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A Mother's Gift of Grace

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A Mother's GIFT *of* GRACE

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

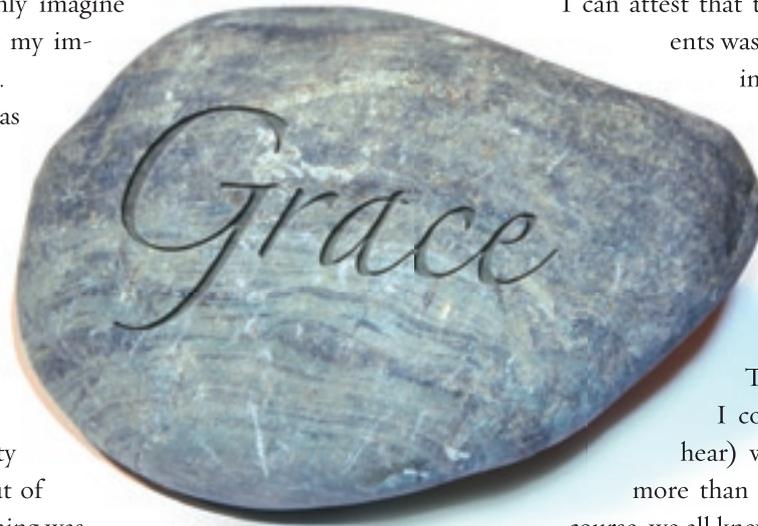
My husband Don is a storyteller. Recently he told me a story that quite amazingly I had never heard before in our 41-year marriage. In his own words, Don shares a personal story of mercy and grace.

“When I was fourteen years old I went with my parents to Palouse Falls State Park in the state of Washington. At that point in my life, my feet were nimble and quick. Taking risks were part of my youthful approach to life. Without considering the consequences, I blazed my own trail up the side of the canyon wall. A rock was dislodged and ‘cart-wheeled’ down the mountain, striking a glancing blow ... to my mother’s head.

“What had I done? My poor mother bled profusely, and I could only imagine the pain I had caused by my impulsive and careless action.

“What I deserved was a scolding—or worse. What I got instead was grace. No blame! No shame! Just grace! Did I deserve to be yelled at? I thought so! Was I truly sorry for what I had done? Yes! I learned all the lessons about responsibility that could be squeezed out of that incident, and my learning was reinforced by my mother’s grace and my father’s mercy. I deserved punishment and knew it full well.

“Many years later, I am still profiting from this experience. Punishment may have taught me to be more careful, but grace taught me love, and that made a lasting impact on my life.”



From my experience having Don’s parents for in-laws, I can attest that this reaction by his parents was not a one-time or once-in-awhile occurrence.

By their grace, I was accepted into their home with love and unconditional acceptance. That was a monumental gift to me. The family joke (which I couldn’t help but like to hear) was that they loved me more than Don and his sister. Of course, we all knew that wasn’t really true, but they certainly loved me and their son-in-law just the same as their own children.

Grace—what an amazing gift!

Susan Murray is an associate professor of behavioral science and social work at Andrews University.