

Blossom Ministries

Preparing Women To Bear Fruit

Greetings...

Dear Readers,

JOY CHOSE YOU

“Joy does not arrive with a fanfare on a red carpet strewn with the flowers of a perfect life

joy sneaks in as you pour a cup of coffee watching the sun hit your favourite tree just right and you usher joy away because you are not ready for her your house is not as it should be for such a distinguished guest

but joy, you see cares nothing for your messy home or your bank balance or your waistline

joy is supposed to slither through the cracks of your imperfect life

that’s how joy works you cannot truly invite her you can only be ready when she appears and hug her with meaning because in this very moment joy chose you.”

~ **Donna Ashworth,**

Wild Hope: Healing Words to Find Light on Dark Days

As fall turns to winter we truly hope that you have found the Joy that only our Savior can give and the truest of friendships to share it with.

Blessings on you and your family,

~Melisa Turner and the Blossom Team

Book Recommendations

The Word in the Wilderness,
A Poem a Day
for Lent and Easter
- **Malcolm Guite**

Sitting at the Feet
of Rabbi Jesus
- **Ann Spangler and
Lois Tverberg**

Mudhouse Sabbath
- **Lauren F. Winner**

Pilgrim, 25 ways
God’s Character
leads us onward
- **Ruth Chou Simons**

The Betrayal,
a novel on John Calvin
- **Douglas Bond**

The Thunder,
a novel on John Knox
- **Douglas Bond**

Please, Sorry, Thanks
- **Mark Batterson**

The Theft
of America’s Soul
- **Phil Robertson**

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Quotes

The storyline of the Bible is too good for anybody to invent. If people were to make Jesus up, they would need to have levels of creativity which have never been seen on the planet
~ **Peter Williams**

What sets us apart as image bearers - as the Imago Dei - more than anything else is our capacity to love.
~ **Dan Forrest**

Legacy is not what you accomplish.
Legacy is what others accomplish because of you. ~ **Mark Batterson,**
Please, Sorry, Thanks

Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see. ~ **Corrie Ten Boom**

The true saint burns grace like a
747 burns fuel on takeoff.
~ **Dallas Willard**

Approach, my soul, the mercy seat
where Jesus answers pray’r;
there humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.
- **John Newton**

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: 'What! You too? I thought I was the only one'” ~ **C.S. Lewis,** The 4 Loves

Friendship Refreshes the Soul

Some of my favorite quotes are about friendship.

“Good friends help you to find important things when you have lost them...your smile, your hope, and your courage.” ~ Doe Zantamata

“A friend knows the song in my heart and sings it to me when my memory fails.” ~ Donna Roberts

“Sometimes it is a slender thread, sometimes a strong, stout rope; She clings to one end, I the other; She calls it friendship; I call it hope.”
~ Lois Wyse

“In so much as anyone pushes you nearer to God, she is your truest friend.”

The Bible says that

**“A sweet friendship refreshes the soul.”
~ Proverbs 29:9 TPT**

This refreshment is like taking a deep breath of a pleasing fragrance. The Apostle Paul writes to his friend Philemon and requests “my brother, I ask that you do this for me in the Lord: Refresh my heart in Christ.” (Philemon 1:20) This short letter offers many facets of friendship, showing us that friends keep in touch, ask for favors and help, offer hospitality, bless and pray for each other, and give thanks to God for one another.

In John 15:12-17 Jesus defines true friendship and offers to be our friend.

“This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and produce fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Jesus tells us that friendship includes sacrifice and true love for one another. He is our truest friend because He died for us. Not only does He offer us friendship through His sacrifice but He invites us into His inner circle. Salvation is a free gift but also an open door to belonging. We are not just offered a handout but a relationship!

This relationship, this place of belonging means that we will never be alone, we will be known and accepted and offered an inheritance.

But you are a forgiving God. You are kind and full of mercy. You do not become angry quickly, and you have great love. So you did not leave them. ~ Nehemiah 9:17b

In the past you did not know God. You were slaves to gods that were not real. ⁹ But now you know the true God. Really, it is God who knows you. ~ Galatians 4:8-9 NCV

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ~ Romans 8:17

These are just some of the many benefits of a friendship with Jesus. Ultimately, our souls are refreshed by the restoration of friendship with God and He gives us so many other good gifts.

THE LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
~ Psalm 23:3-4

~ With all My Love, Melisa Turner

Pass the Promise

In *Mudhouse Sabbath*, Lauren Winner describes her spiritual journey. At one point she talks of a sign she collected from a discarded door with Psalm 121:8

“The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore”

with “keep home safe thank God” handwritten underneath. She kept the sign on her dresser with other trinkets and pictures. A friend, Molly, helping her get ready for a party asked her why she didn’t put the sign on her door. Lauren thought it was a good idea and proceeded to tape it to her bedroom door. At this point, Molly said, “No, your front door.” Lauren’s response was “But Molly, if I do that, the whole world will know I’m a Christian.”

Lauren expresses the reluctance many of us have to share with the world that we are a Christian. Why do we hesitate to proclaim the gospel; to share our faith; to even encourage those around us to live for Christ and continue to stand with Him? Sharing the gospel of Christ, God’s overarching plan, and how we live that out with those around us is the most important work we’ve been given.

This work weaves into the daily work of living, God has given us. Not the daily work we expected, or think we should be doing, but the work placed before us. We need to do this with diligence and energy even when circumstances seem to stand in our way. Sitting in chains, and writing letters to the early churches probably was not what Paul envisioned early on in life or even after his conversion. Yet, he put the same energy he used as a missionary, teaching and ministering to the early churches into his letters to them while in chains for the gospel.

The song *Pass the Promise* talks of passing on God’s promises to our children. Our Children should have no doubt that God is real, that His word is true, that He is living and active in our lives, and that He provides the only salvation and security available.

What about those around us? Do the people in our lives **SEE** a difference in us? The way we live should look different than the world around us. I saw a survey recently about how Christians are perceived. 69% thought that people’s perception of U.S. Christians was getting worse. 45% thought the reason was because Christians don’t act any different than

non-Christians. Did you catch that? Nearly, half don’t see Christians acting any differently than the world and THEY know we should be different. We should have a desire to share our faith but what good does that do us if it doesn’t affect how we live?

C.T. Studd was a missionary to China, India, and Africa at various times in his life. He was in Africa when the region of the Congo was set to open. He saw the opportunity to advance the gospel into the Congo and joined the thousands awaiting entrance due to rumors of an abundance of gold. He wrote “If evil men hear so loudly the call of gold and obey it, can it be that the ears of Christ’s soldiers are deaf to the call of God, and the cries of the dying souls of men? Are gamblers for gold so many, and gamblers for God so few?”

So, what do we share? Most think of sharing the gospel as telling of Christ and his work on the cross, or getting people saved. While that is an important piece, it is not the whole. We need to step back and look at the whole of the story. God’s story, His plan, is woven throughout history. God knew in giving us free will that we would need a Savior to provide a way for us to stand before God with our sins removed. It started before Creation (Genesis 1). We get a glimpse in Genesis 3:15 where the Savior is first promised.

“...And I will make enemies
Of you and the woman,
And of your offspring and her Descendant;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

We see glimpses of it repeatedly as the Bible brings us along the journey and shows us how His plan has moved forward through the people and events of history, both good and bad.

He has a plan. He continues to uphold His plan and preserve His chosen nation, Israel. In the overarching history, we are now waiting for the final events surrounding Christ’s return. In the process of telling our parts of His plan, we also need to share that story not as a fairy-tale, but as history of real live people; of a plan to provide salvation and a future for any who are willing to acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior.

~ Heidi Tonseth

Childlike Faith in Adulthood

One day you are waking up, getting ready for school, just living life per the second. The next, you are waking up, going to work forty hours a week, living for the weekend. It can feel like it all went by in a moment. In the last few months, I have found myself commenting, "I don't want to play this game anymore..." referring to this thing called adulthood. "It's a cruel little joke," I say.

Well, I have only been an adult for four years and have only been working full-time for a year and a half. I am just at the beginning of this so-called...*cruel little joke*, I'm going to have to find a way not just to survive but to enjoy it. I think we all remember the moment we realized life looked a little different than it did as a kid. I don't mean the obvious differences, like no more school, lots of work, and being your own authority figure. I mean, the moment we realize that childlike faith, joy, and energy aren't just there, but now takes effort to experience.

Jesus said, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You need to change and become like little children. If you don't, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven ~ Matthew 18:3

The moment we can feel our body with every step (might only be true for me at this age because of injuries) but it happens to all of us at some point. We start to process that everything we once knew, for eighteen years, is different. Change is around every corner, time keeps moving, and at least for me, I am in the season of processing and grieving my childhood.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. ~ Psalm 34:18

Now, you are probably wondering where the happy part of this article is and I am here to say, I am finding it with the rest of you. Every day we have the opportunity to let God guide us and give us peace. It is a choice to allow God to comfort our grief, lead our steps, and thank Him for the life we have because of Him. I cannot say I am a master at doing any of these things, but I know that God created me for a purpose and the reason we all grow up is that

each season needs a slightly different version of us. God was with me every step of growing up, as He was with all of you, and He continues to be with us in every step now.

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. ~Deuteronomy 31:8

The comfort I find is that He doesn't just stay with me, He goes before me as well. The seasons I am entering and experiencing for the first time, He has gone before, and He isn't surprised. The season I am in currently, I find myself looking forward a lot and having to trust God with everything coming. I look to the future, and I see loss, change, and grief.

As a kid, the saying innocence is bliss is extremely accurate. I don't remember all the sorrow I now feel every day. Not all of it is my own, but my understanding of others, and the world's overall sadness. As adults, I am finding that we broaden our horizons and understand a lot more than we used to. This in some areas is a blessing, and in others, it can feel like a curse. But this is where the point of life comes in. We don't have to put our hope in this world, because it will fail every time. Our hope is in our forever home with the Father. Part of growing up is making this relationship with God our own, not anyone else's. It is choosing to go after the calling and purpose God has for us while we are here, but not forgetting that our home is heaven. We will grieve and He will comfort, but we must not forget that this world is not our end.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ~ Philippians 3:20

I do miss things from my childhood, and I do have questions that may not be answered until eternity, which scares me. But fear is not from God, and He has good plans for me and all of us. So, when you are in a season of change, confusion, and grief, remember that the Father has not forsaken you, He is right there with you as He has been all along.

~ Samantha Turner

A Devotional Thought

A FATHER'S LOVE

See what great love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!

And that is what we are! ~ | John 3:1

Our granddaughter was about 3 weeks old last year when we celebrated Christmas together. Our son and daughter-in-law were sick with colds, had a new baby, and were still learning to get to know their sweet girl. Learning things like how to live without sleep, settle a fussy baby, create a routine, etc. Our son was holding Audrey and she was, in his mind, not settling down very quickly, from my older and more experienced perspective she wasn't even fussy. The pressures of new parenting! I looked across the room into my son's eyes and wanted to help shoulder some of all that pressure, and responsibility, to make his load lighter. I asked how I could help and in that moment I understood my father perhaps better than ever before.

...cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you. ~ | Peter 5:7

As a daughter, it has been a very common experience for me to open my mouth and have my mother come out. Ha! But I suddenly understood my Dad's great need to carry my burdens alongside of me. The way he never starts a conversation without "*How can I help?*" As a first born independent person, I have often resisted help, with a *this is my science project mentality!* But truly, this offer of help is not to take away ownership but to lighten the burden, to share, to help carry what my father knows from experience is heavy and hard to deal with. Life can be cumbersome at best some days.

I was reminded of this memory today as I contemplate the holiday season, the organizing of the calendar, and looking forward to beginning and ending this busy time of year together with my family. I was thinking to myself how grateful I am to God that there will be busy days, hard work, trying to get it all done but then in the end we will be together. And I heard the heart of Father God whisper with deep emotion "Same".

Can you feel the weight of His love for you? How He looks out over the calendar of your days and knows there will be cold and darkness, hard work, a too-busy schedule, stress, and twinkle lights but in the end you will be together!

...I pray that you and all God's holy people will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love—how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. ¹⁹ Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God. ~ Ephesians 3:18-20

Oh, how He longs for that so much more than we do. Why? Because He too is older and wiser and has a greater perspective. Enough perspective to be willing to send His Son to die in our place so that we might all celebrate together.

But God's mercy is great, and he loved us very much. ⁵ Though we were spiritually dead because of the things we did against God, he gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God's grace.
~ Ephesians 2:4-5

Between now and our final celebration, God the Father longs to help us. To share the weight of the burdens we carry and to erase the loads of shame and guilt. He wants us to know He hears when we fuss, when we are over-committed and in over our heads, in need of a nap and a snack.

Come near to God and he will come near to you"
~ James 4:8

He doesn't want to wait until Christmas to spend time together. He gave you your purpose and wants to help shoulder the weight you carry. Include Him in the planning and preparation of your daily life. Rest in God's great love for you.

Devote some thought to that,
~ Melisa Turner

Until we meet again...