

Living “The Chocolate Life”

Savoring and Sharing the Rich Indulgence of God’s Grace

By Deb Burma

Open with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you in God’s Word as you learn what it means to live “the chocolate life.”

Savoring

Imagine you have just received the most incredible, exquisite chocolate indulgence: a rare, foil-wrapped delicacy waiting to be gently opened. *Go ahead; unwrap it!* Move it slowly toward your mouth; take in the beautiful color and the rich aroma. Lay this pure chocolate perfection on your tongue and gently close your mouth around it, allowing your taste buds to dance with joy as you *savor* this morsel of exquisite chocolate. Hold its delicate richness on your tongue for as long as possible, taking in the indescribable flavor and the smooth, creamy texture. And then note how ever so slowly, the delicacy melts, trickles down your throat, and disappears. Finished. A memory. Fleeting, wasn’t it?

That’s how it is with chocolate. And that’s how it is with most precious things we savor. We hold onto them as long as we can. We revel in joys and friendships of our



school years only to part ways upon graduation. We delight in the years of our children’s youth; before we know it, the nest is empty. We relish the time spent with a loved one who lives far away; all too soon, we say good-bye again. We treasure our favorite pastimes and value our greatest accomplishments; we savor the best things of life as long as possible because, far too quickly, they disappear. Finished. A memory. Fleeting, weren’t they?

What precious “things of life” do you savor the most? How might they be fleeting?

As Christians living “the chocolate life,” we savor something so much greater: the rich indulgence of God’s grace in

Christ! His sweet, saving grace — His rich forgiveness and mercy that takes away all our sins — is the one thing we can savor that will not melt, grow up, leave, change, fade with time, or disappear. His Word assures us that grace is ours for much more than a fleeting moment; it does not become a mere memory but lasts for a lifetime. And this endless, free gift of God is by far the best thing of life!

Read **Ephesians 1:7–8**. What do these verses tell us we have in Christ? What do we learn about the riches of God's grace in **verse 8**?

The good news is that when our priorities become distorted and wrong, we can take heart that these and all our sins are forgiven in Christ, *in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us* (**Ephesians 1:7b–8a**).

It is important to be mindful that those fleeting moments and all the valued “things of life” are also gifts from God to be enjoyed. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can still savor them in proper perspective and priority, giving thanks to the Lord for them and putting Him in first place.

What do **Matthew 6:33** and **Matthew 22:37–38** teach about priority? How can you put the Lord in first place this week?

Until the day of Christ's return, or the day He calls us home to eternity with Him, we can go on savoring His rich, lavish grace ... His undeserved, unmerited favor ... His promised salvation in Christ, who died and rose to take away our sins!

Read **Ephesians 2:8** and commit it to memory! According to this verse, by God's grace, what has He gifted to us? Thank the Lord today for the best “thing of life!”

Sharing

Have you ever observed a chocolate fondue fountain? Thick, gooey, liquid treasure bubbles up and overflows, trickling down, layer upon layer, and spilling pools of chocolate into the basin below. Have you wondered what it might be like to stand beneath the fountain, allowing the chocolate liquid to cover us, opening our mouths to catch it and drink to our heart's content?

As we imagine chocolate raining down upon us, we can be reminded of the undeserved, freely-flowing grace that God has poured down over us in Christ, even in the midst of our sin: *The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus* (**1 Timothy 1:14** ESV).

Throughout Scripture, God has given us a similar picture of His lavish grace, of His forgiveness in Christ. Look up the

following verses and summarize in your own words this picture of grace: **Isaiah 61:10** and **Revelation 7:9–10**; **Psalms 32:1** and **Romans 4:7**; **Psalms 85:2**; **Galatians 3:27**.

God's abundant grace and forgiveness lavished upon us overflows, spilling over onto others so they, too, are able to taste and smell and see God's grace through us. Living “the chocolate life,” by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can share His rich, indulgent grace with others.

Share? Do I have to share? When we hear that word in the same sentence as “chocolate,” we may get a little queasy, because sharing would mean we get less than we want. (And when it comes to chocolate, we want it all, don't we!) What a relief to learn that sharing grace doesn't work that way. Enabled by the Spirit, as we share the same freely flowing favor given by God in Christ with the world around us, grace continues to pour down ever so richly over us too.

What does **Ephesians 4:32** say about sharing grace?

On our own, pouring out God's grace onto others would be impossible; but with His forgiving power at work in us, we can let it overflow onto those who have betrayed us, mistreated us, or hurt us — even to those individuals who don't seek or deserve our forgiveness. When we share God's undeserved grace, we leave its sweet aroma and rich flavor as we pass through others' lives. They get to experience the delicious taste of the grace of God in Christ through us. As we remember that *He has forgiven us for so much more*, consider these questions:

- Are we forgiving, even though *this person* doesn't deserve it?
- Are we willing to put *that person's* needs first, though she is acting selfishly?
- Do we have a spirit of giving, although *they* may have given us nothing in return?
- Do we serve to make others' lives richer or sweeter, despite the fact that *they* may have brought bitterness to ours?

[Pause to consider your responses to each of these questions, personalizing them to your unique situations and relationships.]

Because of God's strength at work within us, we are able to be kind and tenderhearted, sharing His forgiveness and grace with everyone around us. When others catch the aroma and the flavor of that grace overflowing in us, they will say, “Mmmm ... I'll have what she's having.”

Perhaps they will even want to stand under it too!

Closing Prayer: *Lord Jesus, we praise You for Your endless mercy and grace! Lead us to savor this grace that knows no end.*

Lord, as Your grace overflows for us, empower us to share that undeserved forgiveness and favor with the world around us too. May they see Christ in each one of us! In Your name. Amen.

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