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Always ABOUNDING

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Editor's Note

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Editor-in-Chief



In John 10:10, Jesus told His disciples that He came to give those who follow Him an abundant life. He did not promise something ordinary or mediocre, but a life beyond measure: one overflowing with goodness. This abundant life is filled with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), such as hope (Romans 15:13), and mercy (1 Peter 1:3). However, we are also to actively abound in godly qualities (2 Peter 1:5–8), in love toward all men (1 Thessalonians 3:12), and in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). Our motivation for this continual abounding is found in 1 Corinthians 15 – the resurrection. Since we have been given “victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57), we know that our labor is not in vain. Therefore, we strive to live lives that are always abounding for the Lord. May these articles encourage you to live a life that is not merely ordinary, but one overflowing with abundance.

We invite you to share our website with other women who would be interested in subscribing to our newsletter.



ABOUNDING WITH THANKSGIVING

BY: ROBYNNE ASHBY

*M*ost of us have met someone who is never content with their circumstances, impossible to please, ungrateful, and if only they could have a better job or a little more money, they would be happy. However, we know that, if they were given such things, the complaining wouldn't end. Why? Because they were not thankful for what they had been blessed with in the first place. This mindset is common in the world, and it's not surprising. How could the world have any hope or gratitude without God? However, when it is among the brethren, it is discouraging, unhelpful, sad, demoralizing, frustrating...you get the point.

Colossians 2:6-7 reads, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with **thanksgiving** (emphasis mine, RA)." Our gratitude towards Christ increases and abounds when we remain rooted, or grounded, in our faith. As Christians, we should be the most thankful people on the earth. That's why it is very disheartening when a child of God is perpetually ungrateful. What can be done to remedy this situation? We must be rooted and established in the faith.

In southern Louisiana, where I live, we have hurricanes. It's not an if thing. It's a when thing. And when it comes, the chances of a tree's falling are 100%, except for the Live Oak. Never in all my years living here have I seen a Live Oak ripped from the ground. A limb might break off, but the trunk still stands. Its roots are numerous and spreading, growing one to two times the width of the canopy. Spiritually, how can we develop this strong of a root system so that, when the hurricanes of life arrive, we still stand?

Our verse gives us the answer. The roots are established in the faith. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is not blind. It is not guessing. It is not taking a wild gamble. It is solid, firm, and a foundation on which I live my life. And how do I obtain this faith? Romans 10:17: "So then faith coming by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Our faith is grounded, rooted, in the word of God. It is that simple. The more we study, the more we learn what we are to be thankful for, the more we deepen our roots so we can withstand the hurricanes of this world. When I have this faith in Christ, I will respond with genuine gratitude and will begin to abound in thanksgiving.

Now, I'm not saying that everything is going to be sunshine and roses. Hurricanes do a lot of damage. They rip off branches and tear off leaves. James 1:2 tells us that we will have various trials in this life. Feelings of unhappiness will be felt by a Christian, and some days will be harder than others. Such feelings are inevitable and will certainly be felt as a soldier of Christ. There's a reason Paul tells us to put on our armor in Ephesians 6:11. It is because we are going to get battered and bruised. But hurricanes don't last forever. They are temporary and transitory. During that hurricane, my attitude will remain thankful, because my roots are strong. Afterwards, new branches will grow, and leaves will be replaced. The tree will not look the same, but it's still standing. Will I be standing like that Live Oak, filled with thanksgiving when the trials of life hit, grateful I'm not destroyed, firm in my roots, because of my faith-filled life?

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Thankfulness is essential in a Christian's life, and when I study God's word, I can't help but be thankful.

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Colossians 2:8 gives us the consequences of not grounding our faith and not being thankful. It states, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." If we don't develop and root our faith in God's word, then it will be based on the philosophy of men. We will fall into the worldly trap of following man's wisdom and find ourselves with empty results. Hosea 4:6 doesn't hold anything back when it states, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." The Israelites didn't seek God's law and displayed a lack of thankfulness towards Jehovah. They were destroyed, because they were not grounded and rooted. The hurricane arrived in the form of Babylon and took them into captivity (2 Chronicles 36:14-18). The hurricane is not merciful.

Thankfulness is essential in a Christian's life, and when I study God's word, I can't help but be thankful. His love, mercy, kindness, justice, longsuffering, goodness, grace, wisdom, and liberality are revealed through His word, and my cup runneth over with the enormity of the blessings bestowed upon me as a child of God. These blessings become clear to me only as I study and firmly plant my faith in His Word. ✦

As we consider the topic of “Always Abounding” in Scripture, we would be negligent in our study if we did not take the time to reflect on Peter’s words found in 2 Peter. The book of 2 Peter was written towards the end of Peter’s life (2 Peter 1:14), and he was resolved to put his fellow Christians in remembrance of truths they had already learned (1:12, 15). Throughout the book, Peter addresses the spiritual growth of Christians. Chapter one addresses the ingredients for spiritual growth, chapter two deals with the opponents of spiritual growth and chapter three concludes with the motivation for spiritual growth. As Peter closes his epistle, he reminds the readers to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

In chapter one, Peter establishes the importance of knowledge. Within the first eight verses, he references knowledge four times. He opens his letter with the desire for his brethren to have grace and peace multiplied to them, and then he clearly states how they would receive the grace and peace – “through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (1:2). He continues by further explaining that the way to receive all things relating to life and godliness would come “through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (1:3). In verses five and six, he writes that Christians are to add knowledge to their virtue, and temperance to their knowledge. He then ends this section by concluding that, if Christians abound in these graces, or characteristics, they will “neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8).

ABOUNDING IN ALL THINGS

BY: EDY COZORT



Within this section on knowledge, Peter emphasizes the need for Christians to ABOUND in all things. Notice the different characteristics Christians are to add to their lives. “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (1:5-7). These characteristics, also known as the Christian Graces, must be found in abundance within the lives of all Christians. Peter, through divine inspiration, strongly writes about these characteristics, because abounding in these things safeguards us from being barren (inactive or useless), from being unfruitful in knowledge, from becoming spiritually blind (unable to perceive spiritual truth), and from falling away from God’s grace.

Peter begins verse 8 with “for,” indicating that he is about to give a reason why these characteristics matter, and he also makes it clear that Christians are to abound in these areas. The Greek word for “abound”, pleonazō, means to increase, to exist in abundance, or become more than sufficient. Bible Hub’s Topical Lexicon overview paints a beautiful picture of what it means to abound.

The verb translated “to abound” or “to increase” conveys a movement from sufficiency to overflowing surplus. Scripture employs it to describe both the multiplication of sin and, more triumphantly, the super-abounding of grace, faith, love, thanksgiving, fruit, and virtue. In every instance the word underscores God’s intention that what begins in His people should not remain static but should grow past ordinary limits.

After some personal introspection, it may be the case that someone realizes she is not abounding and wonders where to begin. The wonderful thing about growing in grace and knowledge and abounding in all things is that we can start where we are. Once we determine in our hearts that we want to abound in all things, we have the formula for success in 2 Peter 1:5-8. We must, however, remember that growth is not linear and there will be ups and downs. There will be days when we do great

and can see the improvements and days where we feel like we continue to struggle in our faith. It is during these times that we must rely on the Christian graces of temperance and patience. Do not give up but, instead, keep patiently moving forward, adding these different graces to your faith.

The formula for growing and abounding begins with faith. Faith is the fundamental foundation to everything we do. Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Biblical faith requires works (James 2:14-26). Hebrews 11 is full of examples of those who lived faithful lives. Their faith coupled with obedience led to God blessing them. We, too, will be blessed by God when we continue to obey in faith, increasing in these graces.

We must never be satisfied with being average. Instead, we must strive to abound in virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. As Christians, it is imperative that we develop these Christian graces, becoming more Christ-like in our actions, in our words, and in our thoughts. Becoming more like Christ will allow us to be fruitful in our labors, to keep our focus on the spiritual, to guarantee our salvation, and (finally) to be rewarded with a triumphant entry into Heaven (2 Peter 1:8-11). ♦

“The wonderful thing about growing in grace and knowledge and abounding in all things is that we can start where we are.”



ABOUNDING IN LOVE

BY: ATHENA SCHERFFIUS

Throughout the Bible, we see countless examples of God’s love. The greatest example is Calvary: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God’s sacrificial love was shown to man through His Son and the giving of His life on the cross. As Christians, we are told to love God, love others, and love ourselves. We are not just to love, but we are to abound in our love. Paul admonished the Thessalonians, “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you” (I Thessalonians 3:12).

We are told to abound in love, but what exactly does that mean, to abound? Thayer defined the Greek word translated abound as “going over and above, to overflow, to excel”. Robertson noted that the word means “to superabound” in our love. This goes way beyond ordinary love. It is like pouring water into a cup and not stopping when the water gets to the top. It is continuing to pour as the water is overflowing. That is how we are to love. There should be no limit to the love we show.

The Bible tells us we are to love our God with all that we have: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30). We should abound in our love for our Creator. We must fully commit to His will and purpose in our hearts to serve Him. To love our God truly is to keep His commandments. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). To abound truly, we have to follow and obey His word.

We are to love our brethren with abounding love. In Ephesians 4:2, we see how we are to be towards our brethren: “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ. One man noted that the idea of long-suffering in this text carries the sense of “putting up” with one another (Scherffius). We deal with various personalities, backgrounds, upbringings, etc. Sometimes we can have

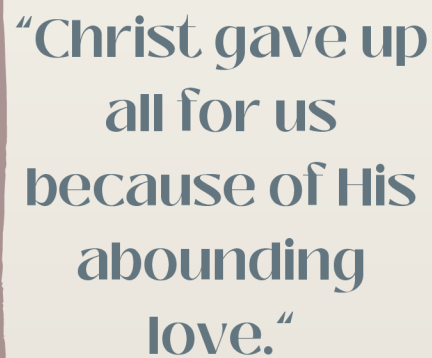


difficulties working with members of the church. Abounding in love will take care of all of these struggles we may face. We learn to be patient with others, and we grow together, laboring in the work of the Lord. We are to love one another as Christ loved us. Christ gave up all for us because of His abounding love. In John 15:12-13, we read of a great, overflowing love: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Christ died for us. We need to follow His example and love others as Christ did.

As we go through this life loving as we are commanded, loving our brethren as we should, we will realize that we affect those around us in the world. In John 13:34-35, we see that the world will know we are His disciples by the love we have for our brethren. We can lead others to Christ by abounding in our love.

We are told, not only to abound in love for our God, for our brethren, but also towards all men. In Galatians 6:9-10, we are told to do good unto all men. In fact, the second commandment of all instructs us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31). But who is our neighbor? Is it the family that lives next door? Is it the elderly lady across the street? In Matthew 25:35-36, we find that, when we love and do good to those least ones who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, a stranger, and in prison, we are truly abounding in the kind of love God expects of His children. As we live and serve God, not only will those whom we love be encouraged and uplifted, and possibly taught the truth, but we will be greatly blessed and rewarded in the end.

As we strive to live like Christ, let us remember Paul’s admonition in I Thessalonians 3:12 to abound in our love to one another and to all men. When we follow these words, we will abound in our love towards God. ♦



**“Christ gave up
all for us
because of His
abounding
love.”**



ABOUNDING IN HOPE

BY: ELIZABETH TURNER BEALL

Hope keeps us going when we feel it's all we have left. Everyone hopes for something: children hope for toys and candy, teens hope to find themselves and learn who they are, newlyweds hope for a happy life together, the middle-aged hope to realize career success, and seniors hope to retire and travel or just rest after so many years of work. Hope is good. It gives us something to look forward to, motivation to keep working, and a goal to achieve. However, most of our hopes are physical, and when realized, only give us temporary satisfaction, causing us to seek something else to hope for.

God, in His infinite wisdom, provides us with a better, lasting hope: a spiritual hope for eternal life. This spiritual hope is better than the physical hope so many people have, because spiritual hope is lifelong, given to those of us who choose to follow Christ in obedience. Sadly, Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:13-14 that many will not find Him because the path they are on leads to destruction.

For those of us who have chosen to follow God, we understand that "God, who cannot lie" made His promise of that hope "before time began" (Titus 1:2), so that we might have eternal life with Him in Heaven (Colossians 1:5). We can know with assurance when God makes a promise that it is true. It will come to be. Our hope is sure.

We make our choice to obey and walk in God's way. We also commit to daily study to learn who God is, what He wants us to do, and about the promises He has given us. Furthermore, we develop a relationship with Him so that we can say with the psalmist, "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word" (Psalm 119:114)



You may say, "But I thought that hope was eternal life." It certainly is, but God's Word tells us all we need to know about God and the way we should live our lives, looking forward to eternal life in Heaven with God. Our walk to Heaven is a lifelong process, always seeking, learning, and growing. It is working with diligence as we hold our hope with assurance (Hebrews 6:11). As Paul encouraged us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, we must be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing our labor is not in vain in the Lord." Yes, there will be times of challenge and temptation, but we must "be of good courage" and let God strengthen us as we hope in Him (Psalm 31:24).

At times, when it seems that God is not answering our prayers, we must continue to pray and wait on God, continue with hope in His Word (Psalm 130:5), and realize, as the psalmist did, that "the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy" (Psalm 33:18). Hope in God's mercy is yet another side to the hope for eternal life, for without that mercy, there would be no hope for eternal life.

In wanting eternal life for ourselves and walking God's way in that hope, we must be aware that this is not a walk we do alone, or with just God and self. The Gospel must be shared, bringing as many as possible with us. Paul tells us that we have been "justified by God's grace" and will be heirs with others in our hope for eternal life (Titus 3:7). Those others, making the walk with us, give encouragement and support along the way, and we to them. The Hebrews writer tells us that Christ is over His own house, and we belong to Him in that house, "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:6). That eternal life is our inheritance, and we are "joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).

As we set our sights on Heaven and eternal life, we should be joyful in our "hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2). Our hearts should be filled with God's love, rejoicing and sharing in that hope.

Consider eternal life for a moment. To get there, of course, means we live a faithful life here on earth and go to Abraham's Bosom/Paradise when we die. It is a transition to the spiritual realm, accompanied by angels (Luke 16:22). No doubt it is a wonderful place, beautiful beyond our expectations, as will be Heaven. But the greatest thought is that we will be with God. And that should greatly stir our hearts and cause us to be excited to the point of talking about it with much anticipation and joy.



The thought of being in Heaven with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit can boggle the mind. As humans, it is difficult to picture Heaven, but we know it will be beautiful beyond anything we know here on earth, and it will be perfect. It will be wonderful that all our earthly pain and suffering cannot be compared to Heaven's glory (Romans 8:18). Remember God's promise in Revelation 21:4-5 to wipe every tear from our eyes, to see no more death, no more sorrow or crying, and no pain, and that God will make "all things new." (Ladies, my hope soars with joy when reading God's promise here, to the point of bringing tears of relief that life's suffering will be over.) This promise alone should make your faith in God and hope in that promise of eternal life grow by leaps and bounds. This hope should cause us to work harder for God, to gather as many as we can to be there with us, and to look forward together to being there with God.

Let me leave you with one last thought from 1 Corinthians 13:13: "Now abide faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love." When we get to Heaven, we will not need faith, because we will see God there—what an awesome thought! When we get to Heaven, we will no longer need hope to keep us going, because the reason for our hope is there with us. All that leaves is LOVE. And that never goes away.

As you read this, remember Paul's statement in Romans 15:4: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning" (and we might ask why). Paul tells us: "that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." My prayer is that each of you have that patience and comfort, and that thinking of eternal life gives you joy and peace in your heart. ♦

***"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,
so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and
stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught,
abounding therein with thanksgiving."***

- Colossians 2:6-7

WRITE THE VERSE:

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

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"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- 2 Peter 1:8

WRITE THE VERSE:

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

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***"And the Lord make you to increase and abound
in love one toward another, and toward all men,
even as we do toward you:"***

- 1 Thessalonians 3:12

WRITE THE VERSE:

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

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"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

- Romans 15:13

WRITE THE VERSE:

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

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QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. How does a strong foundation in God's Word influence a person's mindset of gratitude, especially during trials?
2. What are some warning signs that a Christian is becoming ungrateful, and how can that mindset be corrected?
3. When reading the list of "Christian Graces" in 2 Peter 1:1-8, which one do you find the most challenging to develop? What are some things you can do to focus on growth in this area?
4. Growth can sometimes have ups and downs. How can people stay motivated and consistent when growth seems to be stagnating?
5. We are to always abound in love for one another (1 Thessalonians 3:12). What might be a situation where it is difficult to show this kind of love, and how can we overcome those challenges?
6. Jesus said we are to love one another as He loved us (John 13:34-35). What are some practical ways we can demonstrate a Christ-like love towards others?
7. What are some things that help you abound in hope during trials of this life? How can you use those experiences to help encourage others to remain hopeful?
8. What are some examples of "temporary" hopes in our lives, and how can we shift our focus toward a lasting, spiritual hope?



WHEN YOU PRAY:

1. Pray for the people you may encounter who are seeking the same eternal hope and ask God to help you recognize and support them.
2. Pray that your faith remains firmly rooted in God's Word and that you continually grow in thankfulness.
3. Pray for strength in challenging situations so you can abound in love and reflect Christ's love through your actions toward others.
4. Thank God for His Word, which teaches you how to abound in all things, and ask for wisdom to apply what you learn.



ALWAYS ABOUNDING

F I E T C H R I S T I A N G R A C E S
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1. Abound
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Knowledge
5. Thanksgiving
6. Growth
7. Grounded
8. Patience
9. Love
10. Heaven
11. Gratitude
12. Rooted
13. Abundance
14. Patience
15. SpiritualMaturity
16. Trials
17. ChristianGraces

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