heart and mind is all that really counts.*

*—Savanah Anders*

*Ecclesiastes 8:1 "How wonderful to be wise, to be able to analyze and interpret things, wisdom lights up a person face, softening its hardness."*

*-Beauty may capture your attention, but true beauty will capture your heart.*

*—Brooke Hali Whitmire*

*-It's more important to focus on what God wants you to be than trying to be what the world wants you to be.—Courtney Wallace*

*Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD she shall be praised."*

*-True beauty is the way you act and how you treat others. —Kaly Cassell*

*-To me true beauty has to do with personality, kindness to others, as well as faith in God. —Kensley Burr*

*-If we let Him, God can help us control our actions and improve our internal beauty. —Ashley Bowen*

*-True beauty is those that have a beautiful, giving, loving and caring soul.*

*—Raegan Connelly*

*Matthew 7:12 "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you...."*

*-Beauty is being content with what God has given you, forgiving and forgetting, and walking in the right footsteps.*

*—Karissa Roe*

*-True beauty requires love, compassion and forgiveness. —Sydney Stancell*

*Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."*

*-True beauty is not about how pretty you are or what kind of clothes you have. It is what is in your heart—how you act and what you feel. —Kelsey McAlister*

*Proverbs 31:25 "Strength and dignity are her clothing..."*

*-True beauty is about believing in yourself and loving who you are in Jesus Christ. —Tristan Gillespie*

*Beauty in the heart is having a close relationship with the Lord, our Creator.*

*—Jennifer Nalley*

*Genesis 1:27 "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

*-If you're saved by God's grace, I believe you definitely have true beauty!*

*—Savanna Viles*

*Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.*

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Grace In The Wilderness is a Ministry to encourage Today's Busy Women and Girls. Contact us for more information about our Teen Conferences and Quarterly Teen Newsletter!

We're on the Web!  
www.wildernessgrace.org