

(continued from the front)

It seems Satan has done his job awfully well. The devil has made it his priority to hinder Christians through the use of worry, pressure, strain, and stress. He seeks to wear out our patience, take away our joy, disturb our peace, mute our praise of God, undermine our walk with the Lord, and silence our sharing of the good news. The devil's device is to get us to look away from Jesus and to start looking at circumstances. We know we shouldn't; it doesn't really help, but too often, we still do. As a result, we feel the burden and pressure even more.

Over and above the circumstances, difficult and pressure-packed as they may be, is 2 Corinthians 9:8. There is the all-important reminder that "God is able." What a beautiful and wonderful history He has in showing us that He is able! Then the verse intentionally tells us how able He is. "All grace" is able to "abound toward you." There's incredible grace that's available to every child of God. "All sufficiency in all things." God's sufficiency is ever available; there's grace for every place, circumstance, and time. No exceptions, no exclusions. Note also how the verse says, You "may have an abundance for every good work." The verse begins by saying, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you" and concludes with so you "may have an abundance for every good work." It is the rich and abundant grace of God that motivates and strengthens us to abound in the work of our Lord. It keeps us going when the circumstances, pressures, and difficulties of life might otherwise overwhelm us.

When you feel overwhelmed, focus on God's grace. When the load seems too heavy, cling to God's promises. When you're really feeling the heat and pressure, keep in mind that God controls the thermostat. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

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When You're Feeling the Pressure

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). The comprehensiveness of this passage is mind-blowing. It's amazing how the same passage of scripture can lift us up, humble us, and strengthen us all at the same time.

Most deal with pressure in their lives; maybe it's even a constant. However, there are times when, like Paul, "we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). For someone with the faith and fortitude of Paul to say such a thing is a reminder that even the strongest of Christians sometimes feel the pressure and strain of living for Jesus and cry out. While bearing the weight and agony of our sin, even the Lord cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). He was forsaken for a while so that you and I would never be. We never face the pressure, strain, and difficulty of life alone. God has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

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Jeff Kiel
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