

## Timeline of Grace

If a friend approached you and asked, "Are you a Christian?", a lot of us would probably think to ourselves, "What a silly question. Of course I'm a Christian! I love the Lord, pray in some way everyday, attend Church on Sundays, strive to be a good person..." And yet, isn't it ironic that sometimes the most trivial things can shake our faith and put the smallest (or the greatest) amount of doubt within us, like finances, or school work, job situations, illness, etc.

This is one reason that the Psalms were such an important part of Jewish prayer life. Just as we can easily forget about the Lord's faithfulness and goodness when life gets tough, they too needed constant reminders of His providence and love for them, so they immortalized the many miracles and victory stories of their history in the words of the Psalms. Praying with and singing these texts kept the memory of His mercy and providence alive in their hearts and on their lips, for encouragement in those more difficult moments of their individual lives and collectively as a people of faith.

In your prayer time, draw on a blank piece of paper (or multiple pieces if necessary) a timeline of your entire life, from birth to the present, with plateaus, peaks and valleys corresponding to significant moments/eras of your life. Highpoints might be a successful athletic career, graduation from college, your wedding day, the birth of a child, a particular moment of conversion, etc. Low points might be the end of a relationship, a time of financial strain, illness or death of a loved one, etc. Once you have completed the timeline, go back to each significant event and jot down a few notes about why it was great, or why it was difficult. Then go back one more time to each event and ask the Lord to reveal to you where his hand was in everything, the good times and the bad. Reflect on these things by yourself, and then come together as a family and take some time to share your reflections with one another. In the end, have each person choose one or two particular memories to cling to and bring to mind whenever their faith is shaken in the future. In this way you can encourage one another and keep each other accountable through the ups and downs of each day.

