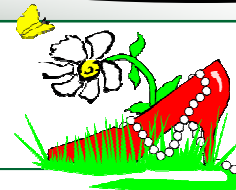


# Grace In The Wilderness



Isaiah 43:19 ...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.



## Stinkin' Thinkin'

Are you guilty of stinkin' thinkin'?

You know, negative thoughts that take you down in a hole?

Sometimes Today's Busy Woman, Grace Ankles, is consumed by stinkin' thinkin'. Boy, you should listen to the conversation that's going on inside of her head! "Why'd you do that? Now what's going to happen? You know better than that! Don't you ever learn? You are worthless! Can't believe you let that happen! You deserve what you get if you can't do any better than that."

The person who came up with the saying "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me!" doesn't know the beating that Grace can give herself inside her mind.

Fear...Anger...Stress...Sadness.. Hostility...Guilt...are all weapons from the devil's arsenal designed specifically to 'take down' Today's Busy Woman. The devil has carefully crafted these weapons and he's refined them as he's had thousands of years to study Woman. While times have changed, what's dear to a woman's heart has not. Don't 'mess' with her husband. Don't 'mess' with her children. But he's found he can 'mess' with her all he wants. And when things don't go her way, when she's the most vulnerable, that's usually when he attacks. He sometimes flings all these weapons at her in rapid succession, telling

her ...she's in trouble,...she's inadequate, ...she's selfish, ...she's not worthy, ...and that things will never be better than her best bad day! If he can cripple her, rendering her ineffective to make a difference to someone else, he's had a major victory. In fact, he can 'take down' a whole family 'cause you know what they say, "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!" The worst part is...he has her fire the shots at herself and she doesn't even realize it.

On days like this, Grace can look at a doughnut and see just the hole. Her cup's half empty. And she can think life's just not worth living! Yes, she can be a pessimist if she's not careful! A pessimist is one who feels bad when she feels good for fear she'll feel worse when she feels better. You know, someone who wallows in a pool of 'stinkin' thinkin'.

And, if the devil can convince Grace to be unforgiving too, he can really injure her. Someone once said, "Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the person who hurt you to die."

Stinkin' thinkin' enslaves the thinker. Bondage is... subjection to external influences and internal negative thoughts and attitudes. But there's good news! John 8:36 says, "...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

And, while guilt from God is a consequence of unconfessed sin and He uses it to bring us to Him, once we've been to

By Sharon Hawkins

Him to get forgiveness, it's time to let it go. Corrie Ten Boom said, "The purpose of being guilty is to bring us to Jesus. Once we are there, then its purpose is finished. If we continue to make ourselves guilty--to blame ourselves--then that is sin in itself."

The solution is simple—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) We've got to embrace that and not listen to the devil's lies.

Gotta love this quote by Chuck Swindoll: "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.

And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitudes."

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*Grace In The Wilderness  
Women's Conference:  
"A Woman After God's Own Heart"  
March 18-19, 2011  
Blue Ridge View  
Baptist Church  
Pickens, SC*

**Philippians 4:8**  
*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

# How Bright Is Your Light?

By Betty Vest



*Luke 11:33* “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel but in a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.”

As I read in the book of Luke this morning and came upon this verse, I began to think about the word “light”. Just what is Jesus trying to get us to see?

When the storm rages and the lightning strikes and the power goes off, sitting in the dark is a scary place to be! What do we do? We go for the candles and matches. As we light them, it is such a good feeling to see the light as it chases away the evil of darkness.

Another thought is when I visit my daughter, Rhonda, and she has candles lit. The sweet-smelling aroma fills the air. I immediately feel a sense of peace

and relaxation.

I know those thoughts have nothing to do with this verse but then again maybe they do. When the light of the Lord Jesus Christ is lit like a candle in our lives, we should never try to hide it or keep it a secret from other people. Others should be able to look at our daily lives and know we are Christians, saved by the grace of God and that we represent the Light of the World. They should see a peace that is beyond all understanding.

Luke 11:35 says, “...take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.”

If we are not careful, we will let the cares of this world show evil or darkness in our lives. We are human and we tend to let situations we face and tragedies that come our way get us down. When this happens we begin to murmur and complain to other people instead of talking to the Lord. Little by little we can let our

light begin to grow dim. God wants our light to always shine so that all can see Him through us. I realize more and more each day how I fail miserably. “God, help me!” I pray.

We should be in constant prayer that God would help us to let His light shine. When people ask how we are doing or how our day is going, instead of replying in a negative way, we should try saying “Fine in the Lord! How about you?” Our light will shine and may encourage someone who is discouraged. We can let the evil of darkness put a damper or a flicker on our light. We have to let our life glow for the Lord Jesus Christ and be mindful every day of the blessed light God has placed in our lives.

By the way, how was your Valentine’s Day? Cherish every moment and every word in those notes and cards you received. Dementia has a way of stealing those meanings from you.



## Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: My Blessed Inheritance

By Roberta Brown

It was February 1944. I was 15 months old when the Lord took my mother home to be with Him.

We lived with my grandmother, Rebecca Perkins. My dad had to go up north to work because there wasn’t much work to be had in the Appalachian mountains of Virginia. He would come home every time he could. My mother’s dying wish was that my grandmother raise her little girl.

Even though my grandmother had seven children of her own, she never thought twice about it. No one except my mother could love me more than she did and I loved her more than any words can say.

I also had three aunts (my dad’s sisters) Mrs. Cora Bell Hall, a widow with seven children; Mrs. Lilly Litton, with two girls; and Mrs. Nell Clark, with five children. Each was such a great influence on my life because they loved me as their own.

When I was five, my dad married Ellon Taylor Ramey, and they bought a grocery store and moved to Virginia. This

meant I had to leave my grandmother and aunts and live with them. As a child would see it, I thought my world had ended. Needless to say, it broke my grandmother’s heart also.

My grandmother and aunts have touched many other lives. Just the mention of their names brings memories—memories of the hard times each endured and the courage and strength they kept through it all.

I have memories of how they each faced tragedy and sorrows and felt deep pain and loneliness from losing their loved ones through death. Yet through it all, they remained strong and became even stronger than before.

The beauty I saw in their faces wasn’t one preserved by the use of lotions, creams or leisure living, but one where their soft, yet leathery skin was darkened by the sun, from many years spent working in fields, gardens, textile mills and homes where their hearts were.

I saw slender, and somewhat wrinkled hands from too many hours spent in water and soap, washing, cooking, etc. Yet, within these hands, there was a gentle-

ness and warmth that didn’t lie still. They reached out to others--their families, neighbors and friends, with a lot of love.

They found comfort in knowing that God blessed them with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and in being allowed to watch them grow into healthy and happy adults. They also found comfort in trying to make their lives a little easier than what they had had to endure.

My grandmother and aunts lost hour after hour of much needed rest and sleep out of concern for their families yet they remained strong and uncomplaining.

Sometimes, their bodies would say, “Give up and rest.” However, they felt the need to carry on as each of them were unfamiliar with idleness. The day came, when the choice was no longer theirs for this much needed rest and peace. God in his infinite wisdom, decided their work here was done, He took each of them home to be with Him.

At that time, I prayed that I had acquired a few of their good qualities--

# My Blessed Inheritance (Cont'd)

qualities such as—

WISDOM, a wisdom they learned through years of trials, tribulations, mistakes and heartaches.

STRENGTH, strength given to them by our God, who in his wisdom knew there were others who would need them to lean on.

A GENEROUS HELPING OF COURAGE, a courage that carried them all through the depression years, a war, illnesses, rejection and sorrows unending.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, some of their talents, talents discovered through necessity, and developed through years of practice.

IF, AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, ONE DAY I SHOULD FIND THAT I HAVE ACQUIRED FROM THEM SOME OF THESE QUALITIES AND A LITTLE OF THEIR LOVE AND KINDNESS FOR OTHERS, THEN, I WILL INDEED CONSIDER MYSELF A VERY WEALTHY WOMAN.

**Proverbs 31:29-31**  
*“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”  
 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*



By Jo Ann Case

I recently heard one line in a sermon that caught my interest.

Are you a fair weather friend of Jesus? Hummmmm... as a member of one of the most blessed societies in the world, am I a friend of Jesus when all is going well? Do I see that as a sign that I'm doing the right things?

Even though our country has had recent economic struggles, we are still one of the most blessed places in the entire world. We have conveniences, food, clothes and riches beyond compare to large portions of the world. Education is readily available. Our library systems have great resources at our use for free. Even the internet is available for free in our libraries. Even though expensive, health care is on every corner. You can even get a flu shot at the grocery store and many prescriptions are free or very inexpensive. Drug stores now offer quick visits for minor sickness. Many hospitals offer greatly reduced rates for the uninsured and won't refuse to see you in an emergency situation. We regularly complain about our government (no matter your political alignment) and we're not arrested for our right to freedom of speech. I think most Americans think the difference between a hard and good time is being forced to choose fast food or a sandwich at home over a sit down dinner at our favorite restaurant.

Over the past couple of decades, I believe a dangerous trend has entrenched itself into the American lifestyle. This has been preached from our pulpits, taught in our studies, promoted in our fellowship groups, shown on TV and written about in books. That trend is to think that just because you're a Christian, that your life will be easy, stress free, prosperous, fun and happy. You just need to have the right attitude, smile, pray, do the right things and everything will be great! Not only that, you will move up the ladder of success and embrace the American Dream. That is in stark contrast to the suffering in the Bible and in the lives of many of the pillars of the faith.

The Bible is full of examples of men and women who experienced great suffering and sacrifice; who were misunderstood, mistreated and hurt. People like Job, Moses, Joseph, Paul, Stephen and Mary. Those same people were great pillars of the faith and made a huge difference in the Kingdom of God. A quick run through Hebrews 11 shows us that God uses the good and the bad to bring glory to himself and life isn't always easy for the believer. This is not our home! Some days, you wouldn't think that as we all tend to settle into the everyday and think this is all there is to life.

So, as a believer, what happens when things don't go your way? What happens when your marriage falls apart? When sickness hits your home? When you lose that job? You don't make the team? You don't win the beauty pageant? Your favorite team loses? People are mean to you? Your house burns?

Your car is wrecked? You have to eat leftovers? Your house doesn't look like the latest makeover on HGTV? Are you content regardless of the circumstances? Do you continue to love the Lord and look to him for help? Or do you whine, kick, cry, cuss and decide to do things your own way? When is the last time you really stopped to realize just how blessed you are and realized you need to be more thankful and content? How silly is it that we spend so much time on things that REALLY don't matter?

This question was a wake-up call for me. I have allowed less than desirable, unbiblical thinking to infiltrate my life and cause me to think I deserve certain things. Everything I have is a blessing and I don't deserve anything. I am thankful for the one who took my place and is there for me through thick and thin.

The old saying goes: Birds of a feather stick together. I want to stick to Jesus and be more like him no matter the storms that may come in my life. That means letting go of unrealistic expectations, drawing closer to him and trusting him to see me through the ups and downs of this life.

**Philippians 4:11-12**  
*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*





## Isn't She Petty, ... I mean, Pretty?

By Brenda Horne



Dear Lord,

So far today, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped. I haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over indulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed. And from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help! Amen.

We laugh but it is so true! Oh the pettiness of our human nature!

What is it with us women?! We want other women to be successful. We tell them all the time, how we hope they do well with their new job, their new project, their new promotion, etc. And when they flourish, we are happy... for a while... but let them continue to thrive and BAM...petty jealousy sets in. We love that they prosper, as long as it doesn't last any length of time. Then it needs to stop. Enough is enough! Besides it's "my" turn now!

You know the comments... "She does a good job, but, really, it's not all THAT!" Or "I could have done that, I just chose not to!" Or "Yes, she works hard but no harder than I do, I deserve a promotion as much as she does!" I mean, my goodness, we all know money can't buy you

happiness, and all I need is a chance to prove it!!

And, Girlfriend, heaven forbid if she loses any weight! So what if she's been dedicated to working out and going to the gym at least 3 days a week. And who cares if her doctor told her that if she doesn't lose weight that her health will be affected!!

We all know the truth, oh, yes, we do! She just wants that attention. Uh huh, just trying to draw attention to herself, that's all. And since she's lost all that weight, have you seen the clothes she's been wearing? She thinks she's 16 again. Who does she think she is? ... Please! Like I have said before, there is a skinny woman in all of us crying to get out, but I choose to shut her up with cookies!!

I do have a very special weight prayer though, maybe you will find it helpful also: *Dear Lord, if I can't lose weight, can you make my friends fat?? Amen.*

Oh, and don't get me started on her kids! Oh, yeah, my kids are WAY BETTER than her kids. My kids are creatures of perfection! So why, in this world, would *anyone* praise *any* other child, especially

her little brats!! I mean, she should have a sign on her front door saying "Forget the dog, beware of the kids!"

It's prayer time again: *Dear Lord, Bless the bratty kids, for their parents know not what they are doing! Amen.*

Now I realize it must be difficult for her to live up to...well...*to me*... but, bless her heart, she still keeps trying.

We can take a minute to laugh at ourselves, but truthfully, jealousy and boasting are nasty, little monsters deep within us all. And admit it or not, they rear their ugly heads from time to time.

The Bible says in *Romans 12:3*... *Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment,*...

And in 1 Corinthians 4:7... *What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?*

Also in James 4:16... *you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.*



## Where Is Africa, Anyway?

By Liz Rampy

Every time I watch the national news, I find myself wishing that I'd paid more attention in 9th grade Geography. I had a great teacher. He got excited about climates, the equator, topographic maps, cultures, and relation to sea level. Unfortunately, the mere mention of sea level had me daydreaming about the beach. Furthermore, I was more interested in local events than global landscapes. I kept current by passing notes and finding a way to chat with people in the hall.

Despite my high school behaviors, I've picked up on one thing about geography and foreign lands. Africa is not for me. It's far away. It can be unsafe. It's poor. I don't know the culture. I don't know what they eat, but I'm sure that I don't like it. When God REALLY starts to tug

on my heart to do something, I start to get nervous. I say to myself, "I'm really going to do it no matter what it is. If God wants me to go to Africa, then I'll go. Would I really go? I hope I would. However, I am always so relieved when God reveals his plan and it has nothing to do with Africa at all.

As a matter of fact, I started to take Africa off of my worry list. It is clear that He isn't preparing my heart to go to that continent...or is it a country? Anyway, then I started to panic when I found out that you can get to Africa on a Harley Davidson motorcycle. That's right, you can. Wait a minute. You wandered the halls during Geography, too, didn't you? You're wondering, "Isn't there an ocean or something between the U.S. and Africa?" There is. Let me explain.

I am a cautious, type A, no-nonsense type of person. I have had no stitches and no broken bones. Ever. I lock my doors in my car immediately upon entering. I put on my seatbelt before cranking the engine. In a parking lot, I always scan around to make sure I'm not a target for attackers. I look at a stranger in the eyes on an elevator and smile. I like to be friendly, but I'm really mentally noting the person's features to identify them in a line up if necessary.

My husband, on the other hand, is the adrenaline seeking opposite. Although I've never been thrilled about him rushing *in* to burning buildings as a fireman, or jumping *out* of airplanes as a skydiver, I accepted that he was only being the man that God designed him to be. He'd had a motorcycle when we first started dating, but he got rid of it early

in our relationship. I didn't give it much more thought. We have now been married for twelve years and he recently bought another motorcycle. Since we are married, this has more impact on me than it did when we were early in our dating relationship.

As you can imagine, Mrs. Type A hasn't been too eager to share her husband's hobby with him. I really want to want to. It's just hard to get past the safety aspect. There's nothing about riding that I can control. I'm also not getting much support from my friends, either. Let's face it, friends tend to think alike.

I saw one of my former teachers the other day while Shane and I were out on the motorcycle. (Fortunately, I was more interested in PE than I was Geography.) She's known me since elementary school. She said, "Liz, I never pictured you as the motorcycle type." I promptly replied, "Liz is not the motorcycle type. Shane's wife is on the back of this thing."

It's because I'm Shane's wife that I'm exploring this land other than my own.

I'm not doing it because he's asked me to, but because I love my husband. More importantly, it's not just a hobby for him. He's found a group of believers that boldly proclaim their faith. They might not look like "church people" to some, but they have "Forgiven" tattooed on their forearms or "Jesus loves you" on their leather vests.

This group is looking to reach bikers who haven't accepted God's love. They are looking for people who might dress differently from you and I and maybe have different philosophies on life. People of a different culture than most. The issue is— to invite bikers to church, you have to find them.

In order to look for them you have to go to places like the Tail of the Dragon. Just the name is enough to scare me away and maybe even give me nightmares. For those of you who don't know, that's an eleven mile stretch of highway with three hundred eighteen curves. I'm not at all scared of the bikers. They are people that God loves that simply like to ride. I just wish that I could tell them

about God's love.... from a car.

I've realized that my own "Africa" is on the back of a motorcycle. You know what, though? I'm glad to be going. (As long as it's not over 50 miles an hour.) I'm holding on to God's promises and wrapping my arms tight around my husband.

What is it that God is calling you to do? Maybe you think you aren't the "type" to do whatever it is. That doesn't matter. Don't do it because you are the "type". Do it because you're God's child. Your own Africa may be next door, a car ride away, or literally across an ocean. However you get there, His plan is perfect. He will keep you safe and direct your path. Don't be afraid of a foreign land. Or as, in my case, no seatbelt, a roaring engine and the open highway.

### *Philippians 4:8*

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*



## I Think God Laughs...

...when the preacher leaned too far over the pulpit and almost spit on the people in the front pew... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when our baby girl blessed her food but kept one eye open to make sure nothing got away... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when the youth group played tag with stinky sardines then was truly thankful for the good, degusting time they'd had ... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when a dog tried to come into the church to worship with us... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when a little girl shouted, "Right On, Preacher!" during service... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when my brother, who was late for church, accidentally got locked out of the sanctuary and had to knock to get in to hear the preaching ("knock and the door shall be opened" had dual meaning that day)... We laughed and I think God

laughed too!

...when we talked about being evenly yoked to our youth class and they thought we were talking about eggs... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when I wore my dress pants backwards to church and didn't know it until I got home... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when a bird got into the fellowship building during the church Thanksgiving dinner and the 'not so young' and the 'not so athletic' deacons tried to catch it... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when we all watched my newly driving teenager try to back out of the church parking space. She pressed the gas with the car still in park, and didn't understand why she's wasn't moving... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when my niece said that when Jesus comes back, she hopes he lands in her backyard... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when our youth minister (my husband) tells a corny joke... I think He and God are the only ones who do laugh (sorry Randy, lol)!

...when the Baptist preacher, while preaching at a Methodist church, accidentally drank the "sprinkle" Holy Water... the congregation laughed and I think God did too!

...when my young niece understood that Christmas was Jesus' birthday, then said, "Wow, how old is He anyway?"... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

...when we taught a group of 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders the song, "He is Exalted," and heard them singing, "He is exhausted, the King is exhausted on high... We laughed and I think God laughed too!

### *Proverbs 17:22*

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*



# Keeping the Temple Fit: 30-Day Challenge

By Erin Lewis of Curves, Pickens, SC (864) 898-2400

At Curves, we are beginning our 30-Day Challenge, and I wanted to invite all the GITW ladies to join in! You can keep track of your own progress by weighing and measuring yourself at the beginning and then again in 30 days to determine how you did. To help you along, I have included some tips for the next 30 days.

Be sure you are **eating enough!** With a calorie deficit, your body thinks it is starving and it is programmed by our wonderful Creator to CONSERVE fat in your body for survival. Well, this is ex-

actly what you DO NOT want when you are dieting. This also creates the vicious cycle of yo-yo dieting. When you do lose weight, it is comprised of muscle and when you start to eat normally again, your body stores these excess calories as fat in anticipation of another "famine."

By following the tips below over the next 30 days, you will help to reset your metabolism and set yourself up for success, not failure!

Eat a consistent 1200-1400 calories a day for one month. Get a food journal or notebook and write it down. Eat every 3

hours – 5-6 meals a day (breakfast, lunch, dinner and a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack).

Be sure to get enough lean protein (some at each meal). Good sources include chicken, turkey, tuna, eggs, low-fat cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese.

Exercise at least 5 hours a week.

Drink lots and lots of water!

Good luck over the next 30 days! If you have questions or need help, please don't hesitate to email me at: [lew-isbe@bellsouth.net](mailto:lew-isbe@bellsouth.net).



## Are You A David in a World Filled With Goliaths?

By Marie Pritchett

Whether we like it or not, and whether we ever want to fully face up to this reality in this life, every single one of us will have to face a certain amount of trials and tribulations as we journey through this life – there are absolutely no exceptions!

Christians can lose their way as a result of getting hit with some severe storm of life. We can have our faith shaken to its very core depending on the severity of the storm that may have just struck us. As a result of living in this fallen world, even the best of God's children will face conflict and adversity in this life at one time or another. No one is exempt from this fact.

The first question many Christians will ask when they are hit with any kind of a severe storm or trial is **why?** How can a loving God allow me or someone else close to me to get hit with such a severe trial or tragedy? How can God allow some of His own, especially the ones who are faithfully serving and following Him, to get hit by something that at times will literally knock us off our feet?

Have you or someone you love faced difficult or life-changing events? Maybe....

**Your baby is born with a debilitating disease.**

**Your marriage is falling apart because your spouse is trading you in for someone else.**

**Someone you love has just been diagnosed with a terminal disease.**

**Your child or spouse is killed in a**

**tragic accident.**

**You have just lost your life savings due to no fault of your own.**

**Your boss just told you that you are being laid off after 20 years of dedicated service.**

**You lose a baby to miscarriage.**

**A friend or family member has hurt you more than you ever thought possible.**

**Someone you love is seriously hurt in a senseless accident.**

I could go on and on with some of the storms of life that can hit any one of us at anytime.

There will be times that God will either have you turn away from the storm and He will come after you, or have you simply hold your position while He takes complete care of it for you. But there will be other times that He will have you face it head on, relying on nothing but Him.

In other words, you will have to stand up and fight the storm head on as a brave and courageous soldier of Jesus Christ. And as you are fighting with the storm, then God will **fight the battle through you.**

One of the best examples of someone fighting with a storm head on has to be the story of David and Goliath. No one from the Israelite army was willing to take on the monstrous giant, Goliath. But David had enough faith and courage to stand up against him. And when he did, God blessed his faithfulness and

allowed him to kill the giant with a single stone.

Wow, what a role model King David is for us all! He was just a shepherd boy when he took on and defeated Goliath. So no matter how big your giant may be, no matter how huge your storm may seem, realize that absolutely NOTHING is impossible with God.

This leaves us with two options when we are called to stand up and face any kind of storm or trial in this life:

We can either run and hide as a result of fear and intimidation, and bail out on God and miss out on what He wants us to do with this trial in our life.

Or, we can face our trial head on in the exact same way that David did with Goliath, and step on out into the battlefield. Only, we will not be fighting the battle alone, God will be right there with us.

If we are willing to take the storms of this life head on like David did with Goliath, God can grow us and use us to help others who may be facing the same storms.

David is called "A Man After God's Own Heart." Will you live to be "A Woman After God's Own Heart?"

### Psalm 44:6-8

*I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but You give us victory over our enemies, You put our adversaries to shame. In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise Your name forever.*





## A Garden in the Wilderness: God Gave Me Roses By Amanda Seawright

I've been single for three years now. After going through my divorce, I was shattered. I felt very alone, unloved and unwanted. I felt ugly and my self-esteem was horrible. I was very down on myself to say the least.

On Valentine's Day 2010, I went to church with my cousin and her family. Even at church, I felt alone. I looked around at all the happy couples and wanted to run out screaming as fast as I could.

So I had myself a little "Pity Party"(...lol) I cried sitting in my PJ's. While eating sweets and watching sad love story movies, I thought about how awful my life was, about how I had no one to share

Valentine's Day with, and how I wouldn't even get roses. Roses weren't even my favorite flower, but roses would have made me feel better. So I went to bed with all of this on my mind. I would wake up to a new day and it would be better...*but probably not.*

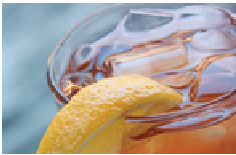
Next morning, I was getting ready for work and forgot to warm my car up. I thought, "Ugh, this day is not going to be any better! What was I thinking?"

I got into my car, refusing to go back in while my car warmed up. So there I sat cold and alone yet again, thinking, "Is it ever going to change?" Then, as I sat cold and alone, the ice on my windshield caught my eye. It was just what I wanted and needed.

It looked like little roses all over my windshield. There were probably, I don't know, a hundred of them. It was a God moment. He had just romanced my heart! My Lord and Savior gave me roses and I realized that I wasn't alone. He was there wanting to mend my broken heart. I got roses from God. I think that makes me pretty special!

Pay attention. When you least expect it but most need it, God just might give you roses too!!

***Song of Solomon 2:2***  
*As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*



## Exceedingly Abundant Iced Tea

By Sharon Hawkins

When people think about what God is able to do exceedingly abundantly, they might think about being delivered from a hard situation, they might think about a long awaited answer to prayer, an unexpected miracle in their lives. Me, I think about tea—fresh sweet Southern iced tea, in a sweaty glass with lots of ice. A photograph of such a glass of iced tea hangs in my den that my sweet friend, Diana, had made for me. It reminds me that my God can do more for me than I could ask or think and He often does, because He loves me so much.

The next night they served water with dinner once again and I told LeeAnn, "I'm a Southern girl and I sure would love a glass of sweetened iced tea." I even described it to her—lots of ice, freshly brewed, in a sweaty glass. She said, "Good Luck with that!" We laughed. A little later, I mentioned it again. "Boy, some sweet tea sure would be good!" She said, "Why don't you ask for some?" Reluctantly, I let it go.

fused with someone else." He said, "Nope, I think this is for you." I felt God speaking to me right there through a glass of tea. He was saying that He could provide exceedingly abundantly above all that I could ask or think. He could take care of all the doubts on my "Doubt Card". He would provide what I needed if I would only trust Him and be obedient to His call. I took my card to the altar that night. I gave it to the Lord and surrendered all my doubts to Him.

2008 was the first year I attended the Proverbs 31 Ministries She Speaks Women's Speaker and Writer Conference in Charlotte. Oh, how I enjoyed the conference! The food was pretty awesome too. The first night of the conference, we were served the most amazing, oozing, delicious, warm chocolate cake. My new friend, LeeAnn, remarked that she would love a cup of coffee to go along with this delectable dessert.

That night Rene Swope of Proverbs 31 Ministries spoke. Her talk was called "Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt." She asked, "What's holding you back from completely surrendering to God's call on your life?" There were "Doubt Cards" on the table. We were to take a card, list our doubts and take them and lay them down at the cross if we felt led.

The conference was life-changing for me! It was where the Lord first began revealing His plans to me for the ministry, Grace in the Wilderness. It's where I completely surrendered to God's call on my life.

She watched for a waiter to ask for coffee. She found one... she asked... he forgot. She saw others with coffee and she licked her lips. After a while, she noticed a carafe across the way. She was sure it was the dark brew she longed for. She went to check it out. When she discovered the carafe was cold, defeatedly she returned to the table. Soon she forgot her craving as the next amazing speaker began her talk.

On my card, I wrote, "...But I have a Dad with Parkinson's, ..But I have a very busy business to run, ..But I have to take care of my husband and my boys, ..But my youngest son is a REAL challenge." On and on I wrote. Just as I finished filling the front and back of the card with all my doubts about why it was hard to surrender to God's call for me into ministry, I felt a tap on my shoulder.

Since then, He has blessed with many ladies who are now part of the Grace In The Wilderness Ministry; about 1,000 combined readers of our Bi-monthly Women's and Quarterly Teen's email Newsletters and Conferences for Women and Teens. The conference in March will be our eighth. It's no surprise that He's been so faithful just as He reassured me He would be that day...with a glass of exceedingly abundant sweet tea.

***Ephesians 3:20-21***  
*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*





## Grace In The Wilderness Ministries

139 Commons Way  
Greenville, South Carolina 29611

Sharon Hawkins Phone: 864-380-2358  
Email: sharon@wildernessgrace.org

Marie Pritchett Phone: 864-979-5281  
Email: marie@wildernessgrace.org

### FOCUS SCRIPTURE VERSE:

Isaiah 43:19

...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Grace In The Wilderness is an out-reach ministry for Today's Busy Woman. Our mission is to encourage women of all ages:

- To look upward to God as they discover Him in a new and deeper way,
- To look inward as they discover who they are in Christ, and
- To look outward as they discover God's plan for their lives.

We appreciate your prayers and support. Donations are also appreciated and may be made payable to Grace In The Wilderness Ministries (address to the left).

This is a bi-monthly email newsletter. To subscribe for an electronic copy (free) or paper copy (\$10/year), please just call or email us.

*Grace In The Wilderness  
Women's Conference:  
"A Woman After God's  
Own Heart"  
March 18-19, 2011  
Blue Ridge View  
Baptist Church  
Pickens, SC*

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*Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened. —Dr. Suess*

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Greenville, SC 29611