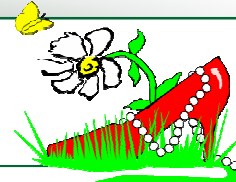


Grace In The Wilderness



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



Walking the Talk

By Sharon Hawkins

Ever heard the saying, "You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" Muhammad Ali often used these words to intimidate his upcoming opponents. Then, much to their chagrin, he went into the ring and "walked the walk" across their faces with his boxing gloves.

Grace Ankles, Today's Busy Woman, talks the talk all the time about what she's going to do in her life and how she's going to handle it with finesse. But when it comes time for the walk, it's just not that easy to put her money where her mouth is.

Often her walk takes her up steep hills in desperation, down heartbreaking valleys, across barren deserts of loneliness, through tear-filled mud puddles, often into pits of difficulty, sometimes even through the fire. The whole time she's chasing the busy life, and all the while Satan is constantly trying to trip her up. Let's face it, Today's Busy Woman's walk is no 'walk in the park'!

Sometimes Grace feels awfully lonely in her walk even though her friends, her family and, especially, her husband try to comfort her as she walks through hard times. After all, she is the only one who knows how it feels to walk in her shoes. Or is she?

The truth is that there's nothing that she can ever go through that Jesus doesn't understand. He came to show us

the way. He blazed the trail. And, no matter what it is, He's walked through worse...

In fact, He walked all the way up Calvary's Hill and He carried His cross on His scourged, bloody back to die for Today's Busy Woman. Though weak to the point of death, He walked with strong determination. You see, He walked toward His goal and nothing was going to stop Him. He saw her... He walked the walk to die for Today's Busy Woman to make a way for her. *Oh, if we could only be so determined to walk for Him!!*

And those feelings of loneliness, she should not give in to them, because she doesn't have to walk alone. There's an old Elvis gospel song that goes, *"When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high, and don't be afraid of the dark. At the end of the storm, is a golden sky... and the sweet silver song of the lark."*

Walk on through the wind, Walk on through the rain. Though your dreams be tossed and blown, walk on. Walk on with hope in your heart. And you'll never walk alone. You'll never walk alone."

Christ is there by her side just waiting for Today's Busy Woman to take His hand and walk with Him. No matter how untamed her wilderness or how barren her desert, He's made the way. In Isaiah 43:19, He promises, "I will

even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." What an awesome promise!!

John 14:6 says, Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus was the only one who can talk this talk because He made that way!!! Oh yes... He walked the ultimate walk for you and me!!! *And I hate to think where we would be if He hadn't!*

To take it even one step further, He invites Today's Busy Woman to take a 'walk on the wild side'!—to walk in radical, total commitment and wild, reckless surrender to follow Him. This is a closeness that makes the walk even sweeter and allows us to experience His miracles beyond our wildest imagination along the way.

We each have a road to walk and no two journeys are quite the same. With such uncertainty for us, it makes all the difference in the world who we're walking with. When it's all said and done, the walk is the most important thing because only what we do for Him matters. It's all that lasts...

In the infamous words of Steven Curtis Chapman,

"You can run with the big dogs. You can fly with the eagles. You can jump through all the hoops and climb the ladder to the top.

But when it all comes down, you know it all comes down to ...The Walk!"

Volume 3, Issue 6, Bi-Monthly

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Christmas Brunch

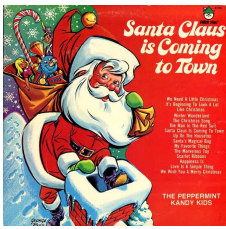
For Moms Who Have Lost Children

December 11
9:30 AM—1:00 PM

Blue Ridge View Baptist Church

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD!



Making a List, Checking It Twice!

By Diana Kilgore

It's October and that means, as women, we must prepare for the upcoming battle – Holiday Shopping!

If you are like me, you find yourself a little short on two important weapons – Time and Money. So let's see what else we have in our arsenal that may help us return from battle with both nerves and bank accounts intact.

1. Create a budget. Although *budget* seems to be a bad word these days, it is actually the best way to keep you on track. Knowing how much you can really afford to spend will help you figure out how many presents you can buy. Make sure your budget includes everything you normally buy during the Holidays from food and decorations to gifts and cards... and don't forget the postage. (Incidentally, postage will increase next year, so buy Forever Stamps and you will be able to use any extra in 2011.)

2. Make a list. As a dog is "Man's best friend," so a List is "Lady's best friend." Even Scripture tells us in I Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." There are two questions you should ask yourself before you hit the mall: "Who am I shopping for?" and "How much can I spend on each person?" Keep the list within the budget, and if it's not working out, you will need to either reduce the number of names or the amount you plan to spend on each person.

3. Look ahead. Buy Christmas cards and decorations in the New Year sale. It may be too late for this year but buy the minimum and look out for bargains in 2011 that will help with the Holidays next year. Yes, my \$3.00 springy Santa hat was \$14.97 last year.

4. Stick to cash. If you have trouble with budgeting, then only spend cash. Once it's gone, your shopping is finished.

Stay away from credit cards. Credit cards may seem easier, but it is also easier to lose track of spending. If you end up spending more than you can afford to pay off at one time, you could end up paying for this year's gifts over the next 30 years. If necessary, put your credit cards in a bowl of water and leave them in the freezer. If you are determined to purchase an item, begin thawing your credit card cube and you may be surprised to find that as the ice is diminished so is your "gotta have it" desire.

5. Just say no. The stores have almost perfected the skill of luring you in during the Holiday season. The colorful decorations and Christmas music make those sales all the more tempting, and it is easy to buy things that no one will ever use. Don't buy things on impulse! Also, set boundaries for your family's wish list so they don't expect more than you can reasonably accomplish. If someone were to ask your child what they remember most about last Christmas, would it be the expensive X-Box or the short-tempered, screaming lunatic who inhabited your body for the month of December?

6. Reduce expectations of presents. Try to not promise expensive presents. If you start promising a lot of gifts or expensive gifts, it only pressures you to spend more money. Start working on this as soon as possible. If your family expects very little, they will be happy when they get a bit more than what you promised. Let's not forget to include stockings in this. We've all heard the old "Well, when I was a child, we were lucky to just get a couple of apples in our stocking." Apparently, people were happier in the olden days. So why not give your child the joy of a frugal stocking?

7. Give priceless gifts. If money is running low, find other ways to give gifts. Organize an inexpensive outing or make a special dinner or dessert. Get creative. There's nothing wrong with making presents on your own. Try finding new uses

for old things. Remember that it is the thought that counts. A favorite in our house is "coupons." As a mom it warms your heart to receive a "I'll wash the dinner dishes" or "Good for one home-made breakfast" coupon.

8. Don't feel obligated to send a Christmas card to everyone you ever met. Do you really need to send a Christmas card to the lunch lady at the high school or the veterinary assistant who vaccinated your puppy? It is not only the expense but signing cards and addressing envelopes is time consuming. Wouldn't that time be better spent watching "It's a Wonderful Life" with your kids or making memories baking cookies as a family? This does not, however, let you off the hook for the privilege of verbally wishing these fine folks a "Merry Christmas!"

9. Shop online. Many of the best bargains can still be found online. It may take some of the stress out of retail shopping. If you order soon you can get all your presents sent in time. I would like to recommend you purchase a pre-paid credit card for any online purchases. The \$3.95 this will cost up front is much less than the hundreds of dollars in unauthorized purchases and bank fees you may incur from some youngster who has hacked into Amazon.com.

10. Don't forget the true meaning of the Holidays. This time hasn't always been about buying lots of presents and racking up debt. Reflect on all the blessings for which you are thankful at Thanksgiving and take time to honor the Christ of Christmas this year with your family!

Begin preparing your finances now and see what a difference it makes for you this Holiday season. I wish you the most blessed and least stressed Holiday season ever!



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: Bless the Lord, When?

By Betty Vest

Psalms 34:1, I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

I have read this verse over and over. All I can think of is how to do as this verse says. I'm not saying I doubt God in any way. But, I'm human and I can't help

but ask why, how and when.

I'll use a situation in my husband's life. First, I want to say Jesus is perfect, yet he suffered more than any man could ever suffer. For who? Sinners. My husband isn't perfect and no where near it. But I can say he has been and still is a great man of God in my eyes. Larry was

saved in May, 1967—Called to preach in 1972—Pastored Calvary Baptist Church, Travelers Rest for two years—Graduated Tabernacle Bible College May, 1978. We moved to Gaston, South Carolina in September, 1978 to pastor a church for 21 ½ years. In November, 1999, he resigned and we are still at the same church, New Hope Baptist, and he

is the Staff Evangelist. Can we praise the Lord! He is so faithful at witnessing and winning souls for the Lord.

On November 17, 2007, my husband was diagnosed in the early stages of Dementia. I asked God why? I watch daily as his short-term memory seems to fade more and more. Oh, how my heart breaks! But the Lord reminds me that his long-term memory is not affected yet! He continues to preach the Word, hand out tracts and witness for the Lord. Bless the Lord! When? At all times!

I know that there are people that will read this article that are in situations totally out of their control. I know it is hard to say "Bless the Lord!" or "Praise the Lord!" for these trials and valleys in our lives. I know we just cannot understand. But the Bible tells us in Proverbs 3:5-6, Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Also, read the book of Job.

My prayer for you all, as well as for my family, is that we will remain faithful

and give it all to God. Romans 8:28 says, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

We may lose everything in this world—our minds, our bodies, our children, earthly possessions, everything. But one thing is for sure, God has "promised" a new body to those who are saved, a mansion in Heaven, streets of gold and everlasting life. We can never, never lose our souls. Can we say, "PRAISE THE LORD!?" When? At all times!! Amen!

Where Are Our Hearts This Christmas—5th Ave. or the Stable?

By Mary Beth Oxendine



This issue, I'm going to share how Tom and I handled Christmas with me as a stay at home mom, and how I've continued to handle it as a widow. We knew that we could not get into any debt after I came home, and Christmas had to be simple but sweet and memorable. Starting when Josh was born and I came home, we started something that we stuck to: the kids only got two presents—one from us and one from Santa—and some small things in their stockings. We knew that if we started a habit like that then, it would continue, and it would help to curb the "Greed Monster" at Christmas. This way, we could focus more on Christ and family at Christmas.

We realized that most of our relatives had larger incomes, which meant that they could buy more expensive gifts for us, so we started making homemade gifts for them. I also sometimes had home parties during the year (such as Southern Living, Tupperware, etc.), and got hostess gifts which I could give away during the Holidays. We would plan our gifts ahead of time, and if we ran into sales, we would buy appropriate gifts. For the kids, I would buy next year's gifts at the after-Christmas sales, thereby saving 50-75% on everything!

One year, I saw a jar mix in the Better Homes and Gardens magazine—this was the first time I had seen one, and I thought it was a great idea! I showed it to Tom and he loved the idea too—we could give it to all of our relatives, and it would be a practical thing which they could use even after the Holidays. Marie was old enough to help me, so we bought

all our ingredients the week before Thanksgiving (when there were great sales), and set aside the first Saturday after Thanksgiving to assemble our gifts. We tested the recipe by making up one jar first, and we were panicked to find out that the recipe really filled a jar and a half rather than a jar! They had messed up the measurements! When we went to cook the recipe, we found out that it didn't taste right either. We didn't know what to do—we had bought all the ingredients, but didn't have a recipe. Then I had an idea...we would try my mom's brownie recipe.

It fit perfectly, and our tradition of making brownie mixes on the first Saturday after Thanksgiving has continued even after Tom's death. It has saved us so much money at Christmas and does not add clutter to anyone's house. We call them Mary Beth's and Marie's Snow Brownies.

Another Christmas tradition that we have is what my sisters and I did with my mom. On Christmas Eve morning, mom would give all three of us a different recipe, and take another recipe for herself, and we would make lots of Christmas cookies. Those recipes then became our special recipes, which we would make every year. After we finished baking, we would put a sampling of all our cookies on a small paper Christmas plate, cover it with Saran wrap, and put a Christmas card on it. Then we girls would deliver them to our neighbors. On Christmas Eve night, my sisters and mom and I would sit down and enjoy some of our Christmas cookies with homemade hot chocolate. The rest of the Christmas cookies would go into Christmas tins to be enjoyed throughout

the Holiday. When my children were old enough to hold a cookie cutter, I started this tradition with them, and it has continued to the present day.

None of my childhood or adulthood Christmas traditions have cost a lot of money or put us into any kind of debt, but with the Spirit of Christmas, we were able to bless a lot more people than we would have been able to if we had *bought* them gifts. We loved them through our cooking rather than through expensive store-bought gifts, and no one ever complained. We even had people returning the empty jars and asking us to refill them for next year!

God gave us Christ on Christmas, so the Spirit of Christmas is Giving. Christ was born in a stable, not on 5th Avenue. We have put a burden on ourselves thinking that giving has to cost money and be fancy and showy. All it needs to be is something that we do that passes on the love of Christ: something from our heart, something from our hands.

Tom and I realized that Christmas was an area in which we just couldn't overspend, or else I would have to go back to work. By using the simple principles in this article, we never had to worry what was on the credit card at the end of December. We have very happy memories and we've enjoyed, and still do, the Holidays debt-free, and so can you!

*Merry Christmas and May God Bless!
Lovingly, Mary Beth, Josh and Marie*

To pre-order Mary Beth's cookbook, Simple Southern Celebrations on a Budget (which will include all the recipes and mixes mentioned in this article), please email marybethskitchen@gmail.com.

Announcing New Ministry: Praying Stop Sign to Stop Sign

By Mary Beth Oxendine



The idea is simple but powerful...

be a house of prayer!

My house shall be called a house of prayer.

Matthew 21:13

Pray for everyone on your street for each whole household's salvation!! Pray from the stop sign on the left side of your house to the stop sign on the right side of your house. Also, pray that God would raise up someone on the other side of the two stop signs to pray on

their street till all the streets in your city, county, state and nation are being prayed for!

The Bible says, if we have the faith of a mustard seed, we can move mountains. As we start praying on the East Coast, we can ask God to spread it across the nation and end up on the West Coast so that every street will be prayed for.

Pray that everyone would accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and develop a personal relationship with Him. Pray that they will share with you when they

do accept Christ, then you share "Stop Sign to Stop Sign" with them until everyone on your street is praying for your street.

Sounds simple? It is! Prayer is simple, no cost, and no frills. But, it is also powerful and effective!

If you have any questions or ideas or have a "Stop Sign to Stop Sign" story to share, contact Mary Beth Oxendine at (864) 639-6371 or email sharon@wildernessgrace.org at Grace In The Wilderness Ministries. Thank you!!!



The Pedestal

A position of great esteem, a person of supposed superiority – this is a common definition of pedestal. Human nature

is to want to worship something or somebody. Our culture lends itself to that bent as well. We commonly place people, sports, events, culture and even our own children on a pedestal in an attempt to place them at a level above the rest. We highly esteem certain characteristics in others like beauty, intelligence, athletic ability, popularity, thinness, talent or even crassness or oddness. There is no limit to our cultural attention to anything we can elevate to a pedestal status.

In recent years we've seen musical artists, Hollywood types, athletes, politicians, criminals, TV evangelists, authors and even You Tube participants rise to unprecedented popularity as pop culture icons or idols. The Reality TV drenched society has everyone jockeying for their 15 minutes of fame. Much of what we value today is based on outward appearance and not the condition of the heart. We tend to be shocked when those in high positions stumble and fall from grace. Or worse, we catapult the more shocking and sinful to an even greater status. I could name names, but I'm sure you have faces popping into your mind as you read.

As Christians, we also place people within our own ranks on a pedestal. Often, we promote someone with great personality, talent, looks or ability and place them in roles that they are ill-prepared to fill. Or, because of their

obvious talents, we will elevate and assign them so many responsibilities that we set them up for failure. They lack the training, maturity and accountability to handle the responsibility, thus leading to mistakes in judgment. Pedestal status within ministry also leads to pride and as the Bible teaches, pride comes before a fall. While we are often guilty of shooting our wounded or those who make mistakes, we sometimes need to look in the mirror and ask ourselves if we have contributed to their failure. Did we run past red flags? Did we turn away when doubts surfaced? Did we offer proper training? Did we pass the buck on our own roles and pile more work on this willing person? Did we provide accountability and supervise the work? Did we discuss our concerns with them or others in leadership or simply hope for the best? Failure amongst us is sometimes attributable to lack of leadership and accountability by placing others in such roles unprepared, without supervision and/or without clear, measurable expectations and goals.

The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 30 that when we are disobedient and turn away from God that we will be drawn to other gods and bow down to worship them. A quick search for the word worship in the Bible on a commonly used web-site reveals at least 250 references. Only one person is worthy of our worship and that is The Lord, Our God. There are over 170 references to idols. Frequently idols are related to sexual immorality in the Bible. I would venture to say that a large percentage of the failure that we see amongst "Christians"

today is related to sexual immorality or the pitfall of money and fame. Lack of spiritual roots, Bible study, mentoring, prayer and accountability attribute to weak workers tossed about by every wind, issue, problem or doctrine that comes their way. When we wander away from our first love, turn away from the worship of God and place ourselves or others on the throne of our hearts, we will begin to see moral demise in our own lives and those around us.

Over the past 5 years, I devoted a lot of time and effort into a foreign ministry opportunity. A group of individuals and ministries involved from various places across our country, placed a young person in that country in a major role of responsibility that he was ill-prepared to handle. No one offered him more than passing accountability or became significantly personally involved to make sure he was growing spiritually. No one was on the ground on a consistent basis to make sure things were going as desired. Everyone just trusted it would be ok and that he could handle it all. There has been a great moral failure and all involved are shocked. But, we placed this young man on a pedestal and we failed to provide proper guidance and accountability. Does that reduce his responsibility? Absolutely not! He is ultimately responsible for his actions and use of the resources provided.

As is common, the ministries involved didn't work together. We Americans love our pioneering, lone ranger spirit. Everyone was encouraged to work together but continued to do their own

By Jo Ann Case

The Pedestal (Cont'd)

By Jo Ann Case

thing and no one compared notes or listened to subtle efforts to bring attention to indiscrepancies and red flags. I believe that we too are accountable for a great deal of what has happened.

We are especially susceptible in the South to the need to trust others without questioning. After all, we consider that polite. In the future, I will be more careful about trusting others without accountability. I will trust my gut and voice my doubts...making sure they are heard and understood by leadership. Being smooth and having a Rock Star personality are not grounds for trust or leadership in ministry! I strongly believe, now, that you cannot help someone who is not intimately involved in

improving or making sacrifices to correct their own situation. We have to be careful about sharing the resources and influence that the Lord has given us with those who are not in the proper position to use them to God's glory or who are less than invested in doing what is necessary in a given situation. That doesn't mean we shouldn't help the helpless. It does mean we should hold those accountable who are in roles of leadership and have access to resources.

We should keep God on the thrones of our hearts and trust Him for guidance in all we do. We should be willing to submit ourselves to authority and take responsibility seriously, giving clear expectations and following up to make

sure we are understood and that the work is being done properly. We shouldn't short cut. Remember we are to be meek and humble, not proud, boastful or self-seeking. We have to be willing to learn from our mistakes and seek help, wisdom and guidance from Godly leaders and especially from the Lord through prayer and Bible study. Prominence and worship belong to the Lord alone – the one who sits upon the Throne! He is the one we can always trust!

Luke 4:8

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"



One-A-Day Families

By Cathy Whisnant

In this health-crazed world we live in today, more and more people are joining the gym and more and more of us are taking our one-a-day vitamins. We do these things to keep us strong and healthy. When you look at your family, do you see it as strong and healthy? There are nine **essential** nutrients and vitamins we should be taking as a family EVERY day in order to keep our families strong and built on the rock of Jesus Christ. These nutrients and vitamins are found in Galatians 5:22-23. They are otherwise known as the Fruits of the Spirit.

First, we have LOVE. I am not talking about just any kind of love. I am talking of agape love! This is the kind of love God has toward us. Love is the first thing that must fill our hearts so abundantly that it spills forth into our homes. Agape love is the one that loves unconditionally. It is the one who keeps loving, even when the one being loved is unresponsive, unkind, or ungrateful. It is the love that keeps giving even when you feel as if you have nothing left to give. Colossians 3:14 tells us that regardless of what else we put on, love is our all-purpose garment and we should never be without it. Disinfect your homes with a love that will never end!

The second vitamin we should take is JOY. Proverbs 17:22 tells us that a merry heart brings laughter while a broken spirit dries the bones. I do not want to be the one to break the spirit of one in

my family, but I do want to bring them so much joy. Who wants a home of doom and gloom when they can have the joy of the Lord around them? Lighten up and let your family see that Christians truly are the happiest people in the world!

The next essential vitamin is that of PEACE. We all want a home where we can let our guards down and be ourselves. Proverbs 14:30 tells us that a heart at peace gives life to the home. We should put away all bitterness and wrath as Ephesians 4 tells us and be the peacemaker of the home.

Next is PATIENCE. There seems to be a shortage of that today. Galatians 6:7 tells us to not grow weary in doing good, and in due season we will reap what we have planted. When I think of patience, I think of how patient God has been with me throughout my lifetime. I am so glad for His never-ending patience, aren't you?

And how could we forget to take a dose of KINDNESS & GOODNESS? Today's world is a "me" generation and we only tend to think of ourselves. We offer more kindness and goodness to strangers than we offer in our own homes. Being kind and good means we are treating others as we would like to be treated. Do something kind or good for your family members every day and watch the difference in your home. Ephesians 4:32 tells us to be kind and tenderhearted.

Our seventh vitamin is that of FAITHFULNESS. Does your family know how committed you are to them? Do they

know you will stay faithful to them in the good and in the bad seasons of life? Do they know you will be faithful in sickness and in health, or for better or for worse? How quick we are to forget those marriage vows. Not only are God's mercies new every morning as we read in Lamentations 3:23, great is His faithfulness to us. Are we following Him in the faithfulness department?

And next is GENTLENESS. Are you a meek, soft, and considerate person? Or do you find yourself screaming at your family all the time. They feel as if they can do nothing right because mom is always screaming. In Philippians 4:5, we are urged to let our gentleness be known to all men. This includes our family members!

And last, but certainly not least, is the vitamin of SELF-CONTROL! This may be the hardest pill to swallow. The world tells us it's okay not to have self-restraint. The world says, "You only live once!" There is no harder discipline to practice than that of self-control. Always remember that God is a God of order; not a God of confusion. We should be in control of our emotions, our feelings, and our actions. We should remember that someone is always watching our actions. Where is our lack of control leading them?

If your family will take these vitamins daily, you will see a stronger and healthier family. You will be like the wise man who built his home on the rock and when the storms came, the home stood firm upon the rock of Jesus Christ!





A Little Good News Today

By Sharon Hawkins

Recently, I heard a re-make of the 1983 song by Anne Murray, “A Little Good News Today”. It made me feel old because I remembered it from the first time it came out. It’s one of those songs that sticks in your brain...been singing it all week.

“I rolled out this morning, kids had the morning news show on. Bryant Gumbol was talking ‘bout the fighting in Lebanon, A senator was squawking ‘bout the bad economy...It’s gonna get worse you see, we need a change in policy.”

Even though it was more than a quarter of a century ago (*ok, now I really feel old!!*), it is still relevant today. Maybe the newscaster has changed and now the fighting’s in Iraq, but, boy, doesn’t it sound familiar? Even, or maybe especially, the squawkin’ part as we approach Election Day? Everywhere we turn, it’s bad news. Higher prices, higher unemployment, higher crime...

“A local paper rolled up in a rubber band,

one more sad story’s one more than I can stand...”

“I’ll come home this evening, I’ll bet that the news will be the same. Somebody takes a hostage, somebody steals a plane.”

Seems hopeless if you just listen to the news. But there is “Good News” even in the midst of all this chaos—the “Good News” is that we don’t have to face these tragedies alone. There is hope and His name is Jesus. He is hope for the hopeless and help for the helpless, rest for the weary, grace and mercy for the undeserving (that’s all of us!). A long time ago, God looked down from heaven and saw our need—that we were lost in our sin. He knew that we could not save ourselves and He would rather die for us than live without us. So...He stepped out, came to a sinful world, paid the price for our sins in the greatest act of kindness that ever was. His story of grace is the ultimate “Good News” for mankind for all time.

Besides the newspaper there’s another up-to-date source for news called the Bible.

It’s great to know that God’s Word is just as real today as it was when it was written and, yes, it is about me and you! And, it’s full of His promises...Promises of peace in the midst of storms, Promises of healing for those willing to reach for the hem of His garment, Promises of living water for the thirsty and sight for the blind. Most importantly, there are Promises for life for those who are dead because we would all be dead in our sin without His grace. There are even Practical Lessons for hard times like how to stretch a limited budget (Jesus feeding 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes)—*Take what you have to Jesus and let Him bless it!*

“How I’d love to hear about a County Fair, or how we cleaned up the air...”

Truth is there’s even better “Good News” than a ‘County Fair’ and we’re not the only ones who *“sure could use a little Good News today!”* Isn’t it time we shared it? All we’ve got to do is pick up today’s red letter edition and read the latest article about what Jesus is up to regarding us today!! It’s all “Good News”!!!



In The Dark

By Brenda Horne

I have heard that sometimes we have to “practice in the dark what we have learned in the light.” My goodness how true that is!

Ever have the electricity go out at home? Maybe one night you sit down in your living room to watch a little TV and ‘Bam’ the power goes off. It’s dark as coal and the flashlight is in the kitchen drawer. You think, “Great, now I’ve got to fumble my way to the kitchen.” So you start feeling your way through your house. You know the placement of the furniture, but it’s pitch black, so you walk with your arms out-stretched, grasping air, searching for stability. After slowly working your way around the furniture, your hand finally touches the wall and you breathe a sigh of relief. You realize you were a little off on finding the entrance to the kitchen, but it’s ok. With your hand flat on the wall you slowly move along and reach the threshold. You walk through the entrance and once again with arms stretched full length, you slowly wander toward the counter. You are familiar with the distance from the doorway to the counter but still have uncertainty in the darkness. You know you are headed in the right direction so the counter can’t be too far. Finally your feet

kick the bottom of the cabinets.

“Phew, made it!” Now sliding your hands on the counter top, you hit a half-full glass of water which slams to the floor shattering into a thousand, tiny, wet pieces. Water and glass shower the kitchen floor. You are a little shaken by the surprise but you put your hands back on the counter to gather yourself. This time you step a little more carefully, leaning even more on the counter so as to avoid the shards of glass, and continue on your dark journey.

As you feel your way you think, “Ok, First the sink, there it is. Next, the dishwasher, ok, next, the stovetop and, finally, the flashlight drawer! Got It!!!” At that point the electricity comes back on. On the floor, sitting right next to the broken glass is a cardboard box that, had you not been leaning on the counter, you surely would have fallen over.

You know where the furniture is placed; you know the direction of the kitchen. In the light, you have no trouble getting around, but in the dark you stumble and are unsure, yet you still know your surroundings. “You practice in the dark what you learned in the light.”

Maybe you are facing darkness, maybe it

seems you cannot find your way. But stop and think, you know your Lord. Better yet, He knows you! You are unsure, scared, and insecure; fumbling with your emotions and your faith. “Practice in the dark what you learned in the light!”

When things are smooth in my life, I know Jesus will never leave me nor forsake me (Deuteronomy 31:8). And I know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). I know that no man can hurt me when God is with me (Psalm 56:4). So now in the dark, I have to remember what Jesus has promised.

I will move in the right direction. I know my Savior, so I will continue to go toward Him. While I am moving toward Him, I will reach for the stable walls of his guidance and I will lean on His secure counter tops for safety and security. I know His truth which I can trust in the dark places of my life. I will use these truths to find my way. *He will guide me in the darkness with what I have learned in the light!* And, although there will be times of darkness with broken pieces and hidden surprises in my life, He will guide me through them all. He is my light...in the dark!!



It's About God, Not Me

By Angie Alexander

Sometimes in life I get so carried away in day-to-day activities. All the things I “think” I have to get done end up becoming routine. However, when I step back and look at the big picture I realize that some of those things aren’t really as important as I think. The most important things and tasks are the things that God wants me to do. It has taken me a long time to realize that this life is really about what God wants for me, not what I can get out of life.

His purpose for all of our lives is detailed in the Bible and when we slow down and learn to listen and understand what He wants us to do, we will discover life’s true meaning. Trials and troubles in this life can be difficult and overbearing

at times but if we stay in God’s Word we can get through them. This doesn’t mean that we will not suffer or have troubles but, when we do, we can be reminded that, with God, all things are possible. Sometimes, especially as women, we try to fight everyone’s battles when we should trust God to take care of them. God is able to do far more than we sometimes give Him credit for.

One of my favorite lines in the song Nothing is Impossible is “When it’s over my head, it’s still under His feet.” What a wonderful reminder that God is bigger than any trouble or trial that I will ever go through. In my own life, I have seen Him work so many miracles! Some small, some large but no matter what the size, God has blessed me and for that I give Him all the glory. We all get down

sometimes and start feeling sorry for ourselves but we will never discover life’s meaning by looking within ourselves.

It all begins with God. He is my starting point and the source of my life and when I take the time to read His Word and listen, boy, does He speak! Many nights I have prayed and cried and wondered why people have to hurt and He always reminds me that even when I do not understand why things are happening in my life, He does! He can see the rainbow after the storm!

Colossians 1:6

All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

By Sharon Hawkins



This Ain't My First Rodeo

Ever watch the Rodeo, either live or on TV, and see those crazy cowboys and cowgirls risking life and limb for the thrill of an 8-second ride? They get thrown off, they dust themselves off and get back up on again. Sometimes they take a break to let the broken bones heal but then they’re right back in the saddle again. It seems they just can’t get enough of it. Makes my back hurt just thinking about it!

I dare say that, if you’re like me, you’ve been in your share of Rodeos. Life is filled with them. Bare Back Bronco Riding is a lot like trying to hang on for dear life during a financial trial when you keep sliding back into debt. Our Tie Down Roping skills might be put to the test with teenage children who don’t want to be tied down. Sometimes, we feel like we’re in a mad Barrel Race, trying to get everything done to make precious time to spend with our parents as their health is fleeting. And, what about that Team Roping?!? Ever feel like you and your husband are trying to tackle and rope a problem that’s trying to defeat your marriage? If you’re not working together, it can be very dangerous business for the life of your marriage.

Just as a cowgirl wouldn’t head out to ride a bull without some training and the help of her Rodeo Clowns, we must not face our “Rodeo of Trouble” without training and help. Psalms 124:8 says, “Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.” According to Proverbs 24:16, “...for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.” What a comfort to know that, if we are Christians, when we are knocked down by trials, we can always get up again with God’s help! As we grow in Him, He provides the skills we need to get back up and face the next trial and challenge. And, boy, is life full of trials and challenges!

Recently, as I was struggling with a trial, I told my friend, “This ain’t my first Rodeo!” I’ve been through a similar heartbreaking crisis before. Then I was reminded, that, yes, I have been through trials, but time and time again God’s been faithful. And with each trial, don’t we fear one less thing? He’s building our faith, our courage, our resolve, our strength. During the hard times, we can spend time in His Word, spend time in prayer with Him and see Him work and move mountains in our lives. If we’ll do the work and accept His training, we will

see His faithfulness and glory and it will build our muscles of faith to make us able to hold on tighter to Him and ride out the next trial. Rest assured the next trial will come and rest assured, He’ll be faithful!!! Sometimes, we just have to get back on and hold on for dear life. As a quote by Keith Green goes, “Just do your best, pray that it’s blessed, and He’ll take care of the rest.”

The victory will come when we don’t give up and we keep our eyes on Christ. So the next time at your Rodeo, when it’s time for some heart-stopping Steer Wrestling where you have to jump off your horse, grab a problem by the horns and try to wrestle it to the ground, just remember... this may not be your first Rodeo, but it’s not God’s either and He’s able to help you through anything!!!!

There’s not a trial He doesn’t have experience in winning! And, that experience of winning with Him is better than any 8-second ride...any ole’ day!!!

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.



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

Christmas
Brunch

For Moms Who Have
Lost Children

December 11
9:30 AM—1:00 PM

Blue Ridge View
Baptist Church

Check us out at
www.WildernessGrace.org

When your one passion and the world's great need intersect, you know God's calling you. -Anonymous

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