

# When Gratitude and Grief Hold Hands

*Sue Bohlin has discovered that the ongoing habit of giving thanks for God's many goodnesses has mitigated her grief in her son's death.*

It's been five months since [our son took his life](#) and we were thrown into a sea of grief. I can tell people are still praying for us because God's deep and beautiful grace is holding us up.

The day after Curt died, I was struck with the thought that a gigantic wall of awful grief was going to hit me. Hard. I knew that wall. It slammed into me the first time when our firstborn baby Becky died on her eighth day of life. It slammed into me again almost two years ago when [a third of my tongue was cut out](#) because of cancer. So I know how to recognize the unbidden, overwhelming feelings of loss and deep sadness.

But a second and comforting thought chased down the chilling first thought: *The Lord carried me through those times of great grief in the past, and He will carry me again. I don't need to fear the grief monster because my God is bigger than the grief monster. Thank You, Lord, thank You.*

That immediate prayer of thankfulness arose out of a 50-year-long habit that God impressed on me as a college student as I struggled to reconcile why a good God would let polio cripple me. I learned probably the biggest lesson of my life: that He wants us to give thanks not only IN all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18), but FOR all things (Ephesians 5:20). For a deeper dive, I invite you to read my blog post "[Giving Thanks for EVERYTHING?](#)"

I couldn't possibly know back in those early days of my walk

with Christ how the habit of giving thanks as a way of life would shape how I could handle the unthinkable loss of a second child decades later.

Giving thanks as a daily habit began as a step of obedience, but then it grew to become an intrinsic part of my everyday life—to the point that I shoot up many more “thank You” prayers than “please” prayers. And that has never been so true as it has been these past five months.

ALL of my “please” prayers for Curt, as he struggled for years with a deep, dark suicidal depression I could not begin to imagine, have been turned into “thank You” prayers. Every day I tell the Lord how grateful I am that my son is experiencing a level of joy he couldn’t have imagined any more than I can imagine the pain of his mental illness. I thank Him for the massive sense of relief that is Curt’s daily life in heaven. I thank Him that his hearing loss has been replaced with perfect hearing. I thank Him that Curt’s love of music, which was devastating because of that hearing loss, has been ratcheted up to enjoy new kinds of beautiful music (so I read in stories of those who have been allowed a glimpse of heaven). I thank Him that my son’s deep suffering is only a memory for him now, and he has all eternity to look forward to whatever God will allow him to do. I thank Him that Curt can look forward with clear eyes and unskewed thinking, to the next stages of his new life on the other side.

Every day I thank the Lord that I *know know know* where my son is, and that he is more alive today than he ever was on earth. I thank Him for the beloved family and friends who graduated to heaven before Curt, with whom he is enjoying restored fellowship and laughter and hugs. I thank the Lord for how real heaven is to me.

And because He has taught me how to turn hard truths into a “thank You,” I know what to do with the pangs of loss that inevitably strike me every day. When I see Curt’s handwriting

on my recipes from the tweaking we did together when cooking, a fresh wave of missing him washes over me . . . and I'm able to say, "Thank You for all the help he gave me in the kitchen over these past 17 years of his living here." When Ray and I wince at needing to find caregivers for our dog Lincoln when we go out of town—something we never needed to do because Curt never went anywhere—I'm able to say, "Thank You that he was our built-in dogsitter for all those years."

When I see his computer components gathering dust in a corner, or when we need computer help, I'm able to chase the pangs of missing him with, "Thank You for the gift of having an IT genius in our home all those years."

It might be easy to scoff and think, "You're just sugar-coating this horrible loss of your beloved son. Get a grip and face your grief squarely instead of trying to paint it with rosy colors."

But I am not a stranger to grief. I've endured a number of very big, very painful losses. I seek to be honest and authentic in this hard place we are in, but my reality is that gratitude softens the blow of grief. The Lord demonstrates His goodness to me in so many ways every day, I can't help but see them because I've grown more sensitive to recognize what I call His "hugs and kisses." Those hugs and kisses are one way He comforts me in this hard time.

Because gratitude and grief CAN hold hands.

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/when-gratitude-and-grief-hold-hands/](https://blogs.bible.org/when-gratitude-and-grief-hold-hands/) on December 17, 2024.

---

# The Commencement Address I Actually Got to Give

*In 2014, I wrote a blog post [The Commencement Address I'll Never Get to Give](#).*

*Then I was deeply honored to be asked to address the eight graduating seniors of the Richardson Home School Association, where my husband and I have been teaching. He's the high school science teacher and I am his admin, I teach cursive handwriting to younger kids, and together we teach "Building Confident Christians," a faith-building year of worldview and apologetics.*

*I had already written my address as a blog post, but I tweaked it some, coming in at a very-short-for-me nine minutes (because ain't nobody goes to graduation for the commencement address, right?):*

*We've taught all eight of you, and I love you! Congratulations! You made it to the cap-and-gown stage. Not without a lot of help and prodding and prayers and frustration from your parents though, right? Thank them. There's not a single thing you are or do or have that they didn't have a part in. Thank them! I mean, right now! Stand up, wave and say thank you! (I'll wait . . .!)*

*You've just finished many years of schooling, and along the way you may have picked up some hoey from the surrounding culture about how wonderful and special you are because of some well-meaning self-esteem messaging. You may have thrown away dozens of ribbons or trophies you received just for showing up.[{1}](#)*

*Those days are over, because that was never real life. Self-esteem and self-confidence are only gained one way, the hard way: working hard to meet a challenge and not give up until*

you succeed. You earn self-confidence by doing, not by reciting platitudes in a mirror.

I'd like to put on a life-coach hat for a minute and make some suggestions for your post-high-school life.

Most of you just finished Dr. Bohlin's and my class, Building Confident Christians. We had you do a lot of reading for that class. I want to encourage you to read something else.

If you haven't read Dale Carnegie's book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, read it. It's a classic of how to understand people and how they like to be treated. The reason it's so true is that the book fleshes out the second great commandment, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

For example, when you see a service person, like a waitstaff or toll booth attendant, call him or her by name. One's name is the sweetest sound on earth to each person, and service personnel are often treated as if they were invisible. Using someone's name says, "You are not invisible to me, and I honor you for your service." Prospective employees and spouses have been known to disqualify themselves because of the way they treated people with disrespect or contempt when out in public.

Everyone has an invisible tattoo on their forehead that says, "Please encourage me." And most people have an invisible speech bubble over their heads that says, "Do I matter? Please show me I matter." Every single person you will ever meet is infinitely valuable as the handcrafted masterpiece of the Creator God, and they deserve to be honored and respected simply because God made them and He loves them.

Some final pithy words to the wise. . .

Listen to your body. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, and it will tell you what it needs. Especially listen to your body when it tells you it needs sleep, and green vegetables.

Learn to recognize the nudges of the Holy Spirit, and follow them.

Pray for your future spouse. Assume that you don't know who they are right now, statistically speaking. He or she is out there somewhere. Your prayers WILL make a difference. (Afterwards, you can ask Dr. Bohlin and me about what that means.[\[2\]](#))

Don't believe everything you think. You swim in the polluted waters of a culture that has rejected God and biblical values, and some of those ideas and thoughts have crept into your mind, even though you weren't aware of it.

Plus, Satan and the demons are real, and you live on the battlefield of unrelenting spiritual warfare. You shouldn't believe everything you think because one of the enemy's favorite tactics is to whisper in our ears in first person, so we think these ideas are our own. Such as,

- "It's okay, I can do this, no one will know."
- "I deserve to get my way."
- "I am such a loser."
- "Well, I'm better than HER/HIM."

Whether we're talking about the cultural water you swim in, or the thoughts in your head that come from spiritual warfare, pass everything through the filter of God's word. Which means you need to read and study it! Every day!

If you wonder if you should be doing something, you probably shouldn't. If the thought, 'Should I be doing this?' even enters your head, it's an alarm. Invite the Lord into that question!

A few minutes ago I asked you to stand up and thank your parents. One of the most important habits you can ever form is gratitude. Especially toward God. He is continually blessing you with everything from the ability to draw your next breath,

to your ability to remember your name, to your ability to walk or drive or think or talk or get a job or more education.

Get in the habit of thanking Him for all those things. Regularly stop and ask yourself, "What would I really miss tomorrow if I didn't give thanks for it today?"-and then thank the Lord for it. Right where you're sitting-"Oh Lord! Thank You for cushioned seats! Thank You for 24/7 electricity! Thank You for air conditioning! Thank You for clean drinking water! Thank You for paved roads, and garbage pickup! There are so many things we would really miss tomorrow if we didn't give thanks for them today.

A grateful heart is not a complaining heart.

A grateful heart is not a critical heart.

A grateful heart is not an entitled heart.

Believe me, it will make you a much better person to live with, or work with, or play with, or just be with.



One of the best ways to get in the habit of saying "Thank You, Lord" is a gratitude journal. It's a wonderful discipline to record three things every day (or night) where you saw God being gracious and loving and kind to you, or to someone else. I want to make that easy for

you, so I have a gift for each of you, a personalized gratitude journal. I challenge you, over the next few years, fill it up, one day at a time. What a magnificent form of worship that would be!

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and give you peace. Your real education is about to begin.

1. After the graduation, I was humbled and grateful for the comments of the mother of an intellectual disabled child who pointed out that her daughter loves receiving ribbons and trophies for just showing up. It makes her feel valued and loved. I'm thankful for this perspective and I regret that my words caused needless pain.

2. Soon after I trusted Christ in college, I started praying every day for my future husband. Once I met Ray and realized he was the one God had chosen for me, we discovered that he had started having a daily quiet time of Bible study and prayer the same week I started to pray.

---

# Addressing Anxiety in Tumultuous Times

*Byron Barlowe connects the dots between the universal problem of anxiety, what brain science is teaching us about our minds, and how Scripture and spiritual disciplines can help. In a world consumed by violent riots and trauma surrounding the Covid virus, this is a timely topic that God and science speak to well.*

Millions of people worldwide are battling anxiety in a tumultuous time. The Coronavirus pandemic response has created a new abnormal: heightened fear of sickness and death, economic damage, and social isolation. Loneliness is the number one health crisis in America according to many epidemiologists, psychiatrists, and social scientists.[\[1\]](#) While we're all still reeling from this, racial strife has erupted into looting, killings, and anarchy in American streets.



Mental health is an increasing concern too. One study found that during the spring 2020 mass quarantine, prescriptions for anti-anxiety meds spiked.[{2}](#) A San Francisco area hospital has seen more deaths by suicide than by Covid-19, prompting a call for an end to mass shutdowns.[{3}](#) *It's been a perfect storm of stress.*



Are there real solutions *right now*? Yes, brain science is confirming the truths and promises proclaimed in Scripture in exciting ways! We have wonderfully adaptive minds—especially when they are focused on God. These built-in mind-morphing capabilities show the genius of our design as Image-bearers of God. Audiologist, cognitive researcher and outspoken Christian Dr. Caroline Leaf writes, “As an individual, you are capable of making mental and emotional change in your life. Through your thinking, you can actively recreate thoughts and, therefore, knowledge in your mind.”[{4}](#)

And this has profound implications for true hope. Leaf continues: “Thoughts are real, physical things that occupy mental real estate. Moment by moment, every day, you are changing the structure of your brain through your thinking [it's happening right now as you read]. *When we hope, it is an activity of the mind that changes the structure of our brain in a positive and normal direction.*”[{5}](#) The biblical book of Hebrews defines faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). The thankful, attentive, willfully hopeful mind creates positive emotions, thoughts, and acts of the will. In other words, we *significantly control whether we have a healthy soul.*

Dallas Willard writes, “The transformation of the self away from a life of fear and insufficiency takes place as we fix our mind upon God as he truly is.” As Scripture teaches, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In this article we'll explore this transformation.

# Morphing Your Mind—It's Mostly Up to You!

Everyday stress is hard enough—but what about work-related anxiety? Money? Riots, memories of abuse, bullying, and abandonment? We have little control over family, culture or epidemics. But we can make amazing internal changes through our responses. Science and Scripture agree on this.

The transforming mind-renewal encouraged by Scripture is possible for us all, especially for people who have invited God to lead their lives. We can intentionally train our minds to reshape our brains—we are *not* perpetual victims of our past or circumstances. Nor are humans mere products of matter in motion. Dr. Caroline Leaf, author of *Switch on Your Brain*, claims that “Choice is real, and free will exists. You are able to stand outside yourself, observe your own thinking, consult with God, and [work with him to] change the negative, toxic thought or grow a healthy, positive thought. When you do this, your brain responds with a positive neurochemical rush and structural changes that improve your intellect, health, and peace.”[\[6\]](#)

Even traumatic memories can be starved, defanged, broken down, and replaced. Brought into conscious awareness, they can become plastic enough to be recreated. Leaf explains that “Neurons that don’t get enough signal (that is, rehearsing of the negative event) will start firing apart, wiring apart, pulling out, and destroying the emotion attached to the trauma.” Also, desirable brain chemicals that bond and remold chemical connections, increase focus and attention, and increase feelings of peace and happiness begin to weaken traumatic memories even more. So bad memories, hatred, hurt, and other negative thoughts and emotions that form toxic beliefs: “If they stop firing together, they will no longer wire together. This leads to . . . rebuilding new ones.”[\[7\]](#)

Ideas have consequences and our beliefs guide our behavior. In the words of King Solomon, “As a man thinks in his heart, so

he is.”{8} That is, we construct frameworks of beliefs and *then* speak and act from them.

Science seems to confirm this biblical view of self-control. Measuring magnetic fields, electrical impulses, chemical effects, photons, vibrations, and quantum energy paints a picture of intricately [networking] neurotransmitters, proteins, and energy—that is, signals—that change the brain’s landscape.{9} This “neuroplasticity [seems to be] God’s design for renewing the mind.”{10}

And there’s nothing magic about it: overcoming anxiety can be helped a lot through habits of the mind, heart, and soul.

## **Mindfulness & Meditation—Self-Control and Seeking God in Silent Solitude**

It’s no wonder that the concept of “mindfulness” has become a “thing” these days. Meditation and concentration are new-old survival skills. How do they work?

Dr. J.P. Moreland, noted philosopher and author of *Finding Quiet: My Story of Overcoming Anxiety and The Practices That Brought Peace*, candidly shares his struggles with anxiety and the need he had for medications. He also discovered the power of seeking God in self-directed solitude. He emphasizes sustained habits of the praising, thankful, and self-controlled soul.

Mindful meditation is not like taking a drug, is not a quick fix, or denying the senses to rid oneself of desire.{11} “By charting new pathways in the brain, mindfulness can change the banter inside our heads from chaotic to calm.”{12} New habits are formed over time. When it comes to our minds, “practice doesn’t make perfect; it makes permanent.”{13}

Remaining at rest via the practice of spiritual disciplines takes advantage of our mind’s ability to “move into a highly

intelligent, self-reflective, directed state.” And the more often we go there, the more “we get in touch with the deep, spiritual part of who we are.” This exercise switches brain modes in a way that can create wisdom and potential connection with God.[{14}](#) As Jesus taught his disciples, “Keep awake (give strict attention, be cautious and active) and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation.”[{15}](#) We can mentor our own minds, settle our souls, habituate our hearts, and free our spirits to respond to God. Brain science is catching up on this reality.

So, what’s going on physically when we stop to meditate in focused solitude and silence? A post at *Mindful.org* claims, “The impact that mindfulness exerts on our brain is borne from routine: a slow, steady, and consistent reckoning of our realities, and the ability to take a step back, become more aware, more accepting, less judgmental, and less reactive. . . . Mindfulness over time can make the brain, and thus [ourselves], more efficient regulators, with a penchant for pausing to respond to our world instead of mindlessly reacting.”[{16}](#) How different would social media conversations be—especially on politics and race—if more people practiced patient contemplation!

Various regions of our brains change while meditating. The “fight or flight” area actually shrinks in size.[{17}](#) It’s a real chill pill!

God keeps “him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”[{18}](#)

## **Thankfulness and Happiness—Healthy Habits of the Mind & Heart**

In trying times, we all want to return to happiness. It’s a God-given right to pursue it, according to America’s founders. The biblical worldview recognizes the inherent brokenness of both creation and human beings, so it is no surprise that

confusion, discord, and tragedy—along with evil spiritual powers—“steal, kill, and destroy”[{19}](#) our joy. What can be done?

Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland writes, “You have it in your power to begin a regimen of choices, assuming you would choose the right things, and form a habit of this that can *substantially improve your happiness and decrease or get rid of anxiety*. There really is hope.”[{20}](#) Our non-conscious mind turns thoughts over and over. Through spiritual disciplines, we bring these into our conscious awareness, which manipulates actual proteins, creating overhauled memories. Intentionally bringing God to mind—His attributes, the wonder of creation and His blessings, promises, answered prayers—such a focus leads to a cycle of good thinking, feeling, and *knowing* that turns into believing real truth. Faith is a gift so we’re not alone in doing this. But it is up to us to put to use the gifts described here to “work out [our] salvation with [reverence and proper humility].”[{21}](#)

Remember, we have a strong influence in reshaping our own brains—especially with God’s help. Secular scientists are discovering the wonderful power of thankfulness. Scientific studies prove seven benefits according to *PsychologyToday.com*. Gratitude improves relationships, physical and mental health, sleep, self-esteem, and mental resilience. It even reduces aggression, the urge for revenge. Scripture aligns with physical reality again when it tells us: “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”[{22}](#)

Moreland jokes, “If we’re not careful, we may even come to think we were designed to flourish best when we are thankful and grateful! Yet as exciting as these psychological studies are, we didn’t need them to know the importance and value of

expressing gratitude and thanksgiving to God. The Bible insists on this . . . [it's] filled to overflowing with exhortations to be grateful to God and express thanksgiving to him.”[{23}](#) As King David famously prayed in Psalm 23, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”—he trusted a good God to lead, protect, and bless him. That’s joy far beyond happiness!

## Takeaways & Practical Applications

Brain networks form an inner life of the mind. We can switch between various networks constantly. Like a mom monitoring kids running around inside several contained rooms, this enables us to control the controllable—our reactions to events and circumstances. Brain scans confirm how we capture and police rogue thoughts in ways prescribed in Scripture: “We . . . take every thought captive to obey Christ.”[{24}](#)

UCLA researchers address how our habitual non-conscious thoughts can drive anxiety—negative self-talk like:

- “I’ll be in real trouble if...”
- “What if so and so happens next week?”
- “I’ll probably fail that exam!”

“It’s what we say to ourselves in response to any particular situation that mainly determines our mood and feelings.”[{25}](#)

“Forming a new habit requires doing things you may not want to do in the early stages of formation,” as any coach or teacher will tell you.

For retraining our brains, experts have devised methods like **The Four Step Solution**:

It goes as follows:[{26}](#)

**Step 1: Relabeling:** call out thoughts as having no necessary

connection with reality: tell yourself “That is a destructive lie.” Call on Proverbs 4:23, “Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”[\[27\]](#)

**Step 2: Reframing:** take the power out of the bad thoughts. Reset your perception of the deceptive message by being mindful that it exists, its content, and how you are now feeling by correctly categorizing the distorted message. Bad self-talk includes:

- all or nothing thinking (for example: “it was a *total* failure”)
- overgeneralizing
- singling out one thing to focus on
- catastrophizing (or making too big a deal out of things) and
- discounting the positive

Reframing them creates stable memories formed by repeated updating.

**Step 3: Refocusing:** Set your mind on anything else—distract yourself from the negative thoughts. Stop obsessing! Get into “the flow” of something. Focus elsewhere. And don’t ruminate about the message—analyzing it will deepen the grooves in your brain.

**Step 4: Revaluing:** After a while, reflect on how you did Steps 1-3. Recommit to repeat these steps throughout the day.

Over 21 days, a “newly formed neural network” will decay in less than a month: thoughts are like muscles that atrophy and die or get stronger with use.[\[28\]](#) Starve the bad, feed the good.

As Paul instructed the Philippian church, dwell on what is

good and pure, true and worthy of praise.{29}

## Notes

1. Senator Ben Sasse, *Them: Why We Hate Each Other and How to Heal*, quoted by Richard Doster in Christian Healthcare Newsletter, June 2020, "Can the Church solve the country's worst health problems?"
2. Nick Givas, Fox News, "Prescriptions for anti-anxiety meds spike amid coronavirus outbreak, new report finds," posted April 18, 2020. [www.foxnews.com/health/prescriptions-anti-anxiety-meds-spike-a-mid-coronavirus](http://www.foxnews.com/health/prescriptions-anti-anxiety-meds-spike-a-mid-coronavirus).
3. Amy Hollyfield, "Suicides on the rise amid stay-at-home order, Bay Area medical professionals say," posted May 21, 2020, [abc7news.com/suicide-covid-19-coronavirus-rates-during-pandemic-death-by/6201962](http://abc7news.com/suicide-covid-19-coronavirus-rates-during-pandemic-death-by/6201962).
4. Dr. Caroline Leaf, *Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking and Health*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013, p. 19 (emphasis mine).
5. Ibid.
6. Leaf, 39.
7. Leaf, 64.
8. Proverbs 23:7.
9. Leaf, 47.
10. Leaf, 65.
11. As with Buddhist meditation practices seeking utter emptiness.
12. Jennifer Wolkin, Mindful.org, "How the Brain Changes When You Meditate," posted September 20, 2015, [www.mindful.org/how-the-brain-changes-when-you-meditate](http://www.mindful.org/how-the-brain-changes-when-you-meditate).
13. J.P. Moreland, *Finding Quiet: My Story of Overcoming Anxiety and the Practices that Brought Peace*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 67.
14. Leaf, 82.
15. Matthew 26:41.
16. Ibid. Wolkin



17. Various Authors, *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, Volume 191, Issue 1, 30 January 2011, Pages 36-43. Posted Nov. 10, 2010:

[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S092549271000288X](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S092549271000288X).

18. Isaiah 26:3.

19. John 10:10.

20. *Finding Quiet*, 54-55 (emphasis mine).

21. Ephesians 2:12, Amplified Bible.

22. Philippians 4: 6-7, New Living Translation.

23. *Finding Quiet*, 113.

24. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

25. Psychologists Edmund Bourne and Lorna Garano, cited by Moreland.

26. Entire section, *Finding Quiet*, p. ?

27. Proverbs 4:23, CSB.

28. Leaf, 151.

29. Philippians 4:8.

©2020 Probe Ministries

---

## Lessons From a Hospital Bed

In the last several months, both of my severely arthritic hips were replaced. In addition to the wonderful blessing that I am out of pain, the surgeries and recoveries were full of lessons pointing me to spiritual truths I am so very thankful for:



For a long time, I needed help getting in and out of my car. To be blunt, it was always noisy with involuntary gasps and screams of pain. And while my family and friends were so very glad to be of assistance, it was hard on them to witness me hurting so badly. Now that the pain is behind me, I keep hearing comments like, “Wow! It’s so great not to see your face contorted!” or, “Oh man! You’re not making the horrible sounds you used to make when you were getting into the car!” I told my husband the other day, “I have a feeling all that was a lot worse than I had any idea.” He nodded his head, “Oh yeah. It was bad.” While I am truly sorry that my sweet helpers had to see and hear what they did, it touches me that their compassion ran so deep. I have a new appreciation of what “rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep” (Romans 12:15) looks like, and how powerful it is to enter into another person’s highs and lows.

We have an amazing community group who love each other incredibly well. The night before my first surgery, they prayed over me. One of the men, with a twinkle in his eye, admonished me: "Sue, you may think this surgery is about getting a new hip, but it's not. It's about the people you're going to meet and minister to in the hospital. I just want you to remember—it's not about you, OK?" I know he said it to make me laugh, but his counsel bounced around in my head during both hospital stays. It allowed me to stay aware of the various people who came into my room, from doctors to nurses to housekeepers to the people delivering meal trays, praying, "How can I bless and encourage this person today, Lord?" It really WASN'T all about me!

I had heard from three different doctors, "You have two bad hips and they both need to be replaced." But I didn't sense the timing was right, especially with the expense of such huge surgeries and recovery. I learned yet again the importance of trusting God's timing; in February I turned 65 and crossed the amazing Medicare threshold, which covered basically everything. God's provision has been a huge part of this "adventure," including an exceptionally generous outpouring of gifts to a GoFundMe campaign for an expensive stem cell treatment that we had hoped would replace surgery, but it didn't. I learned again that the Lord is Jehovah Jireh, the God Who Provides (Genesis 22).

This adventure provided minute-by-minute practice in developing an "Attitude of Gratitude." During the first surgery, it seemed that every time I turned around there was another reason to say, "Thank You, Lord!" From the marvelous shock of waking up in the recovery room in no pain, to walking on my walker a couple of hours after surgery, to the joy of being able to stand again for the simple pleasure of brushing my teeth and washing my hands at the sink, to the delicious hospital food, to the lovely flowers friends brought, to the blessing of being able to fall back asleep after every

nighttime “visitor”—I was immersed in nonstop thankfulness.

The day after my second surgery, the Director of Food and Nutrition visited me to check on how the hospital was doing with the quality of the food and service. We had a delightful visit in which I was able to tell him about my immersion in thankfulness during my first hospital stay, but unfortunately I wasn't able to remember a lot of the things I was thankful for because pain meds made my brain fuzzy. “So,” I pointed to my journal next to my bed, “this time I brought my gratitude journal so I could record the many blessings despite the pain meds. And your food is one of them!” The director grinned and said, “Ah, so that's where the joy is coming from!” I loved that I was able to recognize a brother in Christ, and that he was able to recognize the connection between gratitude and joy.

The second surgery was a challenge for the surgeon because my hip bones are deformed from polio. I learned that there wasn't enough hip bone to anchor the new socket with screws, so she had to use surgical cement. She has high hopes that it will hold, but warned me that if the cement doesn't work over the long haul, “We'll be in big trouble.” So I started praying that the Lord would literally hold me together. Some of my astute friends pointed out that that is Jesus' job in Colossians 1:17: “In Him all things hold together.” The context is all of creation, so He can certainly handle one little hip!

I've already shared some of the other lessons I've learned in this adventure, about [how to handle fear](#) by sharing it with others and inviting the Lord into it and [how to handle unexpected grief](#).

But I'm pretty sure there are more lessons ahead. I just pray to keep my eyes open so I don't miss any of them.

*Next Day Addendum:*

I was right about there being more lessons, and I remembered one of them this morning as I easily stood up from my scooter to grab the coffee beans and mug from the cabinet for my morning cup of wake-up juice. After several years of not walking or standing because of the pain, I got out of a number of habits. Now I have to remind myself, “Hey! You can do \_\_\_\_\_ again!” I need to renew my thinking about what I can and can’t do, and in order to make these new ways of thinking permanent, I need to *practice* thinking differently. That’s how we experience spiritual transformation as well. One of my favorite verses is Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . .” We are transformed by intentionally submitting how we think and interpret life to the authority of God’s word. But we have to *practice* new ways of thinking in order to be transformed (as opposed to a momentary flicker of a thought).

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/lessons\\_from\\_a\\_hospital\\_bed](https://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/lessons_from_a_hospital_bed) on November 13, 2018.

---

## Keeping A Gratitude Journal

Some years ago Dr. Billy Graham was a guest on Oprah. I will never forget his answer to her question, “What are you most thankful for?”

He said, “Salvation given to us in Jesus Christ . . . and the way you have made people all over this country aware of the power of being grateful.”

I loved that he took advantage of the platform to share the

core of the gospel message, but also that he honored Oprah for making a difference in the culture by stressing gratitude the way she has. Millions of people have discovered the power of keeping a gratitude journal because of Oprah's testimony of how it impacted her life.

There's a difference between a grateful thought popping into our heads, even if we turn it into a prayer of gratitude, and the intentionality and physicality of daily writing down three things from that day for which we are grateful. There's something about writing with pen and ink on paper that carves the thoughts into our brains. (See my blog post [Pen > 'Puter](#))

There's also something about recording our gratitude that changes the way we think. We become more aware of the ways in which God blesses us with what I call His "hugs and kisses" throughout the day. Instead of taking for granted the fact that the traffic lights were all synced up to allow us to sail through green lights all the way to our destination, we say, "Oh, thank You, Lord!" light after light, our sense of wonder and appreciation enlarging with each intersection. When the rain starts literally the second after we climb into the car and slam the door shut, we say, "Oh Lord!! Bless You!" instead of saying, "Wow, that was lucky." When we wake up in the morning and realize we didn't have to get up and use the restroom, we see it as the blessing and gift that it is rather than taking it for granted.

I always suggest keeping a gratitude journal for those battling depression. If they are especially depressed, I suggest writing down ten things instead of three or five. When we are deep in the weeds of despair and hopelessness, it's easy to believe the lie that nobody cares, including God. But even those immersed in the mire of darkness can still find things to be grateful for: any body part that works, any body part that doesn't hurt, heating or air conditioning, a bed to sleep in, access to clean water to drink and bathe in, being surrounded by people who speak the same language, internet

access, a car, family members who still love them, a job, their memory, the ability to read . . . the list goes on and on, if they will pay attention. (Let me take a moment to point you to an excellent article on Bible.org by my dear friend Ann Golding: "[Helping a Friend Through the Darkness of Depression.](#)")

Several years ago, Ann Voskamp taught more millions of people to keep a gratitude journal in her book *One Thousand Gifts*. She explained that everything that God allows to happen to us is filtered through His love and grace, so even if it's horrible and painful, it is transformed into a gift for which we can say "Thank You."

One of my pastors regularly posts to Instagram a picture of the gifts he's grateful for, hashtagged with a number. Having started at #1000, he's at #538 today. Not surprisingly, JP [@jpokluda] is one of the most joy-filled people you'll ever meet. He lives immersed in always-conscious gratitude that overflows into joy.

It would be reasonable for you to wonder about MY gratitude journal, right?

Well, I kept one many years ago when I first learned about God's command to give thanks not only *IN* everything, (1 Thessalonians 5:18) but *FOR* everything (Ephesians 5:20). And an interesting thing happened: developing and maintaining an attitude of gratitude become a way of life for me, like breathing. Recently I realized that my "thank Yous" outnumber my "please" prayers by about a 9-to-1 margin. I guess the discipline of keeping a gratitude journal became a part of who I am.

And I'm good with that. :::smile:::

This blog post originally appeared at

# The Commencement Address I'll Never Get to Give

*May 20, 2014*

Graduations mean commencement addresses. Most of which are eminently forgettable, containing feel-good charges to go do great stuff and change the world. But in my experience, they're always given by men, who are some kind of celebrity.

I am neither.

But I have a few thoughts on practical life lessons that newly-minted graduates might use.

"Hey graduates, congratulations. You made it to the cap-and-gown stage. Not without a lot of help and prodding and prayers and frustration from your parents though, right? Thank them. There's not a single thing you are or do or have that they didn't have a part in. Thank them again.

"Speaking of thanking, one of the most important habits you can ever form is gratitude. Especially toward God. He is continually blessing you with everything from the ability to draw your next breath, to your ability to remember your name, to your ability to walk or drive and think and talk and get a job or more education. Thank Him for all those things. Regularly stop and ask yourself, "What would I really miss tomorrow if I didn't give thanks for it today?"—and then thank the Lord for it. A grateful heart is not a complaining heart, or a critical heart, or an entitled heart. Believe me, it will



make you a much better person to live with, or work with, or play with, or just be with.

“You’ve just finished many years of schooling, and you may have been indoctrinated with a bunch of hooey about how wonderful and special you are because of some well-meaning self-esteem curriculum. You may have thrown away dozens of ribbons or trophies you received just for showing up. Those days are over, because that was never real life. Self-esteem and self-confidence are only gained one way, the hard way: working hard to meet a challenge and not give up until you succeed. You earn self-confidence by doing, not by reciting platitudes in a mirror.

“If you haven’t read Dale Carnegie’s book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, read it. It’s a classic of how to understand people and how they like to be treated. The reason it’s so true is that the book fleshes out the second great commandment, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’

“For example, when you see a service person, like a waitstaff or toll booth attendant, call him or her by name. One’s name is the sweetest sound on earth to each person, and service personnel are often treated as if they were invisible. Using someone’s name says, ‘You are *not* invisible to me, and I honor you for your service.’ Prospective employees and spouses have been known to disqualify themselves because of the way they treated people with disrespect or contempt when out in public.

“Everyone has an invisible tattoo on their forehead that says ‘Please encourage me.’ Most people have an invisible speech bubble over their heads that says, ‘Do I matter? Please show me I matter.’ Every single person you will ever meet is infinitely valuable as the handcrafted masterpiece of the Creator God, and they deserve to be honored and respected simply because God made them and He loves them.

“Some final pithy words to the wise.

“Listen to your body. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, and it will tell you what it needs.

“Learn to recognize the nudges of the Holy Spirit, and follow them.

“Pray for your future spouse. He or she is out there somewhere. Your prayers WILL make a difference.

“If you wonder if you should be doing something, you probably shouldn’t. If the thought, ‘Should I be doing this?’ even enters your head, it’s an alarm.

“Don’t believe everything you think.

“When you’re on a road trip, never pass up an opportunity to use the restroom. Consider taking some disinfectant and a roll of paper towels with you, and leave it cleaner than you found it.

“And finally, do one good thing every day that no one will see but God. It will build your character and make deposits in your heavenly bank account that you’ll forget about, but He won’t.

“The Lord bless you and keep you. Your real education is about to begin.”

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/the-commencement-address-ill-never-get-to-give/](https://blogs.bible.org/the-commencement-address-ill-never-get-to-give/)

---

# Turning Thanksgiving Inside

# Out

Time to be thinking about the holidays. Next one up, Thanksgiving.

Oh joy.

It's not too hard to come up with a list of reasons to grump about the Thanksgiving holiday:

- Lots of work in the kitchen
- Lots of cleaning to do
- Lots of cooking to do
- Lots of buying food to do
- Crowds in the stores as we prepare
- The stores already have their Christmas decorations out—like since Halloween
- Spending time with family where the worst in people easily spills out
- Too much football on TV
- Too much food

But to cultivate a biblical mindset, we can take this list and turn it inside out to reveal the embarrassment of riches and lavishment of blessings that are attached to each item by invoking our own personal thanksgiving:

**Lots of work in the kitchen:** Thank You, Lord, that I have a fully functioning kitchen! Thank You for my stove and my oven and my refrigerator and my sink and my counters and my storage of my many many kitchen items.

**Lots of cleaning to do:** Thank You, Lord, for running water that is safe and tastes good. Thank you for a sink that drains. Thank You for buckets. Thank You for dusting cloths and my vacuum. Thank You for the energy to clean!

**Lots of cooking to do:** Thank You, Lord, for recipes. Thank You

that my stove and oven work! Thank You for the various pots and pans that enable me to cook more than one item at a time. Thank You that I can store cooked things in my fridge until it's time to bring them out, and thank You for the microwave to zap them to serving temperature.

**Lots of buying food to do:** Oh Lord! Thank You for money to buy our Thanksgiving meal! Thank You for well-stocked grocery stores with a dazzling number of choices. Thank You for 24/7 electricity that powers refrigerators and freezers, both in my home and in the stores, which means I don't have to go to a market every single day for provisions. Thank You that I have the luxury of making a list, driving to the store, and getting everything on my list because it will all be there and I don't even have to think about it.

**Crowds in the stores as we prepare:** Thank You, Lord, that all those people also have the money to be able to make our purchases. Thank You for a culture where people will wait in line instead of all demanding to be served first. Thank You for stores to go to in the first place.

**The stores already have their Christmas decorations out-like since Halloween:** Thank You, Lord, that we live in a place that still celebrates Your birth even if many forget YOU. Thank You for Christmas decorations period. It means we are in a country that understands the importance of Your impact on our culture.

**Spending time with family where the worst in people easily spills out:** Thank You, Lord, for giving us families. Thank You for people to love, even if sometimes it needs to be in Your strength because we don't like them right then. Thank You for these people You chose to be in our lives. Thank You that being with family, even if it's church family and not bio-family, means we are not alone and isolated.

**Too much football on TV:** Thank You, Lord, that we even have a television. Thank You for a culture and a lifestyle with the

luxury of offering entertainment instead of constant, unrelenting survival mode. Thank You for living room furniture to sit in or lie on while we watch TV. Thank You that the football is only for a few days and not every day!

**Too much food:** Thank You, Lord! Thank You! Thank You! Millions of people are starving and cannot even imagine the abundance of food at our meal. We are so blessed for every single dish and every single item we get to prepare and serve and then eat. You have lavished blessing and honor on us, and we don't deserve any of it. Thank You. Thank You.

© 2008 Probe Ministries

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/turning\\_thanksgiving\\_inside\\_out](http://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/turning_thanksgiving_inside_out) on November 18, 2008.

---

## Amazing Grace in John Newton – A Christian Witness Lived and Sung

### “How Sweet the Sound”

Are you familiar with the classic song *Amazing Grace*? You probably are. Do you know the inspiring story behind its songwriter? Maybe like I did, you *think* you know the real story, but you don't.

John Newton was an eighteenth century British slave trader who had a dramatic faith experience during a storm at sea. He gave his life to God, left the slave trade, became a pastor, and

wrote hymns. “Amazing Grace! (how sweet the sound),” Newton wrote, “That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.”[\[1\]](#) He played a significant role in the movement to abolish the slave trade.

Newton’s song and story have inspired millions. *Amazing Grace* has been played at countless funerals and memorial services, sung at civil rights events and in churches, and even hit pop music charts when Judy Collins recorded it. It’s loved the world over. In South Korea, a local audience asked a coworker and me to sing them the English version; they responded by singing it back to us in Korean.

Newton wrote the lyrics, but the tune we know today did not become linked with them until about 1835, after his death.[\[2\]](#) My university roommate and I used to try to see how many different tunes would fit the *Amazing Grace* lyrics. My favorites were *Joy to the World* (the Christmas carol), *Ghost Riders in the Sky*, and *House of the Rising Sun*. Try them sometime. They work!

Jonathan Aitken has written a biography titled *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace*.[\[3\]](#) Aitken sees some parallels between his own life and his subject’s. Aitken was once a prominent British parliamentarian and Cabinet member, but perjury landed him in prison where his life took a spiritual turn. He’s now active in prison ministry and Christian outreach.

John Newton’s journey from slave trader to pastor and hymn writer is stirring. But it has some surprising twists. You see, Newton only became a slave-ship captain *after* he placed his faith in Christ. And he left the slave trade not because of his spiritual convictions, but for health reasons.

## Lost and Found

Newton was the prototypical “bad boy.” His devout Christian mother, who hoped he would become a minister, died when he was six. He says that through much of his youth and life at sea, “I loved sin and was unwilling to forsake it.”<sup>{4}</sup> At times, “I pretended to talk of virtue,” he wrote, “yet my delight and habitual practice was wickedness.”<sup>{5}</sup> He espoused a “freethinking” rationalist philosophy and renounced the Christian faith.<sup>{6}</sup>

Flogged and demoted by the Navy for desertion, he became depressed, considered suicide, and thought of murdering his captain.<sup>{7}</sup> Traded to work on a slave ship, Newton says, “I was exceedingly wretched. . . . I not only sinned with a high hand myself, but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion.”<sup>{8}</sup>

In West Africa he partnered with a slave trader and negotiated with African chiefs to obtain slaves.<sup>{9}</sup> Life was good, he recalled. “We lived as we pleased, business flourished, and our employer was satisfied.”<sup>{10}</sup> Aitken, the biographer, says Newton engaged in sexual relations with female slaves.<sup>{11}</sup>

One day on another ship, Newton was reading—casually, “to pass away the time”—an edition of Thomas à Kempis’ classic, *On the Imitation of Christ*. He wondered, “What if these things were true?” Dismayed, he “shut the book quickly.”<sup>{12}</sup> Newton called himself a terrible “blasphemer” who had rejected God completely.<sup>{13}</sup> But then, as Forrest Gump might say, God showed up.

That night, a violent storm flooded the ship with water. Fearing for his life, Newton surprised himself by saying, “The Lord have mercy on us!” Spending long hours at the ship’s helm, he reflected on his life and rejection of God. At first, he thought his shortcomings too great to be forgiven. Then, he says, “I . . . began to think of . . . Jesus whom I had so

often derided . . . of His life and of His death . . . for sins not His own, but for those who in their distress should put their trust in Him.”[{14}](#)

In coming days, the New Testament story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) particularly impressed him. He became convinced of the truth of Jesus’ message and his own need for it. “I was no longer an atheist,” he writes. “I was sincerely touched with a sense of undeserved mercy in being brought safe through so many dangers. . . . I was a new man.”[{15}](#)

Newton discovered that the “new man” would not become perfect. Maturation would be a process, as we’ll see.

## **From Slave-Ship Captain to Pastor**

After his dramatic experience at sea, Newton saw changes in his life. He attended church, read spiritual books, prayed, and spoke outwardly of his commitment. But his faith and behavior would take many twists on the road toward maturity.[{16}](#)

Newton set sail again on a slave ship, seeing no conflict between slaving and his new beliefs. Later he led three voyages as a slave-ship captain. Newton studied the Bible. He held Sunday worship services for his crew on board ship.[{17}](#)

Church services on a slave ship? This seems absolutely disgusting today. How could a dedicated Christian participate in slave trading? Newton, like many of his contemporaries, was still a work-in-progress. Slavery was generally accepted in his world as a pillar of British economy; few yet spoke against it. As Aitken points out, this cultural disconnect doesn’t excuse Christian slave trading, but it does help explain it.

During my youth in the US south, I was appalled by racism I observed, more so when church members practiced it. [I](#)



[concluded](#) that some merely masqueraded as followers of Jesus. Others had genuine faith but—by choice or confusion—did not faithfully follow God. It takes years for some to change. Others never do. Aitken observes that in 1751, Newton's spiritual conscience "was at least twenty years away from waking up to the realization that the Christian gospel and human slavery were irreconcilable."[\[18\]](#)

Two days before he was to embark on his fourth slave-trading voyage as ship's captain, a mysterious illness temporarily paralyzed Newton. His doctors advised him not to sail. The replacement captain was later murdered in a shipboard slave uprising.[\[19\]](#)

Out of the slave trade, Newton became a prominent public official in Liverpool. He attended Christian meetings and grew in his faith. The prominent speaker George Whitfield encouraged him.[\[20\]](#) Life still brought temptations. Newton engaged in the common practice of accepting kickbacks until a business ethics pamphlet by Methodism founder John Wesley prompted him to stop, at significant loss of income.[\[21\]](#)

Eventually, Newton sought to become an ordained minister, but opposing church leaders prevented this for six years. Intervention by the Earl of Dartmouth—benefactor of Dartmouth College in the US—helped launch his formal ministry.[\[22\]](#) Newton was to significantly impact a young Member of Parliament who would help rescue an oppressed people and a nation's character.

## **Newton and Wilberforce: Faith in Action**

William Wilberforce was a rising star in Parliament and seemed destined for political greatness. As a child he had often heard John Newton speak but later rejected the faith. As an adult, conversations with a Cambridge professor had helped lead him to God. He considered leaving Parliament and entering

the ministry. In 1785, he sought the advice of his old pastor, Newton.

Newton advised Wilberforce not to leave politics. "I hope the Lord will make him a blessing, both as a Christian and as a statesman," Newton later explained.[{23}](#) His advice proved pivotal. Wilberforce began attending Newton's church and spending time with him privately. Newton became his mentor.[{24}](#)

Perhaps you've seen the motion picture *Amazing Grace* that portrays Wilberforce's twenty-year parliamentary struggle to outlaw the trading of slaves. If you missed it in theaters, I encourage you see it on DVD. It was after spending a day with Newton that Wilberforce recorded in his diary his decision to focus on abolishing the slave trade.[{25}](#) During [the arduous abolition campaign](#), Wilberforce sometimes considered giving up and quitting Parliament. Newton encouraged him to persist, reminding him of another public figure, the biblical Daniel, who, Newton said, "trusted in the Lord, was faithful . . . and . . . though he had enemies they could not prevail against him."[{26}](#)

Newton's biblical worldview had matured to the point that he became active in the abolition movement. In 1788, he published a widely circulated pamphlet, *Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade*. "I hope it will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me," he wrote, "that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders."[{27}](#) His pamphlet detailed horrors of the slave trade and argued against it on moral and practical grounds.

Abolitionists sent a copy to every member of both Houses of Parliament. Newton testified before important parliamentary committees. He described chains, overcrowded quarters, separated families, sexual exploitation, flogging, beating, butchering. The Christian slave-ship captain who once was blind to his own moral hypocrisy now could see.[{28}](#) Jonathan

Aitken says, “Newton’s testimony was of vital importance in converting public opinion to the abolitionist cause.”[{29}](#)

Wilberforce and his colleagues finally prevailed. In early 1807 Britain outlawed the slave trade. On December 21 of that year, grace finally led John Newton home to his Maker.

## Lessons from a Life of Amazing Grace

John Newton encountered “many dangers, toils, and snares” on his life’s voyage from slaver to pastor, hymn writer, mentor, and abolitionist. What lessons does his life hold? Here are a few.

*Moral maturation can take time.* Newton the morally corrupt slave trader embraced faith in Jesus, then continued slave trading. Only years later did his moral and spiritual conscience catch up on this issue with the high principles of the One he followed. We should hold hypocrites accountable, but realize that blinders don’t always come off quickly. One bumper sticker I like reads, “Please be patient; God is not finished with me yet.”

*Humility became a hallmark of Newton’s approach to life.* He learned to recognize his shortcomings. While revising some of his letters for publication, he noted in his diary his failures to follow his own advice: “What cause have I for humiliation!” he exclaimed. “Alas! . . . How defective [I am] in observing myself the rules and cautions I propose to others!”[{30}](#) Near the end of his life, Newton told a visitor, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.”[{31}](#)

*Newton related Jesus’ message to current events and everyday life.* For him, faith was not some dull, dusty, irrelevant relic but a living relationship with God, having immense personal and social relevance. He grew to see its import in fighting the slave trade. He used both the Bible and

friendship to encourage Wilberforce. He tied his teaching to the news of the day, seeking to connect people's thoughts with the beliefs that had changed his life.{32}

*Newton was grateful for what he saw as God's providence.* Surviving the storm at sea that helped point him to faith was a prime example, but there were many others. As a child, he was nearly impaled in a riding accident.{33} Several times he narrowly missed possible drowning.{34} A shooting accident that could have killed him merely burned part of his hat.{35} He often expressed gratitude to God.

Have you ever considered writing your own epitaph? What will it say? Here's part of what Newton wrote for his epitaph. It's inscribed on his tomb: "John Newton. Once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy." {36}

## Notes

1. From Olney Hymns, 1779; in John Newton, *Out of the Depths, "Revised and Updated for Today's Readers by Dennis R. Hillman"* (Grand Rapids: Kregel 2003), 9. Newton's autobiography was originally published in 1764 as *An Authentic Narrative*, a collection of letters between an anonymous writer (Newton) and a pastor. Newton was not yet ordained when he wrote the letters.

2. Jonathan Aitken, *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 233.

3. Aitken, op. cit.

4. Newton, op. cit., 24.

5. Ibid., 33.

6. Ibid., 34.

7. Ibid., 34-37; 40-41.
8. Ibid., 44-45.
9. Ibid., 57-64; Aitken, op. cit., 63-64.
10. Newton, op. cit., 60.
11. Aitken, op. cit., 64.
12. Newton, op. cit., 69.
13. Ibid., 65, 68.
14. Ibid., 69-80; quotations from 71, 75.
15. Newton, op. cit., 82-83.
16. Aitken, op. cit., 85 ff.
17. Ibid., 91, ff.; 106, 107.
18. Ibid., 112.
19. Ibid., 125-126.
20. Ibid., 127-137.
21. Ibid., 140-141.
22. Ibid., 143-177; 193.
23. Ibid., 304.
24. Ibid., 299-308.
25. Ibid., 310 ff.
26. Ibid., 315 for the quote about Daniel; 312-316 for background on Wilberforce's thoughts about quitting.
27. Ibid., 319.
28. Ibid., 319-328.

29. Ibid., 319.

30. Ibid., 243.

31. Ibid., 347.

32. Ibid., 293-296. See also Newton, op. cit., 154.

33. Newton, op. cit., 23.

34. Ibid., 23, 66-67, 94-95.

35. Ibid., 85.

36. Aitken, op. cit., 350, 356.

© 2008 Probe Ministries