

Blossom Ministries

Preparing Women To Bear Fruit

Greetings...

Dear Readers:

Oscar Wilde said "...and all at once summer collapsed into fall"

As I type these words the snow falling makes me think fall has also collapsed! This year has been one of the longest and shortest years of my life. So much has happened and changed and yet I keep blinking and entire seasons have come and gone completely...there was a rainy, cold June, followed by Dante's Inferno, and then Smoke Apocalypse. After helping our kids move to their respective colleges I then spent the fall very ill with Covid, booking a private room in the ICU for ten days. All of sudden as I am now mostly recovered, I am marking a new season by the fact that I have to wear closed-toed shoes when I go outside and fuzzy socks inside. Truly I am grateful to see the next season at all! To know joy or disappointment is still a great privilege. Life itself is a gift, there is always something to be thankful for.

Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Pray continually, ¹⁸ and give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.
~ | **Thessalonians 5:16-18**

~Melisa Turner, and the Blossom Team

Advent Ideas

[Read the book of Luke](#)

[A chapter a day from
December 1-24](#)

Or consider one of these books available at Amazon.

Advent Reflections:
Let the Weary World Rejoice!

~ Gail Johnsen

12 Days of Christmas:
An Advent Devotional
~ Mrs. Charity Rattray

The Greatest Gift:
Unwrapping the Full
Love Story of
Christmas

~ Ann Voskamp

Contact Blossom at :

blossom.ministries@gmail.com

www.blossomministries.com

Quotes

We are people of faith, folks. We are not people of fear. ~ Bill Gaither

It is in the shelter of each other that people live. ~ Irish Proverb

Human beings are so special, are so valuable that God became one.

God became human so that humans may be upgraded into His sons and daughters.

~ John Lennox

...she shows up. She contributes what she can and brings great joy...

Notice. Pray. Show up. Love.

~ Kristin Schell, The Turquoise Table

How desperately we need the Holy Spirit to bring us to the place where our own ego is crucified before the cross of Christ. ~Alistair Begg

The criteria for coming to Jesus is weariness. Come overwhelmed with life. Come with your wandering mind. Come messy.

~ Paul E. Miller, A Praying Life

Satan labels you, God names you.
~ Gloria Gaither

There is a gentle peace that surrounds you when your faith becomes stronger than your fear.

Beginning Again...

I opened our last newsletter with these words “*Our good God is with us ... Always be assured that He is beside you whatever the path ahead of you may hold.*” I then included all of Psalm 121 as it is the Scripture I have been praying over my daughter this year as she transitions from high school to college, childhood to adulthood, living at home to a dorm. Verse 7 stands out:

The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life ~ Psalm 121:7 NIV

These words became a prophecy, one I would gratefully live to tell about! Some of you may know that this fall my husband and I contracted Covid, you prayed for me as I spent ten days in the ICU with pneumonia. It is a humbling experience to know so many prayers were prayed on my behalf, to know God healed me and is slowly restoring my health, returning to me the life I had before, perhaps minus a few things and with the addition of some as well. Reminds me of a favorite quote:

“Restoration is not a quick, prefabricated project that is thrown together. It is a deliberate and planned removal of the unwanted, a detailed refining of that which is to be preserved, and an addition of that which was not before.” ~ Barbara Stephens

The process of beginning to live again is a privilege. Friends, I think some days I am still in shock. I am not normally the one who goes to the ER. I have never considered what it might be like to be airlifted by helicopter (all things considered it was mostly really cool). There were hard days, moments that still interrupt my sleep, and there was so much goodness wrapped up in all of that uncertainty. I have been ranting about God’s goodness for the better part of two decades, I have written a book about it. I have researched the Sovereignty of God and now I have actually lived out the trusting of His character!

I have learned to ask for help. I have learned a woman should always have a pair of tweezers in her purse! I have learned that humor and gratitude boost the immune system, but I am also taking some actual vitamins as well. I have learned to trust God and that the purpose He has given me can overcome any evil. Life is precious and I have been given the opportunity to live it, again.

Our Retreat this year, the one we canceled because of my illness and Heidi’s nephew’s illness as well, the theme was “For the Joy” based on the passage in Hebrews where it tells us that Jesus chooses great darkness, despair, and suffering to in the end find joy. That joy is you and me being reunited with God in a relationship that cannot be broken even by death!

...Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ~ Hebrews 12:2-3

Every day we are given the opportunity to live again, intentionally looking for joy even in and through the darkness. Will you join me?

~ With all My Love, Melisa Turner

The song below (based on Luke 10:17-20) is truly my testimony, of God’s grace and healing.

My Testimony

I saw satan fall like lightning
I saw darkness run for cover
But the miracle that I just can't get over
My name is registered in heaven

I believe in signs and wonders
I have resurrection power
Still the miracle that I just can't get over
My name is registered in heaven
My praise belongs to you forever

This is my testimony from death to life
Cause grace rewrote my story, I'll testify
By Jesus Christ the Righteous
I'm justified
This is my testimony, This is my testimony

Come together sons and daughters
Bought with blood
And washed in water
Sing the praises of the Spirit, Son and Father
Our God will finish what He started
Our God will finish what He started

If I'm not dead, You're not done
Greater things are still to come
Oh I believe

Songwriters: Brandon Lake / Christopher Joel Brown / Steven Furtick / Tiffany Hammer

My Testimony Lyrics © Essential Music Publishing, Bethel Music Publishing

Rooted and Established

How was your year? Mine was rough. I started the year having just had a panic attack so severe I could barely help put the kids to bed. It was almost impossible to keep functioning. Then it returned in the night. The only way I could keep my mind from being completely overwhelmed was to repeat: "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust" from Psalm 91:2. Somewhere while repeating that over and over (I was having trouble even keeping that going) I managed to pray something along the lines of "God, help me."

He did. The next thing I remember was waking up, I don't know how much later, feeling rested in both mind and body. My first thoughts went somewhere between "wow, I slept...thank you, God...and He must have knocked me out." I felt shielded from the panic. That feeling lasted a little over a month. And then it was time to start digging into why? It bothered me. I knew the trigger but didn't understand why that triggered it. I knew it was irrational. I knew it was unreasonable. But that didn't change that it happened and I didn't know what to do with it or about it.

God broke me in gently starting in February. I began following along with the Bible studies on [Mom Strong International](#) in addition to my daily working my way through the Bible. The first few months were great and uplifting and refreshing. Then summer hit. The summer study forced me into the questions I needed to deal with. The big question I hadn't sorted out was Why? Through a couple of books, a Bible/book study, and several podcasts I finally got there.

The why goes at least as far back as kindergarten when I recognized I didn't understand the other kids. They played and thought differently than I did and I didn't understand them. I remember standing in my classroom and wondering about it. The second part comes out of it, I think. I do not go into new situations easily, even ones where I want to be...because I don't know what to expect in how people act and react and how I need to act. Our entire societal structure has been upended and added to the fact that people are much more unpredictable in how they will react to you. Yeah...it's no wonder my anxiety had gone through the roof and hit the breaking point.

Here is a small sampling of reassurances (believe me when I say there are so many more) that God does not change...does not lie...and keeps His promises. He is faithful. Please read these verses carefully. First up: Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, that he should lie or a son of man that he should change his mind Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*

Malachi 3:6 "...I the Lord do not change"

Hebrews 6:18 "...it is impossible for God to lie..."

If God does not change, does not lie, and keeps his promises...then he is faithful (we're getting there) and we can make him our foundation.

In Psalm 18 He is our rock, fortress, stronghold, deliverer, shield, and refuge. Psalm 144 tells us God is our rock. In verse 11 He rescues and delivers. And verse 15 tells us we are blessed if God is our Lord.

Acts 4:11-12 tells us Jesus is our foundation and salvation comes no other way. Psalm 1:1-3 compares us to trees if we delight and meditate in God's law. The more established a tree is the stronger, healthier, and more fruitful it is.

I am going to write directly from my notes this summer written right with my note on Psalm 1. *How does being rooted and established in God's love affect our posture? What would it look like to walk as a woman who is deeply loved by God?* Have you ever thought about how you are walking? Does how you go about your life and how you act (think about what others are seeing) reflect someone deeply rooted and established in God and His faithfulness? When we make God our rock our foundation is firm and unshakeable. It should show by how we act and think. Do we act with the assurance that we are standing on the Rock? Or, do we walk unsure because we know the world disagrees with us? One final verse: It speaks of God's faithfulness (I told you we would get there) pay attention to the last line.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 says *The saying is trustworthy, for If we have died with him, we will also live with him; If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful- for he cannot deny himself.*

~ Heidi Tonseth

Resources and Recommendations

- Beautiful Lies by Jennifer Strickland
- Giving God the Worst of Me by Dana K. White
- Eve in Exile by Rebekah Merkle
- Mom Strong International Bible Study
<https://momstronginternational.com/>
(Subscription required)
- Blossom like Eden, Come Out of Hiding and Into the Son by Sarah Brandt
www.blossomlikeeden.com
- A Praying Life; Connecting with God in a Distracted World by Paul E. Miller
- The Turquoise Table, Finding Community and Connection in Your Own Front Yard by Kristin Schell
- Remember God by Annie F. Downs
- Sing Conference
<https://www.singglobal.com/>

Prayer Box Testimony

Heidi instructed us on how to create and use a Prayer Box at our 2020 retreat. We handed out little note pads, pens, quotes, etc. to put inside a decorated box. Lea Ann gave us all of the supplies to make them beautiful. We included instructions in our Fall 2020 newsletter (look for this to be posted on the website soon.)

I keep mine with my gratitude journal, my Bible, and the book I am currently reading. I have a little note sheet for each of my kids, for Blossom, for our church, for all the leadership teams I serve on, for those who need healing, etc. I write down the things that are heavy on my heart and I talk to God about them. And when He answers I write that down too. It has been amazing to see what God has done.

Friends, I encourage you to start a Prayer box!

A Devotional Thought...

GRATEFUL IN GOD'S HOUSE

Praise the Lord! I will thank the Lord with all my heart in the meeting of his good people.

~ Psalm 111:1

Part of the privilege of being a co-pastor alongside my husband is that I open our Sunday morning service and greet our congregation. For as long as I can remember I have included the phrase that I am "Ever grateful to be in God's house with God's people!"

This has been especially true following the months that we did not meet in person due to the shutdown in 2020. On September 19, 2021, we attended four services. Dwayne and I record our online service early. We then once a month join Whitestone Church of the Brethren on a zoom call to fill in for their part-time pastor. We then welcome our in-person congregation. Finally, on that Sunday night, we joined our son's church for a worship service before we helped him move to college. That next morning my devotions included Psalm 111:1 (above) and it resonated with me how privileged I am to go to God's house and be with His people!

Four days later I began to be sick with Covid and had a shutdown of my own. On the tenth day, my husband took me to the emergency room and I spent another ten days in the ICU, again ten days later I greeted our congregation and I said, tearfully, "I am ever grateful to be in God's House with God's People!"

I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go into the house of the LORD."

~ Psalm 122:1

Do you not know that you are the temple of God
and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

~ 1 Corinthians 3:16

...let us consider one another in order to stir up love
and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of
ourselves together. ~ Hebrews 10:24-25

Be with God's good people, you are the Church!

Devote some thought to that,

~ Melisa Turner

Until we meet again...