



## Reflecting on Grace

**O**n a recent visit to see my parents, my mother caught me completely by surprise one morning after breakfast. With a smile on her face, she handed me a small treasure buried deep in the palm of her hand. She handed me a white gold ring. “Here,” she said, “this was your great grandmother Grace’s engagement ring. I want you to have it.”

“Whoa, wow!!...really?!...my great grandmother’s engagement ring?” The thought of such a personal and precious item from my *great* grandmother so many years ago took me back. “I’m honored and flattered, Mom, thank you so much!” Beyond that, I was speechless. I didn’t know what else to say.

For several years now my mother has been in a mode of giving things away. Whether family furnishings, pieces of art painted by family members or collected over the years, heirlooms, knick-knacks or dining room china, flatware or glassware, Mom has asked each of her children to first agree and then to claim whatever we’d like. As I live in Southern California and Mom and Dad live in North Carolina, it makes little sense to me to ship such treasures all the way across the country. Beyond that, I have everything I need at home already and so I’ve not been one to take on more. Call me a true Scot, but I’ve never taken Mom up on her kind offer.

However, this small piece of family history was different. This gift seemed more personal. To me, the appeal of the ring was not in its appraised value or the size of the diamond set beautifully within the

surrounding white gold. For me, the ring’s appeal was in its history, and my great grandmother Grace’s place within that history.

My great grandmother, Grace, was born on August 30, 1879. She lived most of her life in or around the New York City area. Grace stood all of 5-feet, 3-inches tall and, to my mother’s recollection, was “a tiny thing.” On June 12, 1906, Grace married my great grandfather

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Walter, a man who stood at least 6-feet, 3-inches tall.

Apparently, the two of them made “quite the sight walking around the city together,” my mom laughed. The two had one child, my grandmother, Marion.

I love history. In fact, I’m a bit of a nut for it. And yet, I knew so little of my own family history, just a few short generations back. There are certainly any number of websites and services that offer the opportunity to dig around a little into one’s family history. I guess I just hadn’t made it that far, to that point. When my mother handed me the ring, and then shared some of the family details I now share with you, I felt as if I’d entered a piece of our history. I felt like I’d

found my place in our family’s story in a way I hadn’t before. I must admit, finding that place sure felt good.

### Our Place in a Family Story

As Christ-followers, we have a history, a story, set within a family. We are a precious part of that story, that history; precious like an engagement ring, and yet far more. Like a diamond set firmly within white gold, sparkling for all to see, we are set firmly in Christ Jesus and reflect his light within us to the world. We sparkle and shine his light outward, back to him and to one another.

Jesus Christ is our history, our story and our family. We have a place in Jesus and he in us. Just as my mother had given me a family treasure that was so personal, we have been given life in him and as such, we are personal to him. We are his precious treasure and he is our precious life.

As members of his body, we are part of and have a place as the bride of Christ. We are part of *the story, the history and the family* that will live on for all generations. As we come to see our story, our history, and our place in family with him, we come to deeply value and appreciate what we’ve been given.

Whether or not we have the words to express ourselves completely at the precious and personal gift of Christ in us, we give thanks. In his life, we have life and that beautiful sparkle comes to mean more and more to us over time. □

—Ed Dunn