

Read This in Christ

This is not a final explanation of your situation. It is a way of reading it in light of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of grace.

This report is not a substitute for the counsel of your bishop, stake president, or other trusted spiritual leader. It is not a replacement for the Holy Ghost, whose witness, comfort, and guidance are irreplaceable and cannot be provided by any tool or framework. If you are receiving ecclesiastical guidance, bring this report into that conversation rather than using it in place of it.

SITUATION SUMMARY

A parent is carrying grief over an adult daughter who has left the Church, is living outside her covenants, and is not seeking to return. The suffering here belongs to the parent — it is real, it is unasked for, and it is not resolved by any action the parent can take. The daughter's choices are her own. The parent cannot make them for her, undo them, or repair the distance they have created. This is a situation of non-authored suffering — grief that came to this parent through the choices of someone they love, not through any failure of their own. A second dimension is also present: this is morally unsorted territory, where the outcome visible right now cannot be read as a final verdict on anyone — not on the daughter's eternal standing, and not on the parent's faithfulness. The main risk to guard against is two related errors: reading the daughter's current distance as a settled conclusion about her eternal future, and reading the parent's ongoing grief as evidence that their love, faithfulness, or prayer has not been enough.

Reading this situation as: suffering that came to you through someone else's choices — grief you did not author and cannot resolve by your own effort.

A second dimension also present: a morally unsorted situation where what is visible now cannot be read as a final answer about what God is doing or what will ultimately become of your daughter.

The main risk to guard against: treating the present moment as the whole story — either for your daughter's eternal future or for the meaning of your own hope.

Whatever this situation requires, the answer has already been prepared in Jesus Christ. What follows is an attempt to read your situation in light of that answer.

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LIKELY FALSE INTERPRETATION

The most dangerous false reading this situation invites is treating the daughter's current state as her final state. What is visible now — departure, distance, covenant-breaking — is a real thing. It is not nothing. But visible outcomes are not moral verdicts, and present choices are not eternal conclusions. Final judgment does not invent what a soul is. It reveals what that soul has become and ratifies it. A soul that has not yet become what it will become has not yet been ratified. Reading a living person's current trajectory as settled is a claim that judgment has already occurred. It has not.

A second false reading is the comparison trap — the parent may be measuring their daughter's situation against others whose children have returned, or measuring their own faithfulness against parents whose prayers seem to have been answered differently. This mistakes partial visibility for full understanding. Grace works differently in different lives, across different timelines, through unseen and unannounced channels. The parent cannot see what is happening in their daughter's interior life, what the Spirit is or is not doing there, or what God's patience is preparing. What looks like silence toward the daughter may be something else entirely.

A third false reading is treating the parent's unanswered hope as evidence of divine disregard. The parent has prayed and loved and carried grief that has no visible resolution. That unanswered state is not proof that God has not heard or is not at work. Christ's redemptive reach does not end where human reach ends.

A fourth false reading is the assumption that grace only operates where it is consciously invited. The question 'what does grace mean for someone who isn't asking for it' contains a hidden assumption — that grace waits to be asked for before it acts at all. The Light of Christ reaches every person regardless of covenant standing or conscious request. Grace is not absent from the daughter's life because she has not asked for it. The form of grace available to her has changed; it has not disappeared.

A fifth false reading is the collapse of hope into certainty in either direction. Holding hope for the daughter's eternal situation does not require the parent to pretend that her choices carry no weight. Choices have weight. They form the soul. But the soul is not yet finished being formed, and the final revealer has not yet spoken.

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DOCTRINAL CORRECTION

The book's framework draws a precise line here. 'The presence of affliction does not authorize moral diagnosis, and severe suffering does not become deserved simply because it is severe.' This principle applies in both directions in this situation. It means the parent's grief is not a verdict on their faithfulness. It also means the daughter's current distance from covenant life is not a final verdict on her eternal standing. What is true is that the daughter's choices are real and consequential. 'Sin is not only something a person does. It becomes a condition of the soul. It darkens, distorts, separates, and weakens the person.' This is not said to pronounce a final outcome on the daughter. It is said honestly — because grace operates truthfully, not by softening what is real. The soul is genuinely affected by covenant departure. That matters.

But the paired formulation must also be held: Christ heals what sin damages. The damage is real and the healing is real, and neither cancels the other. The book is explicit that repentance 'is not payment for sin, not compensatory labor, and not an attempt to repair by self-generated effort what only Christ can redeem.' What this means for the parent's situation is that the daughter's return, if it comes, will not be her earning her way back. It will be her turning toward the One who has already prepared the answer. That turning must be hers to author — no one can author it for her. But Christ can do what the parent cannot: He can continue to work within the daughter's interior life in ways the parent will never see.

The book distinguishes two categories of divine reach that matter here. The Light of Christ is universal — it enlightens every person regardless of covenant standing, membership, or whether they are asking for it. It does not stop reaching the daughter because she has left. It continues. The gift of the Holy Ghost is covenantal — it provides sanctifying companionship and deepened grace through covenant life. That deeper grace is genuinely cost by the daughter's departure. Both of these things are true. Grace reaches the daughter through the Light of Christ. The fuller and more personal form of that grace awaits her return to covenant life. This is not a cruel withholding — it is the honest shape of how grace deepens through covenant.

For the parent, the governing truth is that 'God authored the answer, not the suffering.' The parent did not author the daughter's departure. The grief they carry is non-authored suffering — imposed by another's choices, not merited by their own. And Christ is not absent from this grief. He is present within it. The Father's redemptive purpose extends to the daughter even now. This is not the Son acting against the Father's justice — grace is the Father's love acting in the Son. The Father's work and glory is the immortality and eternal life of His children. That purpose has not been abandoned toward this daughter. 'God may consecrate affliction for good without having caused it.' The parent's grief, held faithfully, is not wasted. The love that fuels it is not misspent. What cannot be seen now is not therefore absent.

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CHRIST'S ROLE IN THIS SITUATION

The most essential role Christ plays in this specific situation is that of the Redeemer whose reach extends where human reach ends. This is not a comfort that softens what is real. It is a claim about what Christ can actually do in a territory the parent cannot enter. The parent cannot reach inside their daughter's soul. They cannot author her repentance for her. They cannot make her turn. Human love, however faithful, has a boundary here. Christ's redemptive reach does not stop at that boundary. He continues to work within her life through the Light of Christ — correcting, inviting, witnessing — in ways no parent can see and no departure can entirely shut off. The book's framework is clear that Christ's redemptive work is not dependent on the human reach of those who love someone. He reaches where they cannot.

Christ is also the final revealer and ratifier who sees with perfect knowledge what the parent cannot see. Section 9, Movement 7 establishes that final judgment does not treat all souls as if they had identical conditions, histories, or opportunities. It sees not only what a person did but what was available to them, what formed them, what they were capable of given what they had endured. The parent cannot see what is happening inside their daughter — what the Spirit is doing there, what questions are alive beneath the surface, what the formation of her soul actually looks like from the inside. Christ sees it. The judgment that will one day speak to the daughter's eternal standing will not be made from the outside looking at behavior. It will be made with perfect knowledge of the whole interior person. That is not a license to dismiss the weight of her choices. It is a reason not to pronounce her case closed.

Christ is also the succorer according to the flesh — the one who knows from inside human experience what grief over a loved one's distance actually costs. Alma 7:11-13 establishes that Christ took upon Himself not only sin but 'the pains and afflictions and temptations of his people' — including the specific pain of watching someone you love walk away. He does not observe this parent's grief from outside. He knows it from within. He bore it. The Comforter — the Holy Ghost — is the specific agent who brings that knowledge and care into the parent's present experience. He is not a vague spiritual influence. He is the one who carries Christ's succoring presence into the interior of grief and loneliness and unanswered hope. He bears divine witness when feeling is unreliable. He sustains the parent in the place of unknowing — not by resolving the unknowing, but by making it possible to live faithfully within it.

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Finally, Christ functions here as the one who makes continued discipleship possible — not the one who rewards it, but the one who enables it. The parent's continued faithfulness, continued prayer, continued love toward their daughter is not sustained by the parent's own reserves. The enabling grace described in Section 2 is the grace that makes it possible to keep hoping, keep loving, and keep bringing this grief to God without demanding that it resolve on a human timeline. That is not a small thing. It is the grace that sustains covenant life in morally unsorted territory — where the outcome is not yet visible and the faithful response is to remain.

WHAT MUST BE REJECTED

- Treating the daughter's current departure as a final verdict on her eternal standing — the soul is not yet finished, and judgment has not yet spoken.
 - Reading the parent's unanswered hope and grief as evidence that their faithfulness has been insufficient or that God has not heard their prayers.
 - Assuming grace is absent from the daughter's life because she is not asking for it — the Light of Christ reaches every person regardless of covenant standing or conscious request.
 - Collapsing the hope this parent carries into a demand that God resolve it on a visible or human timeline — morally unsorted territory requires faithfulness without yet receiving resolution.
 - Treating the parent's grief as something to be managed or resolved rather than as real non-authored suffering that Christ knows from within and the Comforter actively meets.
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WHAT MUST BE DONE INSTEAD

- Consider bringing the specific question — 'what does grace mean for someone who isn't asking for it' — directly to Christ in prayer, not as a rhetorical question but as a real one. Name what you do not understand. That is not a failure of faith. It is faith acting honestly.
 - It may help to distinguish, in your own mind, the two things you are holding: the real weight of your daughter's choices and their genuine consequences, and the real reach of Christ that extends beyond your own reach. Both are true. Collapsing them in either direction costs something. Holding them together is the harder and more truthful position.
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- Consider finding one person — a trusted friend, a bishop, a counselor — with whom you can carry this grief aloud rather than alone. The Comforter works through community as well as in private prayer. Naming the grief in the presence of another faithful person is not a sign that prayer alone is insufficient. It is a way of receiving what God has placed within the body of covenant community.
 - It may help to write down, this week, what you actually believe about your daughter — not what you fear, not what the current evidence suggests, but what you believe about who she is as a child of God whose soul is still being formed. Let that belief be specific. It is not denial of what is real. It is a refusal to let the present moment speak as if it were the final word.
 - Consider returning to the scriptures that speak to God's reach toward those who are distant — not to force comfort, but to let the full scope of what Christ has claimed become the frame through which you hold her. The love that sent the Son toward sinners who were not yet asking was not a love that waited for the asking. Let that shape what you hope for.
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ANCHOR SCRIPTURES

D&C 18:10

The worth of souls is great in the sight of God — this is not suspended by covenant departure or by the absence of a request for grace.

Mosiah 24:14

The Lord promised to ease burdens that could not yet be removed — the parent's grief is something Christ can meet and strengthen within, even while the situation remains unresolved.

Moroni 7:48

The command to pray for charity — the pure love of Christ — is given precisely because that love exceeds what human feeling can sustain on its own; it must be given from above.

D&C 45:3-5

Christ's advocacy before the Father is lawful and ongoing — His redemptive reach toward the living is not ended by their present distance from covenant life.

Isaiah 49:15-16

God's remembrance of His children is more persistent than even a mother's — the daughter is not forgotten in her distance, and this parent's love reflects something of that original divine constancy.

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SCRIPTURE MAP BY SOURCE

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 18:23 — God's desire is not the death of the wicked but that they turn and live; the desire precedes the turning.

Psalms 139:7-12 — There is nowhere a person can go where God's presence does not reach — this applies to the daughter in her distance.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 15:20 — The father sees the prodigal while he is still far off — the seeing and the movement toward precede the arrival home.

Romans 8:38-39 — Nothing — including covenant departure — can separate a soul from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

BOOK OF MORMON

2 Nephi 26:24 — God does not do anything except for the benefit of the world, including those who have not yet turned toward Him.

Alma 34:32 — This life is the time to prepare to meet God — a statement about what is still possible within mortality, not a closing of the door.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

D&C 93:39 — The light that is removed by sin can be restored through repentance — this is the honest cost of her departure and the honest shape of what remains available to her.

D&C 138:58-59 — The redemptive work continues beyond what is visible — God's reach toward those in distance is active and ongoing.

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Moses 1:39 — The Father's work and glory is the immortality and eternal life of His children — that purpose has not been withdrawn from this daughter.

WHERE THIS IS DEVELOPED IN THE BOOK

Section 4, Movements 1-4

Blame-first reading is refused; Christ refuses the diagnostic question and opens a different frame; suffering exceeds moral reading; the case of Job grounds the refusal to read present condition as deserved verdict.

Section 4, Movements 7-9

Suffering caused by others is real and must be named; the distinction between causation and consecration is established; God authored the answer, not the suffering — the parent's grief is non-authored pain.

Section 5, Movements 3-5

Christ is not a moral index; non-authored suffering is defined and met by Christ's reach; Christ succors all who suffer, including those whose suffering comes from others' choices.

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Section 2, Movement 8

Agency as response — the daughter must author her own turning; no one can do this for her; but agency is also the ground on which the parent's continued faithful response stands.

Section 7, Movement 7

Hard texts do not undo grace's lawful operation — the severity of departure does not place the daughter outside Christ's reach or beyond the scope of what His mediation addresses.

Section 9, Movements 1-8

Final judgment reveals and ratifies what a soul has become — it does not operate from the outside on behavior alone; it sees with perfect knowledge what was available, what was formed, and what remained possible within mortality.

Section 10, Movements 1, 4, and 7

Grace belongs to God and is not owned by any institution; the Spirit makes grace interior; redemption ends in Christ — not in a structure or a present visible outcome.

Section 3, Movements 1 and 7

Sin as soul condition is named honestly; Christ as physician reaches what sin has damaged — the diagnosis is truthful and the healing is real.

Section 6, Movements 5-6

The reach of resurrection answers what mortality leaves unfinished; mortal wounds — including the soul-damage of departure — do not have the final word.

Application 1: When Suffering Strikes Without Clear Cause

The parent's grief is non-authored suffering — it came through another's choices, not through the parent's failure; Section 4 and 5 frameworks apply to how this suffering is read and met.

Application 4: When Life Feels Morally Unsorted

The outcome is not yet visible; faithful effort cannot be read against visible results; Christ's redemptive reach continues where human reach ends; Section 9 governs the refusal to treat present distance as final verdict.

THE FULNESS OF ANSWER

Grace began as the Father's love acting in the Son before the foundation of the world. It has been accomplished in the Son's embodied life, suffering, death, and resurrection. It is brought into the soul by the Holy Ghost, who reveals, sanctifies, and seals. Every answer this report has offered finds its source here — not in a framework, not in a system, but in the united redemptive work of the Godhead in Jesus Christ.
