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***Grace for The Unexpected Journey*, by Deborah Barr, book review**

By Josh Aguilar

Grace for The Unexpected Journey: A 60-Day Devotional for Alzheimer's and Other Dementia Caregivers

Author

Deborah Barr

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Moody Publishers, 2018. 296pp.

Category

Inspirational/Motivation/Devotional

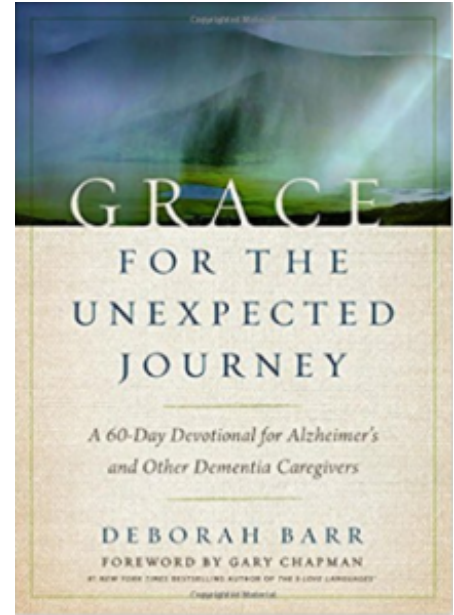
Summary

The Christian book world is full of devotional books. So why another? My eyes were drawn to *Grace for the Unexpected Journey* for a couple of reasons. The first reason this book piqued my interest is because I have not seen a devotional book which deals with the topic of dementia and dementia caregivers. The other is my mother was recently diagnosed with dementia and about six months ago my family and I became her caregivers. When I became my mom's caregiver I was woefully unprepared and unaware of what I was getting into. *Grace for the Unexpected Journey* is a gift of God for my life because it spoke to the various obstacles, emotions, and guilt I was dealing with as a caregiver.

What makes a good devotional? What I look for in a devotional is,

- Is it Biblical?
- Is it encouraging?
- Does it help you reflect and process what 's going on in your life?
- Last but not least, does it refocus your attention to Christ?

I can answer yes to all these questions when it comes to *Grace for the Unexpected*



Journey. Deborah Barr sets up this devotional as a 60-day journey, with scripture reading, some thoughts from the author and an opportunity to journal your thoughts. The topics vary from emotions you may be feeling, to mistakes you may have made, to regrets, enjoying the life that remains, clinging to Christ in the bad days and much more.

Her thoughts in Day 3 have helped me to refocus my energies when I am down and frustrated. Barr writes,

“ At first glance, it seems that caregiving is all about meeting the needs of the person with dementia. In fact, there is a purpose for you, the care partner, during this time too. In the providence of God, you have been enrolled, perhaps reluctantly, in God’s school of character development. In this school, the entire curriculum is designed to achieve one main goal: Christlikeness.

Benefit for Pastoral Ministry

Grace for the Unexpected Journey could be beneficial for pastoral ministry on two fronts. First, this devotional could help the pastor understand what the caregiver is experiencing. It is very open and honest and could be an eye into the soul of the caregiver. Deborah Barr does an excellent job helping the reader understand what the wide range of emotions and experiences that the caregiver goes through and could help the pastor empathize, pray, weep, shepherd, and counsel the caregivers in his congregation.

Grace for the Unexpected Journey could also be an equipping tool to help build the caregivers in the congregation. When a member of the congregation becomes a caregiver, the pastor or church can provide this resource to the caregivers in his congregation as tool to process what the caregiver will experience. Most importantly it will point them to the grace of Christ, which is the strength the caregiver will need through this journey.