

*“Strength from Grace: Faithful LDS Women”*

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Do you ever wonder if in the premortal existence we said, “With the strength of the Lord, I will do hard things”?

Imagine this visual: As rock-solid asphalt gives way to emerging vegetation, we witness the power within one of God’s simple creations—a tender plant. The plant is stretching and seeking light while enduring constant adversity with the weight of the asphalt on its back. Plants gain energy from the light of the sun. That light gives them power to grow. Don’t we marvel at the strength and endurance of this seedling as it reaches for the light?

Does it seem to us at times that in reaching for the light—the light of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we too struggle to break through what might seem like asphalt? We receive the strength to endure our trials through His grace—and as Alma said, our afflictions are “swallowed up in the joy of Christ” (Alma 31:38).

One woman patiently attended her Sunday meetings and fulfilled her calling as Relief Society president, while genuinely loving her husband who chose otherwise. She loved abundantly and balanced carefully the attention she gave to every part of her life. Her afflictions were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.

Another woman, stricken with a terminal disease, found the strength to graciously endure. When she could no longer use her voice to speak to those who came to visit, she used a little whiteboard to communicate. Always directing the conversation to her guests with questions about their families and their interests, she would smile and nod. Her afflictions were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.

Still another woman carried the burden of watching one she dearly loved deal with the power of addiction. She saw its impact on their family. She sought answers through resources available,

personal prayer, the scriptures and finding refuge in the temple. She was swallowed up in the joy of Christ.

These women were strengthened through grace. They found joy in spite of the burdens they were carrying. In spite of it all, they chose to find happiness in their lives. Looking forward with an eternal perspective gives one hope, reason to look up and feel gratitude for even the smallest bit of light. Like Ammon and his brethren as they described the account of their journey in the land of Nephi, they used the words *sufferings, sorrows, afflictions* and *incomprehensible joy!*

Sister Marjorie Pay Hinckley once said, “I can laugh or I can cry, but I choose to laugh because crying gives me a headache.”

What is the “rest of the story” of these three women, whose stories I have shared?

One woman’s husband’s heart was softened years later through her constant love, a patient home teacher and dear friends. He returned to activity and to the temple. A happy, happy day! Eventually dementia plagued the end of her life, and he lovingly cared for her every need to the end.

The second woman eventually succumbed to Lou Gehrig’s disease. She left a beautiful legacy for her family. Life has continued on. Her husband and their children are grateful for the memories they share, and they are finding there is light through the healing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. “The sting of death is swallowed up in Christ” (Mosiah 16:8). For them, the Lord’s plan of happiness continues.

The third woman discovered with the enabling power of the Savior’s Atonement, strength beyond her own. She found healing in the temple covenants and promises. Therein lies the source of hope and eternal perspective. As Christ has promised, she continues to live her life and lives it more abundantly.

These are women like you and me, and like Alma and his people in the Book of Mormon. When the burdens were laid upon their backs, the Lord knew the thoughts of their hearts. He did not remove the burdens, He strengthened them that they could bear their burdens with ease, “and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Like the plant pushing through the asphalt, we too are created by God. We are His spirit children, created in His likeness, with spiritual fortitude implanted within each one of us. That fortitude emerges as we reach for the Savior and access His power-giving light. Then we become as new creatures reborn in the joy of Christ.

Today we have been taught about faithful women here at home and all over the world who have found strength from grace. These qualities are a gift from God embedded within each one of us. Our desire to turn to Christ and give our consecrated all to Him allows us through the redeeming and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to become gracious daughters—daughters of our Heavenly Father.

I speak for all of us as I testify of the living reality and of the love of our Heavenly Father and of His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Mosiah 24:15