

“Grace”

Thump, thump, thump, thump...

I looked up from where I was stirring my tea. “What is that noise?!” I called.

“Grace is on the treadmill again!” yelled my brother, from the next room.

Three days earlier, my sister Grace had been diagnosed with diabetes. At just ten years old, she had begun tracking her glucose, making her own meals, increasing her exercise, and scheduling her life around this new diagnosis.

I remember her coming home from an appointment, cheeks glistening from fresh tears, explaining to me her lab results. She was distraught. It was a shock and adjustment—not just for her, but for my whole family. We would have to adjust our schedules, shopping, movement goals, and eating habits. It was overwhelming for all of us, and most of all, for Grace.

Days passed, tear stains dried, and we all grew accustomed to Grace’s glucose monitoring and alternate diet. The thumping of the treadmill became a part of our daily rhythm, and Grace became the talk of the household. Not because she was needy or whiny—quite the opposite! To combat feelings of overwhelm, she had made it her chief mission to bless our family and think of others before herself. She cooked us delicious, healthy, diabetic-friendly meals—quite the feat with our family of thirteen! – and began leaving sticky notes with verses or encouragement in unlikely places.

In just three short weeks, this ten-year-old had developed more grace than I had in sixteen years! What was it that made those wet, tear-stained cheeks now rosy with joy at the opportunity to bless?

I wracked my brain, trying to see when this shift took place. Finally, I simply asked her what her secret was.

“Even when I am going through hard things, I know that God is with me. After I was diagnosed, the Lord spoke to me through His Word, reminding me that He is always with me, will never forsake me, and that His grace is sufficient. I’m really glad we studied Job as a family right before I got diagnosed so I know God is good and He is helping me deal with this,” was her reply.

In her season of weakness and helplessness, Grace recognized the opportunity the Lord had given her to glorify Him, and she did just that. Because she understood the grace that she had been shown, she was able to become a person of grace. She truly was and is *grace-full*.

Thump, thump, thump, thump...

“Rachel! RACHEL!!! Will you please, PLEASE play chess with me???”

My brother Joseph hurled himself against my door, finally tumbling into my room.

I looked at the math problems on my computer screen. At this point, getting into my dream school was entirely dependent on whether I could score high enough on the SAT to get scholarships. Usually I am a great test taker, but for some reason the math section had me stumped. I was not entirely outside of the scholarship brackets, but still nowhere close to earning enough scholarship money to pay for school.

Looking back at Joseph, I sighed. *Why does he have to keep bothering me? He knows I have to work on this and will not be able to play with him today!* I thought. “Not now, okay? I still have thirty more practice problems before I can even start on my other schoolwork.”

“But you promised!”

“Maybe tomorrow, JoJo. Go away and play.”

He closed the door behind him, disappointed.

Finally, I can get this over with. Reaching for my pen, my eyes caught sight of a bright pink sticky note on my lampshade. It read, *Dear Rachel, I love you so much! Thank you for always spending time with and encouraging me! I love seeing you pray for us every morning. 2 Corinthians 9:8. Love, Grace.*

I reached for my Bible and turned to 2 Corinthians. “*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*”

I then realized that sometimes conviction and wisdom come through the hands of a ten-year-old girl quite literally named Grace.

I had lost sight of the true prize. In trying to pursue one good desire, I forgot to pursue the thing to which I am firstly called—*grace*. The same undeserved favor that God has richly extended to me.

Lord, forgive me. Help me to seek your kingdom first, and trust that You will add all that I need. Help me not to be anxious, but to do my best. And thank you for reminding me that I always have time to be gracious, even under pressure.

I closed the book and opened my door.

“Joseph! Get ready, because I’m about to put you in checkmate!”