

# Acts 11:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

## Analysis

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When Barnabas saw 'the grace of God' in Antioch, 'he was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.' Barnabas recognized God's grace at work and responded with joy and encouragement. His exhortation - to 'cleave unto the Lord' with 'purpose of heart' - emphasizes perseverance in faith. The Greek prothesis tes kardias (purpose of heart) suggests deliberate, wholehearted commitment. Reformed theology affirms perseverance of the saints - those truly saved will endure through determined adherence to Christ, enabled by God's preserving grace.

## Historical Context

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Barnabas's encouragement circa AD 41-42 nurtured the Antioch church's growth. His affirmation of God's grace among Gentiles without requiring Jewish proselyte status was crucial for this predominantly Gentile congregation's development.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How do we recognize and affirm God's grace at work in others?
2. What does it mean to 'cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart'?
3. How does perseverance in faith demonstrate genuine conversion?

## Interlinear Text

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ὃς παραγενόμενος καὶ ἰδὼν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ  
**Who** **when he came** **and** **had seen** G3588 **the grace** G3588 **of God**  
G3739 G3854 G2532 G1492 G5485 G2316

ἐχάρη καὶ παρεκάλει πάντας τῇ προθέσει τῆς  
**was glad** **and** **exhorted** **them all** G3588 **that with purpose** G3588  
G5463 G2532 G3870 G3956 G4286

καρδίας προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ  
**of heart** **they would cleave unto** G3588 **the Lord**  
G2588 G4357 G2962

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 14:22** (References God): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

**1 Corinthians 15:58** (References Lord): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

**Colossians 1:6** (Grace): Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

**1 John 2:28** (Parallel theme): And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

**Acts 13:43** (Grace): Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

**Acts 14:26** (Grace): And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

**Acts 20:24** (Grace): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

**2 Timothy 3:10** (Parallel theme): But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

**Matthew 16:24** (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

**John 15:4** (Parallel theme): Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.