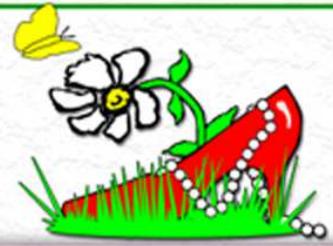


GRACE IN THE WILDERNESS

A MINISTRY FOR TODAY'S BUSY WOMAN



I WILL EVEN MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS, AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT - ISAIAH 43:19



Overcome!

If we had a dollar for every time we've heard "Life is hard," we'd all be rich.

Grace Ankles, today's busy woman, knows first hand that life is hard. She lives in a world that is moving at such a fast pace that she can't keep up. She falls into bed exhausted most nights. And even though she knows it is her lifeline, Grace still saves her quiet time with the Lord and Bible reading for the end of the day. She often opts for a quick prayer instead and falls into a deep sleep after promising for the 'umpteenth' time to find the time ... to do better ... tomorrow.

She is trying to build up her children while the devil is trying hard to tear them down. She is fighting to make things better for her parents as their health worsens. She and her husband are trying hard to get ahead when the economy is driving expenses up so much that it keeps them behind.

The world is throwing sex at her husband while it is telling her she doesn't measure up anymore. She is clinging to her husband and their marriage while finances, parenting issues, poor communication, and many other stresses work to pull them apart.

How can she overcome when she feels like she's the one who is being overcome? ... overcome by debt, overcome by life, overcome by exhaustion ...

Grace heard someone say the other day, "Living just isn't worth it. Everything is out of control. Where is God in all this chaos?"

Instantly, she wished she had answered right back, "Life is hard ... but God is good!"

She knows this. He is ALWAYS right there. He is ALWAYS in control. He is ALWAYS faithful! But in her weariness, she hesitated ... searching for the words. Now she had deep regret for the missed opportunity to share her faith.

God IS there! And He has provided the answer, THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, for today's busy woman. (John 14:6)

His name is J-E-S-U-S. God's answer to our suffering is not an explanation, it is Himself.

Hebrews 2:18 says, "Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." He overcame!!

Jesus left the sanctity of Heaven to come to a cold, dark world, to be born in a stable where animals were kept and fed. He was on a mission, one that would change the world forever.

He was not born to a wealthy family, although He could have chosen to be. He was not born in a palace to a royal family, although He could have chosen to be.

He taught of God's love by example and with His words. He healed the sick, the deaf, the blind. He fed the hungry and gave words of life to those dying in despair. He cast out demons. He raised people from the dead. He showed love in a way that only God could.

By Sharon Hawkins

From His birth, He was destined to die. He was willing to give His life for us because He couldn't bear to live without us. The only way was for Him to take our sins upon Himself, to make a way for us to have eternal life through Him.

He suffered as though He had sinned, but He never did. The precious blood of the perfect, spotless, sinless Lamb of God was willingly spilled out for all mankind. He didn't call thousands of angels to set Him free, although He could have. Out of love, He died a painful, brutal, lonely death for you and for me. He overcame death, hell and the grave for us. All we have to do is accept this precious gift.

Although life is hard for today's busy woman, nothing we go through compares to His trials. God calls upon His children to overcome the world too no matter if it turns a smiling or scowling face toward us. We are to recognize the world for what it is, an enemy, a system energized by Satan and gratifying to the flesh. (John Phillips) Just as Jesus was victorious, we are to be victorious.

1 John 5:4-5 says, "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

That's the answer, FAITH focused on no one other than the Son of God who so gloriously overcame the world. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

September/October 2012

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*Watch for our
Grace In The
Wilderness
Conference for the
Teen Girls—
Empowered Jesus
Girl coming
Fall 2012!*

John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."



A Cup of Cold Water

By Diana Kilgore

Just as we must have a financial budget in order to better understand our overall financial situation and handle what we have appropriately, so we must budget time in our lives in order to take proper care of the bodies God has given us so we can accomplish what God has for us to do.

We must budget some relaxation. Let's begin to Divert Daily. Jesus was the perfect example of getting away from the hustle and bustle of life to spend some quality time with His Father. (Mark 1:32-35) Try to find at least one thing each day to look forward to. It will help you survive the rest of the day when frustration runs rampant. A quiet time with our Lord is essential, not only to our spiritual health, but also to our physical health. Give it a try—God loves to show His faithfulness.

Next, we must learn to Withdraw Weekly. Psalm 23:1-3 reminds us to "lie down" and allow God to "restore our soul." Try to find something each week to look forward to. This may be a meal out with a friend, or a manicure or pedicure, or maybe even a drive to the mountains for a gentle reminder that the powerful Creator of this universe is able to handle any situation life throws our way.

Finally, we must Abandon Annually. A vacation once a year is vital to a healthy outlook on life. It is an excellent time to refresh and rejuvenate our tired bodies and souls so we can return to embrace our daily routines with excitement. Have you ever wished there were more

hours in the day? Oh dear, who could survive the stress. God made our bodies and He knows our limitations. Exodus 18:17-18 reveals the wisdom of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. We must delegate responsibility and realize our limitations. We are not able to handle every area of every problem on our own. Relaxation—give it a try.

As women, we sometimes feel guilty if we are blessed with 15 minutes to sit in one place and enjoy a few deep, cleansing breaths. Don't let your pride get in the way of some necessary relaxation so you can better accomplish the tasks God has given you. Your pride could take away another's blessing.

In Matthew 10:40-42 and Mark 9:41 we read a beautiful story about offering a cup of cold water.

Some people POUR it—you know the people I'm referring to; they seem to have the ministry of fault finding. If there is a spark of excitement in life, they can extinguish it in a second.

Some people PORTRAY it—these are the people who have a mark of godliness. A Christ-like attitude is always evident and they make sure others know they are willing and available to meet needs.

Some people PROVIDE it—these are the folks who put their words into action. Notice the *scope* of "whosoever"—a cup of cold water can be received by anyone willing to accept it. There is no mention of social status, class, color or religion. Also, the *size* of a "cup" is small, common, and an unimpressive container. God will use any person willing to be a vessel for His glory. It is often the little things we do for

one another that are just enough at just the right time to get us through a rough patch in life. Finally, notice the source of the reward—"in the name of a prophet receives a prophet's reward". "In the name of a righteous man receives a righteous man's reward".

Two terrific examples are Onesiforus, mentioned in II Tim. 1:16-18 and Ebed-Melech, mentioned in Jer. 38:6-13. Two Christians with very different names who went the extra mile to help another and made such a difference that their selfless acts were recorded in Scripture for us to follow. Honestly, who remembers who Ebed-Melech is? He reminds me of the person who puts that little mint on your pillow in nice hotels. One little mint won't satisfy your hunger but it adds a little something that makes you feel special.

When Jeremiah was arrested, he was mistreated and placed in a deep pit full of mire, like quicksand. When Ebed-Melech found out that Jeremiah was mistreated, he informed the king and received permission to take 30 men and remove Jeremiah. Since the pit was so deep, the men would let down long ropes which would be put under the armpit and used to pull a person up. Since Jeremiah had been stuck in the mire for so long, his skin began to break down so Ebed-Melech sent down some old cloths for Jeremiah to put under his arms before the ropes so he wouldn't be hurt while being pulled up from the pit.

This was "a cup of cold water" that offered to add a little touch of love to a sad situation. Who can you share the love of Jesus with by offering a cup of cold water today?



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: The Eye of the Storm By Cathy McCormick

Faith.

Our faith is in our God and the promises He has made to us. Faith is the rock we cling to. We proclaim our faith. We stand on faith. We are thankful for faith. We share our faith.

When life is calm and we aren't in peril and scared, we happily, confidently and proudly proclaim, "I have faith!" However, when the storms come rolling in, when we are more scared than we can even imagine, we often PRAY for

strength, for faith. We wonder if we have ENOUGH faith. We question whether faith is ENOUGH.

Faith IS all that we need. However, we have to USE it. Just having faith is NOT enough. In trial after trial in the Bible, we see that when God's people USE their faith, when they ACT on their faith, God always responds. Very simply, our faith grows as we put it to use. Our faith grows, becomes stronger, deeper and wider WHEN we use it. We are able to do and endure greater and greater things as

we grow in our faith.

"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed," the Lord said, "you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." Luke 7:6

As I look around at my grace sisters and brothers, I see so much suffering, so much fear. So many of us are dealing with life's most turbulent storms: the death of a loved one, the failing of a precious parent, cancer always knocking on the door, a broken marriage, a

The Eye of the Storm (Cont'd)

By Cathy McCormick

broken heart. We are scared. We are afraid. We feel so weak and unable. We pray. We plead. We stand on faith. But often we are like a deer caught in the glare of the headlights. We are frozen with fear. We wonder if we have enough faith. We wonder if God hears us. We wonder if faith is enough.

"Be strong, do not fear!" Isaiah 35:4

God does not want us to be afraid. Unlike the deer, when we are paralyzed with fear, all we need do is call on our sweet Jesus. We just call his name and, in an instant, calm and peace come over us where, just one second before, there was panic and fear. It's like we can hear God saying to us, "Do not fear for I am with you, do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you. I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Faith put into action is trust. Think about it—Peter put his faith to work when he stepped out of the boat—trusting that Jesus would hold him up. Why did Peter do that? He had no other choice but to trust the Lord. It was that or drown, that or die. It wasn't that he didn't have enough faith—it's just that he wasn't using his faith. I've often been just like Peter. I've faced horrible, life-threatening storms and cried out, "I Have Faith". But nothing really changed, I was still scared. I was waiting for God to take the fear from me. One day, in the middle of a horrible storm, I fell down on my knees and I cried out to my God and turned the problem over to him wholly, completely, and without hesitation. I put my faith to work—I trusted God. I moved from hoping my faith would work to knowing through my faith, God would work—He would strengthen me, He would calm the seas. And you know what? He did. And,

He always DOES!

In his book, "In The Eye Of The Storm", Max Lucado says, "At the beginning of every act of faith, there is often a seed of fear". Each time we use our faith we become stronger, as God intends us to do. Whatever life storms we find ourselves in, the storm will pass in God's time. And, the moment we put our faith to work and put our trust in God, we will stop being afraid, as our God provides us with everything we need to weather any storm.

Isaiah 41:13

"For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand and say to you, Do not fear, I will help you."

Living with Mental Illness: Lonely and Misunderstood

Anonymous

I met my husband as he was visiting the area where he grew up. He had been in town for 15 minutes when I walked in. I still remember our first glance, our conversation, right down to what we were wearing. He moved back to the area the very same weekend and still tells everyone he moved back because of me, that he loved me that much.

We dated for 3 years before we were married. He was a successful business owner with passion, charisma, and drive. We were married for 7 years when he started having difficulty sleeping, then came a deep depression, rendering him unable to function for weeks on end. He was diagnosed with bipolar disorder by his internist and sent to receive psychiatric help. Even as a nurse, I so wanted to believe the diagnosis was wrong. I was in denial and even though I went with him to doctor's appointments and encouraged him to take his medications, I was convinced that he would go back to being the same man I married.

Because of my denial, I still trusted him to make good rational financial decisions for our family (now with 2 children). His business began to fail and we found ourselves in extreme financial difficulty.

This added to his stress and he became suicidal. Feeling that his current psychiatrist was not able, or willing, to help him, he changed doctors, completely changing his medications he had been taking for the last 2 years. This extreme change, along with some appetite suppressants my husband was taking to lose weight (without my knowledge), caused him to become psychotic with hallucinations, delusions, and memory loss. He spent 3 weeks in jail (for a nonviolent offense) not even knowing what had happened.

At this time we had 3 children (8, 6, and 2). He was in and out of hospitals, many involuntary and this was gut-wrenching for me! Discharge instructions were minimal if at all. I had no idea how to care for him, what to expect. We both felt helpless. Some members of our extended family were understanding, many were not, a couple of them learned from his psychotic event that he really does have an illness and became more supportive and patient with him.

With God's help and the love for one another, we have made it through some very difficult times. With medications, he slowly began to have less anxiety and

his memory improved. I have come to realize that this illness has changed him, but he is still the man I love (although, I do still get tired and frustrated). He takes his medications faithfully but still has "little hypomania episodes" which I don't see coming.

Our children are very loving, caring individuals who never meet a stranger (a trait they have gotten from their Daddy). I keep an honest, open relationship with all 3 of them, as much as I feel they can handle at their individual ages. All of them know Daddy has an illness. I feel it is important for them to know why Daddy doesn't do some things like go to church with us every Sunday (because of anxiety of being around others). They can sense when he is up and down and we can, and do, talk about it. It is amazing what kids recognize, even when you think they are paying no attention.

He has tried many jobs because he wants to be a productive husband and father; however, due to the skills needed, or his anxiety, he was not successful. He has now found a job that he has been successful at for almost a year, which makes him feel good about himself and this helps his overall well-being.

Living with Mental Illness... (Cont'd)

By Anonymous

Our children are happy, healthy, and successful. Our family continues to love one another and has just begun taking life one week at a time rather than one day at a time, by keeping one eye open for what may, or may not, be around the corner.

As Christians, I ask that we pray for one another (James 5:16). Let's not judge one another (Matthew 7:1), but love one another as Christ has loved us so that we can show we are His followers (John

13:34-35). Many times, I needed someone just to listen to me and not say a word, but just put their arms around me and tell me they would pray for me and my family. I didn't need an answer, and definitely not advice from someone who has not been in my shoes. I just needed a touch from above.

It is also a help for a strong Christian woman or man to be a gentle, unrecognized mentor for children of the opposite sex, in this case; just to be a healthy Christian role model.

Ask about and be genuinely interested in the well-being of the person with the illness. Ignoring the person with the illness, does not make the illness go away.

I always feel good when someone asks about my husband, and I know they truly care (believe me, I can tell). It lets me know that he is loved and cared for by others, and that is just as important to me as someone telling me they love me. He is, after all, my friend, my husband, the father of my children, my family.



... Right Behind You ...

By Sharon Hawkins

Dear Taylor:

When you were a year old and learning to walk, you teetered this way and you tottered that way. You were so cute but so unsure of your footing. You took some hard falls but your dad and I were there to keep you safe from real danger. And whether you knew it or not, we were right behind you...

When you became a big boy, you were ready to graduate from your tricycle and move to a bike. You teetered this way and you tottered that way. You wrestled those handlebars back and forth in frantic succession trying not to fall. We would hold the back of your seat and run with you to help you balance. Then we'd let go but run along with you. And whether you knew it or not, we were right behind you...

Since then, you have had so many firsts. You made your first friendships, attended your first class at school, had your first dealings with buying something, went on your first date and took your first trip as driver of a car, to name a few. Through it all, whether you knew it or not, we were right behind you...

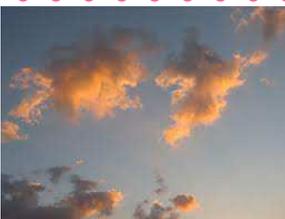
In June, we took our seats at Littlejohn Coliseum for your high school graduation. My heart swelled with pride as you marched in with your classmates and took your seat. Then my heart fell as I realized that, even though we sat on the side of the arena, you were seated in front of us and you couldn't see us. Then I realized as tears trickled down my cheeks, "Yes, it's okay. He knows we're behind him. He knows we wouldn't miss this for the world!"

Now it's time for your newest adventure and another first. Our little boy who just yesterday learned to ride his bike is going to drive away to college. It's time to spread your wings and fly. It's time for you to go change the world.

All your life I have prayed that you would grow healthy, wise and strong. I'm so thankful to God that He has answered my prayers, fulfilling every mother's hopes for her son. You are a godly young man with integrity and compassion who loves the Lord with your whole heart and longs to serve Him and others.

As you go, rest in knowing, we are always here ... 100% ... right behind you...

Love, Mom



Our Broken Wings

By Linda Byce

This is my story and that of Geneva Thorbourne—the struggles our families

have endured and how God's Grace brought us together and enabled us to soar above our hardships while also helping others.

GENEVA--A nurse's aide who came to help with my husband for 4 hours a week. My husband David had suffered severe brain damage after being dead for over an hour due to cardiac arrest on Christmas Morning 2006 at age 49.

She touched my heart the first time I ever met her. A sister in Christ. Little did I know what this precious lady had been through or what she was about to face. Because of her kind heart and devotion to family, she gave up her career to not only care for her blind, brain-damaged, wheelchair bound husband, (now walking and able to see with the aid of very thick glasses and a magnifying glass) but also to raise four of her grandchildren who know her as "Mama". She has found little to no help no matter where she has turned.

Right after she and I met, she received devastating news. It was the week of

Thanksgiving 2007 while at our home. She received a phone call informing her that the rundown duplex she was forced to rent had been sold and was scheduled for demolition. They had to be out by the end of December. Their previous home had been in an apartment building that had been turned into condos (Those unable to purchase a unit had been evicted). With no money, a car that was on its last leg and six hungry mouths to feed, she had No Idea what to do. She left that day with tear-filled eyes and a broken heart.

Trammell, our 14-year-old son, and I knew we had to do something. BUT WHAT?



Our Broken Wings

By Linda Byce

As we look back now we see the reason God moved us to Charleston, SC. It was to meet Geneva, to be there on that day when she received that call, to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Thanksgiving came and we made the 3-hour drive to the Upstate to spend time with family. After our return, we found out that on Sunday Geneva's car had broken down on the highway. After towing it in she received news that the car was beyond repair, EVEN if she had had the money to do so. So now with no car, no way to get to work, no money, she, her disabled husband and four children, were about to be homeless. BUT GOD Had Other Plans.

I hit my knees and my computer. I asked Geneva if she would consider moving her family to Greenville, SC. She agreed. I then packed my family in the car and drove back to Greenville in search of an affordable apartment for them. God led us to a 3-bedroom, 2-bath townhome with a beautiful view of the swimming pool and rent affordable enough for Geneva with a little from us. The sweet manager was so touched by our story that she allowed us to rent the apartment without a deposit. We paid two months' rent with the last of our own money.

We then borrowed my mom and dad's closed-in trailer that they used to haul their Honda Trike. We returned to Charleston and began filling it with everything we couldn't live without. I began driving Geneva to work along with taking food to her family. I told her that we had found an apartment for her in Greenville BUT that's all I told her. The week before Christmas I packed my husband, our son and our cat in the car and pulled the trailer filled with furniture and household items to Greenville.

We literally moved into the apartment we had rented for Geneva for a week while Trammell and I set it up, while also caring for David. I contacted a dealer who found (at auction), purchased and had detailed, a 2002 minivan. He set up a payment plan which, with our help, Geneva could pay off with her modest upcoming income tax refund.

My sister forwarded an email I had sent to my contacts asking for used household items to Fox Carolina, the local Fox affiliate. They called and asked if they could come to the apartment and do a

story. I agreed. They arrived as I was decorating a Christmas tree that had been donated by the manager of a local video store. I had told her what our family was doing as I was renting Christmas movies to watch that night. During those days we were camping out on the living room floor of the apartment on blow-up mattresses and watching the TV with a DVD player we had taken from our home to give to Geneva.

After the interview aired, we were bombarded with donations of furniture, clothing, dishes and much more. One person even sent a \$250.00 Wal-Mart gift card which we also presented to Geneva on "Reveal Day". Stanley Steemer trucks picked up donated furniture, cleaned it and delivered it to us. My sister bought and wrapped Christmas gifts for the family to go under the tree.

By December 22nd the entire apartment was set up with EVERYTHING right down to toothbrushes and toilet paper. Beds were made, clothes hanging in the closet, food in the fridge, the table beautifully set with a red tablecloth and Christmas dishes. What a joy it was to drive back to Charleston and pick Geneva and her family up. They still had no idea what was in store for them. (Please visit our website at www.Ourbrokenwings.weebly.com and see their reaction when they arrived at their new home and received their minivan!)

Shortly after that amazing Christmas, on February 3, 2008, our family was devastated once again. Our son Trammell became paralyzed from the waist down due to a rare virus called Acute Transverse Myelitis that strikes one in a million. That put me caring for both my bedridden husband and paralyzed son 24/7.

God has continued to carry both our families during these years. Ironically enough, in 2009, our car broke down on the side of the highway and had to be towed on the very same day we received a 24-hour eviction notice because we couldn't afford to purchase the condo we were leasing.

We helped Geneva's family move into their own Habitat for Humanity home. Then last year she lost her job and in June her unemployment ran out. By God's grace, they are hanging on to their house while others around them have

lost theirs. She also made the mistake of borrowing money for her house payment from a company who repossessed their minivan 3 days before Christmas 2011 after she had given them her last penny trying to keep them from doing so. Then through God's grace we received a donation to our family from an organization in Charleston who had heard about us. The day after Christmas they drove up and presented us with a gift of \$800. Trammell and I knew what to do with the money. We had to find a car for Geneva. Trammell had \$300 from Christmas money he had received. That gave us a total of \$1,100.

We went to Ralph Hayes Toyota where they made another miracle happen. They sold us a 1996 Lincoln Continental that looked like new. They detailed it and put new tires on it--all taxes, title and out the door with a full tank of gas for the \$1,100 we had. Trammell could hardly wait to surprise Geneva's family. He has his driver's license but is very uncomfortable with driving due to his disability BUT he wanted to be the one to pull the car into their driveway. We got a friend to care for David while Trammell followed me from Anderson to Greenville. Right before we got to their house I pulled over and let him go around me. I then followed as Trammell pulled into the driveway honking the horn. You should have seen Geneva's face when Trammell rolled down the window of the Lincoln shouting MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!

Geneva and I both struggle daily trying to care for our families but that has never stopped us from reaching out to others in need. We know that God brought us together for a reason. We each have a broken wing but together we can fly.

Isaiah 40:31

*But those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like
eagles;*

*they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*



Don't Sniff the Socks

By Liz Rampey

One day early in my marriage, I was contently functioning in autopilot mode while cleaning the house. I was listening to upbeat music, singing along, and mindlessly swooping from room to room. With high energy, I took the cups to the kitchen, dusted furniture, wiped counters, and neatly stacked the books by my bedside.

It was shortly after I spotted a pair of socks on the floor that my groove came to

a screeching halt. For some reason unbeknownst to me, I leaned over, scooped up the socks ... and put them to my nose to take a whiff! I can only attribute this action to determine cleanliness to some kind of primal instinct. I assure you that there was an odor that only the fittest could survive!

As a result of this near fatal sniff test, I provide the following information when given the opportunity to advise a young bride:

Dear Young Bride,

When you encounter socks on the floor, NEVER, EVER sniff them to determine if they are clean! Instead, thank God for your husband, wash the socks again, and put them away without nagging your groom. Take this opportunity to show unconditional love. Actions of a similar nature throughout your years will lead to a happy and successful marriage.

Love, Liz

Random Thoughts and Our Impact on Social Media

By JoAnn Case

I've heard varying opinions about the use of social media. Many use it as an outlet to vent, gossip, slander or share inappropriate details and pictures of their lives. Others rarely use it or don't participate at all. Still others are basically voyeurs into the lives of others while not interacting themselves. Still others give way too much personal information. Recent reports even state that social media is playing a large roll in the breakup of marriages and being mentioned in divorce papers.

The reason I initially participated was to connect with my grown children; stay in touch with family in other cities and states; keep in touch with mission connections and post travel pictures. Along the way, I connected to friends I've lost touch with, strengthened family bonds and gained much encouragement from Christian sites I "like".

So, after having a "page" for several years, I recently had my own turn at a little drama. Interestingly enough, it involved a group of people from my high school who are in my same age group. It was really difficult to remain neutral and avoid being pulled into, well, high school drama! I had to say in no uncertain terms that I did not, would not, could not be a part of gossiping about others, true or not! I later received an apology and was able to work things out peaceably where I'm concerned with all involved. It was none of my business and remains none of my business. Because of what I experienced, I almost removed myself completely from social media. However, when I mentioned I was going

to stop, several friends who read my posts encouraged me to stick with it. I almost changed my page so that only a select few could see it or to delete a large number of "acquaintances". Then, I recalled this verse: "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11) That very day, I decided that I would use my page going forward as a witnessing and encouraging tool that could be used to bring glory to God and maybe lead someone in the right direction or make them think twice.

So, how do we as Christian women use social media to glorify God?

Think twice before posting anything that could be construed as negative, ugly, slanderous, whiny, mean or ugly ... and don't!

Share your thoughts—carefully and thoughtfully.

Humor is good – keep it clean.

Avoid private conversations with those of the opposite sex – especially if you're married. If inappropriate contact is received, cut it off immediately.

Don't post or message anything you wouldn't want your mother, spouse, employer or children to read. God already knows!

Share the word of God, positive snippets, great quotes and things that encourage others.

Don't spend more time on social media

than you do in face to face time with family and friends.

How does your social media time compare to the time you spend in Bible study or Prayer?

When someone posts a prayer request, stop that moment, whisper a prayer and let them know that you've just prayed....not that you're going to, but that you have!

Be bold but gentle in your witness to those who are non-believers. Don't water down the message.

I share a lot from Billy Graham, Max Lucado, Rick Warren, John Maxwell, Proverbs 31 Ministries (and various speakers in that group) as well as Kay Arthur. "Like" a few pages that give you something good to think about daily that you can share with others. I'm regularly amazed at how what shows up in my Newsfeed speaks to exactly what I'm going through at that moment.

Here's a few random samples of my posts from the past few months.

"Sometimes when you feel the need to run ahead, rush things or think too much, it's really time to step back, reflect, pray and take it one day at a time!"

"Love this that I just read - "you don't have to attend every argument you're invited to!" #don't pick up the ball - GAME over! HA!"

"So, I typed up a negative comment and my phone wouldn't post it....so I'll just say bless it and shut up! #can'tsaynothinggood"



My Prayer

By Roberta Brown

I am sure that everyone reading this knows just as I do that our prayers are the closest, most intimate communication we can ever have with our Lord Jesus Christ. If I am to be completely honest, I must admit that sometimes my hurried prayers really are more like a Santa wish list, instead of a deep communion with my Heavenly Father, although I am trying to do better than that.

One of my favorite Bible verses is 2 Chronicles 7:14-15. "If My People, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open and my ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place."

Since I like to write, sometimes I write down my prayers and when they are answered, I can praise God once again for His lovingkindness to me, a sinner, saved by His Grace.

The prayer I am sharing with you is one I wrote down one morning and one of my friends read it and encouraged me to send copies to several of my friends. I keep a copy on my refrigerator as a reminder because I know that the Holy Spirit gave every word of it to me that morning.

Gracious Heavenly Father:

I come to you with a humble heart, with thanksgiving and praise. Thank you for this beautiful new day. Today, I will meditate on your love and mercy. Guide me in sharing this love with others who are without this great gift you so freely give to those who seek it.

Father, please forgive all my sins for they are covered by the blood of your son Jesus Christ. I want to be sensitive to the needs of others, to be a blessing to someone today.

Reveal to me your Holy Word that I may share it with someone who is unfamiliar with this great gift of love. Help me to be a candle in someone's darkness, to share spiritual food with the poor in spirit, to

be a blanket of warmth for the cold in heart.

My desire is to live, that others will see You living in me. For in the flesh I am such a failure, but through your amazing grace, I am Love. I want to remember that you created me to love, minister and serve you with joy.

Thank you for my family. I want to be an inspiration to each of them. Deliver me from any petty grievances or evil thoughts I may harbor. Teach me, to be the best Christian neighbor I can be—to pray and intercede on their behalf. Revive me and fill me with your Holy Spirit that I will be a vessel you can use.

I lift up my church family, my pastors and the leaders to be filled and led with the Holy Spirit, that it will be evident we are the body of Christ. Give me daily a vision of the Cross, the death and the resurrection. Knowing that beyond this life, we have everlasting life through Jesus Christ your Son.

.. Amen

Pain, Pain Go Away...

By Sharon Hawkins

I have a new compassion for those who suffer in pain every day. I have to admit that before my breast cancer and melanoma diagnoses and three surgeries last year, I didn't really understand what people living with constant pain experienced. Now I live with it every day and every minute that my eyes are open.

Trying to help, people are quick to offer remedies--take pain medicine, eat right, get more rest. But for those of us who suffer from chronic pain, it feels as if we are stuck inside a body and have little or no control. Words are inadequate to describe how it feels or what it's like.

Through this last year, in addition to doctor's visits and medicines, I have searched for ways to combat this gnawing, crippling, ever-changing pain. From research, gathering wisdom of others and trying different things myself, I have compiled this list. I am still taking it one day at a time on my road to recovery with God's help. Some of the things below have helped me, others I know I need to work more on. I thought I'd share them for any fellow pain sufferers.

Slow down and watch. Let others do for themselves. Take care of you.

Practice acceptance. Healing sometimes happens in the slow lane. What we resist, persists.

Let go and let God, your family and friends hold you!

Believe in your recovery. The land of wellness exists and you will be there again!

Have a beginner's mind. Learn what you can while you're in this place. Think of it as a gift.

Live more fully in the present, savor each day and appreciate all the little things more.

Find quiet. Feel God's enveloping embrace in silence. Be still and know that He is God! Rest and heal.

Just breathe, expelling stress and pain. Feel the sharpness of pain subside as relaxation and calm take its place.

Listen to music and let it carry you away from your pain. Just praise the LORD!!

Lift up your pain in prayer and then rest quietly with the comfort that your concerns are being tended to by One greater than yourself and you do not have to take them back again.

Reflect in God's nature, it renews your sense of belonging, makes you feel less alone in your pain, and makes you grateful for your life among such wonder.

Laugh more. It can be physically and spiritually healing.

Reach out to others. It always lifts you up when you lift up someone else.

Live in the Light. Combating darkness by bringing on light, candles or a small lamp can help focus thoughts and bring comfort.

Take care of yourself. This will make you feel more in control over your circumstances and your attitude toward pain. It helps you fight back against the pain.

Never lose hope. It motivates and guides you through frustration into positive actions to make your life better. With hope in Christ, all things are possible!



Grace In The Wilderness Ministries

139 Commons Way
Greenville, South Carolina 29611

Sharon Hawkins Phone: 864-380-2358
Email: sharon@wildernessgrace.org
Follow Sharon's cancer journey at
www.caringbridge.org/visit/sharonhawkins
Twitter: [SharonYHawkins](https://twitter.com/SharonYHawkins)

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).

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A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at her. —Unknown

Grace In The Wilderness Ministries
139 Commons Way
Greenville, SC 29611