

## John Newton (1779)

The author of the hymn was, by his own admission, a “wretch.” He was a slave trader, a blasphemer, a rebel, an immoral man, a torturer, and as far from grace as anyone could ever be. As a boy, John was captivated by the adventure and risk of life on the high seas. When he was eleven, young John Newton launched into that exciting life of voyaging, sailing, and living his dream. But the dream turned out to be a nightmare.

In 1748, Newton's slave ship was nearly wrecked by an intense storm. In the tempest, surrounded by crashing waves, cutting winds, creaking timbers, and the cries of onboard slaves, John fell to his knees and pled for mercy, and for grace. God's grace, which reaches anyone, anywhere, saved a wretch like John Newton.

Today, its lyrics still inspire, encourage, and instruct people about the radical reality of God's amazing grace."

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