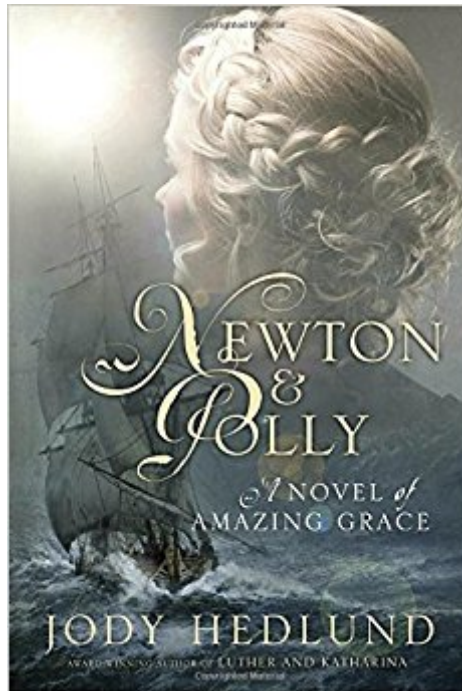




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Newton And Polly: A Novel Of Amazing Grace



Synopsis

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found—Now remembered as the author of the world's most famous hymn, in the mid-eighteenth century as England and France stand on the brink of war, John Newton is a young sailor wandering aimlessly through life. His only duty is to report to his ship and avoid disgracing his father—until the night he hears Polly Catlett's enchanting voice, caroling. He's immediately smitten and determined to win her affection. An intense connection quickly forms between the two, but John's reckless spirit and disregard for the Christian life are concerns for the responsible, devout Polly. When an ill-fated stop at a tavern leaves John imprisoned and bound, Polly must choose to either stand by his side or walk out of his life forever. Will she forfeit her future for the man she loves? Step back through the pages of history, to uncover the true love story behind a song that continues to stir the hearts and ignite the faith of millions around the globe.

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Customer Reviews

“Amazing Grace, indeed! Newton and Polly is one of the most powerful love stories I have ever read, wrenching the heart and waking the soul. If you read one book this year, this should be it.”
—Julie Lessman, award-winning author of *The Daughters of Boston*, *Winds of Change*, and *Heart of San Francisco* series
“A powerfully moving account of one man's epic journey from doubt and despair into a world of radiant faith. Newton and Polly is impeccably

researched and punctuated with glints of genuine humor. I loved it!

•Elizabeth Camden, RITA® and Christy award-winning author. “A sweeping tale rife with adventure, love, and God’s relentless pursuit of his own. With her signature depth and detail, Jody Hedlund plunges her readers into a fascinating and powerful story that has gone untold until now. Set sail with Newton and Polly and become anchored in amazing grace.”

•Jocelyn Green, award-winning author of the Heroines Behind the Lines Civil War series. “In this story of the lives of John Newton and Polly Catlett, author Jody Hedlund skillfully weaves together the history, romance, and Christian faith that inspired the world’s best-loved hymn. Evocative and illuminating.”

•Dorothy Love, author of Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Gray: A Novel. “Jody Hedlund’s historical detail is immaculate, and her storytelling will bring you to tears. Newton’s conversion was truly remarkable, sparking a legacy that has impacted millions of lives. Newton and Polly invites readers into that powerful experience.”

•Sigmund Brouwer, award-winning author of Thief of Glory. Praise for the Christy and ECPA Novel of the Year Luther and Katharina. “Jody Hedlund’s Luther and Katharina is an absorbing and deeply researched look into the life and ministry of a figure in church history I’d previously known only from a few dusty facts. Jody breathes life into those facts with this fascinating and intimate portrayal of Martin Luther’s life. Luther and Katharina is a compelling tale of tested faith, tumultuous church history, and incredible courage against daunting odds—and one of the most unique love stories I’ve read in ages.”

•Lori Benton, author of The Pursuit of Tamsen Littlejohn and The Wood’s Edge. “Complex and emotionally rich, Luther and Katharina gripped me from the very start and never let go. Not even when the final page was turned. The history, the love story, the depth of faith in this novel is masterfully woven by Jody Hedlund.”

•Tamera Alexander, USA Today best-selling author of To Win Her Favor and A Lasting Impression.

Jody Hedlund is a CBA best-selling and award-winning author of more than a dozen books. Among a variety of genres, she especially loves bringing long-forgotten women of history to life. She is the author of Luther and Katharina, which was awarded the ECPA Book of the Year Award in Fiction. Her other novels have won the Carol Award, the INSPY Award, and the Christy Award. She resides in Midland, Michigan, with her husband and five busy children.

This is the fictional account of the early life of John Newton, the author of the hymn Amazing Grace.

The story mostly takes place in a small shipping town called Chatham, England in the 1740s. John Newton is 17 years old and traveling back to accept a position his father has obtained for him to take a ship to a Jamaican plantation where he will work and oversee things for the plantation owner for the next five years. On his way back, he decides to stop and visit his mother's cousin whom he has recently received a letter from. While there, he is introduced to his cousin's daughter Polly Catlett and is immediately drawn to her. She is a young teenager of 15, but seems to feel the same attraction. He decides he doesn't want the job his father has arranged for him because he doesn't want to spend five years away from Polly. He just knows she is the one for him. As events unfold, John makes several poor choices that lead to his being forced to leave Chatham and the woman he loves. She is devastated as well, but her father has told her that John doesn't have the character of a husband that her father wants for Polly. Polly agrees that John struggles with his faith and responsibility, but she still loves him. As months pass, Polly tries her best to forget John and go on with her life. Years pass when she receives an unexpected visitor—John's father. He has come to her parents' home to tell them that John is alive and a changed man. Can Polly give him another chance? Is John really changed or is he just putting on an act to please their parents? If he really has changed, how has this change manifested itself? This is a fantastic story! I couldn't put it down. This is one of my favorite genres as I learn about history as well as get to enjoy a good romance! The author's note following the story is very interesting and I liked reading about what was real in the story and what was fiction. I never knew the story of young John Newton and how his life was changed and how he lived out the rest of his life after his change. The scenes at sea put me right there on the ship with John. His realization of how God had saved him over and over again in his life and God's love for even a sinner like him brought tears to my eyes. Don't miss another wonderful story by Jody Hedlund!

Prior to reading this novel I knew a little bit about the history of John Newton, the author of the hymn, Amazing Grace. A song that has touched so many lives through the years. Newton's love for Polly is something to behold. However, Newton is a mess. He continually makes bad choices and pays the consequences for them. Still in the midst of all his trials, you can see the grace of God. God working and reaching out to him. Sadly, it takes Newton many a hard lesson and falling far into the pit before he can see his way out. Polly, while her struggles are not as obvious, is too in need of God's grace. She struggles with pride and other heart issues. I was incredibly touched and moved

by this story. Hedlund penned their story so well and brought forth their pitfalls, love and deep truths of faith with such ease and flow, that it all felt real and natural. I especially love how at the end of each novel, Hedlund goes into separating the fiction and the fact. She references her sources for the facts, for those of you who would like to dig deeper. I am still just meditating upon this story. Truly a reflection of the power of grace and love at work. I highly recommend the read!

I'll start out by saying that this is one of the best books I've read this year, and I read a lot. I loved "Luther and Katharina", but I think "Newton and Polly" is even better. Jody Hedlund is a first rate story teller, and her writing is superb. I have read a couple of biographies of John Newton, but they didn't include much about Polly. Though a work of fiction, the historical research is detailed and accurate. Ms. Hedlund does an excellent job of alluding to the utter depravity Newton had fallen into without being unnecessarily graphic. The consequences of his poor choices are abundantly clear, as is his conversion and marvelous redemption. I ached for their love for each other, and especially for Polly trying to come to terms with it and the seeming impossibility of it ever resulting in marriage. She was clearly torn between her heart and her head, and trying to earn God's favor. Also clearly portrayed was Newton's father's unconditional love for his very prodigal son. I couldn't put it down and would highly recommend it.

I really enjoyed this book that is about the writer of the well known hymn "Amazing Grace" and the lady who became his wife! When John Newton first starts out he is an unbeliever and fairly unscrupulous. After meeting Polly he falls hard but not enough to change his ways. As the years go by he begins to change his ways, especially after the ship he's on nearly capsizes and sinks! Excellent work of historical fiction.

Newton and Polly I have been reading a lot of fictional biographies lately. I love historical fiction, and being able to learn about a real historical figure makes the book all the more fascinating. This is the second book I have read by Jody Hedlund. The first was Luther and Katherina which I reviewed here. They were both excellent, but I think I enjoyed Newton and Polly a little more. There was a lot of action that kept me engaged in the story. I also enjoyed seeing John Newton's journey from scoundrel to a man under conviction for all the wrongs he had done. His salvation story is truly amazing. There is a lot missing from this story. It focuses on the early part of Newton's life and his romance with Polly Cattlet. His involvement in the slave trade is covered in a short portion of the book, but much of it takes place later in his life after his salvation experience. There is an

informative author's note at the end of the book that delves further into this fascinating story. I would highly recommend this book to lovers of historical fiction. I hope Jody Hedlund does more books like this in the future. I received this book for free for the purpose of review.

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