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“AMAZING GRACE”

John Newton, 1725-1807 (verses 1-4), John P. Rees, 1828-1900 (verse 5)

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things and at all times ... you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:8)(NIV)

Calling himself a “wretch” who was lost and blind, John Newton recalled leaving school at the age of 11 to begin life as a rough, debauched seaman. Eventually he engaged in the despicable practice of capturing natives from West Africa to be sold as slaves to markets around the world. But one day the grace of God put fear into the heart of his wicked slave trader through a fierce storm. Greatly alarmed and fearful of a shipwreck, Newton began to read *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas á Kempis. God used this book to lead him to a genuine conversion and a dramatic change in his way of life.

Feeling a definite call to study for the ministry, Newton was encouraged and greatly influenced by John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. At the age of 39, John Newton became an ordained minister of the Anglican Church at the little village of Olney, near Cambridge, England. To add further impact to his powerful preaching, Newton introduced simple heart-felt hymns rather than the usual psalms in his services. When enough hymns could not be found, Newton began to write his own, often assisted by his close friend William Cowper. In 1779 their combined efforts produced the famous *Olney Hymns* hymnal. “Amazing Grace” was from that collection.

Until the time of his death at the age of 82, John Newton never ceased to marvel at the grace of God that transformed him so completely. Shortly before his death he is quoted as proclaiming with a loud voice during a message, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!” What amazing grace! AMEN.

- Amazing grace — how sweet the sound — that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.
- ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious that grace appeared the hour I first believed!
- Thru many dangers, toils and snares I have already come; ‘tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
- The Lord has promised good to me; His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
- When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’d first begun. AMEN.

— Amazing Grace
366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions
— Kenneth W. Osbeck

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

