



May 2012

Dear Friends,

We all face times in our lives that aren't easy and don't make sense to us. Someone has suddenly lost a family member. Someone has been involved in a car wreck. Someone else has faced a long-term illness. All of us have been impacted by moments where we really needed some encouragement. Whenever we have found ourselves going through a difficult time, we inevitably hear, "God won't give you more than you can handle." For a long time I trusted it. It sounds good. It sounds comforting. The problem lies in the phrase "more than you can handle". As humans, there is nothing we can handle on our own.

The Bible is full of passages that either indicate or directly state that we can do nothing apart from God. In Genesis 1, God created man and woman, so we couldn't even exist without Him. In John 15:5 Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; *apart from me you can do nothing.*" There are many other verses that further make this point. If we couldn't exist without God, and we can do nothing apart from Christ, how could we handle the trials and tribulations of life?

I firmly believe that God will absolutely give you more than *you* can handle. He will not give you more than *He* can handle, because there is nothing He does not control. God has no weakness. There is nothing in existence -- no circumstance, person, or thing -- that He cannot handle. God is the Almighty, All-Knowing, Ever-present Lord of all. He wants you to know Him, to trust Him, and to rely on Him in all circumstances. Through whatever difficult times you face, you will grow from your experiences. We have to either choose to grow closer to Christ, or wander away from Him in hate and self-pity. God wants us all to know Him more and He wants the best for you. He orchestrates and ordains circumstances in our lives to draw us closer to Him and to show His glory to us.

One of the passages in the Bible that is often quoted as a reminder of God's faithfulness and intentions is Jeremiah 29:11-13: " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.' "

This promise from God does not mean that life will be without hardship or suffering. It means that He will walk with us and even carry us through the hardship. It means that His plans for us are to find hope through Him, and a glorious future with Him. If you are a follower of Christ you have that hope for the future. If not, He may be preparing you for a new beginning with Christ at the center of your life -- to love Him and to choose to live for Him. This scripture shows us that *you will find him* when you seek Him with all your heart.

One of my favorite quotes from a man named C.S. Lewis is, "We are not doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be." I experienced a painful lesson a few years ago. I broke both bones in my leg, just above my ankle. It was a bad break that required surgery to put in metal plates and screws. I endured nearly a year of physical pain, set-backs, and a second surgery to remove the hardware. As I continue to process all that happened and what God taught me, I realize that I am actually thankful for much of the pain I endured and the hardship we went through as a family during those 11 months. Among the many lessons that I have learned: God really is all you need; He is faithful and good. He will never leave you, even when you feel the loneliest of lonely. I

needed to learn about being humble and allowing others to help (I am not Superwoman, even though I act like it sometimes). Then there is always for me a lesson of patience. The list could go on and on.

Would I have asked to learn those lessons the way I did? No. Would I ever want to repeat the experience? N-O! And yet I am thankful for God's grace and mercy and faithfulness in the midst of all that. He truly did draw me closer to Himself and that made it all completely worth it.

The point is learning the lessons you may need to learn may not always be comfortable or easy to experience, but if you direct your heart and mind toward God, and not within yourself, He will show you more about Himself than how bad your circumstances may be.

He absolutely gave me and my family more than we could handle on our own, but it was by his grace alone and for His glory that we made it through. God didn't *want* pain for my life, but He used it to help me grow closer to Christ. He wants the same for your life, too.

Grace and peace to you through our Lord, Jesus Christ,

Community Celebration

Please help us plan our next community event. On August 10, we will have a night of fun that will showcase the talents of many that are part of Grace Klein Community. This will be a celebration of the great things God has done in our community of friends. Some have the gift of music or singing, some have the gift of creating beautiful things like jewelry or artwork, and some have the gift of cooking delicious foods.

We will hold a silent auction for items like art, jewelry, baked goods, and gift certificates to help raise money for Grace Klein Community. The funds raised will go into our general fund to allow us to continue doing things like providing food for hungry people throughout Birmingham, helping friends pay unexpected medical bills, helping missionaries overseas to spread the love of Jesus, and generally loving one another in the ways God directs us.

How can you help?

- Sign up to bring drinks, baked goodies, or snacks to share.
- Please share your talent with us! You can perform at this event or you can donate items to be auctioned.

Hebrews 13:16 "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."