



# A Measure of Grace

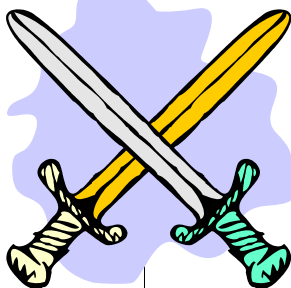
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## Iron Sharpens Iron

*By Mary Heathman*

In over 18 years of ministry, WGA has developed relationships with ministry leaders in other cities and countries whose calling is similar to ours. That is, to guide and support people who seek to understand sexuality and relationship, and to inspire them to find their identity and provision in God the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Power of the Holy Spirit.



With such a lofty mission and such darkness surrounding sexuality in our society, we need all the help we can get. One of the ways we support one another is through an email list where Exodus referral ministry leaders share information and resources, and speak into each other's lives and ministries.

A recent request for help and the subsequent responses are an especially good example of  
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how leaders work together to help each other do a better job than we could on our own. It seemed to me that WGA newsletter readers might be interested in the fact that these relationships exist and are mutually beneficial to ministry leaders across the country. With this idea in mind, I asked the writers for their permission to print the dialog and they agreed. The following is a transcript of the discussion with minor editorial changes in formatting, punctuation and such.

Initial question from Jeffrey:

*Hi all. I'm pretty new at this and have a situation I feel I need help with. One of the guys in my group has a brother who is vociferously opposed to him attending our ministry meetings, nor does he think he should have ANYTHING to do with any such ministry. "You're a new creature; get over it!" sums up his thinking pretty well.*

*The brother wants to meet with the guy from our group and have a "Bible study" to show him he shouldn't need this type of ministry. He keeps pressing this in spite of the fact our man and their common pastor have objected to the brother's attitudes and beliefs.*

*I could use wise advice and also, more than anything, something I can offer our group person. Also, is it my imagination, or am I*

*seeing a pattern with siblings sabotaging healings? Thanks for listening!*

*Blessings,*

*Jeffrey H.*

Other leaders respond, offering their thoughts on psychological, developmental, emotional and spiritual factors that may be involved:

*"The client and their sibling grew up together, presumably with a level of dysfunction that contributed to the development of your client's issues. In dysfunctional families, cardinal rules like "Be blind, be quiet, be numb, be careful, and be good" are characteristic. Facing the destructive influences of one's family violates these rules. As well, many churches espouse a simplistic idea about sins like homosexuality. The idea is that salvation doesn't do away with (a church member's) compulsions to gossip, criticize, overeat, etc., but it most certainly does do away with life controlling issues like sexual sin, emotional distress, and addictions. One could say that some of the same cardinal rules in a dysfunction family are played out in many churches. Of course, I WON'T say that, but one COULD." Carlton Q.*

*" When our oldest daughter was 3 she was riding home from a friend's house with the girl and her mom. The mother had let them shut their own*

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# Flying on Auto~Pilot

by Mary Heathman

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*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the April 2000 edition of A Measure of Grace.*

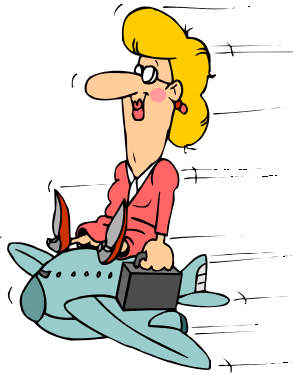
Do you ever find yourself out of sync with your circumstances? I often do, and sometimes it has some funny consequences. Other times I cry.

A few months ago, I got into my car, which was parked in the garage, pressed the button on the remote control for the garage door opener, put the car in reverse and started to back out. As I looked behind me, I was shocked to see the garage door steadily bearing down on the back of my car. I slammed my car into first gear, and pulled forward, barely clearing the door as it lumbered toward the floor. I also just missed crushing my bicycle, which was in front of my car!

After my initial response - sheer panic - I laughed out loud as I realized what had happened. The door was already open when I got behind the wheel. Since my car is not usually in the garage, but parked in the driveway outside of it, my habit is to

push the button on the remote, closing the door as I am backing out of the driveway. This works wonderfully when I am *outside* of the garage, but from the *inside*, my habitual touch on the remote control set my car and the garage door on a collision course!

Sometimes I am not totally out of sync, just a little off in my timing.



Once I was on task, with an impending deadline, and I was on a roll - details clicked into place, and my project was well on the way to completion. In this mode, I am Ms. Hyper-efficiency, habitually fitting all interruptions tightly into the workflow. So, when a call of nature became insistent, I set a print-job

into motion, rushed out the door and down the hall, thinking I could probably get back just as the printer finished, thus losing no time to the mundane.

It would have worked, too, if I hadn't found myself standing in confusion *outside* the bathroom door, already unzipped! When I realized I had managed to get entirely too far ahead of myself, I was struck with an attack

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## Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

*By Patrick Maschka*

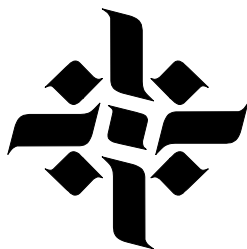
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**H**ope does not disappoint us  
(Rom 5:5)

I often tell people that my life has been one dream come true after another. Indeed, many of my favorite imaginations have become realities as my life has unfolded. When I talk about it, I know myself that it all sounds to good too be true. That is because simply a listing of the dreams realized does not include any of the process along the way. Sometimes the way was very long and difficult. Quite often, my dreams have been unrealistic, even stubborn, and I have been known to cling to the idea of something I want to the point of forgetting why, dismissing other possibilities, and looking past God by focusing only on attaining my goal. Sure, I have prayed that the Lord would give me the desires of my heart (see Psalm 37:4), but there have been times when I really have not been able to tell the difference between the desire of my heart and the desire of my will. As a decisive and risk-taking person, I have pursued dream after dream, often to come back to reality, disappointed that I am still the same person with my same needs. In the most difficult of times, I have felt and believed that my life is just one disappointment after another.

Perhaps Jesus, too, was no stranger to disillusionment. We read in the gospels about the miracles and the great teachings, but not much about what happened in between. Searching for faithful disciples alone must have been discouraging with so few that were willing to give up all they had to follow him. Jesus started every day of his public ministry knowing that he held a message of truth for all people, but yet his words were met with resistance and ridicule. To persevere, he had to hold onto the faith and hope that God, his Father, would come through for him. Without hope, the disappointment of a human life that ended nailed to a cross would be tremendous.

So, is my life a huge disappointment or a living dream? Actually, it is both. When I talk to people about it, the hope inspired by Jesus enlivens my story. Jesus as God incarnate could handle “God-sized” disappointments, so I can hope that mine which are merely human will be redeemed as well.



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of giggles that would rival my junior high days!

I wish that all the glitches that result from habitual behaviors triggered therapeutic laughter. I could use a bit more of the stuff the Bible says makes the heart merry. But, unfortunately, that is not the case – not all automatic behavior has given me the gift of laughter. Some has had results that cause me pain yet today.

Just before my father died, he visited me. It was great to have him here, and I showed off my two children. He was duly impressed; I could tell even though he didn't say so. When I told him how my new job promised to be a good career move, he was proud of me; I could tell by the gleam in his eyes. Several times I wanted to tell him how much I loved him, and how glad I was to have him visit me, but I knew he knew that already. These things were understood between us and didn't need to be said. That was our way of doing things. It was our habitual behavior when it came to expressing love.

When Daddy died, I grieved deeply. Over the weeks, then months and years, I healed. It's been 36 years now. But there is one unresolved

issue that remains as a thorn in my side. When I remember that my dad came to visit, then 30 days later he was dead, my heart and throat ache. My heart cries out again, like it did in the bargaining stage of my grief, when I desperately wanted him back, -- even if just long enough to say, "I love you, Daddy!"

My habitual way of dealing with my emotions cost me intimacy with my father. Sometimes I still cry over the loss. Other losses have followed me into adulthood. Much of it comes as a direct consequence of automatic decisions and choices formed by habit. They proved to be disastrous mistakes made in the living of my life, when I was a "liberated woman," "doing it my way," "marching to the beat of a different drummer," "being true to myself," and "following my heart."

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I didn't learn until late in life that my heart was "desperately wicked." It came as a shock to me that "being true to myself" was impossible, for I didn't yet know myself. "Marching to the beat of a different drummer" and "doing it my way" cost me more than I would have paid for it, if I had known the price before I committed myself. And being a "liberated

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*(Flying... continued from page 5)*

woman” wasn’t very liberating after all. Gloria Steinem led a passel of us into costly sexual safaris. (Then later she wrote a book on the benefits of celibacy!?!?)

God has been faithful to restore to me “the years the locusts have eaten.” I enjoy the company of my family and friends, and am blessed beyond belief to be a grandma! We laugh together a lot. The Lord has seen fit to allow me to be involved in ministry – a miracle in and of itself.

But the consequences of my former false beliefs and the automatic choices that came out of them still go on. My children and grandchildren suffer from the ripple effects of my sin. And when I see their pain, I cry.

So. . . I don’t ever again want to rely on my own understanding. In my first prayer to God, when I called on Christ to come into my life, I said, “I don’t ever again want to make a decision without you.” That prayer was so foreign to my belief system, I had to choke the words out. It was the least automatic thing I ever did. And I am glad I did that new thing.

There are still pain and feelings of loss as I cooperate with the Lord in the renewing of my mind, as I allow my heart to be changed, as I live out my life in this fallen world. But it is a price I will gladly pay. Like the

man who found the pearl of great price and went and sold all he had to purchase it, I have found it worth the price to submit all my decisions to Christ. The peace is profound.



(Iron... continued from page 2)

door when they got in the car. When she turned a corner, the door came open and her 3 year old fell out. The child was scratched up but not seriously injured. But the mother was a basket case, because all the way home my daughter kept telling her, "My mother would never let that happen to **me**." I knew instantly that my child was not attempting to convict my friend for her lack of oversight, but instead she was trying to convince herself that this sort of thing could never happen to her. Maybe this is what is behind the brother's denial of the need of support and accountability as well. Maybe he fears shining a light on childhood issues that he would rather keep in the past. He is probably as deeply in need of help emotionally as his brother is. He might have convinced himself that God's forgiveness does not require us to discipline our actions but just to say we are sorry, and so he doesn't want anyone proving him wrong or even suggesting otherwise." Nancy B.

"Under no circumstances would I allow the brother to meet with the group, nor would I encourage the guy in the group to participate with his brother. I think I would work with the client to understand the difference between salvation, justification and sanctification. Obviously denominational issues can raise their ugly heads here. But Salvation is the free gift given in the death and resurrection of Christ. Justification

is the restoration of proper relationship between ourselves and God. Sanctification is the continued working out of the walk with Christ. It is sanctification that is the process we engage in once we are a new creation. There are ample references in scripture to mature believers teaching and discipling those who are less mature. That is what we are doing in my opinion. Perhaps that will help. My two cents" Lee

It seems to me that the collection of responses is well worth the "two cents" Lee mentioned. I have many times participated in these discussions and found my own attitudes and understanding deepening and being reshaped by the collective wisdom of other ministry leaders. I know the Lord better because they reflect Him so often. And regularly, I get comments regarding how my part in the discussion has helped another. I am deeply grateful for this network of leaders and the way we bear one another's burdens and sharpen one another's minds.

When you pray for WGA, please pray for our ministry network as well. Thanks!



) ) )

**JULY**

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### Thursday Night Group

July 1st - 51 people  
 July 8th - 54 people  
 July 15th - 46 people  
 July 22nd - No Group  
 July 29th - 58 people

Orientation meeting - 7 new people

### Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring

The WGA staff provided about 10 hours of discipleship counseling and mentoring each week last month.

July 18 - 20th—Exodus leaders training days at Azusa Pacific (Greater LA Area)

July 20-24th - Exodus International Conference at Azusa Pacific (Greater LA Area)

July 25th - Mary Heathman spoke at a Lutheran Church in the LA area

July 31st - Sy Rogers spoke at a seminar co-hosted by Where Grace Abounds and Cherry Hills Community Church.

## AUGUST & BEYOND

August 21st - Dinner Party to introduce WGA to new people

September 4th - Intercessory Prayer. Join us from 7:00 - 9:00 am at the WGA offices for prayer.

September 26th - WGA participating in Corona Presbyterian's Centennial

Celebration.

October 8th - WGA will be providing training for an organization's staff in Colorado Springs.

October 10th - Service at First Denver friends Church

### WGA Staff

**Mary Heathman**  
 Executive Director

**Program Department**  
**Scott Kingry**  
 Program Director  
**Pat Bott**  
 Assistant Program Director

**Operations Department**  
**Roger Jones**  
 Operations Director  
**Sheila Knudtsen**  
 Resource Development

### Purpose Statement

*Where Grace Abounds exists to guide and support men and women who seek to understand sexuality and relationship, and to inspire all people to know and personally appropriate God's plan for their sexuality and relationships.*



*A Measure of Grace*  
 is edited by  
 Elodie Ballantine Emig.

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