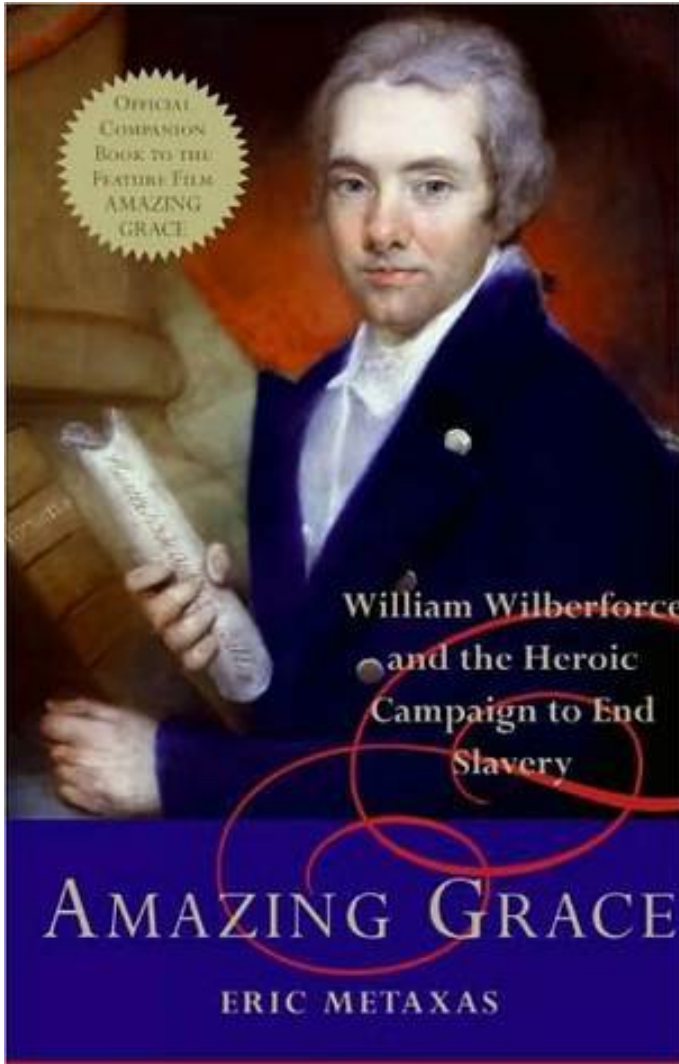

Eric Metaxas

Amazing Grace



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Description

Amazing Grace tells the story of the remarkable life of the British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833). This accessible biography chronicles Wilberforce's extraordinary role as a human rights activist, cultural reformer, and member of Parliament.

At the center of this heroic life was a passionate twenty-year fight to abolish the British slave trade, a battle Wilberforce won in 1807, as well as efforts to abolish slavery itself in the British colonies, a victory achieved just three days before his death in 1833.

Metaxas discovers in this unsung hero a man of whom it can truly be said: he changed the world. Before Wilberforce, few thought slavery was wrong. After Wilberforce, most societies in the world came to see it as a great moral wrong.

To mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade, HarperSanFrancisco and Bristol Bay Productions have joined together to commemorate the life of William Wilberforce with the feature-length film *Amazing Grace* and this companion biography, which provides a fuller account of the amazing life of this great man than can be captured on film.

This account of Wilberforce's life will help many become acquainted with an exceptional man who was a hero to Abraham Lincoln and an inspiration to the anti-slavery movement in America.

Insightful reviews

Jeff Short: Excellent book. Things slowed up a bit toward the end, as life usually does, but I mostly did not want to put it down. Aside from being a well-written, well-researched book, this is an important book. Wilberforce's life deserves to be more widely known. I came into the book knowing that he was key in the fight for the abolition of the slave trade in England in the early nineteenth century, but that was about all. I am thankful to know better now.

His life has many lessons for us--faith, perseverance, service, charity, etc. Wilberforce had begun a promising political career when he was converted to Christianity. He then faced a crossroads crisis. He did finally decide to remain in politics, but to do so with a Christian worldview, not divorcing his faith from the public square. His faith informed and drove his public service. He was resolved to pursue two great objects with his life--abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of manners (by which he meant the morality of the nation). His was a life lived to a great purpose.

Wilberforce was pre-Victorian, and you might also say he helped make Victorian England possible. We tend to romanticize these periods of British history. Metaxas gives us a good look at the reality that was not so idyllic. The time was full of excesses, cruelties, injustices, and wickedness. Wilberforce engaged his generation and challenged them. We have many parallels today. Human trafficking is by no means gone, but we presuppose it wrong. Cruelties and injustice still abound. How shall we then live?

Metaxas has quite a bit of personality, but he mostly stayed out of the way that we might see Wilberforce the more clearly. I appreciated that effort. I highly recommend this book.

Mitch Kelly: Before picking up this book, I had just finished an adult book on the American Revolution and had started a young adult book on the American Civil War, both non-fiction--I work in publishing, so I read a lot of different types of books. I bring this up because these books tainted my expectations of *Amazing Grace*. All three books are similar in that they are historical narratives, which encouraged me to read them in a similar manner. However, where the other two were focused on war and politics this one focused on politics, morality, and faith. The idea of war can get a reader's adrenaline going and dramatize the political setting. *Amazing Grace* moved slower than the other two books, and consequently it took me longer to get into it. However, by the end I was filled with gratitude for Eric Metaxas' biography on William Wilberforce.

Wilberforce was a man whose morality and character were in line with his Christian faith. Seeing how a wealthy, affluent individual can literally sacrifice everything--his public perception, wealth, time--to pursue civil rights for the underprivileged, during a time when it was not in style, is inspiring. So often we get dulled by the monotony of life that we miss opportunities to help those in need when it's in our ability to do so. It's easy to pass a beggar on the street not seeing the need in front of us, or worse to put your hands in your pocket assessing your own wealth; this image kept coming to mind as I read this book. Wilberforce's main objective was to fight the ignorance of the wealthy and those in power, forcing those in parliament and society at large to see their crimes against mankind during that time.

Wilberforce was uncompromising in his loyalty to God throughout his life. When faced with either helping a friend or standing up for his convictions, he seemed to always choose the pursuit of civil rights. In instances where it would be easy and politically prudent to take a certain stance, he rarely strayed from the task of bettering the lives of those less fortunate. Wilberforce so rarely strayed from his calling that it is hard to find an instance where he is not generous or self-sacrificing. However, up to the end of his life he was saddened that he had not given more to the cause. This leaves us with someone who is charitable and humble, pragmatic in his solution yet idealistic in his intent.

Metaxas had two main goals in writing this biography: share the story of Wilberforce's life and inspire a Christian readership. Both of these things are great. However, I was hoping to find a list of additional resources for people looking to grasp the theology that inspired Wilberforce. Though not necessary, it would have been greatly appreciated.

David : William Wilberforce has been one of my heroes for a while now, though my learning about his life has been limited to illustrations in other books, the movie *Amazing Grace*, and chapters in surveys of church history. This biography then was educational and encouraging, taking the reader deep into the life of this great servant of God.

The picture painted of late 18th century England set a strong context for Wilberforce's story. As a youth when he got too interested in serious (evangelical, Methodist) Christianity, his parents

moved him away from those influencing him. Soon Wilberforce was living the normal life of a wealthy British man: gambling, drinking and in general living it up. He ended up in Parliament and appeared on the fast track to a successful career.

His life was changed during a trip through Europe with a friend and some family. During this time he engaged his friend in deep discussion and Bible study. Through this he gave his life to Christ. With advice from other Christians, including the famous John Newton, he decided to stay in Parliament, believing he could serve God in the government.

From this point, many know the story of his twenty year question to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire. Metaxas tells the story well, opening a door to the historical context and reasons why it took so long. Finally the trade was abolished in 1807, but it was another couple decades before all slaves in the British empire were freed.

Metaxas' biography does not focus only on Wilberforce's work of abolition. We also learn about the many other causes Wilberforce worked for, such as helping the poor, working class of Britain and the sending of missionaries to India. Wilberforce, and those he worked with, exhibited no split between "evangelistic" ministry (getting people saved) and "justice" ministry (abolishing slavery, helping the poor. The way these two things, so often split in American culture, went together provides lessons for all of us who seek to serve God. Therefore, Wilberforce's life remains a model for Christians today.

There are other lessons that Wilberforce's life could provide for us. As then, many today demand that religious influences be kept out of politics. Only then, the reason they wanted them out was because they wanted to keep slaves and continue to commit injustice. Wilberforce, and those like him, allowed their faith to influence their politics and thus spoke for justice. It is a testament to how well they influenced the whole society that for many years afterward, up to today, people can speak for justice in politics without referring to religion. Yet without its religious basis, this concern for justice would never have penetrated the government in the first place.

Also, Wilberforce's work makes me think about how Christians work for justice. On one hand, some today in America would say that "social justice" is basically "personal charity" and has nothing to do with government intervention. Such an idea would be foreign to Wilberforce, for abolishing the slave trade required government intervention. On the other hand, Wilberforce's work was to remove the chains of injustice that shackled enslaved Africans, freeing them to live as human beings. Some today seem to equate social justice with the government giving people everything they need. At least from this book, I don't see that from Wilberforce. Instead, social justice was a removing of barriers so people could work toward what they need on their own without any institutional disadvantages.

Overall, a great read, perhaps a must read, for any Christian working in ministry of any kind today.

Donna: a unconditionally relaxing and engaging check out the British crusade to finish slavery and the fellow in the back of it - William Wilberforce. Wilberforce was once additionally a motive

force at the back of the institution of many charities and businesses to assist the operating terrible and people who had no different support. As somebody who spends a lot of her spare time volunteering to aid others it seems that I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Wilberforce and his efforts to set up the paintings of "doing good" as fascinating occupation and past-time. I do know my lifestyles will be poorer with no my volunteer activities. I usually have audiobooks entering into a similar demeanour that many folks have a number of books going - hearing one or the opposite because the spirit strikes me. the opposite publication I used to be hearing in addition to this used to be Greg Mortenson's newest *Stones into Schools*. What an ideal pairing of 2 tremendous devoted males who relentlessly pursue(d) their passions to enhance the lives of others. Very inspiring!

Alan Jacobs: this can be most likely the simplest learn ever for a booklet approximately an English MP. and I have learn a few. the writer is openly Christian, and obviously thinks that Wilberforce is a brilliant credits to Christianity, and particularly to Methodism. in response to Metaxas, the impulse to dispose of the slave trade, after which to abolish slavery, is a only Christian one. He doesn't forget the truth that the slave investors themselves could name themselves Christian, yet sees Wilberforce as being a propagator of a far purer kind of Christianity than what existed in England on the time. This isn't really a scholarly book, yet is written in a breezy style, and includes analogies to modern day the US with the intention to take hold of the importance of Wilberforce at his personal time and place. even supposing I believe a piece condescended to, I need to say that the method works. I now believe that I've got a great realizing of this imperative determine in abolition, and I have been entertained whereas learning.

Judy: in response to this biography, William Wilberforce was once at one time as famous and respected as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. This e-book gave me new standpoint at the slave trade, a convention so entrenched in each point of society and in each state that to stop it used to be no longer even a part of the general public recognition while Wilberforce begun his twenty-six-year crusade to finish it. After years of political and social crusading that took a heavy toll on his health, his efforts ultimately proved profitable in 1807. And then, simply 3 days ahead of Wilberforce's demise in 1833, slavery used to be abolished altogether in Britain and such a lot of its colonies, due mostly to his life of work. He was once really a hero. Metaxas additionally writes of the spiritual revival that Wilberforce, a religious Methodist, helped convey about, and of his crusade for more advantageous "manners"—not on the table, yet within the method we deal with the poor, together with these in British colonies like India. I enjoyed the main points approximately Wilberforce's own life--he had a cheerful marriage and a home jam-packed with teenagers and wild animals. Metaxas's learn is particularly thorough and his writing is delightful, laced with a superb tongue-in-cheek humor that stored me smiling despite the heavy topic matter.

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