

Personal testimony

A photograph of two hands reaching upwards, palms facing each other, against a bright, golden-yellow background with soft clouds and light rays. The word "Grace" is written in a large, stylized, cursive font with a white outline and a reddish-brown fill, positioned between the hands.

Grace

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When I started my journey with ABBO (Assosiasie vir Bybelse Berading en Opleiding) 4 years ago, I dreamt of becoming a biblical counsellor. I was so excited to start this journey to be empowered to help others. I was convinced that I was the perfect person for the job. I mean, I have graduated from the school of life and I created the t-shirt!

My own journey was not easy. I found out early in life that life was not perfect. My biological father was not part of my life so when I met my husband, he became my hero. Yes, I had an amazing stepfather that was in every aspect my real dad, but I still felt cheated somehow growing up without my own father. So, when I married my best friend, I put him on a pedestal and somehow awarded him complete power over my happiness. Then I finally found out, on the day that he was arrested for possession of drugs, that he was addicted.

My entire world collapsed. Again. This happened a few times before that rude awakening as well. Like the day my daughter was born 9 weeks early and we thought that she would not survive, and when I had a miscarriage after that and then finally when our little girl was so sick in ICU and the doctor said those words: “I’m sorry. It is over...”

Let’s take a few steps back.

Amber (now 21) was born 9 weeks early and even though the hospital counsellors prepared us for the worst, by God’s grace, Amber survived, after an incredibly challenging time. I didn’t think things could get any worse and that if

it somehow did, that we would even be able to survive. We soon found out that God would have to carry us through so much worse than that. We suffered a very devastating miscarriage after that and then fell pregnant with twins when Amber was about three years old.

Since she was born so early my doctor was concerned about the pregnancy and his goal was to get the twin’s combined weight to Amber’s birth weight. Amber only weighed 1.75kg at birth.

The pregnancy was incredibly challenging. I was admitted to hospital when I was only 5 weeks pregnant. I was dehydrated because I could not keep anything down. I was constantly nauseous. Up until the day they were born. My whole body was sore. Even my skin hurt. But by God’s grace, even though I was so sick during my entire pregnancy, the twins, Chrystal and Jade were doing so well. They were born only a few weeks early (much later than expected) and their combined birth weight was almost 4.5kg. This was a miracle. They had difficulty sucking

(like with most premature babies) but no other issues. The next morning, we heard that they will be moved out of PICU to make space for more babies as they were running out of beds. Chrystal & Jade were moved to the normal baby ward.

When I had to go say goodbye to them a day or so later when I was discharged, I noticed that Jade was breathing funny and alerted the nurse who assured me that she was fine. I put some saline drops in her nose, and we left but I could not help to feel uneasy. The next morning, I received a call from the hospital to say that we had to come in as there was blood in Jade’s nappy and they are concerned. From that minute everything started to fall apart. We arrived there and nobody would speak to us or allow us to see her. It felt like days before we could finally see her and speak to the doctor who had no idea what was happening.

The next three days were a nightmare. Jade was extremely sick and had to get a complete blood replacement, twice. It was an exceedingly difficult time for us. Jade somehow contracted some kind of bug in the hospital that turned into septicaemia and she passed away a few days later. She was only 6 days old.

We were devastated and broken beyond repair. Or so I thought... Again, by God’s grace, we found the strength to pick up the pieces and to start breathing again. We had to. We had a new-born baby and a four-year-old that needed a mom and dad to love them and take care of them and we needed them too. We slowly started to learn to deal with the pain of

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losing our precious little girl. Four years later, Jadon was born. God gave me her name and after the initial tantrums for not wanting a name so close to Jade or to spell it this specific way, I eventually made peace with it and accepted it as His will. Jadon was a biblical name. One of the assistants to Nehemiah in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. For the past 13 years, that is exactly who Jadon has been. When she was only a few months old the rug was pulled out from under me once again.

Johan, my hero, was arrested for drug possession. I felt betrayed, broken, and angry. I felt like my entire marriage was a lie. During the almost 10 year journey of being married to a selfish drug addict that lied, stole and cheated on a daily basis I found refuge at God's feet.

For an awfully long time nobody knew what I was going through. I felt too ashamed to let anybody know that my husband was using drugs and that our bank account was constantly empty because of his new hobby or to let anybody find out that we had no electricity yet again because the money that was supposed to be used for that was used for something else. Again.

People eventually found out and some supported me through this journey but then after the third rehab and me still not leaving him, I lost a few friends along the way. People started to get irritated with our story. My boss at the time even promised to look after me financially if I divorced him and then turned on me when I refused to.

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Believe me, I wanted to divorce him. Hell, I wanted to kill him. Many times. I hated him with every fibre in my body. But God refused. I used to lay at His feet begging Him to release me to divorce Johan but He wouldn't. He even told me to show him grace every time I would throw a tantrum and ask Him if He can't see what Johan was doing to me. I cried so much during this time, and I couldn't believe that God would make me stay with Johan. That He would witness day after day how I was treated and not take me out of it. Today I'm grateful that God forced me to not give up on my marriage and that he sent a few special friends to support me on that journey.

I honestly believed that my studies through Abba would empower and equip me to assist others on their journeys but what I really got out of this journey was to reflect on my journey with God and his amazing Grace throughout my life. I've always known that He existed and that He is capable of truly amazing things. I just never believed that He would be willing to do it all for me. I was reminded

that God carried me through all of this and that I am special to Him. Even when I turned my back on him for 15 months after my sister passed away from brain cancer, He was still there. In my darkest days when I did not want to call out to Him or hold on to Him, He was holding onto me.

So, it is no surprise that when God placed this desire in my heart to start my own business that it would be called Healing Grace. Healing Grace is still a brand new business. We do natural skin and body care products, created from scripture-based oils.

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