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I think it was about April when I thought about the joy of being with family, doing picnics and summer fun at the beach, etc. However, during May our family was hit with my daughter in laws cancer diagnosis. It took us all a while to process the news, deal with the treatment stages, and begin a rhythm of grace to work together to help. My sister Mary was finishing up her cancer treatment, so I sort of thought I knew the routine. But every body is different, every treatment is customized and Becca's cancer was a different kind, even though in the same area.  I am so thankful for God's grace. Every three weeks this summer, at least three of Andrew and Becca's four children stayed overnight the day of surgery with me. A few other cousins joined us as well. We have had much laughter and made many memories. Their youngest child, now 14 months, Sofia, came and joined us at times as well. What I imagined as time together in April has actually happened, but in God's own way.  In June, we added my oldest granddaughter to the mix as well. The plan was for Abby to stay at Andrew and Becca's home during the recovery week and help with the kids. Not only did this bring added strength and help, but it gave us a chance to get to know her better as well. Becca's sister and parents live next door to them, and we mingled strength and encouragement and grew the two families closer together. All of us are grateful we can team up to help each other—even with some new challenging diagnosis' facing her dad. Again, not our perfect world plan, but God truly works out all things for not only His good, but ours.  As I write this, I think back on how during this time, my smelly, rotting backroom was transformed into a beautiful office space for me. I now have two guest rooms available for company. The joy of watching the cousins grow closer has been amazing. My daughter Elizabeth ran "Theater Camp" a couple of weeks ago, so another granddaughter joined the mix. She was here for 11 days. Getting to know her as a 16-year-old has also been a joy. Abby was here 58 days (she counted, I didn't!) They left yesterday. The house is quiet, but my heart is full of memories. We still have one more chemo session for Becca next week. The grandkids will spend more time with me, with maybe a few other cousins thrown in, and we will have fun. We will make it. She then faces surgery, infusions and maybe radiation, but God, who has been faithful with His abundant grace, will help carry us through.  I turn 75 next week. My body is tired, but my heart is full. This week I had to replace my washing machine. An unexpected expense, but due to God's faithfulness and His grace, I could get a new one. I know He will provide for the other things on my list (brakes, eye appointments and new glasses etc.), because of His abundant grace. This has not been an idyllic perfect time. I have gotten short with my grandchildren, frustrated over menu and food decisions and they have missed their folks; but working together and keeping our eye on the prize has made it not only doable, but enjoyable.  My friends, I am so thankful for His abundant grace. What are you facing? He can make all grace abound toward you this very day. It doesn't matter what you are facing, He will make a way for you. Though this summer has been challenging, it has also been life changing. I realized I developed stamina to run my life's race in areas I needed it, because I had to. Leaning on Him and His faithfulness when I have felt weak is exactly what I needed to do. He is more than able, my friends. Keep trusting Him.  Father, I thank you that you truly do know how much we can bear and do. I thank you for the other team members you have brought in to help us. Your grace is amazingly abundant when we allow it to be! My "help me Lord" prayers have been answered so well, and I simply thank you. In Jesus' Name, amen. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |  | | |