

GRACE &  
GRATITUDE  
FOR  
EVERYDAY  
**LIFE**



MICHELE HOWE

“Michele Howe’s newest book, *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life*, is another excellent addition to her burgeoning collection of life-changing books. Don’t take my word for it. Pick up a copy and read the first chapter—I guarantee you won’t put it down any time soon. Then buy a couple of books for your close friends and family who may need inspiration in life.”

—Rick Johnson, best-selling author of  
*How to Speak so Your Husband Will Listen* and  
*When Grandparents Become Parents*

“Grace and gratitude are two very powerful strategies in living a peaceful and victorious life. Michele has done a phenomenal job in providing practical examples, prayers, prompts, and specific action steps to help you develop habits of grace and gratitude. This book holds the power of testimonies and truth to help you unlock a deeper relationship with both Christ and others.”

—Keri Kitchen, MEd, LPCC, NCC  
Faith and Focus Coach and  
Host of *The Every Day Royalty Podcast*

“Life can be so painful and disappointing and discouraging. How do we turn pain into dancing, sorrow into joy, and hopelessness into victory? *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life* will show you how to do just that. Through everyday life challenges, Michele guides you to love God more deeply, offer him your hurt, accept complete grace, and walk in gratitude.”

—Lucille Williams, Author of *From Me to We*,  
*The Intimacy You Crave*, and *The Impossible Kid*

“Gratitude empowers us to be less judgmental, more tolerant, and graciously forgiving in the midst of rugged circumstances and heart hurts. In *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life*, author Michele Howe refocuses challenges through the lens of eternity where we find help, hope, and the reason we can live joyfully.”

—PeggySue Wells, best-selling author of 30 books,  
including *The Ten Best Decisions a Single Mom Can Make*, *Homeless for the Holidays*, and *The Patent*

“In a world of contagious negativity, *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life* is a timely and gracious heart-check. Michele’s gift of storytelling combined with her godly wisdom serves as a comprehensive guide to managing our attitudes and guarding against those things that would diminish the light we are called to be as believers. You hold in your hands a book packed with practical strategies to make gratitude your default response. When you turn the last page, you will understand that grace and gratitude are not only antidotes to negative emotions but weapons to wield that bring joy and contentment regardless of circumstances.”

—**Kathy Schwanke, speaker, Bible study author, mentor**

“Author Michele Howe had me at ‘grace.’ *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life* gives this grin gal plenty to smile about. Like many of you, I’ve been going through some difficult circumstances. Trials that make me feel all alone. This book reminds me where to hang my hope, as I look to God for my contentment and joy. What do grace and gratitude have to do with everyday life? Everything! Or at least, they help make our experiences and perspective better along the way. Thanks to Michele for yet another helpful guide to finding abundant life as we change our focus from self to the Savior.”

—**Kathy Carlton Willis, God’s Grin Gal, speaker  
Author of *The Grin Gal’s Guide to Joy***

“We all face disappointments and struggles. For our tough moments, *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life* offers the way to peace. Michele Howe brings uplifting insights through authentic personal stories and scripture. I recommend her inspiring recipe for contentment to all who hunger for hope.”

—**Tina Yeager, life coach, therapist, award-winning author, and host of the *Flourish-Meant Podcast***

# Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life



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Michele Howe

## **Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life**

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Published by Hendrickson Publishers  
an imprint of Hendrickson Publishing Group  
Hendrickson Publishers, LLC  
P. O. Box 3473  
Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473  
www.hendricksonpublishinggroup.com

ISBN 978-1-4964-7163-5

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*Printed in the United States of America*

*First Printing — July 2022*

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022933308

*To Beau Hudson Ross*

*A blessed gift and a joy to behold.*

*Welcome to the world.*

*May your life shine brightly for Jesus!*





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## Acknowledgments

I've said it before, and it bears repeating: Every book you hold in your hands is the product of the combined efforts and talents of many gifted individuals. While an author's name alone is featured on the front cover of a book, what you don't see are the names of the highly skilled people who work tirelessly behind the scenes. As the author of twenty-plus books, I've always been in awe of those who labor on behalf of myself and my work. I am both grateful and humbled by these individuals and their excellent work every single time I first hold a new book in my hands.

Let me share some names so that you, dear reader, can join me in saying thank you to these marvelously talented and God-honoring individuals whom I am so thankful to call my friends from afar. First, thank you, Patricia Anders; as editorial director at Hendrickson Publishers, you hold many responsibilities, and I cannot imagine the heavy workload you carry every day—seemingly with perfect ease. I am so thankful for you and for the friendship we now enjoy, and I'm so excited we can say together, "We did it. Again! Let's rejoice and give thanks!" Thanks also to assistant editor Sarah Welch and editorial assistant Kate Walker for your thoughtful and expert work on my book!

To Meg Rusick for marketing and promotion, Phil Frank for typesetting, Dave Pietrantonio for getting my book to the printer and out to the world, and to Sarah Slattery for her beautiful cover

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design, I thank you. Again. And again. And yet again. You are all much appreciated!

I also want to express my kindest appreciation to Bob Hostetler, who happily represents me at the Steve Laube Agency. I appreciate you and your diligent work on my behalf.



## Introduction

**A** book is born in the mind of an author when they personally sense a felt need and then observe others struggling in similar fashion. This book, *Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life*, was first conceived in my heart and mind when I discovered the life-changing power of saying “thank you” to God no matter what the circumstance. This simple yet often difficult response is paramount in equipping us as Christ-followers to live as overcomers as we journey through life. I’m convinced of it. As we learn to make grace-filled gratitude our default response to every situation we face, we will discover that God’s amazing peace envelops us from every side.

Instead of grumbling or grouching when we are disappointed or displeased, however, the apostle Paul encourages us to do as follows:

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. (Phil. 2:14)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6–7)

## Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life

Giving thanks, no matter what is happening all around us (or within us), isn't optional. It's simple obedience. And we know from countless passages throughout Scripture that God expects obedience from his children—not to harm us, but to make us both whole and holy.

On the worst of days, when we have a hard time finding something to be thankful about, it's always helpful to have some perspective. For example, do you have safe drinking water? More than one billion people in the world don't. Do you have enough food? More than 800 million don't. Do you have good eyesight, good hearing, decent clothes to wear, employment, family or friends who care about you, a safe place to live? The list goes on. If you think hard enough, you'll soon discover that you always have plenty of wonderful reasons to offer up thanks to your heavenly Father—your very breath of life is one of them! The problem is that most of us are in our own heads too much. We miss out on what's going on around us—especially in the beauty of nature, through a breathtaking sunset or the scent of a rose. All around us, God's grace showers us. And for this, we should indeed be grateful.

Throughout the pages of *Grace & Gratitude*, you'll discover how ordinary men and women have learned to give thanks in the face of suffering, trials, and faith-testing obstacles. You'll see that as they leaned in toward Jesus for the grace and strength to carry on, they were transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that we all become humble students of God's word, and that we take him at his word and trust him hour by hour. He is indeed equally worthy of both our trust and our obedience—and, of course, our undying thanks!



# Chapter 1

## Why Grace & Gratitude?

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

Philippians 2:14–15

*Gratitude never comes from avoiding difficulty but from finding yourself sustained through it. The degree of joy rises to the degree of gratitude, and the level of gratitude corresponds to the level of God's grace experienced in our suffering. God's sustaining providence brings relief, even when life becomes unspeakably difficult. Cultivating thankfulness today will allow us to cling to God's goodness and mercy in our darkest hours.*

*Randy Alcorn*

**W**hy grace? Why gratitude? Perhaps the better question is, why not grace and gratitude for everyday life? God, as our heavenly Father, knows us in intimate detail and carefully oversees every step (as well as every misstep) of our lives. So why does God place such importance on honing a

## Grace & Gratitude for Everyday Life

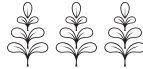
consistently grace-filled, grateful heart? In short, because God knows how we thrive!

As we search through Scripture, we find a common theme presented throughout both the Old and New Testaments. That common cord began in the book of Genesis and was completed in the final words of the book of Revelation. It is clear that God commands his children to be thankful, and that a grateful heart is only possible when we are equipped by God's empowering grace. God repeatedly speaks through biblical characters in the Old Testament, instructing his beloved ones to be different and set apart from other nations in many ways—mostly by consistently adopting a humble, grateful attitude.

In the New Testament, Jesus and his apostles preach the same message: Be grateful. Live gratefully. Speak words of gratitude. As we study God's word, we read over and over again this same dynamic refrain, "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation" (Phil. 2:14). No matter what our difficulties might be, no matter how trying the circumstances are or how much suffering we're enduring, God's call for us is to respond gratefully, humbly, and with complete faith in his provision and outcome.

This is no small feat! However, when God issues a directive, he also provides the means to fulfill it. His promises to provide for our every need in each situation include every imaginable hardship we may be facing or may be called to face in the future. God calls Christians as his set-apart children who are to view all of life through the timeless, robust lens of eternity. As we choose to make gratitude our default response, God's supernatural grace, hope, and love swoop in to sustain us. Life is hard enough without falling into the self-sabotaging habit of grumbling and complaining, which then spins us into a downward spiral. God knows this, and if we're honest, deep down, we

know it too. As we delve into the principle of honoring God by humbly trusting him, his light will begin to shine in our hearts and upon our difficulties. Because in God’s economy, obedience is the supernatural key that unlocks the door to sustaining faith, hope, and love.



We can learn to become grateful despite any troubling circumstance, private pain, or personal disappointment. As we learn more about who God is and who he promises to be for us, we can respond with gratitude and humble, grace-filled trust. And we can be sure that our faith will grow stronger and more robust as we seek to obey God every day by intentionally choosing to say “thank you” no matter what the circumstances. “The more you suffer the greater your capacity to serve the Lord” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Learning to respond with a heart that beats with gratitude—even when we’re facing what we might deem the worst scenario possible—allows us to receive God’s supernatural grace, goodness, and constant provision. God wants us to be so sure of his faithfulness that whether we’re facing good or bad circumstances, we can be confident of his sovereignty and his divine work to bring about both the good he wants for us and the glory that will be attributed to him in the process.

If you’re still not convinced that a response of faith-bolstered, grace-filled gratitude is the best choice we can make, then keep on reading! God has great things in store for those who take him at his word, and he wants each of us to have the ability to live above and beyond our fickle emotions and ever-changing circumstances. This journey all begins and ends with a heart in tune with our heavenly Father’s perfect love for us.



## Take-away Action Thought

This week I will be mindful about the power of honoring a grateful heart, even in the midst of challenging circumstances. I will determine to give thanks and cease grumbling, because I know that God is carefully overseeing every event in my life, whether large or small, and that I can trust him completely.

## My Heart's Cry to You, O Lord

Father, I want to respond to every challenge, every difficulty, and every unwanted circumstance in humble trust, knowing that you are totally aware of what is happening in my life. Help me to choose grace-filled gratitude over grumbling as I exercise my faith muscles, knowing you intend only good for me. Equip me through the supernatural enabling of the Holy Spirit to obey your word and rest in complete assurance that you are always with me, sustaining me, strengthening me, and holding me close. Amen.

## Practicing Grace & Gratitude

1. *Grace & gratitude from God.* “You will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.” This week, I will direct my focus toward the heavens whenever I face something that challenges me to respond with obedient, faith-driven gratitude.
2. *Grace & gratitude in me.* “You may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Each evening, I will spend a few

## *Why Grace & Gratitude?*

minutes in prayer asking the Lord to help me to see my difficulties and challenges as tools to equip me to better serve him. I will spend time specifically giving thanks for God's perfect provision for me that day.

3. *Grace & gratitude in life.* "Do everything without grumbling or arguing." Each day, I will reflect on my attitude and be mindful about whether or not my first response to unexpected or unwanted circumstances was one of humble acceptance or sinful grumbling.