THE DAILY BREAD

The Magnificat of the Beloved



How Grace Works in a Woman's Life

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

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Cooperating With the Life God Gives

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INTRODUCTION

Grace in the Life You Actually Live

A woman may understand that grace is the life of God in the soul, received at Baptism and restored in Confession, and still not quite know how grace actually works in her daily life. Does grace simply make her holy while she waits passively? Does it zap away her faults if she prays hard enough? Why, if she is in a state of grace, does she still struggle with the same sins, the same wounds, the same patterns, year after year? The doctrine of grace can remain abstract, a truth she believes but does not know how to live, so that she possesses the life of God without quite knowing how to cooperate with it, how to let it heal her wounds and transform her life in the concrete reality of who she actually is.

This book is about how grace actually works in a woman's life. It will dispel the idea that grace is magic, showing that it is a real transformation requiring her cooperation; it will show how a woman cooperates with grace, neither passive nor self-powered; how to live in the state of grace as the foundation of everything; how grace meets and heals the specific wounds a woman carries; the channels through which grace flows into a life; how grace works even when a woman does not feel it; and how grace transforms a woman slowly, over a lifetime. The aim is to make the doctrine of grace practical, so that a woman knows not only what grace is but how to cooperate with it, how to let the life of God actually work in the life she is living.

By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. — 1 Corinthians 15:10

Saint Paul describes exactly how grace works, that he is what he is by the grace of God, that this grace was not in vain, and that though he worked hard, it was not he but the grace of God working with him, a perfect picture of grace and cooperation together. This book will show a woman how to live that way: understanding that grace is not magic; cooperating with grace; living in the state of grace; letting grace meet her wounds; drawing on the channels of grace; trusting grace when she does not feel it; and letting grace transform her over a lifetime. A woman may possess the life of God without knowing how to live from it. This book will show her how grace works in the life she actually lives.

CHAPTER ONE

Grace Is Not Magic

A Real Transformation, Not a Spell

The first thing to understand about how grace works is that it is not magic, not a spell that zaps away a woman's faults or makes her holy without her involvement, but a real transformation that works through her cooperation over time. Understanding that grace is not magic but a genuine transformation requiring a woman's response corrects a common misconception and prepares her to cooperate with grace rightly.

Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. — 2 Corinthians 6:1

Not a Magic Fix

Grace does not work like magic, instantly removing a woman's faults or making her holy without effort, for it is not a spell but a life that must be lived and cooperated with. There is a temptation to imagine grace as a kind of magic, a divine force that, if a woman prays hard enough or receives the sacraments often enough, will instantly fix her faults, erase her struggles, and make her holy without her involvement, but this is not how grace works, for grace is not a magic fix but a real life given to be lived, a transformation that works through a woman's cooperation and over time, not a spell that changes her without her. This means a woman should not expect grace to remove her struggles magically or to make her holy while she remains passive, for grace works not as magic but as a real transformation that requires her response, so that her disappointment at still struggling is often a misunderstanding of how grace actually works. The woman who understands grace is not a magic fix cooperates with it as a real transformation rather than waiting for a spell. Grace is not a magic fix, not a spell that instantly removes a woman's faults, but a real life given to be lived and cooperated with over time, so that it works through her response rather than without her.

Grace Can Be Received in Vain

The Scripture warns that grace can be received in vain, which means a woman can possess grace and fail to cooperate with it, so that grace requires her active response to bear fruit. The Scripture's warning not to receive the grace of God in vain reveals something crucial about how grace works, that it can be received and yet be fruitless if a woman does not cooperate with it, so that grace is not an automatic force that transforms regardless of her response but a gift that bears fruit only when she works together with it, able to be received in vain if she fails to cooperate. This means grace depends on a

woman's cooperation to bear fruit, for it can be received in vain, so that she cannot be passive but must actively work together with the grace she has received, letting it work in her rather than leaving it fruitless through neglect. The woman who knows grace can be received in vain cooperates actively with it, so that it is not fruitless in her. Grace can be received in vain, for a woman can possess grace and fail to cooperate with it, so that grace requires her active response to bear fruit rather than working automatically regardless of her.

Why You Still Struggle

Understanding that grace is not magic explains why a woman in grace still struggles, for grace heals and transforms gradually through cooperation, not instantly, so that ongoing struggle is not a sign grace has failed but the normal shape of its slow work. A woman may be troubled that, though she is in a state of grace and receives the sacraments, she still struggles with the same sins and wounds, and may conclude that grace is not working, but this misunderstands grace, for since grace is not magic but a gradual transformation worked through cooperation over time, ongoing struggle is not a sign of grace failing but the normal condition of a life being slowly healed and transformed, the work not yet complete. This means a woman need not despair at her continued struggles, for they do not mean grace has failed but that its transformation is still underway, a slow work that does not remove all struggle at once, so that her perseverance through struggle is part of how grace works. The woman who understands why she still struggles sees her ongoing battles as the normal shape of grace's slow work, not its failure. Why you still struggle is explained by grace being not magic but a gradual transformation, so that ongoing struggle is not a sign grace has failed but the normal shape of its slow, cooperative work.

CHAPTER TWO

Cooperating With Grace

Your Part and God's Part

Because grace works through cooperation, a woman must understand her part and God's part, how grace and her own freedom work together, so that she is neither passive, waiting for grace to do everything, nor self-powered, trying to transform herself without grace. Understanding how to cooperate with grace, the working together of God's grace and a woman's freedom, shows her the active yet dependent posture by which grace actually transforms a life.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. — John 15:5

Neither Passive Nor Self-Powered

Cooperating with grace means avoiding two errors, the passivity that waits for grace to do everything while a woman does nothing, and the self-reliance that tries to transform herself by her own power without grace. There are two ways to misunderstand cooperation with grace, by passivity, imagining that since grace does the work a woman need only wait and do nothing, and by self-reliance, imagining that she must transform herself by her own effort and willpower, as though grace were not needed, but both are wrong, for grace works neither by a woman's passivity nor by her unaided effort but by her active cooperation with the grace God gives. This means a woman cooperates with grace by avoiding both passivity and self-reliance, neither sitting back and waiting for grace to transform her without her effort nor straining to transform herself without grace, but working actively with the grace God provides, her effort and His grace together. The woman who is neither passive nor self-powered cooperates with grace through active effort that depends on God, avoiding both errors. Neither passive nor self-powered is the posture of cooperating with grace, avoiding both the passivity that does nothing and the self-reliance that works without grace, so that a woman works actively with the grace God gives.

Abiding in the Vine

The image of the vine and branches shows how cooperation works, for a woman bears fruit not by her own power nor without effort but by abiding in Christ, drawing life from Him while remaining actively joined to Him. Jesus gave the image of the vine and the branches, teaching that a branch bears fruit only by abiding in the vine, drawing its life from the vine, for apart from Him a woman can do nothing, and this shows how cooperation works, for a woman bears the fruit of a transformed life not by her own power and not without her involvement, but by abiding in Christ, remaining joined to Him, drawing His life, and letting it bear fruit through her. This means cooperation with grace is a matter of abiding, of a woman staying joined to Christ and drawing her life from Him, so that she bears fruit not by straining in her own strength but by remaining in the vine, actively dependent on the life that flows from Him. The woman who abides in the vine cooperates with grace by drawing her life from Christ, bearing fruit through her union with Him. Abiding in the vine shows how cooperation works, for a woman bears fruit by remaining joined to Christ and drawing His life, so that she is neither self-powered nor idle but actively dependent on the life that flows from Him.

Doing Your Part Within His

A woman cooperates with grace by doing her part, making the efforts and choices open to her, while recognizing that her very ability to act well is itself the grace of God working within her. Cooperation means a woman does her part, making the real efforts and choices that are hers to make, praying, receiving the sacraments, resisting temptation, practicing virtue, while recognizing that even her ability to do these things is itself the fruit of grace, God working in her to will and to act, so that her part is real but is done within God's prior and sustaining grace, her effort and His grace inseparably joined. This means a woman neither neglects her own effort nor takes sole credit for it, for she genuinely cooperates, doing what is hers to do, while knowing that her cooperation is itself empowered by grace, so that she works hard, yet it is not she but the grace of God with her. The woman who does her part within His cooperates genuinely with grace, making real efforts that are themselves empowered by God working in her. Doing your part within His is how a woman cooperates with grace, making the efforts and choices open to her while recognizing that her very ability to act well is the grace of God working within her.

CHAPTER THREE

Living in the State of Grace

Keeping the Life of God

The foundation of the whole Christian life is living in the state of grace, possessing and keeping the life of God in the soul, for from this state everything else is built, and losing it undermines everything. Understanding how to live in the state of grace, keeping the life of God and recovering it when lost, establishes the foundation on which a woman's cooperation with grace rests.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, that we too might walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:4

The Foundation of Everything

The state of grace, the possession of God's life in the soul, is the foundation from which the whole Christian life is built, for without it a woman is cut off from the divine life and cannot bear supernatural fruit. Living in the state of grace is not one practice among many but the foundation of everything, for the state of grace is the possession of the life of God in the soul, and from this life all supernatural fruit flows, so that a woman in grace

is joined to God and able to grow in holiness, while a woman in the state of sin is cut off from the divine life and cannot bear supernatural fruit, however hard she tries. This means a woman's first concern is to live in the state of grace, to possess and keep the life of God, for this is the foundation on which everything else in the Christian life is built, so that all her cooperation with grace presupposes the state of grace itself. The woman who understands the state of grace as the foundation of everything makes keeping the life of God her first concern, the ground of all the rest. The foundation of everything is the state of grace, the possession of God's life in the soul, for from this life all supernatural fruit flows, so that a woman's first concern is to live in grace rather than being cut off from the divine life.

Guarding the Life of God

A woman keeps the state of grace by guarding the life of God against mortal sin, which destroys it, so that she avoids grave sin and its near occasions to protect the divine life within her. Since the life of God in the soul is lost through mortal sin, a woman keeps the state of grace by guarding against such sin, avoiding grave and deliberate offenses against God and the near occasions that lead to them, so that she protects the divine life within her, not treating her state of grace casually but watching over it as the precious thing it is, the very life of God she could forfeit by serious sin. This means living in the state of grace involves a real guarding, a vigilance against mortal sin and its occasions, so that a woman protects the life of God in her soul rather than carelessly risking it, keeping the foundation of her whole Christian life secure. The woman who guards the life of God watches against mortal sin to keep the state of grace, protecting the divine life within her. Guarding the life of God means keeping the state of grace by avoiding mortal sin and its near occasions, so that a woman protects the divine life within her rather than carelessly risking the foundation of her Christian life.

Recovering Grace Quickly

When the state of grace is lost through serious sin, a woman recovers it quickly through Confession rather than remaining in the state of sin, so that she does not delay in returning to the life of God. If a woman does fall into mortal sin and lose the state of grace, the right response is to recover it quickly through the sacrament of Confession, not to remain in the state of sin or delay her return, for every moment in the state of sin is a moment cut off from the divine life, so that she returns promptly to Reconciliation, recovers sanctifying grace, and is restored to the state of grace without needless delay. This means a woman who loses the state of grace does not despair or linger in sin but recovers grace quickly through Confession, treating the return to the life of God as urgent, so that she minimizes her time in the state of sin and keeps the foundation of her

life restored. The woman who recovers grace quickly returns promptly to Confession after serious sin, not lingering in the state of sin but restoring the life of God. Recovering grace quickly means returning promptly to Confession when the state of grace is lost, so that a woman does not remain in the state of sin but restores the life of God without needless delay.

CHAPTER FOUR

Where Grace Meets Your Wounds

Healing the Patterns You Carry

Grace does not only save a woman but heals her, meeting the specific wounds she carries from the Fall, the disordered attachments, the pull toward approval, the patterns that have long troubled her, and slowly healing them over time. Understanding where grace meets a woman's wounds, how it heals the specific patterns she carries, shows her that grace is not only for her salvation but for the healing of her actual struggles.

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. — Ezekiel 36:26

Grace Heals, Not Only Saves

Grace does not merely save a woman from sin but heals her wounded nature, working to repair the damage of the Fall in her, so that grace is a healing as well as a rescue. The work of grace is not limited to forgiving sin and restoring the life of God, for grace also heals, working to repair the wounds of the Fall in a woman's nature, to mend the darkened mind, strengthen the weakened will, and reorder the disordered passions, so that grace is a healing as well as a saving, God not only rescuing a woman from sin but mending the damage it has done in her. This means a woman can expect grace to heal her, not only to save her, for God's grace works to repair the wounds she carries, so that her struggles and patterns are not beyond the reach of grace but are precisely what grace works to heal over time. The woman who understands that grace heals, not only saves, brings her wounds to grace expecting God to heal them, not merely forgive her sins. Grace heals, not only saves, for it works to repair the wounds of the Fall in a woman's nature, so that grace is a healing as well as a rescue, mending the damage sin has done in her.

Meeting Your Particular Patterns

Grace meets a woman in her particular wounded patterns, the disordered attachments, the people-pleasing, the self-forgetfulness, working to heal the specific struggles that have long marked her life. The wounds of the Fall take particular shapes in a woman's life, and grace meets her precisely there, in her tendency toward disordered attachment in relationships, her pull toward the approval of others over faithfulness to God, her difficulty seeing herself and her own needs clearly, so that grace works to heal these particular patterns, bringing light to her self-knowledge, freedom from disordered attachments, and the strength to choose faithfulness over approval. This means a woman can bring her particular wounds and patterns to grace, trusting that God's grace works to heal these specific struggles, so that her long-standing patterns are not hopeless but are exactly where grace meets and heals her over time. The woman who brings her particular patterns to grace finds God meeting her in her specific wounds, working to heal the struggles that have long marked her. Meeting your particular patterns, grace heals the specific wounds a woman carries, her disordered attachments, her people-pleasing, her self-forgetfulness, so that her long-standing struggles are precisely where grace works to heal her.

A New Heart Over Time

God promises to give a woman a new heart, and grace works this healing gradually, replacing the heart of stone with a heart of flesh over time, so that she is patiently transformed rather than instantly remade. The healing grace works is captured in God's promise to give a new heart and a new spirit, to remove the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh, a promise fulfilled not instantly but gradually, as grace works over time to soften, heal, and transform a woman's heart, so that she is given a new heart through a patient process of healing rather than an instant replacement. This means a woman can trust grace to give her, over time, the new heart God promises, healing her wounds and transforming her patterns through a gradual work, so that she does not despair at the slowness but trusts the grace that is making her heart new. The woman who trusts in a new heart over time lets grace heal her gradually, confident that God is giving her the new heart He promised. A new heart over time is the healing grace works, God replacing the heart of stone with a heart of flesh gradually, so that a woman is patiently transformed through the work of grace rather than instantly remade.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Channels of Grace

Where the Life of God Flows In

Grace flows into a woman's life through particular channels that God has established, above all the sacraments, along with prayer and the Scripture, so that a woman cooperates with grace in part by drawing from these channels through which the life of God flows into her. Understanding the channels of grace, where the life of God flows into a woman's life, shows her how to position herself to receive the grace she needs.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. — John 7:37-38

The Sacraments First

The sacraments are the primary channels of grace, the chief means God established for pouring His life into a woman's soul, so that frequent and worthy reception of the sacraments is the first way she draws on grace. The surest and primary channels of grace are the sacraments, which Christ established precisely to pour His grace into the soul, so that the Eucharist nourishes a woman with Christ Himself and increases grace in her, Reconciliation restores and strengthens grace, and the other sacraments each give their particular grace, making the sacraments the first and chief means by which the life of God flows into her. This means a woman draws most surely on grace through the sacraments, the Eucharist and Confession above all, so that frequent and worthy reception of the sacraments is the primary way she positions herself to receive the grace she needs, the main channels through which God's life flows into her. The woman who draws on the sacraments first positions herself at the primary channels of grace, receiving the life of God through the means Christ established. The sacraments first are the primary channels of grace, the chief means Christ established to pour His life into the soul, so that frequent and worthy reception is the first way a woman draws on grace.

Prayer and the Word

Besides the sacraments, grace flows through prayer and the Scripture, through which a woman opens herself to God and receives His grace, so that a life of prayer and the Word is another channel of the divine life. Grace also flows through prayer and the Scripture, for in prayer a woman opens herself to God, asks for His grace, and receives His help, and in the Scripture she encounters the living word through which grace comes, so that prayer and the Word are real channels of grace, means by which a woman draws on the life of God beyond the sacraments, keeping herself open to grace through her daily communion with God. This means a woman cooperates with grace by maintaining a life of prayer and attention to the Scripture, opening herself continually to the grace that flows through them, so that she draws on the life of God not only in the sacraments but in her prayer and her reception of the Word. The woman who draws on prayer and the

Word opens herself to the grace that flows through them, a continual channel of the divine life. Prayer and the Word are channels of grace besides the sacraments, for through them a woman opens herself to God and receives His grace, so that a life of prayer and Scripture draws on the divine life.

Positioning Yourself to Receive

A woman cooperates with grace in part by positioning herself at its channels, keeping close to the sacraments, prayer, and the Word, so that she is continually drawing on the grace she needs rather than cut off from its flow. Since grace flows through established channels, a woman's cooperation includes positioning herself to receive it, staying close to the sacraments, maintaining a life of prayer, keeping near the Scripture, so that she is continually in the flow of grace, drawing on the life of God through the channels He provides, rather than drifting away from them and cutting herself off from the grace she needs. This means a woman's practical cooperation with grace involves keeping herself at the channels of grace, frequenting the sacraments and prayer and the Word, so that she positions herself to receive the continual flow of the divine life rather than neglecting the means through which it comes. The woman who positions herself to receive stays close to the channels of grace, continually drawing on the life of God through the means He provides. Positioning yourself to receive means keeping close to the sacraments, prayer, and the Word, so that a woman is continually drawing on the grace that flows through these channels rather than cut off from the divine life.

CHAPTER SIX

When You Do Not Feel It

Grace Is Not a Feeling

A woman often does not feel grace at work, and may conclude that nothing is happening, but grace is not a feeling and works whether or not she perceives it, so that she must learn to trust grace by faith rather than by feeling. Understanding that grace is not a feeling and works even when unperceived frees a woman from discouragement and teaches her to trust the grace at work in her by faith.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. — 2 Corinthians 5:7

Grace Works Whether You Feel It or Not

Grace is not a feeling and does not depend on being felt, for it works in a woman's soul whether or not she perceives any sensation of it, so that the absence of feeling does not mean the absence of grace. A woman may expect grace to come with a feeling, a sense of consolation or spiritual warmth, and may conclude, when she feels nothing, that grace is absent or not working, but this is a mistake, for grace is not a feeling but a reality that works in the soul whether or not it is felt, so that grace can be powerfully at work even when a woman perceives no sensation of it, its action independent of her feelings. This means a woman should not measure grace by her feelings, for grace works whether or not she feels it, so that the absence of spiritual feeling does not mean the absence of grace, which may be working deeply even when she senses nothing. The woman who knows grace works whether she feels it or not is not discouraged by the absence of feeling, trusting that grace is at work regardless. Grace works whether you feel it or not, for it is a reality in the soul and not a feeling, so that the absence of spiritual sensation does not mean the absence of grace, which may be deeply at work unperceived.

Walking by Faith, Not Feeling

A woman trusts the work of grace by faith rather than feeling, believing that grace is at work on the strength of God's word rather than on the evidence of her emotions, so that she walks by faith and not by sight. Since grace is not a feeling, a woman must trust its work by faith, believing on the strength of God's promises that grace is at work in her even when she feels nothing, walking by faith and not by sight, relying not on the evidence of her emotions but on the truth that God's grace is working whether or not she perceives it. This means a woman's confidence in grace rests on faith, not feeling, so that she trusts the grace at work in her because God has promised it, not because she feels it, walking by faith through the dry stretches when no feeling confirms what grace is quietly accomplishing. The woman who walks by faith, not feeling, trusts the work of grace on God's word rather than her emotions, confident even without feeling. Walking by faith, not feeling, a woman trusts that grace is at work on the strength of God's word rather than the evidence of her emotions, so that she relies on grace even through the dry stretches when no feeling confirms it.

Faithfulness in Dryness

A woman cooperates with grace especially in the dry times by remaining faithful, continuing to pray, receive the sacraments, and do the good even when she feels nothing, trusting that grace is at work in her faithfulness. The times when a woman feels no grace are precisely when her faithfulness matters most, for by continuing to pray, to receive the sacraments, to do the good, and to cooperate with grace even in dryness, she keeps herself in the flow of grace and lets it work in her, so that her faithfulness in the dry

times, unrewarded by feeling, is itself a cooperation with the grace that is quietly at work. This means a woman's cooperation with grace is proved and deepened in dryness, where she remains faithful without the support of feeling, trusting that grace is working through her faithfulness even when she senses nothing, so that her perseverance in the dry times is itself fruitful. The woman who is faithful in dryness cooperates with grace by continuing in prayer and the sacraments without feeling, trusting the work of grace. Faithfulness in dryness is cooperation with grace in the dry times, a woman continuing to pray, receive the sacraments, and do good without feeling, trusting that grace is at work in her faithfulness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Grace Over a Lifetime

The Slow Work of Transformation

Grace transforms a woman not all at once but over a lifetime, through a slow and patient work that heals and sanctifies her gradually across the years, so that she must trust the long work of grace rather than expecting rapid results. Understanding that grace works its transformation over a lifetime encourages a woman to persevere in cooperation, trusting the slow work of grace that God will bring to completion.

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
— Philippians 1:6

A Lifelong Work

The transformation grace works is a lifelong project, not a quick fix, for God heals and sanctifies a woman gradually over the whole course of her life rather than remaking her instantly. Grace does not transform a woman overnight but works a lifelong project of healing and sanctification, for God reshapes a soul gradually, over the seasons and years of a life, slowly healing wounds, growing virtues, and conforming a woman to Christ, so that the work of grace is lifelong, a patient transformation that unfolds across the whole course of her life rather than a sudden remaking. This means a woman should understand grace as a lifelong work, not expecting to be fully transformed quickly but giving herself to the patient cooperation that lets grace do its slow work over the years, so that she measures grace not by rapid results but by the long transformation of a lifetime. The woman who understands grace as a lifelong work gives herself to patient cooperation, trusting the slow transformation of the years. A lifelong work is what grace accomplishes, healing and sanctifying a woman gradually over the whole course of her

life, so that she must trust the slow transformation of the years rather than expecting a quick fix.

Trusting the Slow Work

Because grace works slowly, a woman must trust the slow work, not despairing at her lingering faults or the gradual pace, but believing that grace is genuinely transforming her even when progress is hard to see. The slow pace of grace can discourage a woman who sees her lingering faults and feels she is making little progress, but she is called to trust the slow work, believing that grace is genuinely at work transforming her even when the progress is gradual and hard to perceive, not measuring the work by immediate change but trusting the patient grace that heals and sanctifies over time. This means a woman does not despair at the slowness of her transformation or conclude that grace has failed, but trusts the slow work of grace, confident that God is genuinely changing her through a gradual process whose fruit may be hard to see in the moment but is real over the long course. The woman who trusts the slow work does not despair at the gradual pace but believes grace is transforming her, even when progress is hard to see. Trusting the slow work means a woman does not despair at her lingering faults or the gradual pace, but believes that grace is genuinely transforming her even when progress is hard to perceive.

God Will Complete It

A woman can be confident that God, who began the good work of grace in her, will bring it to completion, so that she cooperates in hope, trusting that the transformation grace has begun will be finished. The Scripture gives a woman confidence for the long work, that He who began a good work in her will bring it to completion, so that she can trust that the transformation grace has begun will not be abandoned but will be carried through to its finish by the faithful God who started it, a work He Himself will complete. This means a woman cooperates with grace in hope, confident that God will complete the work He has begun, so that she does not fear that her transformation will be left unfinished but trusts the faithful God to bring the slow work of grace to its completion, finishing what He started in her. The woman who knows God will complete it cooperates in hope, trusting that the good work grace has begun will be brought to its finish. God will complete it, for He who began the good work of grace in a woman will bring it to completion, so that she cooperates in hope, trusting that the transformation grace has begun will be finished by the faithful God who started it.

CONCLUSION

Let Grace Do Its Work

The woman who possessed the life of God without knowing how to live from it now understands how grace works. We have seen that grace is not magic but a real transformation that can be received in vain; that she cooperates with grace, neither passive nor self-powered, by abiding in the vine and doing her part within God's; that living in the state of grace is the foundation of everything; that grace heals her particular wounds over time, giving a new heart; that grace flows through the channels of the sacraments, prayer, and the Word; that grace works even when she does not feel it, so that she walks by faith; and that grace transforms her slowly over a lifetime, a work God will complete.

Through all of it runs a single invitation: let grace do its work. Grace is the life of God given to transform you, but it works through your cooperation, over time, in the life you actually live, so that your part is to cooperate faithfully and let grace do what only it can do, healing your wounds and conforming you to Christ across the years.

So let grace do its work. Do not expect magic, but cooperate with the real and gradual transformation grace is working. Abide in the vine, doing your part within God's grace, neither passive nor self-reliant. Live in the state of grace as the foundation of all the rest, guarding and recovering the life of God. Bring your particular wounds to grace, trusting it to heal the patterns you carry and give you a new heart. Keep close to the channels of grace, the sacraments, prayer, and the Word. Trust grace even when you feel nothing, walking by faith and remaining faithful in dryness. And trust the slow work of a lifetime, confident that God will complete what He has begun. You possess the life of God. Now let grace do its work, cooperating with the life God has given until He brings it to completion in you.

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