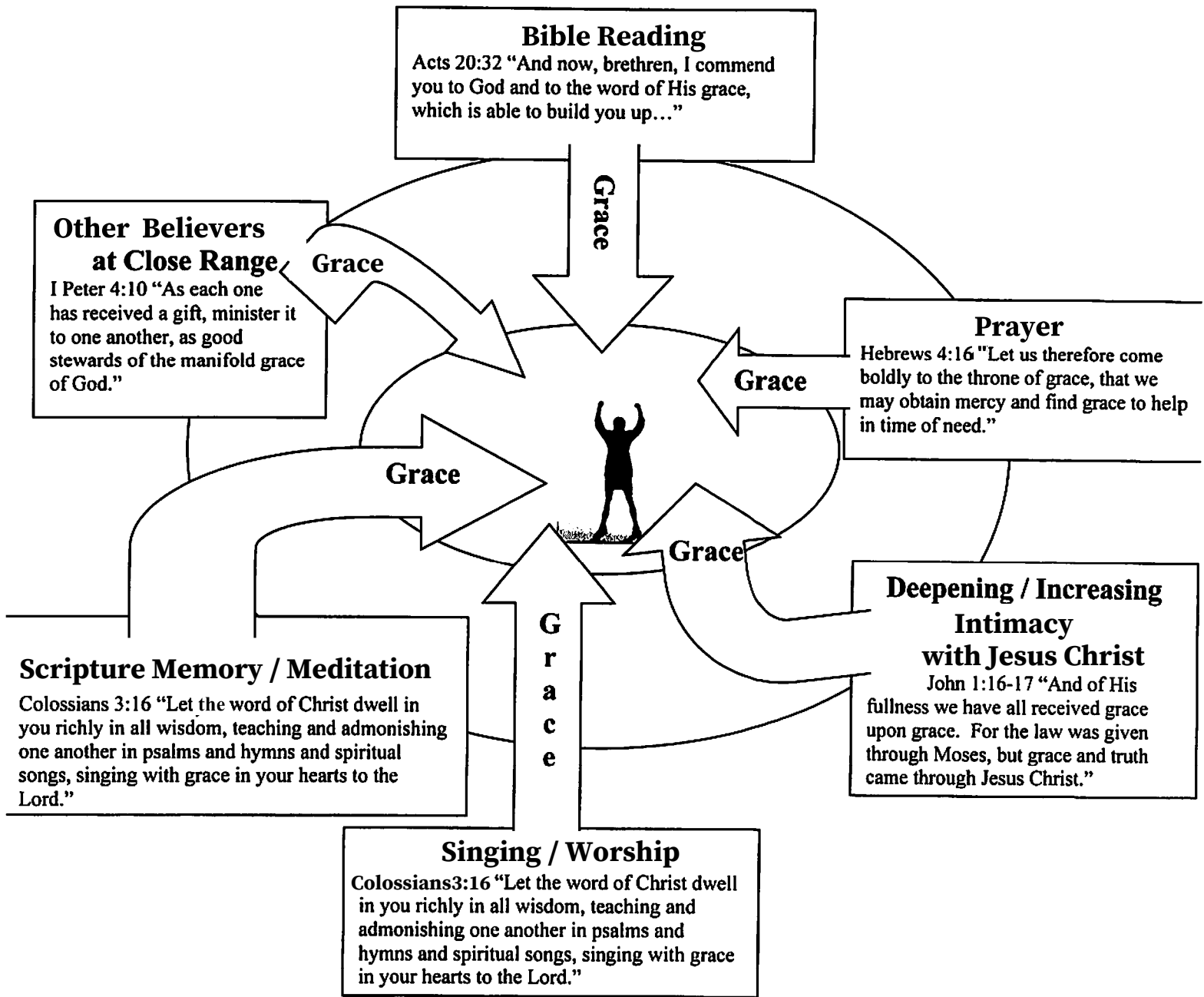


God's Channels of Grace



"When my husband died, my world was so shaken that out of sheer survival I began to sing hymns to my soul each night. (In my book *The God of All Comfort*, I tell what a key part great music and its truth-filled lyrics played in helping me survive.) For two years, I sang all the verses to "Be Still My Soul" every night. I began to listen to MP3 sermons every day while I biked or got dressed and fixed my hair, grasping the truths I heard like a drowning woman gasping for air. (I especially was helped by Tim Keller's sermons from Redeemer.com because they got to the root of my problem.)

I called two particularly strong Christian friends from my past, Sylvia and Ann, and asked if we could reignite our friendship. (They now come to my cabin from their respective states every year for a week of iron sharpening iron.) I got counseling from a wise Christian counselor. I read edifying books, biographies of those who made a difference because God was so real to them (such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Amy Carmichael, and Jonathan Edwards) and nonfiction by authors of substance (such as Philip Yancey, C.S. Lewis, and Henri Nouwen). I started praying through the Psalms so that I was not just pouring out my own thoughts but using the very words of God. I spent more time outdoors, praising the wisdom of the One who covers the woods with forget-me-nots, causes the sun to take the earth by its edges, and shows the hawk how to soar.

These ordinary means of grace kept me moving toward Jesus. But there was something else, even more important: I began to gaze inwardly upon God. My mind would go to Him, thinking of Him. Even while occupied with laundry or driving to the post office, I found my mind going to God with increasing frequency." *Idol Lies*, Dee Brestin, p.128-129.

It was her CHOICE as to where she was going to turn, and what she was going to do... and she had to put forth EFFORT. It was not going to happen automatically.

I Cor. 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Look at the prescription:

God's Grace  **My Effort**  **God's Grace**

- **Singing** – "For two years, I sang all the verses to "Be Still My Soul" every night."
- **Bible** – "I began to listen to MP3 sermons every day while I biked or got dressed and fixed my hair, grasping the truths I heard like a drowning woman gasping for air."
- **Other Believers at Close Range** – "I called two particularly strong Christian friends from my past, Sylvia and Ann, and asked if we could reignite our friendship. (They now come to my cabin from their respective states every year for a week of iron sharpening iron.)"
- **Bible / Other Believers at Close Range** – "I got counseling from a wise Christian counselor."
- **Meditation / Other Believers at Close Range** – "I read edifying books, biographies of those who made a difference because God was so real to them (such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Amy Carmichael, and Jonathan Edwards) and nonfiction by authors of substance (such as Philip Yancey, C.S. Lewis, and Henri Nouwen)."
- **Prayer** – "I started praying through the Psalms so that I was not just pouring out my own thoughts but using the very words of God."
- **Praise** – "I spent more time outdoors, praising the wisdom of the One who covers the woods with forget-me-nots, causes the sun to take the earth by its edges, and shows the hawk how to soar."