




PRAYING  
GRACE  
FOR  
*Women*



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55 Meditations  
and Declarations  
for Beloved  
Daughters of God



DAVID A. HOLLAND



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## **Praying Grace for Women:** *55 Meditations and Declarations for Beloved Daughters of God*

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## Dedication

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*For Tracy, Caitlin, Grayson, Olivia, Cora,*

*Winnie, Ruby, Sadie, and Holland;*

*the women who grace my days.*



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## Introduction

I know what you're thinking: *A devotional for women by a man?* My hope is that you'll give me the benefit of the doubt and dive into a few of the entries here before you dismiss me. I had compelling reasons to write the collection of meditations you hold in your hands.

For one thing, my journey through life has gifted me with a front-row seat for what daughters of God battle daily and what causes them to thrive in God. You see, I'm in my fourth decade of marriage to one such woman. I love and admire her more than I can express. I really, really like her, too. I know it's a cliché, but she is my best friend.

Together, we were gifted with three daughters who, by God's enabling grace, we've watched grow into remarkable women of God. Now our babies are having babies, and of our seven grandchildren, we count five girls in the mix. I've been surrounded by glorious femininity for about as long as I can remember.




I'm confident that if you were to ask any of these ladies if I have some helpful spiritual insights to share about appropriating God's abundant grace for rest, peace, intimacy with God, and breakthrough, I'd get a rousing endorsement from them. (At least from the ones who can talk.)

Secondly, spiritual truth is spiritual truth. I was profoundly encouraged to discover my previous book, *Praying Grace: 55 Meditations on the Finished Work of Christ*, had struck a chord with many women.

I've heard from many who expressed profound gratitude for that devotional over the last few years and have let me know that they are on their fourth, fifth, or ninth pass through the work. I believe this collection will also find a treasured place on the nightstands and end tables of many women of God.

Allow me to share a couple of notes about the content. In several places here, I briefly quote preachers and teachers from the 1800s. Some, like Charles Spurgeon and Andrew Murray, are well known, while others are quite obscure. Yet all possessed some profound insights for us concerning God's grace and




faithfulness. Because the writings I cite are well over 100 years old, they are in the public domain. So, in some cases, I have taken the liberty of modernizing the prose of the quote for clarity, while remaining faithful to the message and meaning of the author.

Finally, a word of explanation about the “Prayer of Declaration” you’ll find at the end of each devotion. In Ephesians 6:18 (NIV), Paul exhorts us to “Pray . . . with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

Clearly, there must be numerous types of prayer, each one powerful and appropriate for its purpose. One such type is what I call “declaratory” prayer. These are prayers that put the truth of God’s Word into your mouth in the form of a bold, faith-filled declaration. Your Bible is filled with them. There is something so powerful about this. I encourage you to say them out loud for two reasons.

First, when your own ears hear those words coming from your own mouth, something transformational happens in you. The second reason is this: Your ears aren’t the only ones listening. Invisible angelic hierarchies hear you, too. If you had eyes to see



spiritual dimensions, you'd see things moving and changing as you speak.

The meditations themselves are crafted to help you align your thinking (“renewing your mind” Romans 12:2) to the truth of *what* Jesus accomplished for you and *who* you truly are as a result. They are about transforming your sense of *identity*—rooting the truth of who you are in Christ deep into your heart.

This is not something that automatically happens when you become a daughter of God; it's a process. This book is designed to accelerate and facilitate that process. That means that the declarations may very well sound false in your ears when you first start proclaiming them. Even arrogant or boastful. If so, take that as an indicator that you *need* this process. Keep reading these meditations. Ponder the key scriptures and speak the declarations that are built upon them. Then watch what happens.

May the words on the pages that follow bring you hope, encouragement, strength, confidence, peace, and power.

David A. Holland

I

**GRACE FOR REST**

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# Breathe

*So we conclude that there is still a full and complete Sabbath-rest waiting for believers to experience.*

HEBREWS 4:9


The relentless striving for perfection. The never-ending struggle to meet everyone's expectations. Heaven forbid you let anyone down or disappoint any of the multitude of people who are counting on you. Then there's your most brutal critic of all—  
your own inner voice. It's exhausting, isn't it?

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What's worse, we often carry that same frantic dynamic right into our relationship with God. In fact, we often think of Him as if He's the fussiest, most demanding person in our lives. Too many daughters of God relate to Him as if He is a harsh, perfectionist father who simply can't be pleased. The dad you love and admire but who you're always disappointing. The one whose approval always seems just out of reach.

That is a false perception that the enemy of your soul is more than happy to help perpetuate. Here's the truth that destroys that lie. Hebrews chapter four describes salvation as an invitation to enter into an ongoing, never-ending "Sabbath rest."

The Sabbath was a designated day under the Old Covenant in which no one was to work or strive. It was created to be a blessing, but the Israelites ultimately turned it into another religious



box to check, as we humans so often do. Another achievement to be proud of.

That's what religion does. It takes things God designed to bless and help us and drains them of all joy—turning them into yet another obligation to meet, rule to follow, or yardstick for measuring yourself against others.

Living life in this fallen, twisted world will always require effort. But God's invitation to "Sabbath rest" means that your relationship with Him shouldn't. In Jesus, the striving to please Him is over. Jesus pleased Him on your behalf. Daughter of God, you can lay down the struggle to qualify. Jesus was and is your complete qualification.

What's left is simply enjoying what Adam and Eve forfeited: enjoying God. Never again having to worry whether you've done enough to make Him happy. Never again fretting about measuring up to some impossible standard. Jesus measured up on your behalf.

Rest. Breathe.

## GRACE DECLARATION:

Father, You have invited me to join You in an ongoing, never-ending Sabbath rest. I will not keep You waiting. Beginning today, I cease struggling to qualify for or earn Your love and acceptance. Jesus, You are my qualification. You measured up on my behalf. So, I rest in You. I breathe.



## Discover the “Faith-Rest Life”


*God’s works have all been completed from the foundation of the world, for it says in the Scriptures, And on the seventh day God rested from all his works. . . . As we enter into God’s faith-rest life we cease from our own works, just as God celebrates his finished works and rests in them.*

HEBREWS 4:3B,4,10

The title of a 2017 article in *Psychology Today* magazine asked, “Why are Women so Exhausted?”<sup>1</sup> In it, the author, a clinical psychologist, pointed to the way women invariably end up being the default cultivators and keepers of relationships—family, friends, work, church, and community. If they don’t do it, it often doesn’t get done. Sadly, it’s easy for your relationship with God to become just one more stressor in that juggling act.

This means that when many daughters of God think about turning to their heavenly Father, they get a knot in the stomach instead of the anticipation of refreshment, peace, and supernatural help. It need not be this way. Here’s why.

For six days God was a flurry of creative activity. Day by day, order emerged out of chaos. Wonders of life, beauty, and complexity appeared. Each extraordinary phase of work was pronounced “good” at its completion. Then, after crafting and commissioning the crowning glory of His six-day masterpiece—mankind in two complementary forms, male and female—God rested.



That doesn't mean God entered a long period of total idleness, but only that His flurry of creative effort was finished. God's "sabbath" has been complete and ongoing. The fourth chapter of Hebrews makes it clear that God wants the same thing for you. And it is filled with both encouragements to "enter" that rest and earnest cautions about not having the faith to do so.

Faith? Yes, as that chapter makes clear, doubt is the primary enemy of your stepping into this faith-rest lifestyle. To our natural minds, God's offer of rest seems simply too good to be true. It can't possibly be that effortless, can it? It can. And it is. The "good news" of the gospel is that God really is ready and willing to accept Jesus' perfect life as a proxy for your flawed and broken one. If you've accepted His offer, God really has imputed Jesus' pristine righteousness to you and laid every last bit of your brokenness and sin on Him.

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Yes, it's humbling. But accepting Jesus' finished work on your behalf means a complete and ongoing end to your efforts to create a pathway back to God. It means a full and forever end to trying to earn or merit your heavenly Father's acceptance and favor. You may have many difficult people in your life but your heavenly Father is not one of them. He's easy.

Oh, weary one, you have been invited into a lifestyle...the faith-rest lifestyle. God rested from His labors. Isn't it time that you rested from yours?



## GRACE DECLARATION:

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Father, although it seems too good to be true, I believe it. You want nothing from me except relationship. I can bring nothing to this transaction other than a childlike heart of belief in Your astonishing goodness and generosity. Today I rest *with* You. I rest *in* You.



## Step Over

*Now the promise of entering into God's rest is still for us today. So we must be extremely careful to ensure that we all embrace the fullness of that promise and not fail to experience it. . . . So then we must be eager to experience this faith-rest life, so that no one falls short by following the same pattern of doubt and unbelief.*


HEBREWS 4:1,11

You're standing in the desert wilderness. But over there, across the river, is the Promised Land. The wilderness has been a harsh, dry place filled with striving and struggle. You've needed miracles of provision just to survive.

But God has led you to this extraordinary place. It's a green, fertile place promising abundance and rest. It represents an end to both your wandering and wondering where your next drink of life-sustaining water will come. From the throne of heaven, God declared and decreed this land is yours. Now all you need do is believe what He said and act on that faith by "stepping over" into it.

Of course, we know how that first generation of Israelites responded to that choice. A fearful "bad report" by some of the spies sent out to explore the new land filled the entire nation with dread. As a result, they forfeited their opportunity to experience the "rest" that rightly belonged to them.

In the key scripture passage above, the author of Hebrews uses those Israelites' failure to enter Canaan as a metaphor for what



many born-again believers do. They let fear and misbelief keep them in a wilderness of striving and struggling to “earn” what Jesus has already gifted them. And just as the spies planted fear in their hearts, many well-meaning teachers and preachers make them afraid they’re not doing enough to earn God’s blessings or making enough sacrifices to please Him.

Here’s the truth, daughter of God. A loving Father drew you out of the slavery of sin and separation from Him. He’s patiently led you through the harsh wilderness of pointless, fruitless, self-improvement, self-sufficiency, and self-consciousness. He guided you out of the shame and despair that result from repeatedly trying and failing to do all the things “good” Christians do.

With cords of kindness, He’s drawn you to the border of a good land. A place of rest. A place where you know that you know you’re accepted, received, and approved...in Jesus. The only remaining question is: “Will you cross over?”

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Your Father, through the writer of Hebrews, pleads with you to uproot the fears and doubts sown in you by Religion. He says the only thing you need to “be careful” about is whether or not you’ve trusted Him enough to rest. Step over. The “faith-rest life” awaits.

## GRACE DECLARATION:

Father, I will not make the same mistake that generation of Israelites made. I’m stepping over. I trust the “good report” that Jesus has met, on my behalf, every requirement for being a resident of this beautiful land. I choose the faith-rest life.



## Humble Enough to Rest?

*But he continues to pour out more and more grace upon us.  
For it says, “God resists you when you are proud  
but continually pours out grace when you are humble.”*

JAMES 4:6

We’ve seen that fear is a major obstacle to entering the Sabbath rest God has prepared for us through Jesus’ finished work of love and grace. But it’s not the only one. Rest has another enemy: pride.

Have you ever given someone an extravagant, unexpected gift simply because you loved them and wanted to bless them? Did that person suddenly feel obligated to do something for you in return? How did that make you feel? You weren’t looking to conduct a transaction; you were trying to express your care and affection. You just wanted them to know they were valued.

Pride lies behind that uncomfortable reaction to generosity. Most of us simply have a hard time receiving. Yet a humble willingness to receive is literally the only requirement for entering God’s rest. But it’s a non-negotiable one.

This is one of the many differences between the Old Covenant system and the “new and better” covenant Jesus inaugurated through His death and resurrection. Under the old system, you didn’t come to God empty handed. You brought an offering. A sacrifice. But under the new one, Jesus gave *Himself* as your offering. *He* was and is your sacrifice. That means we all come to



the cross the same way: empty handed and in need. Recognizing that requires humility.

The passages in Hebrews we've been examining reveal that, at the spiritual level, "Sabbath rest" means leaning fully upon and into Jesus' finished work on the cross *with nothing added*. It means not insulting God's grace through pride-driven efforts to "pay back" or earn your place at God's table. It's a way of *being* that doesn't insult the staggering price God paid—namely, His only Son—to provide you with the extravagant gift of restoration (to Him) and rest (in Him) through trying to pay Him back.

So, you may be wondering... *What about good works? Didn't James say that faith without works is dead? Didn't Jesus tell us to let the world see our good works so they'll glorify God?*

They did, indeed. Here's the key to understanding these and similar exhortations. Simply keep in mind that your good works don't earn you your connection to God. That's a gift. But also know that good works *do* result naturally and organically from being in connection to God. In other words, your life-giving connection of rest as a beloved daughter of God can't help but produce good works in you.

God freely gives the grace of rest to the humble, because only the humble have open hands to receive.

## GRACE DECLARATION:

Father, I come to You today the same way I came to You originally, with empty hands and a heart full of gratitude. I humbly receive what You have so abundantly provided. Today I lean fully, with all my weight, on Your goodness. And good works naturally flow out of my connection with You.



## Lighten Up

*Pour out all your worries and stress upon him and leave them there,  
for he always tenderly cares for you.*


1 PETER 5:7

*Carefree!* That's an evocative word, isn't it? What image comes to mind as you see it here in print?

There's a good chance you envisioned a child, most likely at play. Anyone who has lived for any amount of time in the adult world has—in a moment when the stresses, pressures, and complexities of life are weighing down—looked back longingly at simpler childhood days.

Of course, we all had worries as children. It's just that now, in the bright light of adulthood, we understand how trivial most of those worries were. Our grown-up concerns seem enormous in comparison.

The constant crush of financial pressure. The drain of navigating dysfunctional relationships with broken people. The gnawing feeling of inadequacy and inferiority that social media is so wickedly good at instilling and feeding. An inescapable electronic news and information ecosystem designed to fuel either fear or outrage in you because everyone on the internet gets paid through clicks, pageviews, and shares.



Carrying these weights in an environment of pandemics, protests, and political polarization is a prescription for the crushing of the human soul with care. Your soul.

Much of the substance abuse and addiction currently ravaging our society is driven by the desperate need to assuage the relentless pain of this pressure. Multitudes self-medicate to numb the ache; or seek escape through mindless, meaningless pursuits.

God did not design us to carry that weight. And here's wonderful news: His beloved children of all ages have access to a "care-free" life as their birthright. That is because the cross of Jesus Christ is an extraordinary place where a kind Father and gentle Shepherd partnered together to carry our griefs, sorrows, and weighty cares.

The great 19th-century preacher Charles Spurgeon (1832–1903) once said, "He took our griefs and carried our sorrows that we might be a happy people... Ours is the crown of lovingkindness and tender mercies, and we wear it when we cast all our care on Him who cares for us."

A life free of care (carefree!) is possible for you. Simply lay your burdens at the foot of the cross and pick up, in Spurgeon's words, your "crown of lovingkindness and tender mercies."

## PRAYER OF DECLARATION:

Father, because You have poured Your love on me, You invite me to pour my cares out before You. Because You tenderly care for me, I can lay down my heavy bundles of worries, stresses, pressures, and fears. I am carefree. Because I am Yours, and You are mine.



## Organic Fruit

*“So you must remain in life-union with me, for I remain in life-union with you. For as a branch severed from the vine will not bear fruit, so your life will be fruitless unless you live your life intimately joined to mine. I am the sprouting vine and you’re my branches. As you live in union with me as your source, fruitfulness will stream from within you—but when you live separated from me you are powerless.”*

JOHN 15:4-5


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Picture a thriving, potted tomato bush, each branch laden with green and red ripening tomatoes. Now imagine taking some pruning shears and snipping off a branch of the shrub. Now visualize just leaving that amputated branch lying beside the pot. What happens in the days that follow?

Of course, the disconnected vine withers and dries up. And it certainly doesn’t produce any additional tomatoes. Its days of fruitfulness are over.

Jesus had something very similar in mind when He told His disciples that He was, in a sense, a vine, and they were branches. He was revealing that when the New Covenant came, their spiritual connection to Him would be their source of life and power.

The same is true for you and every daughter (and son) of God. Apart from your life-union with Jesus, you cannot produce anything of eternal value.



“But what about good works?” you may ask. Good works are a natural outgrowth of being in connection to God through Jesus. They flow *organically* from being in life-giving connection to Him.

You don’t qualify for becoming, or remaining, a child of God through any effort of your own. A gift is a gift. It can only be received. But once you become God’s child, the most natural thing in the world is to begin exhibiting the characteristics of your Father. In other words, we don’t do good works *for* our relationship with God; we do them *from* our relationship with Him. This is precisely what Jesus had in view when He shared this metaphor with His disciples.

Do you see it? You’re not capable of bearing real, eternal fruit apart from your connection to Jesus. That means you don’t have to strive, strain, or struggle to be fruitful when you’re restfully connected to the Vine. As you “abide” in Him, that is, rest in His finished work on your behalf, you naturally can’t help but bear fruit.

Plug into and rest in your blood-bought connection to Him. Then watch the fruit *organically* spring forth!

## GRACE DECLARATION:

Jesus, I see it now. Striving in my own strength to *do* better, to *be* better for You, makes me like a broken-off tomato branch. Apart from You, I can do nothing of eternal value. But by simply resting, day by day, moment by moment, in life-union with you, I soon discover Your nature, Your desires, Your fruit, emerging organically from my life.



## Choose Rest

*“Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you’ll discover that I’m gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear.”*

MATTHEW 11:28–30


Every mom knows this scenario all too well. The ordinarily cheery toddler is angry, sad, exasperated, bored, and overstimulated all at the same time. She’s inconsolable and unmanageable.

Of course, the mother knows the real problem. She’s over-tired. Exhausted. Momma also knows that the only thing that will put them both out of their misery is a nap. The child is spent and needs rest. And yet, she refuses. She fights this obvious remedy with all her pint-sized might.

A test of wills with a three-year-old is a terrible thing to behold. And “will” is the key word here. Every human is born with a will—the ability to choose, and refuse. That includes you.

The 19th-century Scottish preacher James Hamilton once observed: “We are weary and heavy laden, and our heavenly Father offers to carry us and our affairs in His own everlasting arms. But we must consent to be carried to find rest for our souls.”

One unchanging truth runs from Genesis to Revelation: God respects our freedom to choose. God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden with free will and the ability to choose. Every one



of their descendants inherited that same wonderful-terrible gift. The freedom to choose Him or reject Him. To run to Him or flee from Him.

Through Joshua, He challenged the Israelite tribes to “choose for yourselves today whom you will serve.” (Joshua 24:15 NASB) Through Elijah, He asked, “How long are you going to struggle with the two choices? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” (1 Kings 18:21 NASB) Jesus invited a wealthy young seeker of truth to leave all behind and follow Him on an adventure for the ages. The young man shrugged, passed, and walked away. Jesus didn’t chase him.

Yes, Jesus invites and draws and woos us, but He never forces us to come. And as we come, He invites us to lay our burdens down, yet this, too, is our choice. It is one thing to know that He is willing and able to carry our greatest burdens, but something completely different to let Him.

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In other words, we have to *choose* the rest He so freely offers. “Stop fighting me, little one,” you hear Him saying. “It’s time for a little rest.”

## GRACE DECLARATION:

Oh, gentle, humble Jesus, I choose the refreshment and rest You have graciously offered at the oasis of Your presence. I actively release my cares and burdens to Your strong hands as I cease my frantic striving to qualify for the favor You have already gifted to me. I choose rest. I choose You.