

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

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A Turtle on a Fence Post By Sharon Hawkins

Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Alex Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words and think that they are wonderful, and begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post and remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help."

Grace looked into the sad face of her little boy as a single tear sprang from his eye and darted down his cheek. He had had a terrible week. The kids at school often made fun of him. And this time he lashed back with a round of name calling that landed him squarely in the chair in the Principal's office. The Principal was dealing with the matter just fine with a firm but compassionate reprimand when Toby's response surprised him. "What's the point? I should just end it all!"

Er ... Er ... Er ...! The Principal's reprimand came to a screeching halt; time to call in the big guns—Mom and Dad.

That night Grace sat on the floor facing her son as she tried to reason with him. "What is the point, Mom?," Toby asked. "You're born. Life is hard. You

suffer, then you die. Life is miserable!"

Grace knew this was one of those teachable moments and, boy, she felt so unequipped for it. "Lord, please don't let me blow this," she silently prayed. "Well, here goes ..."

"First of all, God loves you and Dad and I love you, Toby. You were fearfully and wonderfully made by God and He has great plans for you. Because you have accepted Christ His Son as your Savior, you will never die. You'll get to live forever in Heaven with God. But even more than that, He wants you to enjoy life while you're still on earth."

"But I don't enjoy it at all, Mom!," Toby murmured dejectedly.

"Really? Well, I say you do!" Grace got up and grabbed a pen and a piece of paper. "I'll prove it to you! Let's make an 'I'm thankful for ...' list and write down all the things that you enjoy about life. Thankfulness can give us a whole new perspective. An attitude of gratitude can make all the difference!"

Toby was all about games and he was eager to get started with the list. It began slowly ... Family. Shelter. Friends. Soon he was rattling off things so quickly that Grace couldn't write them down fast enough. Music.

Books. Sunshine. Bugs. Video Games. The dog. Colors. Basketball. Girls (*smile*). The list went on and on. Within a few short minutes, they had filled every inch of the front and the back of the page.

When Grace finished writing, she gave the paper to her little boy with instructions for him to think about all the wonderful things there are in life and how they didn't happen by accident. They were blessings from God. Life is so good!!!!

They thanked God for everything on the list. Then, with a sleepy grin, Toby kissed her goodnight and headed to bed.

For awhile Grace sat quietly thinking of all the blessings God had given her. One of them had just scurried off to bed. So often she took God's blessings in her life for granted. In her mind, she started her own "I'm thankful for ..." list. Being a wife, a mom, a daughter, a sister, a friend, and, most importantly, a child of the King of the Universe.

She knew she hadn't been elevated to this position on her own. No, she was just like a turtle on a fence post. She didn't get there by herself, she didn't deserve to be there and she couldn't stay there without His help.

She bowed her head and praised God that from where she sat on that fence post the view was pretty incredible!

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Visit our Grace In The Wilderness Facebook Page and 'Like us' to receive updates about our newsletters and conferences. Photos will soon be posted there from our recent GITW Women's Conference.

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.



Making Up For Lost Time

By Linda Byce

I have wasted much of my 54 years on this earth living "The Me Life".

MY career - Blessed to make my living as a professional model and modeling instructor for more than 20 years. Enjoyed every moment of it.

MY Fashions - With my career, I was obsessed with the fashion world. (These days I have NO IDEA what's even in style.)

MY Traveling - I've traveled to so many places and done so many things. Of course not so much after motherhood but that was well worth it. (Motherhood has been my greatest adventure.)

MY "TO DO LISTS" - I've always been a "List Maker". Creating endless lists of things I needed to do and wanted to do and not letting up until the last thing was marked off.

MY Goals - Of course, you probably expected that from a "List Maker". I was

one who set one year goals - 5 year goals and, oh yes, 10 year goals. Striving daily to accomplish each goal that was set.

MY Home - Talk about obsessed. My home had to be nothing short of perfect ALL THE TIME. (Oh yes, that has now changed drastically.)

Don't get me wrong. None of those things are bad. What's bad is the fact that I focused so much of my time, energy and resources on them when I should have poured myself into discovering my purpose here on earth—the reason God placed me here to begin with.

Over the past six years and two months our family has been through more tragedy than most people endure over a life time.

You can see our story on our website at bycefamil.y.weebly.com or keep up with us on my blog at lindabyce.blogspot.com.

God is truly teaching me so much as He carries my family through trial after trial. As I look back I am ashamed at all my wasted years. I have been a Christian

since I was a little girl, SO why has it taken me so many years of wasted time to realize that I should be devoting "24/7/365" to discovering why God has put me here AND actually spend every waking moment living out GOD'S PLAN for my life.

Living by GOD'S TO DO LIST.

I have no idea how much time I have left on this earth. It could be 5 minutes or 50 years but I do know one thing I want to spend the rest of it MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.



Financially Speaking: FUNdamentals Of Finances

By Diana Kilgore

I'm not going to assume that everyone is drowning in debt. But I would say it is safe to assume we all have monthly bills, so here are some FUNdamentals that are necessary to creating a stable financial environment. It is my goal to help you add the FUN and subtract the MENTAL. Finance and having fun can fit together, it just takes some creativity.

FUNdamental #1...TITHE

Malachi 3:10 – *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and **prove me now** herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Notice the order – first, "Bring" then "pour you out a blessing." Give it a try. I PROMISE you will not be disappointed.

I cannot tell you how many times God has blessed me and my family. When I chose to tithe and didn't make the rent payment, the money showed up. PLEASE give God an opportunity to prove Himself faithful in your personal financial situation. That is definitely FUN!!

Do you believe that it is wrong to steal? I'm so glad we agree. Malachi 3:8 *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me! Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."*

Ouch. We say we don't have enough money left to tithe when what we should say is that we tithed and don't have enough money left for cable, internet, smartphone, new purse....

FUNdamental #2...DON'T SPEND MORE THAN YOU MAKE

Have you ever stressed wondering if that check you wrote for the electric payment on Wednesday was going to clear your

account before you had opportunity to deposit your paycheck on Friday? Well, here's a novel idea – don't write the check until you have money to cover it. First of all, it's against the law to write a bad check and secondly, who needs the added stress? Next time try calling the electric company and simply let them know that you are running short this week and will be able to bring them a check as soon as you get paid on Friday. Simple – no stress, no broken laws. God is honored.

Would any of you send your teenager to the grocery store with a list for \$40 worth of food and only send him/her with \$20? Surely not, but if you did, what do you think the teenager will do? Most likely he/she would call you and ask what to do OR only buy \$20 worth of food – what a novel idea. Do you think he will try to borrow money from a stranger in the store to make up the difference? Surely not.

FUNdamentals of Finance (Cont'd)

By Diana Kilgore

So, with that same concept in mind, why would you write a check for \$100 for when you only have \$50 in the bank?

Let's put the FUN back into FUNdamental financing and not write bad checks. You'll enjoy peace and you'll allow God to work freely and then have the honor of watching Him bless you. If you don't have it - don't spend it.

FUNdamental #3...BUDGET

It is extremely important to have a budget so you know where you stand financially. You need to know what is coming in and what is going out each month so you can plan a strategy.

Luke 14:28 *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"*

With an organized, written budget you will always know how the month is going so you can plan accordingly. Start with how much is coming in on a regular basis and then see what expenses that will cover. Structure your spending according to your income. If there seems to be a shortage of funds, try to eliminate some expenses before trying to work another job. It doesn't make sense to work three jobs to pay for big screen TV or cable service when you will never be at home to enjoy them.

Keep in mind that every person's situation is unique and don't fall into the trap of "Keeping up with the Joneses". Many "luxuries" have been labeled as necessities by our culture and it's time we take inventory of our lives and make some adjustments. Having all the latest tech-

nology does nothing to change who you are as a person so don't be sucked into that mentality. Find your security in Christ and be free from the bondage of competition.

Try involving the kids in some of the bill paying. You create a teachable moment and prepare them for their own future. I am not saying that you reveal specifics that they will take to share with their entire class the next week; however, you can work them into the areas you see fit. Let little ones count how many bills are being paid, lick envelopes or put stamps on. Older kids can look at the cost of cable, internet, or cell phone bills and get a reality check. Instead of dollars, give your kids chores to do with X points per chore. (ie. 10 points pays for their cell phone; 5 points pays for their usage of the internet)

FUNdamental #4...RECONCILE

How many of you actually reconcile your bank accounts each month? I mean sitting down and seeing what has cleared and what is outstanding with that last page of your bank statement that most people throw away. There is security in KNOWING how much money is in the bank so you can budget and pay bills without being overdrawn.

On those bill pay and bank reconciliation weekends, everyone else does the cooking and cleaning OR you treat yourself to a meal out OR go to a movie. If your husband helps, he can join you for dinner or a movie. Rewards do not have to be expensive, just experienced.

Open a "Household" checking account.

Deposit enough money to pay monthly bills. If you are prone to overdraw, avoid automatic bank drafts. Household accounts should not have debit cards – only write checks for monthly bills.

Another option is the "envelope system". You put X amount of dollars into each envelope category to pay each bill and when the money is gone, your bills should be paid and you don't spend any more.

FUNdamental #5...REWARD YOUR-SELF

Set Up Countdown Calendars
When it comes to big numbers, don't count forward, only backward. Take your mortgage. If you sit down to pay it with the 20 years or \$150,000 you have left in mind, it is intimidating. That's a big, nearly incomprehensible nut and it's never fun. Make a reverse, tear-off calendar that counts down the months left until you're paid off. Once you make a payment, tear off that sheet and stomp on it in a dance of joy. Use this with all your bills. It may sound crazy right now but you will be surprised how much fun it can be.

Whatever method you choose, stick to it. Women by nature are relationship oriented. We learn best from each other. Combining girl-talk with finances reduces the intimidation and increases the fun. **Have a celebration with the girls when you pay off a credit card or a loan. Share the joy and it will also encourage the others in their financial journey.**



My Beautiful Black Boots

By Brenda Horne

I have a pair of smooth, high heeled, black dress boots that have beautiful silver buckles on the sides. They make me feel tall and pretty when I wear them. They are very

slick and look nice with anything I wear them with. I love my boots.

So every time my daughter almost steps

on the toe of my beloved boots, I get agitated and grab her before she can crinkle the top.

She always says, "Mom, I didn't mean to!" And I explain that I know she didn't mean to but please watch where she is stepping because I don't want a giant crease in the toe.

Of course, all she hears is "Blah, blah blah ..." Yet I have managed to keep the

tops shiny and smooth despite the tromping of my sweet daughter.

Well, Sunday rolls around and I decide to wear my gray dress which, (surprise surprise), I can wear with my fabulous black boots.

At church that morning I allowed my mind to set aside all the worries of life, home, work and my black boots. I listened to every note of each song. I fo-

My Beautiful Black Boots (Cont'd)

By Brenda Horne

cused solely on the Word of God as our Preacher poured out the message with passion. That Sunday, I can truly say I worshipped my Lord and Savior. No distractions ... no outside influence ... just worship.

As the Preacher finished, I could not sit in the pew any longer. I eased into the aisle and made my way to the altar. I had to give thanks to the Son of God who allows me the privilege of worshipping Him. Tears flowed as I knelt and was completely humbled before the Lord.

When I had finished my prayers, I walked back to my seat. As I sat, I glanced down and noticed something. My

beautiful smooth black boots now had a giant crease in each toe. "I must have bent my feet while I was praying," I thought as I examined the creases, "What a silly thing to worry about."

Now when I wear my boots, they still make me feel tall and pretty. They still look nice with anything I wear.

And yes, there are still giant creases across each toe. But I don't stress over the creases, instead they remind me of the tremendous honor I was given to kneel before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords ...and I did so ... in my favorite beautiful black boots.

Psalm 45:11

Let the King be enthralled by your beauty; honor Him, for He is your Lord.

Hebrews 13:15

By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: My Darkest Day

By Roberta Brown

This story is one I find hard to write but I feel there are others reading this who have gone through similar things and can relate. I do not tell this story for any other reason except to give God the glory for the healing which takes place in our lives when something such as this happens. And, even though Jesus heals us in many ways, these are things we never really can ever forget.

I will never forget that day and the dreadful toll it took on our entire family. Many families go through times such as this which change their lives forever.

It was one of the hottest summers we had experience in the mountains of Virginia. Everyone was making plans for their 4th of July celebrations. Daddy had ordered extra ice cream, watermelons, etc. as his customers at our store would be planning picnics, etc.

It was July 1, 1959. I was 15 and my brother was 9. Our family was having a reunion at the local park. We had relatives from South Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky.

My daddy loved people and they loved him. He always could have people laugh-

ing, joking and just having a good time. There were wholesale dealers from all the states which served our store who would take extra time delivering groceries just to spend extra time with Daddy.

As Mama was packing up our food for the reunion, and we were ready to go, Daddy said, "You all go ahead, I may come later." To which Mama replied, "If you aren't going, we will all stay here." So he got in the car and went.

There was an abundance of good food. We played games, swam and everyone seemed to be having such a good time. Of course, no one there knew this would be the last time we would be together. The next part of the story has always puzzled me.

My mother died when I was 18 months old and left me in the care of my sweet grandma. Until my Daddy remarried when I was 5, he seemed to really love me even though he worked a lot of the time.

After he remarried, it seemed that I was closer to my stepmother, instead of my dad. He would punish me for the least thing I did or said. When I was 6, I had a half-brother. I was really happy to have

someone to play with and I loved my brother but my daddy seemed to act as if my brother was his only child. My aunts noticed this and every time they came to get their groceries, they wanted to take me home with them and I would have gone.

Years later I told a doctor I saw in the hospital how my daddy changed toward me and the doctor said this was not uncommon when some men lost their wives at a young age. Sometimes they would treat that child differently especially when they were the same sex. I couldn't fully understand it but since then, I have talked to others to whom the same thing happened.

He wouldn't allow me to go to any programs at school or take part in any sports. I was fortunate that I got to go to church almost every Sunday.

All my growing up years, my neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Shelburne and he was Superintendent of Lee County Schools and they would take me with them to all the things going on at the Warriors Schools in the County and also picked me up for church if Daddy and Mama didn't go.

My Darkest Day (Cont'd)

By Roberta Brown

I loved those people so much and, to them, I was very special.

Now back to the darkest day. As I said, everyone had a good time at the reunion. The next day, July 2, most of them were to return home, but a few stayed through the 4th. We packed up, went home and went straight to bed. Daddy said he didn't feel well at all.

About 8:00 the next morning, my brother and I awoke to Mama screaming as she went into the kitchen to get a pan of water and a cloth. She was telling us to get up. Someone had beaten Daddy.

We followed her down a path that led to the store and she screamed for our neighbor and he came running. We were just two kids, I was 15 and my brother was 9 standing beside the Jeep station wagon Daddy had bought for us to use to go camping to get away some weekends from the store.

As she washed the blood from the place on his cheek, Mr. Meyers reached into

my dad's pocket and read a note. He told Mama to stop because it was a suicide note to us. The gun was underneath his body.

They took him to the large hospital in Tennessee. I was in total shock. My mama and my grandpa had gone in the ambulance. About 2 hours after they took him to the hospital, my aunt took me there and, when we walked into the waiting room, Mama told us he was dead.

I came back to my aunt's house and I just wanted to be alone. I was totally in disbelief. We made funeral arrangements and his funeral was on the 4th of July.

For years, I worried about if God would forgive him. He had given his heart to Jesus in his early twenties.

I never will forget one Sunday after I was a woman with children, the Preacher we had that Sunday spoke about sins such a suicide and he said,

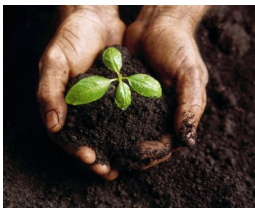
"Anyone who takes their life will go to hell." I came home so hurt because I feel no one in their right mind could do that anyway. And Daddy believed in God so for years, I struggled with this.

As with any tragedy, it never seems to go away. Later, I was told Daddy had been seeing a doctor in Tennessee and had cancer. We will never really know why or understand these things.

The last person to see him alive was a little neighbor boy who came to get drinks and crackers as they were baling hay. He said that Daddy told him to be careful, it was going to be a hot day. And he said Daddy was laughing and joking with him as he left.

For years, I carried a load of guilt, even though I shouldn't have. But when something such as this happens, we go through all kinds of emotions.

I just know God is in control and He tells us He will never leave or forsake us, even on our darkest days.



Let's Go Planting: Laughter

By Cathy C. Whisnant

As we continue in our garden this month planting seeds in the lives of children and grandchildren to give them a strong foundation, we are going to be planting one of my favorite seeds.

It is the seed of LAUGHTER! This is one of those seeds you want to continually plant and water in the lives of your children, no matter their age!

Proverbs 17:22, "A cheerful heart is good medicine." Parenting is the hardest occupation in the world, in my humble opinion.

I have learned over the last thirty-five years, as a mother and grandmother, that I must enjoy life myself if I want to instill this great coping skill in the lives of my children. Laughter is what heals

the bumps and bruises of this thing called life.

We firmly believe in laughter in my household. We have all heard that a family that prays together is one that stays together. I agree with this statement, wholeheartedly, but I also believe that a family who can laugh together is prone to make it through the tough times easier than those who don't laugh as often or at all.

Even God ordains laughter as He tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:4 that there is a time to weep and a time to laugh. Proverbs tells us that a cheerful heart is good medicine.

Are your children having enough fun in their childhoods? I had rather my children say we laughed a lot rather than we screamed a lot when I was a child.

Play games together, watch funny movies, share a joke, and the list goes on and on of things we can do to make sure your children are always increasing their LPM's (Laughs Per Minute). Just be silly at times; do crazy things they would not expect of you. They say laughter is the best medicine, so don't allow Satan to rob your family of their joy!

There is an old Yiddish Proverb that says, "What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul." We always make sure our children are soaped up and clean. But do we make sure they are laughed up and happy?

Lay this newsletter down right down ~ be spontaneous ~ go have some laughs with your family! Until next time, keep smiling! Christians really do have the best kind of fun ~ you can call it Jesus Joy!



Don't Row Against God

By Amanda Malone

How could he do this again? I know he knows better. I know

he knows right from wrong.

These are the things that come to my mind as I struggle with understanding someone living with addiction in my own life.

Sometimes we know that people in our own life know what is right. We know that they know what direction they should go. Yet every time we turn around, they are headed down a wrong path.

I find myself sometimes searching through the book of Jonah and praying that God would somehow prepare a fish to get them to turn their direction around. But as I take another look at this amazing story, my eyes are opened a little bit wider. This time, I pick the whole story apart.

When Jonah boarded that boat, God had it already laid out. Jonah wasn't a man running from God anymore once his feet stepped onto that boat. Jonah was a man that God was running toward. God had not only prepared a great fish, but God had planned the trip.

God not only knew how to get Jonah's

attention, but everyone's on that boat. At the start of the trip, each man worshipped his own god and at the end of the trip they were making vows to the Lord Almighty. Yes, something powerful had taken place in more than one life.

It is so like God to get our attention and get us out in the middle of the ocean, in the middle of the storm, so we will listen. And the harder we row against God, the bigger the storm. Sometimes what we are running away from is exactly what is keeping us from receiving the blessings that God has in store for us.

One thing that I have found true in my experience is that you can't get someone to do something just because you give them advice. It may be the best advice in the world, but God has a plan and He may get their attention through a storm in their life.

I have seen God working in someone's life that was potentially rowing against God and there wasn't anything I could say or do to get them to make better decisions. Only God can get their attention. In Proverbs 3:5-6, it says "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight."

We have to trust God with people in our lives. Not trusting God or trying to only trust Him a little is poor theology. People

go through storms and the storms of some are harder than others. God doesn't want us to be in the dark. He is waiting for us to surrender.

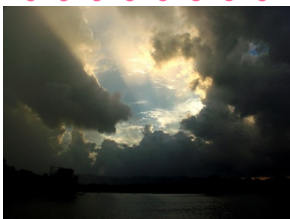
The greatest testimony is to trust God and see our obedience work through trusting Him. We should allow God to prepare our hearts to be obedient to Him.

We have to yield, surrender and be obedient to find God's will for our lives and that will bring true happiness to our lives. God is waiting for us to surrender to Him. He finds holy happiness in blessing His people, in meeting our needs regardless of circumstances.

God brings about the best possible results, for the most possible people, for the longest possible time, in the best possible way. God is sovereign and whatever happens in our lives is allowed or directed by Him.

The storms may be tough. They may be too hard to handle but He promises hope for tomorrow, and endurance for today. He allows us to learn from our past experience and He gives us perspective from the past.

We all have difficult things on our plate but surrendering to God and searching for His plan for our lives will be the best testimony for others to see how Christ has worked in our lives.



Where Were You, God?

By Brenda Horne

She could no longer sit there; the rage she felt lifted her to her feet

as the words seethed through her clinched teeth.

"How could God let this happen?!" she cried out through angry tears. "Why didn't God stop it?! She is a child of God but He didn't protect her!" Her fury was erupting and she could no longer keep it inside. She was angry at God, but even worse, she felt He had betrayed the one that she loved. She ran out the door to get away.

I followed after her, silently praying. "Lord, how can I make her understand?"

"Listen to her," God whispered. "Her pain is real. Listen to her."

As we walked across the yard, I listened to her broken heart. I listened as she accused and condemned God. She was so hurt and mad at Him.

All I could say to comfort her was "God did not do this."

"But He didn't stop it!" was her quick reply.

My heart whispered again to God, "I can't make her believe."

"You don't have to make her believe, you just have to tell her the truth," God breathed softly.

So I tried again, even more tenderly this time. "God didn't do this. Sin caused this." She didn't want to hear it. She was furious over God's seeming betrayal.

With a heart full of compassion, I attempted to explain how sin, whether it's *our sin* or the sin of others can affect us in heinous ways ... *Yes, even the children of God!*

Where Were You, God? (Cont'd)

By Brenda Horne

We talked a little more but her mind was made up, she was done with God. When our conversation ended, I walked away with a heavy heart.

We live in a fallen world. And in this fallen world, we have choices to make. We can choose to live this life with Christ Jesus or without Him.

If we choose to live WITHOUT Him, it is very much our decision and although He woos us to Him, He will not force Himself upon us. Yet the result of life without Christ is to face the atrocities of this world alone and defeated. Satan wins.

Or we can choose to live WITH Christ Jesus, where He promises an inner

strength to fight against the horrible and unfair. Where unmovable faith assures us all will be well, no matter the outcome. Hope will also abound giving us unexplainable peace, joy and, *yes*, even... forgiveness.

If we are honest, we have all asked the question *at some point in our lives*, "Where were you, God?"

And Satan fights dirty; he will use this doubt to center our thoughts on blaming God instead of placing the blame where it belongs ... on sin.

Yet, we can learn to recognize Satan's lies. All we need is the **truth**. And the truth can be found in the Word of God.

With this truth, we *can* secure a firm confidence in God and His promise that He will NEVER leave or forsake His children.

Deuteronomy 31:6

It is the Lord your God who goes with you: He will not leave you or forsake you.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust in Him.

Just Breathe

By Sharon Hawkins

I have just started therapy ... again. This is the third time since the first of my three surgeries for breast cancer beginning in July of 2011. I am now in therapy three times a week and I'm also seeing my doctor once each week all in a quest to escape this non-relenting 24/7 nerve and muscle pain.

My new massage therapist, Max, has amazing gifts with her hands and with her heart as she helps and encourages people every day. She began working with me and was surprised to find that my body was in a locked tight vice from the trauma of my surgeries.

As she worked on my rib cage recently, suddenly there was a pop that I felt all the way around to my spine. She said she thought it was a misaligned rib popping back into place. She also told me that she was convinced that I had been holding my breath for months as my lungs were being restricted from taking deep breaths. Actually, I've been holding my breath for a year and eight months longing to get well.

I'm not the only one who has held my breath. Max shared with me about her son who was in the service for eight long years. This included three tours of duty taking him to the front lines of battle. I can only imagine how hard that must have been for her. She told me that when

she picked him up at the airport on his last return home, she held him in her arms and breathed deeply. That's when she realized that she had been holding her breath ... for eight years!

Trials can hit our lives like a 3:00 a.m. tornado with no warning knocking the breath right out of us. Cancer, like so many other trials, doesn't wait for the best time to happen. After all, when would that be?! When we hear that "c" word, we hold our breath waiting for news. Sometimes even after the news comes, we still can't breathe easy.

Trials can endure and seem endless. We might find ourselves in the middle of a long season of worry, like a mother's heart dreading a call in the night when her child is in harm's way.

God understands our pain, our longings, our sleepless nights. He created us. Genesis 2:7 says, "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." He loves us and our families more than we can ever imagine and He is the breath of our lives.

I've learned through my health journey this last year and a half that when I have severe pain, I need to take deep breaths and just breathe through it. (You

would think I would have remembered that from childbirth.) Often when I'm in pain, I find myself forgetting to breathe deeply. And when I'm struggling no matter what the reason is, I need to also remember to take a deep spiritual breath .

Prayer is our spiritual breath. It is how we tap into the power of God. If we don't pray and connect with God, we're like a light bulb that is not in the socket. When we plug into Him, we can glow like the Light of the World, and we can breathe easier.

John 8:12 says, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the Light of the World. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." We can only be as powerful in life as we are faithful in prayer.

He's only a breath away ... just breathe!!

Job 12:10

In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.



Grace In The Wilderness Ministries

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FOCUS SCRIPTURE VERSE:

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

Grace In The Wilderness is an out-reach ministry for Today's Busy Woman. Our mission is to encourage women of all ages:

- To look upward to God as they discover Him in a new and deeper way,
- To look inward as they discover who they are in Christ, and
- To look outward as they discover God's plan for their lives.

We appreciate your prayers and support. Donations are also appreciated and may be made payable to Grace In The Wilderness Ministries (address to the left).

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Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. - William Arthur Ward

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