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**GOD THE FATHER IS ULTIMATELY IN CHARGE By Don Garner**

This is something akin to kicking a person when they're down, but the evil one prefers to use opportunities like the tragedies occurring in our lives to interject doubts into our minds so he can try to derail our faith in God. Satan sees our personal pitfalls as an opportunity to plant his crooked crowbar between faithful Christians and our loving Creator. In trying times we need to stay focused on our faith and we need to look to Jesus for support and solace. We can't allow doubt and uncertainty about God's love for us creep into our intellect and sabotage our sound Christian reasoning.

We are reminded of Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14:28-31. While Peter had his eyes fixed on Jesus, he was able to climb out of the boat and walk on the surface of the water. But when he lost his focus and started paying attention to the wind and the waves around him, that's when he began to sink. In a panic, Peter called out to Jesus to save him. Jesus calmly took him by the hand and rescued him from drowning. The same type of thing sometimes happens to us. When we take our focus off Jesus and the sacrifice that was made for all of us, is when doubts appear in our minds and our faith becomes questionable. We have to remind ourselves that God is faithful and unwavering and He will reward us in the afterlife if we remain faithful to Him in this earth life. We know that God is steadfast and unchangeable, and if anything happens to negatively modify our relationship with the Father, it must be a problem on our end.

One analogy is to look at it as if God is in the position of the strong, diligent Father driving down the highway in the family sedan or station wagon. He's always in the position of total control behind the steering wheel. No matter where we choose to sit in the car or even if we choose to bail out, God remains in the same place He has always been; safely in control behind the wheel. It's up to us to where we choose to place ourselves in the automobile. We can choose to stay securely nestled up beside Him, under the protection of His comforting love, or we can hang our heads out the right side window to get smacked by a mailbox. or we could mess up the relationship with the Father in whatever manner we choose to mess it up in, usually engaging in sinful acts that drive a wedge between ourselves and our loving Creator. All humans, even God's precious children like us are endowed with the freedom to make our own decisions concerning our obedience and about our faithfulness, or lack thereof.

As with everything we pray for, we need to ask that God's will be done above that of men, including our own trivial hopes and dreams. I believe that we can all be content and happy as long as God's will is accomplished. I am confident that if we remain faithful and stay focused on discerning what God's will is for us, if we keep studying the scriptures and pray consistently, we'll be privileged to experience the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge and be blessed by God with the personal tranquility to live our lives in peace.

Ephesians 3:19 *"And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

**Excerpt from "Refining Grace" -- Copyright 2014 by Donald Garner**