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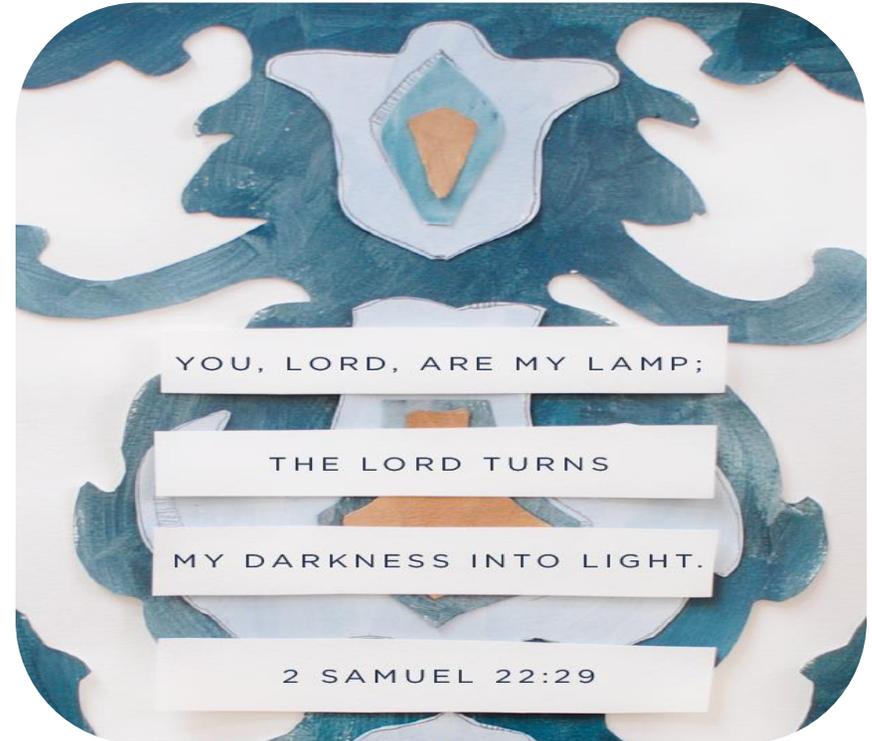
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. **John 14:27; 16:33**



Inspiration for Her

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THE OFFICIAL INSPIRATION MINISTRIES WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER



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Inspiration Ministries is unifying the body of Christ in order to most glorify God and inspire others to accept the saving and satisfying love of Jesus Christ.

Letter from the Editor

Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8



PPeace is My continual gift to you. It flows abundantly from My throne of grace. Just as the Israelites could not store up manna for the future but had to gather it daily, so it is with My Peace. The day-by-day collecting of manna kept My people aware of their dependence on Me. Similarly, I give you sufficient Peace for the present when you come to Me *by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving*. If I gave you permanent Peace, independent of My Presence, you might fall into the trap of self-sufficiency. May that never be!

“I have designed you to need Me moment by moment. As your awareness of your neediness increases, so does your realization of My abundant sufficiency. *I can meet every one of your needs* without draining My resources at all. *Approach My throne of grace with bold confidence*, receiving My Peace with a thankful heart.” Exodus 16:14-20; Philippians 4:6-7, 19; Hebrews 4:16

The above passage is from a daily devotional called “Jesus Calling” by Sarah Young. I was gifted this devotional by a great friend, and I’ve enjoyed the times I’ve been able to read it consistently. However, I did not come across this one because I was reading it, but because SHE was reading it. And she sent it to her husband, who sent it to my husband (Andy), who sent it to me. And then I sent it to another friend, and am now sharing it with you. This devotional was so powerful for us in those moments, that we felt it needed to be shared, the message needed to be spread. When I reflected on the passage later, I realized that the word “peace” could be changed to many other words, and still hold true, and maybe even be more pivotal in our current circumstance. Words like joy, strength, motivation, purpose, grace, mercy, love, attention, wisdom, guidance, forgiveness, etc.

There are so many things I need from God. And the list of words I just made are only a few of them. I’m assuming we can all agree on that... But I have a hard time asking Him for those things. First, because I want to be self-sufficient. I want to be able to do everything for myself, because then I don’t have to feel let down if something doesn’t turn out the way I want it to. And then I fall short, and I continue to fall short until I seek Him and ask for His help. Second, because I don’t always believe that I have the right or deserve to ask Him of anything. Will He really answer? Will He really care? The answer, of course, is OF COURSE! Of course He will answer, and He will care. Now, I could never ask for His... anything... ever again, and God wouldn’t necessarily be effected; He would still love me regardless. However, I wouldn’t be getting the most out of my relationship

with Jesus that way. I wouldn’t be as satisfied, happy, joyful, caring, as I would be if I would seek the Lord and His purposes and desires.

One section that really hits me: “*I can meet every one of your needs without draining My resources at all*.” No matter what we ask of Him, or how often we ask of it, the magnitude of that which we receive will never diminish. We won’t get less forgiveness or love or joy or strength in 10 years than we will today. And when God says He can meet *every one* of your needs, He means every one. Even the ones we don’t realize that we need, maybe because we are too distracted by our need for something else. So I encourage you to seek God with all of your needs, every day, every moment. Because that is what He is there for! Give Jesus something to do – let Him petition to the Father for you! Call out to Him so that you can receive that which God is willing to give continually.

I want you to think for a moment of how excited you are to give someone a gift – the anticipation of the joy you will experience through this person. The blessing this person will receive through this gift giving, and the blessing you receive as the gift-giver. Now think how excited God must be to give you a gift He knows you not only need, but want, and are asking for! Another thing to think about, is how being asked for help makes you feel. I know that when my daughter, Lilly, is needing something, and she comes to me for help, I feel so much better knowing I was able to relieve her discomfort, or her need for something as silly as putting a “pretty” in her hair, or turning on “Frozen” for her. I also know how terrible I can feel when my son, AJ, is crying out for something, but I can’t figure out what he needs, and he can’t communicate any other way. I imagine God feels these same feelings – joy when we ask for and receive His gifts, and sadness when we don’t communicate our needs or desires to Him. I am reminded of the following verse: “Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him” (Matthew 7:9-11). So I encourage you to ask, seek, and knock, so that you may be answered, you may find, and the door may be opened to you, in the name of Jesus!

I just want to take a second to say how excited I am to be including again some more pieces written by YOU LADIES! We’ve received so many letters from women around the country we are having a hard time keeping up. But don’t worry – responses are coming! We would love nothing more than to encourage you in your walk with the Lord, answer questions, and get to know you. So keep ‘em coming! Let us know if you’ve found inspiration in these pages, what has touched your heart, what has opened your eyes, how the Lord is leading and changing you. I know these letters are super encouraging for me as a woman of God, knowing that what I have shared matters. I’m sure other ladies would love to hear the same!

Continuing to seek Inspiration,

Kirsten Foster

Inspiration Ministries

My Testimony – Part 2

by Arlene Samuelson

Despite the fact that I had gained 20lbs eating dorm food, in college I met and married my husband who has always loved me unconditionally and for whom my weight has really never been an issue. After graduating from college, I taught Junior High School and we had our first son in 1970. I had started attending TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly – not knowing I was pregnant – AND I managed to lose a total of 32lbs that year. Finally, I was at or close to my desired weight. I was exercising regularly, and I had started feeling good about both who I was and how I looked. What I had not left behind was that old hunger for approval. What really had happened was that I had a new tool to use to gain approval: my body and my new confidence. I became a married woman who really wanted other men to look at and admire her, or more. It was the 70s and with my new body, a somewhat neglected moral compass, and loose morals all around me, I several times betrayed my marriage, and, I'm very ashamed to say, I gave my husband permission to do so also. I still attended church sporadically since Jerry had some issues with the church, but we weren't going or growing together. I can recall praying fervently to God to get me through the neediness I felt. I knew what I was doing was very wrong, but I certainly wasn't afraid of the fire enough to walk away from it either.

We moved to a new town. I became pregnant again, and we'd purchased a business, all in a relatively short period of time. My reaction to the stress was to gain 20 pounds during my second pregnancy and to be frustrated because it didn't want to come off immediately in the first two weeks after I came home from the hospital! Talk about unrealistic. While my head acknowledged that my weight was NOT the defining element in my life – I was, after all, the same person after I'd gained that 20 pounds in pregnancy that I'd been before – that long and old struggle from childhood was about to resume in my heart: the struggle with wanting to eat what I wanted unless I could somehow find the approval I so desperately sought elsewhere, and denying that the food I was eating was adding pounds to my body. My struggle with wanting to be with other men was put on hold. I can't say that desire immediately went away, but the fact that my sin could have led to having someone else's child was a sobering one. God continues to help me deal with fallout of where those desires took me through Celebrate Recovery. I believe Satan loves to twist our character defects into complex knots. My victory is in knowing that God loves me so much that He can and will undo those knots if I turn from denial and ask for His help.

Our family walk with the Lord was about to take a step forward, however. We made the commitment in 1975 to attend church each and every Sunday as a family. We began what has been and will continue to be a walk with Jesus, BUT there were many challenges to come – and with my weight loss having led me away from the Lord, I was about to go through some years where I sought weight loss in a lot of places, but also gave up that search very easily when I hit the inevitable plateaus that are a part of every weight loss program. I wanted to lose weight but I also didn't want to leave my Friend, my Comfort, my Savior from Boredom and

my favorite Relaxation Technique. I can't truly say I was afraid of a normal weight, but God was certainly NOT in control of this part of my life. I struggled for the next 30 years through Hypnosis, Weight Watchers (where I lost 50 pounds which I gained back), Weigh Down, and working with a very good Bariatric Doctor where I lost 35 pounds that I've kept off.

One of my most hurtful experiences gives a lot of insight into my personal pattern of Lose and Give UP -- came after I'd lost the above-mentioned 50 pounds. This story illustrates just how hungry I was for approval and encouragement – and how fragile our “successes” can be when we are not in God's Care Plan but are out there on our own. I'd been attending Weight Watchers. I had lost about 20 of those pounds since we'd last visited my parents in Kentucky. Looking for that support and approval, I said to my mother, “Hey, Mom, I've lost a total of 50 pounds, can't you tell?” My mother turned to me and rather bluntly replied, “Well, Arlene, to be honest, no I can't.” I was devastated. First of all, at that 50-pound mark, I was at one of those walls or plateaus where I needed to step up my game a bit (and I probably wasn't really wanting to do that). Secondly, I so much wanted to hear words of praise from my mother (one of my particular hang-ups), words that she, for whatever reason, could not give me. Since my focus at that time was on the weight itself rather than on asking for God's healing for the underlying causes of that weight, I, of course, took that hurt upon myself and decided that no progress equaled failure. Slowly but surely, I returned to my old friend “Food” for the Comfort and Love that I felt I wasn't finding elsewhere and the weight came back on. I feel very certain that part of my old pattern was that despite any and all success, when the going becomes harder, I looked for a good reason to fail and to return back to my relationship with Food. That's an insight revealed to me while writing my original testimony, by the way, a very positive part of my Celebrate Recovery experience!

I was able to share this story at Celebrate Recovery in our share group meeting. The beauty of Celebrate Recovery is that God's concept of healing through shining the light of His love on those things we keep closed within our heart really helped me deal with that hurt. *John 8: 31,32&36*, “If you hold to my teaching, then you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” This, to me, is what our Share Group meetings are all about!

A final note: How God works through what we share in our share group each week in Celebrate Recovery is a bit of a mystery to me. Part of that healing is coming to the meeting each week with the purpose of seeking His help and wisdom. He answers our prayers when we reach out! In a recent meeting, I heard our leader state that our sins are really just a symptom of the deeper healing that is needed in our lives. Yes, we must deal with alcoholism, binge eating, depression, shame, pride, drug addiction, lying or whatever our hang-up, but God wants to heal the underlying hurt – being abused, poor parenting, feeling unloved, whatever is being stuffed deeper and deeper. Wounds need the open air to heal – honesty, seeing God's love for us as most important, stepping away from denial.

I Can Hear You – Am I Listening?

by CJ Eaton

What are we listening to? Not just what do we hear, but what are we intentionally, deliberately focusing our audial attention on to take in and understand? How many of us have spent any effort or time considering the kind of input that filters into our conscious?

So, what am I purposefully listening to? I can often detect when people are whispering together and immediately I want to know what they are saying – which is almost always (Truthfully, it's ALWAYS) none of my business, since if I was supposed to know the topic of their conversation, I would have been brought into it. But I can easily fall into the habit of listening to, which is to say, eavesdropping into, someone else's discussion. I don't like knowing that I willingly participate in gossip and waste time paying attention to it.

I work in an office of open cubicles and can "hear" everyone's conversations all day long. Lots and lot of information comes flooding over me and I've had to learn to tune out the useless, meaningless, and irrelevant stuff so I can focus on my own work. The same situation happens everywhere, all the time. You may be some place where you have no option but to be bombarded with all the opinions, rants, arguments, and lectures that other people refuse to keep to themselves. A question to ponder: does it benefit you to hear all that?

What about during those times when it's quiet? Maybe you're in the middle of a sleepless night because you can't feel peace where you are or with what's happening. Or it could be just a brief moment when everything is silent and you aren't aware of anything outside of yourself. How long does the silence last before it's broken and something else gets your attention? Some people are quite talented with filtering out sounds that distract them from what they are thinking about. Others, like me, find interruptions difficult to ignore.

Which brings back the question, what are we listening to? The media is filled with chaos and clamoring, from news to television shows, to books and magazines, to music. Even when we look specifically for whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, etc., they can be difficult to find. But Philippians 4:8 instructs us to focus on those things. And we have to make deliberate choices about what we pay attention to, sometimes eliminating familiar behaviors or relationships that have been barriers, so there is room to grow in faith.

One of the greatest joys I know is listening to genuine, heartfelt Christian music. There is no more effective method to lift my spirit, focus my heart, and touch my soul than listening to words of praise being sung by people who truly love the Lord. It is perfect joy to know I can choose to fill my ears with sounds that bring glory to God. When I need something positive to drown out the negativity that likes to live in my head, the choice is music.

There are times the songs I hear will stay with me for days. They run through my head over and over and spill out of my mouth when I just can't keep them in.

I consider the music that plays through my mind to be God's gift to me. I recently heard a song by a group called Urban Rescue, titled Song of my Father that highlights this phenomenon and may explain why I hear music when it's no longer playing. Instead of hearing silence, I can listen to music in my memory.

Based on Scripture, Zephaniah 3:17, this particular song resonates with my deepest needs. It gives us the absolute certainty of God's presence as it proclaims that God is with us, delights in us, saves us, quiets us, and rejoices over us with loud singing. Envision the Almighty, the Great I Am, the Holy God, raising His own voice to sing "over" us – it is one of the most beautiful images in my heart. We sing to glorify and praise Him and He sings back to us to give us hope, peace, encouragement, and joy. This is exactly what I want to listen to.

He Waited

by Katrina Scott

God waited around in the unlikeliest place
He was waiting for me in a 6 x 9 space

Waiting patiently to take my hand
So I'd have a chance at His promised land

Loving and strengthening He lit up my heart
I needed the rescue but was lost on my part

And with His help I know I can do
Anything He puts me through

All is possible with His grace
Even finding Him in this unlikeliest place.

Would You Give

by Katrina Scott

What would you do For the Lord up above?
Would you give Him your heart, would you give Him your love?

Would you give up your life or surrender your soul?
Would you give up these things so you can be whole?

Jesus gave us His all when He gave us His life
So we can be happy no more living in strife

It's time to decide Where you will stand
In the depths of hell or in His holy land.

Does He Love Them More?

by Laura Gauthier

I've heard so often from grown women how hard it is to find good friends. I'm not talking about the "good time friends," I'm talking about the kind of friend that really knows you, knows your ugly, and still loves you anyway.

I've experienced this hardship in the past, but thankfully for the last decade I've had some pretty incredible friends. However, this past fall I experienced fallout with a friend, and then this winter with my closest friend. Both were unexpected, and both were really painful. During what turned out this year to be one of the tougher years of my life relationally, I struggled to believe in Christ's individual love for me. As I found myself at odds with other believers, the enemy spoke lies that would have me believe that Christ loves unevenly, that He values some more than others. The enemy would have me believe that I am unlovable, as I have a front row seat to my sin. I even fell for that lie for a little while.

The Holy Spirit used these hardships for me to expose that lie from my childhood, the lie that He values others more than He values me. As He brought this lie to the surface, to my wounds He applied healing balm through the study of the book of John. He made the ultimate love story personal to me in a new way.

This study of John took me back several times into the Old Testament to look at the prophecies of Christ's coming. One particular prophesy in Isaiah 53:5-6 became the balm that soothed my soul. I began to read it with the word "my" in place of the word "our." "He was pierced for MY transgressions, He was crushed for MY iniquities, the punishment that brought ME peace was upon Him, and by His wounds I am healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to His own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

All year as I suffered in these relationships I wrestled with God. I wanted Him to defend me. I cried so many times, "Where are You in this, Lord? Why won't You defend me?" Through this ancient passage my gracious God reminded me that He already defended me, and with a defense that lasts for eternity. Though my sin makes me deserving of hell and undeserving of His love, His blood covered me. He sent His Son for me, and with His precious blood, He covered me. His blood not only covers my sin, but it covers the sin I've been wrongfully accused of. And it also covers the sins of my accusers. You see, my accusers are also children of God that have chosen to believe and take Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When we do that, when we make Him Lord of our life and we stop trying to be lord to ourselves, in exchange the Bible says that He washes us white as snow. When we choose to love and follow Jesus it doesn't make us perfect. We still sin, we still hurt each other, we still have judgment for and accuse one another, but God's Word tells us we ALL have gone astray, but He was pierced for our transgressions. Just like He did this for me, He did this for my accusers, and He did this for you. His death and resurrection were His defense for me. His death and resurrection are His defense for you, too. Have you asked Jesus to be your defender? If you haven't, it's not too late to ask Him now.

What I learned through all of this, is that His defense for me through His death is enough. It is enough, and it doesn't matter what my accusers say, as long as I'm forgiven by the King. Ephesians 3:16-21

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen

Women of the Bible Word Search



Eve	Deborah	Mary	Dorcas	Zeresh	Rachel
Hagar	Hannah	Abigail	Delilah	Sarah	Bathsheba
Miriam	Ruth	Martha	Jezebel	Rebekah	
Haggith	Abital	Eglah	Ahinoam	Maacah	

The Pathway to Humility

by Lysa TerKeurst

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:3

A friend of mine who is a young leader at a growing organization recently confessed to me some discouragement he'd been wrestling through. Basically, he'd been working so hard, seen great success, but was given no recognition or encouragement by his leaders. And hardest of all, due to some transitions in the company, he'd been demoted to a lower position.

I asked him a seemingly strange question on the heels of him pouring out his heart to me: "Do you know what the opposite of pride is?" He tilted his head and asked his own question, "Do you think I'm struggling with pride?"

I wasn't trying to imply my young friend was prideful. I was setting the stage to help him see his circumstances through a different lens.

So I simply stated, "I believe the opposite of pride is trust in God. Pride begs us to believe it all depends on us. Trusting God requires us to place our dependence on Him. And the pathway that leads us away from pride and into a place of truly trusting God is paved with humility. Humility is never bought at a cheap price. It will always cost us something but will be worth the price we pay. Might God be using these humbling circumstances to get you to a place of deep and unshakable trust in Him? If God sees big things ahead for you, and I believe He does, then He must remove all hints of pride. Even if pride is but a tiny thorn in your heart now, when you are given a bigger position with more recognition, that pride will grow from a thorn to a dagger with the potential to kill your calling."

In the Old Testament, we see God revealing this same kind of pride-stripping process by feeding the children of Israel manna in the desert for the purpose of humbling them. It was crucial that God prepare them to trust Him as they stepped from the desert into their destined Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 8:2 says, "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands."

And then our key verse Deuteronomy 8:3 goes on to reveal, "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

So why exactly was having to eat manna so humbling? And what can we glean from Deuteronomy 8:3 for our own lives today? Here are three things I think we can take away from today's key verse:

1. God is our provider.

The children of Israel were used to looking down at the ground in Egypt and working the land to provide for themselves. They trusted their own hard work for their provision. Now, they would need to look up and trust God for His provision.

2. God's provision is what we need but not always what we want.

This manna God provided was not like the normal food the Israelites were used to providing for themselves. But God knew it was the perfect nourishment for those in the desert. He knows our needs better than we do. God is more concerned about our ultimate good than our temporary pleasure.

3. God's provision protects our heart. Our desires have the potential of corrupting our heart.

Man-made bread is not what gives the fullness of life God desires for us. Man-made success, riches and popularity are the same way. They will not fulfill us like we think they will. Only the Word of God can seep into the hungry places of our souls and make the dead and discouraged places within come fully alive and deeply satisfied. We must want Him most of all. And then He will see our hearts are prepared and trustworthy to handle other things.

At the end of our discussion, my young friend thanked me for helping him see that in each hard step of his journey as a leader, he's either walking the pathway of pride, by trusting himself, OR the pathway of humility, which is trusting God. And the same is true for each of us.

May we all choose to trust Him and let that be the lens through which we process our circumstances. May we see how God isn't trying to break our hearts but rather make us ready for what He sees just ahead.

Lord, thank You for always having my best in mind. Search my heart for any shred of pride. And help me live a life of humble and complete surrender to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

A Friend

by Kathryn Clement

What a friend I have in Jesus. He's a gentleman that walks by my side, covers me with His almighty wings and puts angels in charge of me so that if I stumble they pick me up. A friend that protects, defends, provides, heals, and covers me with a banner of love. A friend that does not lie or change His mind, and is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow. A friend that is my Maker, Designer and created me to be His friend. Would you like a friend like Jesus? Then believe in your heart, confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ died for your sins, conquered death, rose on the third day and arose from the grave so that we can live life abundant and have eternal life.