

FOREWORD BY LAUREN CHANDLER

# Glimpses of Grace

*Treasuring the Gospel  
in Your Home*

GLORIA FURMAN

STUDY GUIDE

Study Guide for

# Glimpses of Grace

*Treasuring the Gospel  
in Your Home*

**GLORIA FURMAN**

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*Study Guide for Glimpses of Grace: Treasuring the Gospel in Your Home*

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## Today's Forecast: Mundane with a 100 Percent Chance of Miraculous

“Motivation can’t be written on an index card—it must be written on your heart.”

“Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,” writes the apostle Paul (Phil. 3:20). But how? Can the prospect of our heavenly future really and truly help us practically with day-to-day life? It can indeed, because it gives tremendous significance to each ordinary task.

### Reflection

1. Paul tells us what real love is like (1 Cor. 13:4–8), and we want to love like that, but more often than not, we fall far short. What is the way out of discouragement when we recognize our failures to love?

2. Gloria describes how her outlook on life has changed over time (pp. 26–27). What realization began to free her from her former outlook? Where would you place your own outlook today?

3. The Bible tells us: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Col. 3:23). What view can help us live this out as we manage our homes (see p. 27)?

4. Discuss or describe how *today* is included in the scope of eternity.

5. Grace—shown at the cross and promised in the future—holds Gloria back from two deadly attitudes (pp. 31–32). What are those attitudes? Describe your own struggles with them.

### Going Deeper

Gloria found encouragement from John Piper’s sermon “Honoring the Biblical Call of Motherhood.” Set aside some quiet time to read or listen to it. You can find it at <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/honoring-the-biblical-call-of-motherhood>.

## Don't Smurf the Gospel

"Christianity is not a how-to manual for having a nice life."

How would you define "the gospel"? If you ask ten people, you are likely to get ten different answers. There seems to be a good bit of confusion these days as to what exactly the Christian gospel is. But nailing down a biblical definition is vital, because it's a matter of life and death.

### Reflection

1. Why do our attempts to be "good" fly in the face of the gospel?

2. Under the old covenant, God's people were required to make animal sacrifices on a regular basis. Because our worship doesn't include that practice, we often aren't awestruck by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. How does Hebrews 10 reveal the magnitude of blessing for new-covenant believers?

3. Gloria writes, "It is the responsibility of every theologian to check and recheck according to the Scriptures the ideas floating about regarding who God is and what he does and what he desires" (p. 43). Also, the apostle Paul's ministry included destroying "arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God" and taking "every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). How are we called to do likewise?

4. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Cor. 15:19). What did he mean?

5. Review Romans 1:18–23. What do you see there that shows, as Gloria says, that “it takes a deliberate effort to reject God” (p. 46)?

6. Where are you tempted to rely on yourself or on your efforts rather than on Christ?

### Going Deeper

Holiness, when rightly understood and pursued, leads to tremendous blessing. Note what you learn about holiness from the following passages:

- Exodus 15:11
- Psalm 65:4
- Isaiah 35:8
- 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1
- Ephesians 4:17–24
- 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13; 4:3–8
- Hebrews 12:7–14
- 2 Peter 3:8–13

## The Power of Parables

“If you feel that God meets with you only when the house is empty or quiet, you’ll view every noise . . . as an annoying distraction to your communion with God.”

God’s Word is vital to our spiritual growth, and as we study it, the Holy Spirit applies its truths to our hearts, transforming us and imparting wisdom. We’re all tempted to conform our lives, families, and homes to worldly values, which is why we must always be asking, “What does God’s Word say about it?” Only then will we find ourselves grounded to live before God and others with joy and peace.

### Reflection

1. Jesus spoke in parables both to reveal and to conceal. What gracious purpose underlies the concealing (see pp. 51–52)?

2. What are some tip-offs to the presence of idolatry in our lives and hearts?

3. How would you answer Gloria’s question, “Is your role or identity as a homemaker the object of your affections?” (p. 54).



4. How specifically does Romans 12:1–2 shape our outlook on motherhood and homemaking?

5. Gloria shares a personal struggle she had with prayer and pillows (pp. 56–57). Can you relate to that struggle? How does Hebrews 12:1–2 speak into it?

6. Why does God give us good gifts to enjoy (see p. 60 and Ps. 103:1–5)?

### Going Deeper

God gives gifts to his daughters, and the primary gift he gives is himself. Is your heart there? Take some time to pray through the following passages:

- Psalm 73:25–26
- Matthew 13:44–46
- John 4:7–10
- Romans 5:15–17; 6:23
- Ephesians 2:8–10; 4:7
- Philippians 3:8–11
- James 1:17

## Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

“The miracle of being born again in Jesus is anything but ordinary.”

Are you joyful these days, or has daily life become nothing more than teeth-gritting perseverance? When the routine feels mundane in its sameness, we can come to believe that joy is on hold until some future season, but we have daily opportunity to delight in God as his grace gives us assurance to follow him wherever he leads.

### Reflection

1. Why is there no such thing as an “ordinary” testimony?
2. Gloria admits that she is prone to discouragement. How does she combat discouragement, and how can we (see p. 66)?
3. Because we so easily lose sight of the gospel, we must both guard ourselves in it and seek to apply it as we live our daily lives. Review 2 Timothy 1:13–14. How do we go about guarding the “good deposit”?

4. Discuss or describe how the gospel transforms us, using 2 Corinthians 3:18 in your answer (see also p. 67).

5. Studying Christ is the most worthwhile of endeavors. What happens as we undertake that study?

6. Gloria writes, “While salvation is initiated by God, we are not passive recipients of his grace” (p. 69). How are we active in receiving grace (see Phil. 2:12–13)?

7. How does holding to an eternal perspective impact our decision making?

### Going Deeper

Gloria references Richard Sibbes (1577–1635), one of the Puritan writers whose work continues to benefit the church today. Add to your reading list Sibbes’s *Glorious Freedom* (Puritan Paperbacks, Banner of Truth, 2000).

## Divine Power and Precious Promises for the 2 a.m. Feeding

“You can’t organize your way into communion with God.”

Life sometimes feels suffocating, like we’re trapped in an endless cycle with no way out. Eventually we get to the point where we feel we just can’t keep going as we have been. But, in reality, our life isn’t really about our circumstances. It’s about peace with God—peace that dominates any and all circumstances, regardless of how monotonous or difficult.

### Reflection

1. Why do you think peace seems so elusive sometimes? Why is working harder to lay hold of peace ineffective?

2. The way in which we go about our spiritual disciplines matters greatly. It has everything to do with our heart motivation. What makes the difference between works that please God and those that don’t?

3. Gloria guides us to think about how we’d answer the following questions:

- How does believing in Jesus change the way I face the daily grind?

- How does faith in God rescue me from a restless heart?

- How can I experience the peace of Christ when I am so prone to failure?

- How does the gospel transform me into a woman who rests in peace in the midst of chaos?

4. What happens to us as we cling to Christ in the midst of overwhelming circumstances (see Gal. 5:5–6 and pp. 80–81)?

5. What specific instruction for persevering through difficulty do we find in Hebrews 12:12–14?

6. Gloria and her husband, David, were greatly impacted by Milton Vincent's words about the gospel. Reread the Vincent quote on page 84. How does it alter your understanding of the gospel?

7. In what way does faith look both forward and backward? How are both looks necessary for trusting God?

### Going Deeper

When trials and troubles come, sometimes our faith gets shaken, and often that's because we lack a biblical understanding of suffering. What do the following passages teach about God's purposes in our pain?

- Job 36:15
- Psalm 119:67, 71, 75
- Romans 5:1–5
- 2 Corinthians 1:3–7
- James 1:2–4
- 1 Peter 1:3–9; 4:12–19



## The Bread of Life and Bagels for Breakfast

“The cost of bread in God’s kingdom is just to be hungry for it.”

As homemakers, we’re tempted to build our identity on what others think of us, but when we allow people to define us, we become increasingly worried and anxious. That’s because we aren’t seeking our identity in Christ. Only in him will we find who we were meant to be, and as we allow him to define us, we will find ourselves free from the tyranny of people pleasing.

### Reflection

1. Read Proverbs 9:1–6; Isaiah 55:1–3; and John 6:26–51, then answer the following questions:

- What aspects are similar in all three passages?

- What questions are asked?

- What promises are made?

2. How does the truth of the gospel free us from an anxious overemphasis on food?

3. What lies at the root of our anxiety (see pp. 91–92)?

4. Why is recognition of our weaknesses or failures cause for rejoicing rather than for discouragement (see pp. 92–93)?

5. According to Richard Sibbes (see quote on p. 93), what are the differences between a *hard heart* and *hardness of heart*?

6. Gloria says we all need to be reminded that “keeping a home, serving strangers, ‘settling down,’ raising a family—none of this was ever about us. It was always for the sake of the gospel” (p. 96), and she has memorized Titus 2:11–14 to help her remember. How is the truth contained in this passage the impetus for the admonition in Titus 2:3–5?

### Going Deeper

Read how God introduced manna to the Israelites and how they responded to God’s provision in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. What do these biblical narratives show us about God and about God’s people? Why did the Israelites respond as they did, and how are we just like them?

## All Grace and All Sufficiency for Every Dinner Guest

“What would our hospitality look like if we believed that Jesus’s death on the cross was the measure of God’s compassion for someone?”

Jesus is the host extraordinaire. Our divine host, who opened the way into God’s very presence through the sacrifice of his body, gives us the greatest possible picture of hospitality. He gave his life so that we could be guaranteed a place in his Father’s house forever. And he defeated the darkness so that we could live in eternal light. Because of Christ’s death on the cross, God welcomes us into his forever family.

### Reflection

1. Gloria points out that God often uses things that are common to us to shape our souls (p. 99). What “common things” is God using to shape you?

2. Gloria found herself frustrated one morning when she discovered someone had used her last coffee filter (p. 100). What did she identify as the root of her frustration? Where can you see something similar in your own life?

3. When it comes to sharing, Gloria says, “The issue isn’t with the resources I have; the issue lies with my willingness to share them and where these resources come from” (p. 102). In what ways is hospitality a struggle for you? What excuses do you find yourself using to avoid it?

4. Romans 2:4 tells us that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. How can God's kindness transform our approach to hospitality?

5. Gloria writes, "Because of God's grace in the gospel, our hospitality can be selfless, generous, and authentic" (p. 104). How is this possible (see Phil. 4:19 and 1 Pet. 4:11)?

6. D. A. Carson warns us against using hospitality and service as a means to glorify ourselves (p. 104). How can we heed his warning?

### Going Deeper

Hospitality is a major theme in Scripture. Study the following passages as a sampling of the biblical picture of hospitality:

- Genesis 18:1–21
- Leviticus 19:34; 25:35–38
- Matthew 10:41–42
- Mark 14:12–16
- Romans 12:9–13
- 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:9–10
- Titus 1:7–9
- Hebrews 13:2
- James 2:1–7
- 1 Peter 4:7–9

## He Washes Us White as Snow

“At times we may even be tempted to think that God himself is fed up with us and our sin, baggage, and issues.”

We’ve all heard people say, “Cleanliness is next to godliness,” but from the standpoint of Scripture, that’s simply not true. According to Jesus, spiritual cleanliness, not physical cleanliness, is godly. But much like Gloria’s kitchen floor, we just can’t get all the dirt off. How wonderful that we have a Savior who does the cleanup for us!

### Reflection

1. In what way is a dirty kitchen floor a metaphor for our hearts (p. 110), and how is the truth of the metaphor shown in Psalm 51?
2. Gloria uses her dirty kitchen floor as a reminder of the gospel. What in your home can serve as a gospel reminder?
3. What is the most harmful aspect of our sin? Use Bible passages to form your answer.

4. How does the Bible refute our natural inclination to measure ourselves against others?

5. Gloria writes, “God is unified in himself to ensure both that he is glorified and that we are secure in his salvation” (p. 116). Discuss or describe what she means by that.

6. What do the following passages teach us about our hearts?

- Genesis 6:5

- Jeremiah 17:9

- Matthew 15:17–20

7. In what way is the cleansing God provides us different from our attempts to clean ourselves up (see pp. 118–19 and Ps. 51:7, 10)?

### Going Deeper

Our tongue is a vehicle for sin, as James 3:6–9 makes clear. Using the book of Proverbs, do a word study on wise and foolish speech. What sort of words are categorized as folly, and what sort are deemed wise?



## God's Abiding Presence in Our Pain

“When God mercifully strips us of our idols, he has in mind  
to give us something better instead—himself.”

We all carry burdens—a lost love, a lost child, a broken friendship, a broken home. Whatever it is, burdens like these cause us to limp through life, and sometimes the pain is so deep we can hardly stand up. Are certain circumstances currently shaking your trust in God's goodness? If so, there is hope in Christ and in the grace he holds out to you.

### Reflection

1. Thinking back to Gloria's story, what thoughts or feelings along the way rattled her heart? How did she regain her hope?

2. Gloria asks, “How does God's immutable character affect our everyday perspective on life?” (p. 131). How would you answer that question today?

3. No gift from God could ever be greater than the gift of himself, Gloria writes, and she adds, “the gutsiest thing to do is to pray on a daily basis that God would show you how this is true” (p. 131). Are you willing? If not, what holds you back?

4. What does it mean to ask God to show us grace and mercy? What answer should we expect and watch for (see p. 131 and 1 Thess. 4:3)?

5. Gloria confesses her tendency to pray “pacifier prayers” (p. 132). What usually underlies this sort of praying? Where does this show up in your own prayers?

6. What is God up to when our prayers for relief seem to go unanswered? Review the Bible passages Gloria mentions (Ps. 16:11; 73:26; Isa. 55:1–3; 61:10; Jer. 31:25) when forming your answer.

### **Going Deeper**

Prayerfully read the entire story of Micah in Judges 17–18. Can you identify with Micah when he asks, “What have I left?” (18:24)? What idols in your life does this study expose?

## United with Christ but Lonely for Friends

“If a homemaker has built walls around herself, . . . she must punch  
a few holes in the walls to make windows for others.”

The security we have in Christ changes the way we relate to one another, and it does so by first changing us. If Christ dwells in our hearts through faith, then we can, by grace, begin to comprehend his great love for us, and from that love, we can truly love others.

### Reflection

1. Gloria identifies loneliness as something that can accompany the challenges of motherhood, saying, “Loneliness can . . . settle onto your heart like dust after a thorough cleaning.” In what ways can motherhood be lonely? How does God’s grace minister to our loneliness?

2. What can lead to bitterness, and how does Gloria work to keep herself from it (see p. 139)? How does Hebrews 12:12–15 deepen our understanding of why bitterness is so deadly?

3. What are some of the hindrances to being a good friend, and how can we overcome them? How does Colossians 3:12–15 guide us in building friendships?

4. What underlies the craving to control our friendships (see p. 141)? What can enable us to repent of that craving?

5. Gloria mentions some “what if” fears that can hinder our friendships from growing. What are some of your “what if” fears? What mind-set overcomes these fears (see pp. 142–43)? How does Romans 15:5–7 both strengthen and instruct us concerning our relationships?

6. Of what does true repentance consist, and how does it build relationships (see pp. 145–46)?

### **Going Deeper**

What practical steps can you take to allow time for friendships? Commit the question to prayer over the next few weeks, and begin to formulate some realistic, concrete plans.

## Treasure in Jars of Clay, Not in Fine Bone China

“For many of us homemakers our greatest fear is in being found incompetent, insufficient, and ineffective.”

We are so often tempted to hide who we really are. At times we present a false self. Other times we simply lie. But because of Christ, we don't have to be perfect! When God calls us to serve—even though we lack the skills, knowledge, or expertise—we can move forward with the confidence that God loves to work through us just as we are.

### Reflection

1. Review 2 Corinthians 4:5–7. What do we learn about God and about ourselves from this passage? Why has God chosen to use us in kingdom work?

2. Gloria writes, “One way to know if you might struggle with [perfection] is to listen to what your heart is saying next time you hear the doorbell ring” (p. 151). Think about a recent doorbell ring at your home. What can you learn about your heart from the way you responded?

3. What two reasons does Gloria name for why we don't embrace kingdom work (see pp. 151–52)? Can you relate? Give specific examples.

4. Gloria admits her temptation to believe that God is obligated to give her the life she wants if she believes in him (p. 152). Why is this a “false gospel”?

5. When we measure our faith by our circumstances, we are actually questioning God’s character, and sooner or later we’ll find ourselves asking questions like those Gloria poses on page 153. How would you answer those questions?

- Is God really as good as his Word says he is?
- Is my faith in Jesus’s work enough to guarantee that my prayers are heard?
- Have I committed a sin that wasn’t covered by the cross?
- Is there a better way to pray to make my prayers more effective?

6. How does the gospel shape our view of God’s character?

7. Review the Bible passages Gloria lists on page 156 and note all the characteristics of God revealed there.

### Going Deeper

Proverbs 29:25 says, “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.” How does people pleasing ensnare you personally? Study Psalm 73 and Jeremiah 17:5–8.



## The Idol of a Picture-Perfect Home

“The purpose of a home is to serve the people who live there and the strangers who are invited in.”

Our home, our kids, our life—we care so much about how all that appears to others. We want to be seen as the perfect homemaker, wife, and mother. But image isn’t everything. In fact, it’s often only an illusion. But we work so hard to maintain that illusion before others. How freeing it is, then, that the gospel enables us to uncover what lies beneath the polished surface of our lives.

### Reflection

1. How does the gospel inspire us to give control of our lives to God?
2. We’re all tempted to idolize our home. In what specific ways is that true for you?
3. Gloria used to be driven by the maxim “God is a God of order and not of chaos.” What realization changed her (see p. 163)?

4. What sort of traps does the Devil set for homemakers, and how can we guard against them (see pp. 163–64)?

5. What does a godly self-image look like? How is it found?

6. Review Ephesians 2:8–10. How does that passage speak to the mundane aspects of our lives?

### **Going Deeper**

Gloria challenges us to set our homes apart for Jesus. What concrete changes can you make to carry the challenge forward? As you ponder your answer, spend time meditating on Romans 12:1–2 and Colossians 1:15–16.

## Does Contentment in Christ Come with a Nap?

“If there is discontent bound up in your heart, then there is no room  
in your house where you can go and feel peace.”

Contentment is something we all want but so often find elusive. Sometimes we’re perplexed at how the apostle Paul could write about being content in every situation, but God’s Word shows us how. Contentment is about so much more than our circumstances, and it’s possible in Christ no matter our situation.

### Reflection

1. What approach to the study of Scripture is necessary to take in the whole counsel of God (see p. 170)?
2. Review Philippians 4:11 and note all you observe about Paul’s contentment.
3. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16–28 for an overview of Paul’s life as an apostle. How do you reconcile this with his words in Philippians 4:11?

4. Discuss or describe the nature of Paul's self-sufficiency (see p. 173). How does it differ from our contemporary understanding of self-sufficiency?

5. When it comes to cultivating contentment, Gloria uses a baby's weaning process as an illustration (pp. 174–75). Discuss this process and where you are in it. What does Psalm 131 add to your understanding?

6. Submission to God fuels contentment (p. 175). If you are struggling with contentment, can you detect in your heart any unwillingness to submit to God?

7. Review Jesus's words in Matthew 6:24–25. How does the focus of our heart determine contentment?

### Going Deeper

A timeless resource for cultivating contentment is Jeremiah Burroughs's *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. Get a copy and study it on your own or with a group. It's available in paperback or free on some websites.