



# GRACE AND THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

*We can receive strength to do more than we realize.*

**By Joshua J. Perkey**  
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In the summer of 2012, Palakiko C. had just graduated from high school in Hawaii, USA, and was looking forward to attending Brigham Young University and serving a mission. Palakiko had done a lot to prepare for his mission already—he had accompanied the full-time missionaries all day three times, and he often went with them to visit and teach the gospel to families.

One evening Palakiko and the missionaries began teaching a

part-member family with five children, ages 8 to 14, who hadn't been baptized.

“We visited with them for six weeks,” Palakiko says. “Each week, I saw their faith increase as we taught them doctrinal principles that would help them receive eternal life.”

Soon all five children had accepted the invitation to be baptized and asked Palakiko if he would perform the baptisms. He enthusiastically agreed. Baptizing them would be

a privilege and an honor. But for Palakiko, there was a more difficult challenge: they also asked him to give a talk about the Holy Ghost at the baptismal service.

Palakiko was more than a little nervous. “How was I supposed to give a talk on a day that they would remember for the rest of their lives?” he asked. “What would I say?”

In spite of his anxiety, Palakiko knew he should do it, and he started preparing for his talk that very day.

“I did everything in my power to make sure everything would go well,” he says. He prayed, read scriptures for guidance and comfort, and rehearsed the baptismal prayer in his mind. On the day of the service, the baptisms went fine. And as he gave his talk and focused on striving to have the Spirit, he felt guided in what to say.

“At no other time in my life have I felt the Spirit more than during that talk,” Palakiko says. “I’m glad I was able to be an instrument in the Lord’s hands.”

Palakiko was able to do what he needed to do because he was strengthened by the grace, or enabling power, of the Atonement.

### What Is the Enabling Power of Jesus Christ?

Because we all sin, we need to learn about and apply the principles of repentance, a core feature of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the

Savior’s sacrifice, none of us could conquer sin and return to the presence of our Father.

Helping us overcome sin is one facet of the Savior’s grace. But there’s another. Grace is defined as “divine help or strength . . . given through the mercy and love of God.”<sup>1</sup> By the grace of Jesus Christ, we can be strengthened to “do and be good and to serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity.”<sup>2</sup> As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, “The word *grace* frequently is used in the scriptures to connote a strengthening or enabling power.”<sup>3</sup>

Palakiko was blessed by the grace of the Savior to accomplish something he felt inadequate to do on his own. That same power can help all of us in ways both small and great.

### How Can We Access the Savior’s Grace?

When we need guidance or support or strength, God can help us. But it depends on us too. We have to seek His help and be worthy of it.

As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “When we obey the commandments of the Lord and serve His children unselfishly, the natural consequence is power from God—power to do more than we can do by ourselves. Our insights, our talents, our abilities are expanded because we receive

strength and power from the Lord.”<sup>4</sup>

This pattern can be seen in the life of Jasmine B. of Washington, USA, who received help in coping with a disease. Before contracting the disease, she was a healthy young woman who excelled on her high school track team and loved getting up early for seminary.

Then she started feeling ill. She lost 15 pounds very quickly, and no matter how much sleep she got, it became harder and harder to get up for seminary. She couldn’t run as well as she used to and was hungry, thirsty, and weak all the time.

Over a month went by before she started to pray for help. “I held off so long,” she says, “because the thought of praying for help was an act of submission, admitting that something was indeed wrong with me. It scared me.”

But because she humbled herself to seek the Lord’s help, answers started to come. She went to see a doctor, who discovered she had developed type 1 diabetes, which meant her body could not produce insulin to process sugar. Diabetes has lifelong consequences and must be carefully monitored. Even as the doctors developed a plan to help her manage her condition, she began to worry that she would not be able to continue running track.

“I never ceased to pray as I struggled to understand my new life and to control my disease,” she says.



“I prayed for strength and understanding and that I would be able to accept this trial. I would not have made it through those hard days and weeks without prayer.”

Jasmine made incredible strides. Within two weeks of being diagnosed, she was back practicing on the track, and later that year she did well in state competitions. “I believe Heavenly Father has blessed me with a strong, healthy body because I have been striving to be steadfast in the gospel,” she says. “Having diabetes was not the end of the world. With His help, I knew I could get through this.”

By the grace of God and through her dependence on Him, Jasmine is able to cope with her disease and have wonderful successes in her life.

### Grace Is Available to Everyone

This same strengthening power, the grace of Christ, is available to all of

us. Whenever you feel alone or overwhelmed or discouraged, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ makes His grace available to you.

As Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy has explained, “If we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the enabling power of His Atonement *strengthens* us in our moment of need [see Jacob 4:7], and His redeeming power *sanctifies* us as we [put] off the natural man’ [Mosiah 3:19]. This brings hope to all, especially to those who feel that recurring human weakness is beyond the Savior’s willingness to help and to save.”<sup>5</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Grace,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. David A. Bednar, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, April 2012, 43; *Liahona*, Apr. 2012, 15.
3. David A. Bednar, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 76.
4. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 30.
5. Craig A. Cardon, “The Savior Wants to Forgive,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 15.

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

### Things You Might Do:

- Ponder on the times God has granted you grace and record these experiences in your journal.
- Set goals to stretch your abilities and take time to recognize the Savior’s grace as you strive to reach your goals.
- Share your testimony and experiences with others at home, at school, at church, or on social media.