



# GOOD NEWS GUIDE

REMEMBER: GOD LOVES YOU!

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Feel free to invite your family members and friends to write to me and ask for the "Good News Guide."

## Grace – a Memoir

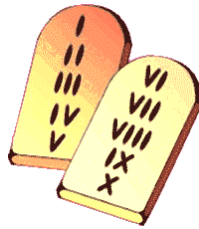
by Brother Roland

*God our Savior ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*  
(1 Timothy 2:4)

### To my Neighbors, all:

At a very young age I came to believe that God is real, that He is good, and that He requires people to be good, and not sin. I had no reason to doubt it. Now I am old and have learned much, and I have come to know that my childhood belief was correct.

As a teen-ager and a young adult, I became painfully aware of Heaven and Hell. Heaven was to be desired; Hell was to be feared. Good people go to Heaven when they die; sinful people die and go to Hell. That was scary, because I was a sinner. I had cursed, lied, stolen, and done many other things that were sinful. I had no hope of ever becoming good enough to go to Heaven. Fortunately, my despair never became so intense that I contemplated suicide. Why hurry to the inevitable awful destination? But I fervently wished, on many occasions, that I had never been born.



street invited my wife to bring our small son to Sunday School. They went, and they both liked it. Soon I was invited to come along, and I did.

The pastor of the church was a young man, about my age. He was just beginning to teach an adult confirmation class, and I was invited to join it, so I did. For six weeks or so Pastor Ken taught what the Bible says about sin, salvation, and grace. I don't remember which Bible passages he taught from, but I expect these were two of them:



*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

As the teaching finally registered in my dim brain, I was flabbergasted.

**“You mean I don't have to go to Hell when I die? I can be saved? I can go to Heaven?”**

“No, yes, and yes.”

**“Even as sinful as I have been? I really don't have to be good enough?”**

“Your sins are forgiven — and you can't be 'good enough.' Nobody can.”

**“How can that be?”**

“God made a way. It's called Grace. He sent a Savior, His Son, Jesus, who suffered and

I attended churches a few dozen times in those years, and I'm sure the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must have been preached in my hearing. But for some reason I didn't understand any of it. I lived with, and worried about, the burden of being hopelessly doomed and headed for Hell.



But God eventually brought me to a place where I could hear, and begin to understand, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is God's “Good News.”

In 1969 we moved into a growing neighborhood near Jacksonville, Florida. Neighbors across the

died to take the punishment for our sins — for all sins, for all time.”

“I don't understand ...”

Of course I didn't understand. The Bible calls God's plan to redeem the world a “mystery,” and we can only understand as much of it as He chooses to make clear to us. But Jesus' words in John 3:16-17 summarize it well:



*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”*

Later that year my son and I were baptized together, and thus were “marked” by the Holy Spirit as adopted children of God. Of course, there was still a lot that I didn't know about being a child of God. But at least I had come to know that He is God (and I am not) and that He loves me.

I have now lived as God's child for over fifty years. I've been both faithful and faithless; a part-time saint and too obviously still a sinner. I've learned an amazing amount about love, and sin, and worrying (don't do it!), and forgiving (do it!). But, more importantly, I have become a different person than I was.

Different, how? Once I was afraid of God. I didn't want to be anywhere near Him, especially on Judgment Day. Now I talk with Him every day. I try to please Him by doing what I know He wants me to do. I depend on His Holy Spirit to guide me and help me, and He does, in so many ways. And when I sin, I don't turn away from Him; I run to Him for forgiveness and help.

The biggest difference, though, is that my fear of God has become joy — primarily the joy of recognizing and celebrating who God is. When I look carefully at things He created — giraffes especially come to mind — I want to laugh and shout praises for His astonishing creativity, His engineering excellence, and His wonderful sense of humor. Our God is truly awesome!

And I have the joy of knowing that I am accepted and loved by Him. I am cooperating (however imperfectly) with His plan for my life, which is totally right and good and satisfying. The more I learn of

Him, the more joy I have, and I fully trust His promise that this joy will continue forever.

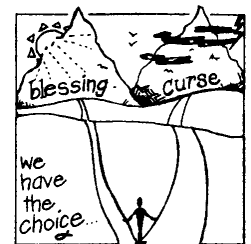
But being His child has also brought me sadness, because there are people I love — family members, friends, and so many dear ones I've never met or even heard of — who do not know God as their loving Heavenly Father; who don't even know that they are rejecting God by ignoring Him. I hope this short memoir will prompt them to think about it, and then check it out to see if God's love for them is real.

*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!  
Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him!  
(Psalm 34:8)*

**Hell** is real -- it consists of eternal existence apart from God, and thus separated from everything that is bright and beautiful and good. There is no love and no joy in Hell, there is only despair and regret and pain, forever. My heart aches for those who will choose Hell by simply rejecting God.

**Heaven** is eternal life in an intimate, joyful love relationship with God. There is love, beauty, goodness, and joy forever in His presence. That's His plan and His desire for you and me. One of my great joys is that my younger brother, the last stubborn hold-out among my siblings, has become a believer and accepted God's gift of grace.

We all choose: Heaven or Hell. I hope your choice is Heaven. If you have not already settled that, now would be a good time. Just ask God to be your God and Father, and to give you the



Holy Spirit to guide you. He is eager to do it, because He loves you. And then, with His help, find a church family where Jesus is Lord, where the Bible is believed, and where you will be blessed and be a blessing.

I praise God with my whole heart. Every day I appreciate and love Him more.

Blessings and Peace to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, and to all who read this. **GOD LOVES YOU!**

*Brother Roland*

## Rite of Passage (Source unknown)

Do you know this story of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage?

The young boy's father would take him deep into the forest, seat him on log or a tree stump, blindfold him, and leave him alone. The boy was required to sit still the whole night and not remove his blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shone through it. He could not cry out for help or make any sound. Once he survived the night, he had become a MAN.

He was not allowed to tell the other boys about this experience, because each boy must come into manhood on his own.

The boy would naturally be terrified. He could hear all kinds of noises. Wild animals must surely be all around him—not to mention those he couldn't hear. Or maybe some human being might even want to do him harm.

The wind would blow through the trees and the grass, maybe even shaking his log, but the boy must sit stoically, never removing the blindfold. It was the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a terrifying and seemingly endless night, the sun would rise, and the boy could at last remove the blindfold. It was then that he would discover his father sitting on the log beside him. His father had been on guard the entire night, protecting his son from any harm.

We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, our Heavenly Father is watching over us, sitting on the log beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him. He is there.

## A CHRISTIAN POEM by Maya Angelou

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin."  
I'm whispering "I was lost,"  
Now I'm found and forgiven.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble  
and need CHRIST to be my guide.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak  
and need HIS strength to carry on.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed  
and need God to clean my mess.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not claiming to be perfect,  
My flaws are far too visible  
but, God believes I am worth it.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I still feel the sting of pain,  
I have my share of heartaches  
So I call upon His name.

When I say... "I am a Christian"  
I'm not holier than thou,  
**I'm just a simple sinner  
who received God's good grace,  
somehow.**

[Amen to that!]

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The "Good News Guide" is a monthly newsletter that is free, and freely available to anyone who wants it. I love to get a note saying, "Please put me on the mailing list." If you know of someone who wants it, let me know. For inmates I need first and last name, DOC number, usually their SID number, and address.

This newsletter is primarily for jail and prison inmates, but I love it when an inmate is released and still wants it. I just need your address. Keep telling me where you are, and I'll keep sending you the GNG.

If you have a question about Bible truth or the Christian life, I'll gladly share my thoughts with you, and maybe with readers of "Good News Guide." Write to me. **Note:** I do not have Bible studies or materials to send you.

Address: Brother Roland, P.O. Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222  
Website: [www.goodnewsguide.org](http://www.goodnewsguide.org)

# Grace

Grace is one of the major themes of the New Testament. This puzzle is made from some of the key Bible passages about Grace. Enjoy!

## Puzzle:

K K O P P H E J P O Z U U G H R R M S J W B J S H B V V A W N J  
I P T T D O T A W V M F X X N N S I H A J G J S R T X V D R O U  
M L A Z H E V A I N T H E P R E S E N T A G E E Y A D L Z K T F  
D I O K J R V D E C A R G Y B D E V A S A R J N R E O D I I B G  
K L H I K D O E C D G V C S U L D T X K W Q O I L O L Y S T Y V  
B B K H P C L U R X S H E S U G N I N I A R T L R E C E P J W G  
R E N P G H A R G L M E E L H E H H L T Y W O D J H T M R Y O Q  
N F G N W U S X O H A B V R P E D C F L Q R L O C E B N B O R B  
N O S D G B O U S W F S C R G O O A F W T R H G R B Z Y Z N K W  
O R I O D D F R K M N A T Z E A E X M N M F O N U I E W R K S Q  
T E U G R L I G H O F E I I F S J P O D I Y A U J O W I B O T U  
T H N F G R E J C T Q C L T N N E C L D O L S E V U Y W R G S N  
O A Y O U O K N M K Q I C L H G F D E L L G V C R J S C I S H O  
C N J T P W B G D N B L G Y A L L V N I A I O N H I B G S S M S  
O D G F R E S Y O Y R D N O E F O I F I S O V U Y D O C K D T Y  
N O N I I H H I G Y I D L S D L S E F E S A T O W D Q R P S S L  
D G F G G T A X F K N N E R O P B I V E U F J N S F O P H E I N  
E F S E H O S O O J G V O S O L R E H R L P E E G W T O A C R O  
M O U E T T A Q T X I R D T L W I E W T I Y N R D Q U G A P H S  
N E S R A N P A F L N O D S Y L E W P Z S T J O O L Z G R G C I  
F C E F N I P W I L G T B W E O A H M A H A O R D N B U Y X N H  
A A J F D D E H G R S Y W B N Y U P T I R G O N P T T N A E I E  
Y R T J G Y A G E T A W R L S A L R S E O E O B H U F T B E D V  
W G S U O W R G H H L E C O H N L S D D V T D Y N U S L F U E A  
Q E I O D S E N T J V Q V L V O O V O O D A H N N A N B M Q T G  
R H R T L L D Y Z E A Q A S R N Q T H I I P S U B R C X C Q A H  
D T H B Y F A P O S T H F K Z X V I E Q R N X O X N U E V K E K  
G T C Q B V W H P U I H G G X A C D Y U H J G Y T N K K N J R K  
A J N W P J W Q S N O I S S A P Y L D L R O W H N D E B R O C Q  
C S I T Y Y K H S H N N C O V S T J Y G O D O T S U R O F L N H

## Words:

### \* John 3:16-17

GOD SO LOVED  
THIS FALLEN WORLD  
GAVE HIS ONLY SON  
WHOEVER BELIEVES  
SHOULD NOT DIE  
EVERLASTING LIFE  
GOD SENT HIS SON  
INTO THE WORLD  
NOT TO CONDEMN  
TO SAVE THE WORLD  
THROUGH HIM

### \* Romans 6:23

SIN DESERVES DEATH

FREE GIFT OF GOD  
IS ETERNAL LIFE  
IN CHRIST JESUS

### \* Ephesians 2:8-10

SAVED BY GRACE  
THROUGH FAITH  
NOT YOUR DOING  
THE GIFT OF GOD  
NOT BY WORKS  
NONE CAN BOAST  
GOD MADE US  
CREATED IN CHRIST  
TO DO GOOD WORKS  
GOD PREPARED

BEFOREHAND  
FOR US TO DO

### \* Titus 2:10-12

THE GRACE OF GOD  
HAS APPEARED  
BRINGING SALVATION  
TO ALL PEOPLE  
TRAINING US  
RENOUNCE UNGODLINESS  
WORLDLY PASSIONS  
LIVE SELF-CONTROLLED  
UPRIGHT AND GODLY  
IN THE PRESENT AGE