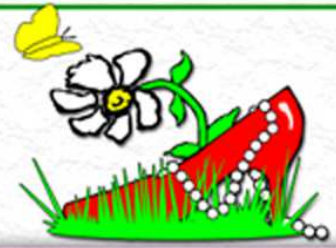


GRACE IN THE WILDERNESS

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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If the Shoe Fits

Every little girl dreams of growing up to be like Cinderella, with her dainty little foot perfectly fitting the delicate glass slipper presented to her on bended knee by her adoring Prince Charming.

Grace Ankles is no exception. You might say she has always been a "wanna-be princess" and a "shoe diva" at heart. There's a saying, "If the shoe fits, buy it in every color". And, if Grace's budget would allow, that's exactly what she would do.

An athletic shoe retailer uses a spin-off of this same quote as a marketing slogan. "If the shoe fits, run...!" Boy, can Grace Ankles, Today's Busy Woman, relate to that!

With her many duties as wife, daughter, caregiver, chief cook and bottle washer, she is a girl on the go. Some days she can certainly empathize with Cinderella, at least pre-"Happily Ever After" days, back when Cinderella was a servant girl at everyone's beck and call.

With a mom role thrown in for good measure, one of the Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes resonates with Grace too and gives her an understanding chuckle with three kids of her own.

"There was an old woman who lived in a shoe.

She had so many children she didn't know what to do.

She gave them some broth without any bread.

And whipped them all soundly and put them to bed."

Obviously, this rhyme was written long ago when spanking children was proper. Maybe Mother Goose wrote it to strike fear in the hearts of rowdy children to keep them in line so their moms would not go crazy. Nowadays, they would pick up the old woman in a squad car and cart her off to jail. Then I wonder who'd take care of all those children?

There's another ending to that quote that possibly fits Grace's situation best of all—"If the shoe fits, wear it."

As wife and mother, Today's Busy Woman holds a position of immense responsibility, honor and importance ordained by God Himself. After all, He created the family before He created His church and her position in the family is unmistakable as the partner to her husband and the bearer of the children.

The Bible describes the Proverbs 31 woman. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." (27-28)

Sometimes, when her responsibilities are compounded by life's trials, the shoes that Today's Busy Woman wears can become so clunky. And her size 9's don't fit so well into the size 6's the world provides for her. The shoes she wears can leave her tired, disheartened and aching so many days.

The good news is, with God's help, the burdens of our sometimes heavy, tight shoes

can ultimately help us grow in flexibility and strength. Deuteronomy 33:25 says, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

In God's infinite wisdom, mercy and love, as His daughters, He strengthens us through our work for Him and through our struggles and our trials. He grows us if we'll let Him. These shoes sometimes get so heavy but, oh, how, in our weakness, we are made stronger!

Our Lord has different paths planned for each of us to walk. Sometimes our journeys are uphill, long and rough. He never said it would be easy but in Isaiah 40:28-31, He gives us an empowering promise! Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

As we methodically move one foot at a time with our hand in His, even when we don't feel like we can, we realize and experience day by day that He can! There is nothing too hard for our God and we can do ALL things through Him who strengthens us! We've just got to remember to take it one step at a time...

By Sharon Hawkins

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Check our GITW facebook page for photos from our recent Special Day for Special Moms!

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

Habakkuk 3:19

The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to go on the heights.



Getting Messy With Jesus

By Cathy McCormick

I'm sure you're wondering just what the title of this article is all about. It does seem like a very strange title for a Grace in The Wilderness article. And it is.

Getting Messy with Jesus is about an experience I had with Jesus several months ago. The experience so profoundly affected me that I knew I needed to write an article about it. But, at the same time, I was so profoundly affected by it that I couldn't even make sense of it. After I had this experience I tried to tell Sharon about it but I was still at a loss for words. I promised Sharon that when I finally was able to find words to describe it that I would write an article. I cannot tell you how many times Sharon has asked me, "When are you going to write that article?" Well, Sharon, I guess the time has come and here we go!

It occurs to me that as Christian women we are raised to use our best manners when we talk with God. After all, we come to God's house dressed in our "good" clothes, with shoes shined, and hair freshly washed and combed. We have been taught to respect our elders, our teachers, and especially our God. I believe that this politeness expands to our communications with God.

When I pray I tend to do it politely, with my thoughts arranged and a certain piety about my attitude. Yes, sometimes I am desperate and I cry out to Jesus to

"take the wheel". BUT, I never just let myself go and "let it all hang out" -- in other words, I never get "messy". You know what I mean about "messy" -- slobbering, wailing, runny nose, hiccupping, sobbing, crying.

Well, sisters, I have experienced two occasions where I have fallen down on my knees and become an utter mess in front of my Lord. The specific events that turned me into a "hot mess" (as the kids say) do not matter. What mattered is that I dropped all sense of decorum, all sense of correctness, and just let myself become a slobbering, sobbing child. I was truly like an injured child climbing up on my loving parent's lap, sobbing and dripping, asking for relief, for healing, for help. Never before had I dared to approach my Lord in such a messy state. What a revelation!

I put aside my "adult" self ... you know, the one who pays attention to HOW things should be ... and let my natural emotions take over. Think about it... when we are the most scared, the most burdened, the most clueless of what to do next, we are, in essence, like children again. It scares us to NOT KNOW, to NOT be in CONTROL. As adult Christians we tend to forget that as a child of God we are always His child.

Just this last week I was blessed to be able to take care of my three-year old grandson while his baby brother was being born. I learned many lessons from my sweet grandson, but one lesson that truly strikes me as I'm writing this is remembering the IMMEDIATE relief he would

experience when he crawled up in my lap, sobbing and dripping. He'd tell me all about what had happened and why he was so upset. I'd simply hold him, hug him, tell him it was all ok, and his sweet body would relax, his crying would slow down and then stop, and a few minutes later, he'd be back about his business.

VOILA! That exactly describes the experience I had when I crawled up on Jesus' lap and let myself be messy with Him. I was immediately comforted. My pain was eased. I rose from His lap knowing that I was safe, knowing that He is guiding me through whatever pain, challenge, loss, fear, or concern I have.

Thank you, sweet Jesus, for always being with me. I love you, Lord Jesus, and will try to remember that you are always ready and waiting for me to crawl up on your lap and tell you all about my worst fears.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus,
look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle
till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask Thee to stay,
Close by me forever,
and love me, I pray!

Bless all the dear children
in Thy tender care
And take us to heaven,
to Live with Thee there.
Amen.

By Amanda Malone



"You Are Having Twins!"

"You are having twins," we heard the ultrasound tech say at

our 12 week check up. We were in complete shock. Never in a million years would I have ever imagined that I would have twins. My husband thought it had to be some kind of joke! He quickly sat down! We were expecting to see our one little precious baby for the first time and instead we got a double blessing!

We planned for our pregnancy and waited for the right time in our lives to

start a family. I have always had to plan for everything. However, I do like to be spontaneous about things. I thought that I had to plan when the best time would be for us to have our first child and then when to have another one later, or even adopt a girl from China. I feel like God gave me twins to show me that all my plans are not up to me, but that they are in the plan that God has set for my life.

We prayed that if God wanted us to have a baby, He would give us one when He thought we needed one. God gave us two! Many times people would ask, "When is

your baby due?" I would smile and say, "They are due in May."

A lot of times people would blurt out "Oh no!" or "What are you going to do?" Or my favorite was "Was this planned?" Then there were those sweet people that would smile and say, "What a blessing!"

Although the thought of having twins was a little overwhelming at first, we were so excited! I began to wonder how we were going to provide for them. Now those fears are gone because I gave it to

"You Are Having Twins!" (Cont'd)

By Amanda Malone

God. After all, He gave us these two babies, so He has a plan. I began to wonder what God wanted me to see and learn from this. From the beginning I have felt so blessed by God because He has given us these two miracles in our lives. I had seen miracles in other people's lives and how they changed their lives forever. I felt like God picked me and Lee out of everybody to have these two babies. What had we done to deserve this?! What joy and love we felt from God.

At times it didn't seem like the right time for us. We didn't have everything we needed to take care of two babies. It only seemed so stressful because I was-

n't giving it all to God. I have never felt like the twins were a burden or a bad choice. I wouldn't have it any other way. God wanted me to truly trust and rely on Him. God has shown me that He doesn't want me to do it all on my own.

The first few weeks of the twins' lives were the hardest because they spent time in the Neonatal Care Unit. Being born at 34 weeks they only had to stay for 17 days, but for us it seemed like an eternity. During their stay I saw God at work many times! It is never easy for a parent to see their child struggle for air like our daughter did or to see your 3 pound son so tiny and helpless. The hardest thing I have ever had to do was to be released

from the hospital without my two precious babies. Through it all God showed that He still heals and answers prayers. I fully rely on God to plan my life and I give Him all of my burdens because it's not what you plan for your own life, but what you do with the plans that God has given you.

Jeremiah 29:11

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

The Law of Attraction and the Power of Positive Thinking in 10 Easy Steps

By Sonya Skidmore

In recent years there have been many books authored and CDs produced about "The Law of Attraction". Many of these writings and productions make "The Law of Attraction" sound like it's something new, perhaps even new age. This is simply NOT TRUE!

Over the centuries, many people have studied the Bible and had the law of attraction revealed to them. Their "new" revelation inspired them to write books about the law of attraction or the power of our thoughts. It's not something new; it has been around since the beginning of time.

Simply put, the law of attraction states that whatever we think, do or say will result in a change in our universe, a change in our personal world, a change in our circumstance.

Norman Vincent Peale put it this way: "There is a basic law that like attracts like. Negative thinking definitely attracts negative results. Conversely, if a person habitually thinks optimistically and hopefully, his positive thinking sets in motion creative forces and success, instead of eluding him, flows toward him."

Read the story of creation in Genesis 1:3. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Night and day didn't just happen. God thought about it, stated what He wanted, and made it happen. That is the law of attraction in action – thoughts and actions become physical things.

And you don't have to go very far to see that it works with negative circumstances too.

Read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:23.

The Lord God therefore banished him from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. Adam and Eve attracted the wrath of God through their thoughts and actions. As a result, they were ejected from the Garden of Eden and destined to struggle in life. Had they not eaten from the tree of knowledge, they would not have been ejected from the Garden of Eden and their lives and ours would have been substantially easier.

God is always there to help us and give us the strength we need.

Psalms 138:3 "On the day I called, you answered me; you increased my strength of soul."

With God's help we can do anything.

If we don't know what to do, God will show us the way. This principal applies to every aspect of our lives: health, wealth, relationships, our careers, spirituality, everything.

God told us over and over we have not because we ask not.

Our feelings are a direct result of our thoughts and that FREE WILL gives us the choice to CHOOSE what we think.

God is powerful and his greatest gift was the power of the Holy Spirit to live within us when he sent his Son to die for our sins.

So let's tell him what we want and need. He wants us to have the desires of our hearts. He wants us to have FAITH in him. He wants to heal our minds, bodies and spirits.

Let's put it to work.

This law of attraction and power of positive thinking can be put into action by following a few simple steps.

1. Believe that this works. Believe that God's Word proves that this is true.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "as a man thinketh, so he is."

2. Remove your doubt. James 1:6-7 "But he should ask in faith, not doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed about by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, since he is a man of two minds, unstable in all his ways."

The Law of Attraction... (Cont'd)

By Sonya Skidmore

3. Know what you want. It's impossible to ask for something when you're not clear on what it is you want. If you need help finding out what you really want, look at what you don't want and seek God's guidance. Proverbs 1:5 "Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

4. Ask God for what you want. Clearly see all of the little details in your visualization, the more details the better. Luke 11:9 "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

5. Think about what you're thinking about. When you have negative thoughts ask yourself, "Is that what I want to happen?" Then begin thinking about what you DO want to happen. Eph.4:22-24 says, "Let the Holy Spirit change your way of thinking and make you a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy."

6. Use the power of FAITH both when you ask AND while you wait. Visualize yourself already having your desire and feel the joy and excitement of receiving. Matthew 17:20 "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

7. Turn it over to God. Don't worry about how your wishes will come true. "The how", is God's job.

8. Receive it. Matthew 21:22 "Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."

9. Take action. Without action, absolutely nothing will happen. And act like it's already happened. Don't question God's timing - He will act in His time - right on time. Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

And lastly,

10. Be grateful for all He's already done and for what He's going to do in your life. 1 Chronicles 16:34 "Give thanks to the

LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever."

God wants us to be abundant in all things. 2 Corinthians 9:8 "Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have abundance for every good work."

John 10:10 "I come so that they may have life and have it more abundantly."

How AWESOME and mighty is God to want for us to have lives of abundance and joy! Don't settle for what this world has planned for you. Greater is He that lives in us than he that lives in this world! Access that power. His Holy Spirit came to live within you the very moment you accepted Christ as your personal Savior.

It is my prayer and the true desire of my heart that you will put these easy steps into action in your very own life. Use them as battle armor when the enemy comes against you and your thoughts. May God's victory be yours in your thoughts, in your life and in the lives of those you love as they witness you handle life's trials and tribulations with the power of positive thinking.



12-N-12

By Linda Byce

God has laid something on my heart that cannot be ignored. It came to me in the middle of the night as I lay in my bed trying to fall back to sleep after being up changing my bedridden husband's diaper. During these 5 1/2 years of endless days and nights of caring for him and our disabled son I have heard God speak to my heart as He has done many times during my 53 years. I have always received such Awesome Blessings when I've listened to and done what I believed He was asking me to do. I only wish I had obeyed Him every time. I have seen so many people helped and many lives changed by not ignoring what God was asking of me. I have taught our son this his entire life and I am so blessed every day to see him following that teaching.

I believe with all my heart that we are on this earth for two reasons - To Serve

God and To Help Others. This means that each one of us should strive to help at least one person a month, every month (12 acts of kindness in 12 months, 12-N-12). We should do what we can to change someone's life for the better at least once a month BUT to never forget to let that person know it is God working through us that allows us to do so. May HE Always Receive The Glory. So many times I hear the words, "I wish I could help but I don't know what to do." One of the worst things you can do is "NOTHING". As I look back over the years, I am ashamed that I have known caregivers and did nothing to help. I have always had a heart for helping those in need but I had NO IDEA what caregivers were actually living through until now. As we have now walked through this fire and are being tested, we are learning first-hand what the needs are for families who have had

their world turned upside down. I want to use this knowledge to educate others in ways they can help those in need.

Here are a few ideas for Caregivers and other families in Need:

Caregivers Need REST! They need time away. They need a night every so often when they don't have to worry about getting up every 2 or 3 hours to check on and care for their loved one.

Meals are always needed. What a relief it is to know your family will have a nice meal, especially near the end of the month when it's down to PB&J's and you're running out of bread. Even if you're not into cooking, picking up a few items at the store such as canned foods, bread, tea, juice, coffee, creamer, milk or especially fresh fruits and vegetables is always welcomed. Shopping at places like Sam's Club allows you to buy large quantities so that you are able to share. Also, any time you see a buy one get one, put

12-N-12 (Cont'd)

By Linda Byce

the free one aside to help someone else.

Paper goods! Some families are able to get food stamps but they are unable to purchase things like toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates, cups, napkins or tissues (which are a real luxury in this family). When you are trying to keep food on the table, diapers on bottoms and the power or water from being turned off, paper products, like so many other things, become luxuries.

Personal items! Things we used to take for granted now are luxuries. Things like shower gels, hand sanitizer, tooth

brushes, lotions, deodorant and more. Don't wait until the holidays to create a basket or gift bag filled with all sorts of personal items.

The feeling of helping those in need is one that is so rewarding. It is a feeling we should all yearn for. Remember, in the blink of an eye you too could be the one in need. We thought we had our future all planned out - our retirement, Trammell's college - No Worries. But God had other plans. It's so easy to forget that we are not the ones in charge. HE IS and, after all, it's HIS PLANS we are on this earth to fulfill in the first

place. So many people live their lives with the "What Could Happen" attitude. Even now, after all our family has been through, our son, now nineteen, will joke and say, "What Could Happen?" I always laugh and say, "WHAT COULD HAPPEN?! LOOK AROUND! JUST LOOK AROUND!" We just smile and shake our heads because we know GOD'S GOT THIS UNDER CONTROL.

God has carried us through every minute of every day and is now, through His grace, allowing us to help others. Please join us—12-N-12!



A Garden In The Wilderness: Jamie's Story

By Margaret Hayden

Part 1

Billy and I married August 29, 1970. We often wondered what God's plan would be for us. We had talked about starting a family sometime in the future. Six years later in 1976, our son Gregg was born. What a special time in our lives! Gregg brought us so much joy, and that wonderful joy continues to this day.

Three years later in 1980 our son, Jamie, was born. Jamie was very sick at birth. His sugar count was very low and he became jaundiced. He remained in the hospital for a couple of weeks after birth. When we were finally able to bring our baby home from the hospital, Jamie continued to improve each and every day. As the first few months went by, we noticed that Jamie wasn't progressing as quickly as Gregg had. We just kept telling ourselves, and Jamie's doctors also told us, to be patient because he had been so sick at birth. They assured us that he would eventually start doing the things that a two-, three-, or four-month old baby should do. He did start very slowly doing a few little things here and there, but was still very delayed. We continued to wait, and we tried to be patient. Soon Jamie was one year old. He had only improved a little bit. One day my sister-in-law talked with us about Jamie. Being a nurse, I guess that she seemed to be more aware of Jamie's slower progress.

At that time, our family doctor made us an appointment for Jamie at the Green-

wood Genetics Clinic. Dr. Roger Stevenson did a complete chromosome study on Jamie. I'll never forget the telephone call a week or so later when Dr. Stevenson called us. Billy was at work and I was home with Gregg and Jamie. Dr. Stevenson said that he had completed his study and found a chromosome disorder (a very rare chromosome disorder). These were such strange words to me. What on earth did this mean? Dr. Stevenson said that Jamie's chromosome #22 was abnormal. Instead of X or Y, a part of chromosome #22 was missing. Again, what on earth did this mean?

Dr. Stevenson very kindly explained that Jamie would always need special help with everything in life to learn the simplest task. That is when I realized that we had a special needs child. At that time I thought that my whole world had come to an end.

I called Billy at work and he came home to be with me. We cried together and all I could ask was, "God, why did this have to happen to us"? I simply could not accept this and I really had a hard time.

I talked with our Pastor at First Baptist Church in Belton and told him that I was really struggling with my faith and that I didn't understand any of this! I will never forget what he told me that day. He said that taking care of our special child would strengthen my faith more than I could ever imagine. You know, he was exactly right! Not only did my faith grow stronger, but I realized

that God walked right beside me guiding my every step.

I finally got over those feelings of "feeling sorry for myself" and realized that my selfish feelings were not helping anyone, especially my precious family. Billy my husband, and my very best friend in the whole world, was so wonderful to me during this time. He still is.

Jamie finally turned two years old. He still wasn't walking. We had been taking Jamie to a therapist in Aiken for about 9 months to try to build up his muscle tone. Finally, one day our son Gregg sat Jamie on the step in our den and told Jamie to stand and walk to him. He stood and took his first two or three steps. Wow! What a great accomplishment! Gregg always helped us with Jamie in so many ways. I never asked Gregg to help us with Jamie unless I absolutely had to. This is just what our Gregg wanted to do. We always made sure that Gregg was happy growing up with Jamie. When Gregg helped us, we always did something very special with him.

As time went on I began to realize why God chose Billy and me to be Jamie's parents. We hadn't taught Jamie. Jamie had taught us! He taught us love, patience and understanding. Jamie taught Billy, Gregg and me just how important it is to help others. I believe with all of my heart that this is the reason that Gregg was led to work in law enforcement. He is now an investigator for the Anderson County Sheriff's Office.

Jamie's Story (Cont'd)

By Margaret Hayden

He investigates child abuse cases, and he is over the sex registry for Anderson County. Sex offenders report to him to register on a weekly basis. Helping little children is so important to Gregg. All of this, no doubt, was Jamie's influence on Gregg as they grew up together.

Our whole family has been so very supportive and they all have helped us in so many ways. Our daughter-in-law, Joellyn, has been wonderful to Jamie and he loves her dearly. Our three precious grandchildren are growing to love and understand Uncle Jamie's "specialness". Jamie just continues to teach us that it's ok to be different.

When we became members at Southside Baptist Church, I couldn't get over how everyone welcomed us as part of their church family. They accepted Jamie and they have always loved him, and Jamie loved everyone there too. Not only Southside Baptist, but everyone at Cedar Grove Baptist Church has meant so much to Jamie and our entire family. Jamie claps his hands very loudly as he enjoys the special singing in church. He also has fun with his dear friend Jill at her birthday parties and Christmas parties.

Jamie has grown now to 6'2" tall and

weighs 285 lbs. He has begun to show his love for his best buddies by his hugs. We call them "the powerful Jamie hugs". When he loves you, he hugs you so tightly that you almost stop breathing.

I am so thankful God chose me to be Jamie's mother. You see, Jamie can't talk and he shows his love in so many special ways. One day I'll actually hear him say "I love you" and I can't wait.

Part 2

On July 5, 2008, our lives again would be changed forever. At 28 years of age, our precious Jamie went home to be with the Lord. Now all the pieces of my puzzle finally fit together. First piece to my puzzle – Jamie was born and was a special gift from God. After he passed away I fully realized just how much this child of God taught his mother.

Second piece – In 2001, Billy no longer had a job. This was very tough to swallow but, as He has always done, God provided our every need. Most importantly, only God knew at that time when Jamie would enter his heavenly home. This gave Billy seven years, 24 hours a day with his precious child. Billy and Jamie were inseparable during this time. They spent many hours on long golf cart

rides, or riding in the truck, as well as watching Gaither videos together.

Third piece – two months before Jamie passed away I questioned my salvation. I had been baptized at 12 when all my friends were being baptized. I prayed with our pastor and no longer have any doubts about my salvation.

When Jamie passed away, God gave me such peace and a strength that I never knew existed: the peace and strength that only comes from God. I thank Him every day for his many blessings!

When I get to Heaven and before I search for our precious Jamie and other loved ones, I want to see Jesus and thank Him for saving my soul. I know that when I see Jamie he will say, "Mother, I love you so much. Hold my hand, Mother. I want to show you your beautiful new home. This is where we will spend eternity."

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.



Adventures in Parenting: Big '80's Hair

By Brenda Horne

My teenage daughter wanted 80's hair for "Throw-Back" Day at school. 80's hair--yes maam, I can do 80's hair.

It's the era of big hair with giant bangs, standing straight and firm, accomplishing unnatural feats of pure hair perfection.

Oh the wonderful memories! Yes, my child, I can do 80's hair. We started by hot rolling her long, straight, blonde hair. It turned out beautiful, with lots of curls to scrunch and bangs to tease. Then we moved on to the most wonderful invention in all of the 80's big hair world... hair spray. As we started this endeavor, I told her to shut her eyes tight, keep her mouth closed and let the spraying begin. The bathroom was a thick, white fog of hairspray, when she came up for air and told me her face was stiff and she couldn't open her eyes because her lashes were stuck to her cheeks due to the hairspray residue.

Ahh, the signs of a job well done.

Her hair was looking good and I was loving it. I only had about 30 minutes to transform her back in time, so I continued to work quickly, hair utensils flying in the mist. Now the moment of truth, time for the unveiling! I detached my daughter's eyelashes from her cheeks so she could marvel at my accomplishment. She stood up, looked in the mirror and shrieked with horror! "This doesn't look like the 80's hair!"

"Well, actually it does," I replied puzzled. She quickly grabs her phone and surfs the web for 80's hair. As she surfs, I'm picturing Cindi Lauper hair, Madonna hair, shoot, even Steven Tyler hair. You know ... 80's hair. Finally, she says, "Here's 80's hair," as she holds her phone up to my face. "And it doesn't look like these spaghetti noodles on my head!" The picture she was showing me was a beautiful, professional portrait of the perfect Morgan Fairchild!! Ok, so yes,

Morgan does have big, 80's hair, but I CAN'T DO THAT!! It probably took a professional beautician two hours to get her hair like that and well, I'm just a mom with 30 minutes and a can of cheap hairspray!! Yep, if THAT is the hairstyle she wanted, then I failed miserably!



So I told her to wear it in a side ponytail.

Sometimes our best plans just don't work out so well. We try our hardest but the results or the response to our efforts are not exactly what we had hoped for.

2 Corinthians 4:16 says, "But don't lose heart, we are renewed day by day." I may have failed today, but tomorrow I am renewed in Christ and through Him I can try again.



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: The High Calling of Motherhood-Let's Go Planting

By Cathy C. Whisnant

By the time you are reading this article, you are probably enjoying fresh garden produce. I remember as a little girl working in my mom and dad's huge garden. Of course, to hear them tell it, there wasn't much work going on with my stroll through the garden! I was too afraid to work...too afraid of the snake that I just knew was waiting for me to put my hand under that tomato plant!

Gardens take hard work, time and tender loving care. You have to work the soil to get it in the right condition for planting. Then you have the back breaking job of planting the seeds, keeping the weeds away, fertilizing the plants, and the never-ending watering of the garden to make sure it grows properly. Then comes the hard work of picking, stringing, shucking, canning and freezing these precious vegetables. By the end of the garden season you are exhausted and vow you will never have another garden. That is until next Spring...

Have you ever thought of yourself as a

gardener in the life of your children and/or grandchildren? This is exactly who we are! We do the same work in their lives as we do in the garden. We work hard to prepare the soil, their hearts, to know Christ and receive Him as Savior one day. We work hard to keep out the weeds of the world and to keep them nourished and watered so they can grow mentally, physically, and spiritually. We worry if we are planting the right seeds in their lives to help them become all God intended them to be.

Yes, God has placed us as gardeners over the lives of the children He has placed in our care. One day when we take our last breath and stand before Him, He will hold us each accountable for how well we tended our gardens.

Throughout our lives, seeds have been planted and cultivated by the women in our lives; our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, Sunday school teachers, and maybe even a close family friend. Over the next several months, we will look at some of the good seeds that we need to

be planting in the tender lives of our children. I do want to give you a word of warning before we start our planting season. The first step in preparing our soil is to remember that our children and grandchildren were not created on an assembly line. They were created as individuals just as we were. They have different personalities, talents, temperaments, dreams, and goals from anyone else in your family. They handle things differently than anyone else; therefore, we cannot treat each of our plants in the same way. In one child we might need to plant an extra row of tenderness, while in another child we need extra seeds of discipline.

Planting these seeds will take us some time, but it will help us prepare our children for the destinies God has planned for them. Planting these seeds will also help keep the lines of communication open between you and your child. Get your rakes, shovels, and hoes ready ~ in our next issue we will begin our garden planting!



Mountains and Molehills

By Sharon Hawkins

Twenty-one years ago, just before Scott and I got married,

we sought out the perfect honeymoon spot. We looked at brochures (*that was long before Google*) to find the ideal lovers' paradise to spend our first week as husband and wife. What we landed on was the honeymoon capital of the world, the Poconos Mountains of Pennsylvania. We were so excited about our trip as we started our new life together!

We spent our wedding night in Jonesville, NC, then the next night in Lancaster, Pennsylvania at an Amish Bed and Breakfast. After a breakfast with our Amish Hostess and a tour of an Amish farm, we continued our drive to the Poconos.

For miles the land was flat as we drove. This was before the days of GPS's and I was the navigator with my "super duper, fold out all over the car" map in hand.

Way off in the distance, I spotted a little ripple in the flatness. As we got closer, the ripple looked a little larger. I told Scott, "You don't suppose that's the Poconos? Surely not! We are going to the mountains."

As we went further, we realized that was exactly what it was. But, where we come from, they were hills. Wow, could we have shown those folks some real mountains on the Blue Ridge Parkway!

What the area lacked in height and grandeur, it made up for in wildlife and things to do, especially for honeymooners—horseback riding, rafting, tours. We stayed in a precious little honeymoon cabin, complete with (*you guessed it*) a huge, heart-shaped bath tub.

One evening a bear waddled through our cluster of lovers' cabins. Although we kept our distance, we just had to go outside for a peak. Every night during our stay Scott wanted to go for a drive through the community to count all the deer that were wandering around (*Hopeless romantic!*). It was a wildlife

paradise.

No, the Poconos Mountains were not the mountains we expected, more like molehills really. But they provided a breathtaking setting for our unforgettable honeymoon memories that will last our whole lifetime.

Sometimes, if we'll just take the time to take a deeper look, whether in nature or in situations in our lives, we'll receive an unexpected blessing of God's unmistakable beauty. Not only did God make every snowflake unique, but also every grain of sand and every one of us. There is beauty in all His amazing creation. Yes, even molehills can be magnificent too!

Genesis 1:31

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



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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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Check our GITW facebook page for photos from our recent Special Day for Special Moms!

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

Check us out on Facebook— Grace In The Wilderness and at www.WildernessGrace.org

Do not judge others because they sin differently than you. —Anonymous

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