

Friday Grind, July 31, 2026 GRACE
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Grace invites us to embrace the paradigm of Sufficiency.

Grace calls something—invites something beautiful—from each and every one of us, and grace never leaves until the invitation is heard and embraced. It may shake up our life, there's no doubt about that.

We're not used to being unconditionally loved.

But this we know: When I see only scarcity, I miss the fact that every single one of us has been gifted with creativity, abundance, heart, love, passion, gentleness, helpfulness, caring, kindness, tenderness, restoration and a shoulder to lean on (for crying or for dancing, depending on the mood at the time).

If we live in grace, we pay attention—the permission to be here now, in the sacrament of the present moment. But, as Simone Weil has pointed out, there is all the difference in the world between real attention, which has to do with waiting, emptying your mind, expectant and receptive, and a kind of misdirected muscular effort—paying attention as a obligation.

“If one says to one’s students ‘Now you must pay attention,’ one sees them contracting their brows, holding their breath, stiffening their muscles. If after two minutes they are asked what they have been paying attention to, they cannot reply. They have been concentrating on nothing. They have not been paying attention. They have been contracting their muscles.”

So, it’s paradigm shift time.

And let’s begin here: we can’t change anything until we love it. We can’t love anything until we know it. And we can’t know anything until we embrace it. Now we’re back to the invitation of the sacrament of the present moment. To be here now.

In our culture that places a premium on control, grace seems, surely, like madness. Yes... random acts of madness. Because I can tell you this: When I listen to the voice of grace, I relax.

I give up my need for control.

I pause to relish the notion.

And I can tell you that when I do pause, I begin to hear the voice of grace around me. And... Grace always fuels delight. Be here now indeed....Grace is that which tumbles into our lives (when our defenses are relaxed), and we are spontaneously surprised by the goodness and beauty of living. C.S. Lewis called it “surprised by joy.” Maybe you read the book or saw the movie!

In other words, we don’t need a primer on “how to find delight,” but the permission to pause, to experience, to give into, to give up control (our need to manage).

Randy a dear friend and minister, who found a love of gardening later in life told me, “There was a time, I went to the garden to walk and pray. But I was so enamored with it all, I couldn’t focus on prayer. The fragrance of the lilies... I felt horribly guilty, until it hit me that this infatuation was my prayer.”

Yes, a funny thing happened on the way to prayer.

He found the sacred.
He found grace.
And even better, grace found him.

I do not know where you see Grace in your life. I do know we don't cut ourselves enough slack, and I do know that when Grace appears, it's best if we don't analyze it, but just... pause, and let it seep into the core of our being. The reality of true Grace is that it does not waiver or diminish. It does not depend upon our response, performance, attitude, faith or checkered past. It just is.

So tell me, when this week have you been “surprised by joy”?