

What is Grace?

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The notion of Grace is suggestive not only of a dimension of being beyond us yet palpably right here, but also of a guidance and support profoundly attuned to our deepest needs.

In Grace there often is an implication or felt sense of sacred intervention, a not-by-us engineered doing that serves our essential well-being, often in ways that are far from expected.

A serendipitous infusion of what may quite convincingly appear to be more-than-human guidance – this is Grace, however ragged or rough its delivery may be, however unreceptive its reception may be.

Grace arrives whether or not we recognize it. And it does not cease arriving.

The very consideration of Grace conveys a sense of something unexpected and uncannily supportive – though it may not feel supportive at the time! – showing up on our doorstep, permeated with undeniable significance.

Grace is a gift – and more often than not a surprising gift – regardless of its wrapping or manner of arrival.

Somewhere in us there persists a longing for Grace, a longing to receive it and let it carry us where it may – and at the same time there may be a longing for Grace to arrive in a particular form, which of course does not necessarily happen.

Sometimes what we most need is what we assume we least need or don't need, and Grace serves what we most need, which often means that it doesn't seem to us to be Grace at all, but rather just a nasty or unfortunate turn of the wheel.

Grace, however, is neither good luck nor the inevitable result of our good deeds. It is much more mysterious than that, responding as it does to more than just the obviously visible and known.

It's important to recognize that Grace takes much more into account than we can see, being unimaginably intimate with what is out of sight. Grace won't let us down, even if in the short term it deposits us in places or situations that we don't like.

May we let Grace guide our days; may we let Grace flow through us; may we allow Grace to come to us – such prayers are but confessions of intuiting or wanting to host the presence of something gloriously Other, something that, sooner or later, is recognized to be none other than part of what we truly are.

May we not limit Grace to how we think it should manifest. May we not decide beforehand how Grace should look or behave. May our prayers for Grace reach without grabbing, ask without begging, and ready us without leaving us on hold. May we recognize Grace for what it is, and remain grateful for it.

Grace is the arrival and expression of not-by-us (at least as we ordinarily conceive of ourselves) orchestrated direction and support, emerging without any strategy or manipulation on our part.

When Grace shows up, we are guided in directions that we very likely would have otherwise overlooked, rejected, or not seen. The gift of Grace is an astonishing thing, no matter how often we have witnessed it. It always feels fresh.

In the same sense that prayer could be said to be a divine

personal, Grace could be said to be a divine intrusion.

To the extent that prayer reaches up, Grace reaches down. The gravity of the situation demands it.

Some conceive of Grace as the tangible entry of our deepest dimensions into our everyday life and consciousness, appearing in whatever form fits our prevailing frame of reference. Others conceive of Grace as the tangible entry of something far beyond us.

When it comes to Grace, it doesn't matter if we're religious, agnostic, or atheistic. It doesn't matter what our status is. It doesn't matter how high we've been, or how low. Grace simply persists.

When Grace shows up, we usually register it at least to some degree, whether we acknowledge this or not. We cannot engineer Grace, but we can deepen our receptivity to it, making more room for it, knowing that we don't know when it will show up, nor in what form it will arrive.

In the same sense that Life could be said to be the Poetry of Being, and Intimacy the Poetry of Relationship, and Beauty the Poetry of Appearance, Grace could be said to be the Poetry of Opportunity.

May Grace touch you, and may you know that it is touching you. Feel it now. Don't mind your mind's denial of it.

Invite it in, even though it's already here. Don't make an idol out of it, for it is as natural to us as our breath. And rest in its Mystery, knowing you'll never really figure it out, and don't need to.

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