

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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Shaken

“My hands are shaky and my knees are weak. I can't seem to stand on my own two feet.” “My tongue gets tied when I try to speak. My insides shake like a leaf on a tree.”

Grace Ankles, Today's Busy Woman, can relate to all of Elvis' debilitating ailments described in his 1957 hit, “All Shook Up”. Many times Grace has found herself in a shaken state. In fact, on more than one occasion, trials of life have left her all shook up. Financial troubles. Teenager crises. Health concerns. Job issues. Just to name a few.

Recently, she learned that her older son was experimenting with drugs with his new friends. She discovered this abruptly one night when the phone rang.

He had clipped a tree while driving recklessly by the park near their house. Now all of a sudden, he was facing a DUI charge and she was facing a fear that this was more than just a one-time experiment with drugs. Who were these new friends? Did she have the power to steer him away from them and this destructive path he was heading down?

One minute she's upright and the next, her world can be turned upside down like a snow globe. Isn't it amazing what one phone call can do to stir up an otherwise dull, boring life? ... *As if Grace's life could ever be dull or boring, but, boy, that is something she would like to try sometime!*

When these trials come, it's like on the bottom of the ocean when the sand gets stirred up. It's hard for Grace to see past the nose on her face. Sometimes she just has to hold on in blind faith to her Lord until things settle down. There are times things settle down quickly and other times the shaking up goes on and on. It can rattle her to her core.

Oh, how God loves to shake things up! He shakes up the lives of nonbelievers to get their attention because He wants a relationship with them. He can't bear the thoughts of living eternity without them.

And, in the lives of believers, He's shaking the idols loose trying to draw us closer to Him. Hebrews 12:26-27 says, “Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

He turns things upside down to shake things loose in our lives that shouldn't be there in the first place so that only what is unshakable remains. That means less of us and more of Him.

In Psalm 18:2, David wrote, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I

will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” He is the constant that never changes. He is the steadfast and sure One. He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother. In fact, Christ is the only unshakable part of a Christian.

Even when we're being shaken, we have to trust Him. He loves us too much to leave us the way we are when ungodly things take root in our lives and stand in the way between us and Him and His plans for serving Him.

Even in shaky times, God can make us unshakable. Have you ever known people who are at peace in the most horrific of circumstances? You look at them and you see a strength, a faith in God that is unshakable. When they should be falling apart, they are cool, calm and collected. You just know it is not something a human can accomplish in his own strength. You can believe that, at some point in his life, he has been shaken.

Sometimes your medicine bottle has on it, 'Shake well before using.' That is what God has to do with some of His people. He has to shake them well before they are ever usable. -Vance Havner

In Matthew 5, the Bible says that Christians are salt and light. That is how He wants to use us to bless His world. Unless we are shaken up by God, how are we going to get out of the shaker?

By Sharon Hawkins

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Visit our Grace In The Wilderness Facebook Page and "Like us" to receive updates about our newsletters and conferences.
Our 4th Annual Special Day for Moms of Special Needs Children is July 20, 2013.
Register at www.wildernessgrace.org

Psalm 62:6

He only is my rock and my salvation. I will not be shaken.



It's July and many of us celebrate our freedom as a nation on July 4th. So why not celebrate some financial freedom to help us better enjoy celebrating another holiday - Christmas? Newsflash—Christmas is less than six months away! I realize with temperatures in the 90's most folks are not thinking about sitting near the fireplace drinking hot chocolate and singing carols, but I would like to give you some tips to make Christmas 2013 a financial success. The goal is to increase fun and decrease stress, so here goes ...

If your holiday planning went smoothly last year then you may not feel an urgency to think about Christmas 2013. But if you overspent, stressed out due to last-minute shopping, or continued paying off debt well into spring, then you might want to rethink this year's strategy.

To begin, ask yourself the following questions:

How much did I spend on Christmas 2012?

Am I content with that figure or do I need to adjust it?

Did I pay cash or use a credit card for my purchases? If I used a credit card, when did I pay it off (or am I still paying)?

Did I forget someone's name on my gift-giving list? Did I stress so much that I wasn't able to fully enjoy my family and friends?

Now that you know where you were last year and where you'd like to be this year, we can begin planning. Repeat after me, *"I love lists!"* Lists will keep you organized and on track as you seek to meet your goal.

Make a list of your Christmas gift recipients and other Christmas expenses like cards, stamps, decorations and food for entertaining. Go ahead and start putting together your card list and making your dinner menu. Preplanning saves money and reduces stress.

Set a dollar figure for each person or expense on your list and stick to it (unless,

of course, you find a sale).

Add up your budget and starting setting aside money **today**. The average shopper spends between \$700-\$800 on Christmas. With the information you discovered from the above questions, you can plug in your dollar amount and divide by 25 remaining weeks. Just setting aside \$20 a week will give you \$500 towards Christmas.

Consider giving handmade gifts, homemade meals, or home baked or canned goodies. If you knit, crochet, sew or do crafts, get busy finding those ideas now. Has anyone heard of *Pinterest*? If you're a baker, candy maker, or canner, start your recipe research right away.

With six months to go, and a list in hand, you now have time to keep your eye out for sales and can buy early. Make sure you either go ahead and wrap and tag your purchases or put a note with each to remind you who gets what.

With a little forethought and discipline, you will enjoy financial freedom this Christmas!!



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: The Missionary Ladies

By Roberta Brown

As I have said before, I grew up in the mountains of Virginia (the Appalachians). This is an experience which stands out in my memory, so I thought I would share it with you. I realize every state has extra activities for the elementary students. All during my elementary school days we were entertained by Smokey the Bear. This one stands out so much in my memory because I got so tired of Smokey that I began to think I didn't know if I could sit through another one of their programs. Their song played over and over in my mind until I wanted to scream.

Then there were the monkeys. Yes, I said monkeys. This man would come with a trailer behind a truck and about four or five real monkeys came running

out and climbed all over the school grounds. I disliked this day because frankly I was afraid of those monkeys and I never did figure out why they thought they were entertaining in any way whatsoever. There are different strokes for different folks, of course, but to this day I do not particularly care for monkeys.

My most favorite event of all was the Missionary Ladies. I guess it was because I had loved church so much since I was in the first grade. There were two gray-haired ladies. I guess they were in their 40's, but back then I thought they were very old. Needless to say, that notion has changed now. Wonder why? The teachers would tell us a couple days ahead when the Missionary Ladies were coming. On these days I was so excited when they were coming. They smiled a lot and

treated all the children as if we were their grandchildren. The boys didn't really care for the Missionary Ladies, but the girls did for the most part.

In my elementary school days I loved school until around the fourth and fifth grades. Then I started day dreaming. I would stare out the windows. Nothing out there ever changed, of course, except in fall the leaves changed color and in winter we had lots of snow.

Getting back to the Missionary Ladies, they always had my undivided attention. They had a large board on a stand, covered with felt. Of course it was simply called the felt board. Sometimes I would be chosen to help sort out the felt Bible characters.



The Missionary Ladies (Cont'd)

By Roberta Brown

The Missionary Ladies stood in front of the class and, as they began a Bible story, they would place a Bible character on the board. When they were finished, they had completely told us a Bible story.

I wanted them to stay longer, but they had other schools to go to so we only got one story. I remember thinking, "I wish I could be a Missionary Lady when I grow up." Of course, this seemed as far-fetched as my becoming a millionaire. This could never happen for me, or so I thought.

Now that I am a grown, Christian woman, our church is really a mission-minded church so I have been privileged to go on six mission trips. My last trip was to Trinidad and Tobago.

John, our Chairman of Deacons, was with us. I guess it was the third day there when he approached me and said, "Roberta, today is your day to speak." We were allowed to go into the schools there and share about Jesus. When John told me it was my turn to speak,

my heart started thumping and I was sure John could hear it. He never let on if he did. I have taught Sunday school at my church with my friend Betty. We taught the pre-teens and it never made me nervous at all.

This was different. I didn't know these children so I was so nervous that I told John, "I cannot do this." I didn't have anything written down and, if I had, I couldn't have held the paper, or so I thought. John replied, "I know you can do it. There is nothing to it." That was easy for him to say, as he spoke often in front of our large church.

I promptly went into the bathroom and prayed, "God, I *can't* do this." I have fainted on several occasions and was beginning to believe this was another one of those times. Just then a still, small voice seemed to say to me, "Remember the Missionary Ladies." When my mind went back to thinking of how I had wanted so badly to be a Missionary Lady, a peace came over me.

So I rose to the occasion, took my place on the stage and told the children how, when I was their age, these ladies came and told us all about Jesus in a Bible story. I didn't have a felt board, but I was so calm as I told them a Bible story and how they could ask Jesus to come into their hearts. I wasn't nervous at all.

When I finished they smiled and clapped, and I've never seen a more attentive group of children. The moral of this little story is be careful when you ask God for something, even if you don't think you can do it, because you may just get what you ask for. I did, and now I am a Missionary Lady thanks to God and His grace.

1 Peter 4:10
As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

31 Things A Mom Should Teach Her Daughter

Below is a list that is circulating on facebook. I'm not sure where it originated but it has some pretty good pointers.

1. How to give a firm handshake.
2. To never wear clothes with something written across your bottom.
3. A man will never treat a woman better than he treats his mom. Pay attention to how the guys treat their moms, and run from the ones who aren't respectful.
4. Look people in the eye when you talk to them.
5. People will judge you by what you say. "I was like, um, totally!" does not qualify as a sentence.
6. People will judge you by what you wear. Show respect for yourself (and see #2).
7. How to change a tire.
8. How to throw a football.

9. Don't be afraid to use your voice—sometimes it's the most powerful thing you have.
10. Basic self defense—be able to get out of a situation, and run fast. And use that powerful voice.
11. Teach them how to apologize well, ask for help when needed, and that anger is more harmful to the person who harbors it than to the person it's directed at.
12. What's in the magazine is photo-shopped. Confidence is more attractive than size 2 jeans.
13. Laughter can diffuse many a challenging situation, especially when you can laugh at yourself.
14. Block out the voices. Not every opinion is worth listening to—listen to the ones that matter, and learn whose opinion you'll allow to shape your thoughts.
15. Advertising is full of hidden agendas. Don't fall for it. "Maybe she's born with it

- ... maybe it's Maybelline" — really? Maybelline didn't make her anything she wasn't born with.
16. How to hit a baseball, throw a punch, and use a compass.
17. How to write a proper thank you letter, and how to type.
18. How to manage her money.
19. Appreciate the little things (and little refers to more than diamonds and pearls).
20. Read often and much. Read works of classic and contemporary literature, fiction and nonfiction. Read your Bible.
21. Walk in someone else's shoes.
22. Listen well, both for what's being said, and for what's being omitted.
23. Dream big, and set realistic goals. You can accomplish more than you think you can.

31 Things (Cont'd)

24. Girls can do most things as well as boys can, in general. But know your personal limits, what your own strengths and weaknesses are. Once you know them you can use them to your advantage.

25. Most things worth having or worth doing require sacrifice. Know what you're willing to sacrifice, and for what.

26. No regrets. Learn from the past, but don't dwell on what could have been.

27. Just because it's never been done doesn't mean it can't be done. Push the limits.

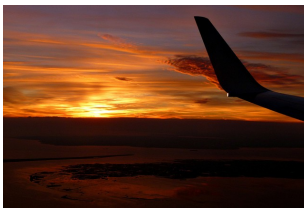
28. Basic sewing skills.

29. How to handle herself online—using good privacy, remember that anything shared can go viral (including pictures in

poor taste), and knowing that people online aren't always who they say they are.

30. Trust your instincts. If it feels wrong, it probably is. Listen to that voice, and don't silence it.

31. The world isn't all there is. Rely on God more than you rely on anything else, including yourself.



Crash and Burn

By Brenda Horne

Phew, she had made it.

She plopped down in the window seat of small 10 passenger single engine airplane. The security checkpoint had taken longer than she anticipated so she had to run "full throttle" to make her flight.

But she was on the plane now, safe and sound and could finally relax. She stretched out her arms and legs, laid her head back and closed her eyes. A sense of security filled her body. All was well.

When she hears the roar of the engine start up she always holds her breath. Take off is a little unnerving on these small planes. Once in the air, the plane finally reaches the correct altitude and levels off. She can finally exhale and stretch out, feeling safe and secure once again..

Then suddenly her heart fell from her chest, an ear piercing boom shook the entire plane and black smoke was billowing outside over the wings. Everyone screamed. The pilot immediately announced they had lost the engine and the plane was descending quickly.

She knew there was no chance of survival; the plane would crash into the ocean below and would burst into flames. All was lost and panic struck her very soul. Tears streamed down her face, she

knew she had no hope, she was going to die.

Then within seconds, the pilot stood in front of the passengers and told them to put on their life vests. He was going to open the side door and everyone would jump from the plane into the ocean. It was their only chance of survival. "Survival?!" she thought. Is it possible? Could she really survive this crash?"

She quickly followed the instructions of the pilot, fastened her life vest and stood in front of the open door. Without hesitation she grabbed the pilot's firm hand, trusting him as he helped her jump feet first into the ocean.

She landed hard in the water, her life vest keeping her from sinking to the bottom. She gasped for air as the waves lapped over her ... then she realized she was alive!! She had survived! She would not die, she was safe ... her life would never be the same.

The moral of the story is this. You have to realize the bad news before you can act on the good news.

The bad news is that our lives are crashing under us. We may think we are okay. We may think we are safe, and then the flames of our sins consume our souls. And God reveals we are headed for a Devil's Hell ... and we finally see the truth. We are sinners and will die, to suffer for eternity without God. We have

no hope.

It's that realization that brings us to the good news. The good news is ... WE ARE NOT DOOMED because JESUS SAVES.

Jesus is our Pilot. He is the One that leads us to safety.

Trust Him, believe in Him, follow Him and you will survive. Put your hand securely in His and allow him to lead you to true security.

Romans 3:23-24

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins.



Playing In The Rain

By Sharon Hawkins

For six days, we have had rain, rain, rain. The weather man said 6.63 inches to be

exact. If it had been snow, he said we would have had 65" inches of it. Brrrrr!

So when we had a break in the clouds on this Saturday afternoon, my boys, Taylor and Bradley, and I made a break for the pool, thirsty for some sunshine.

For several hours, we played, drinking up the rays. *Not to worry, we wore 30 spf.* Ahhh, the sun is good for the soul!

Then suddenly a rain cloud blew in and the bottom of it dropped out over us. At first, we started running around. As my grandma would say, "like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off." We were grabbing towels, gathering our things. After all, we didn't want to get wet.

Then Taylor stopped, smiled and jumped into the pool. Soon the boys were both playing again, this time with more zeal and in the pouring rain, as I watched from our little pool house.

Since it wasn't thundering and lightning, I didn't object. What a fun adventure! My heart smiled as I watched their light-hearted play.

It reminded me of a rainy camping trip when Taylor was little, before Bradley was born. The rain had confined us to our little camper for just a little too long. I giggled and took Taylor by the hand. We ran out into the rain and stomped the water (and mud) right out of as many mud puddles as we could find.

We laughed and laughed as the mud covered us. I'm sure Scott was a little worried that I had lost my mind that day. After showering in the campground showers, we finally got all the mud off our bodies and out of our hair. Even with all that scrubbing, we could never wash that sweet memory away!

Sometimes life gets hard and we forget to stop and smell the roses ... seize the day ... or play in the rain. When life gives us lemons, we can't overlook the blessing of being able to make lemonade.

Today I was reminded by my kids just how much fun spontaneity can be. Thanks to God we can find joy in the rain. Life is too short and precious not to

enjoy every minute of it. We've seriously got to quit taking ourselves so seriously.

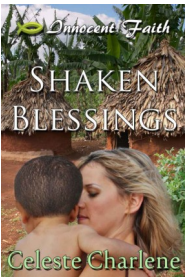
Matthew 6:34 encourages us to focus on today, not tomorrow. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Amen! Today seems overwhelming enough, doesn't it?

Hmmmm ... What's that I hear? Rain again? ... Oh yeah! ... Let's go!

Zechariah 10:1

*Ask the LORD for rain
in the time of the latter rain.
The LORD will make flashing clouds;
He will give them showers of rain,
grass in the field for everyone.*



Shaken Blessings

By Celeste Charlene

Sandra Calbrin arrives in Africa after a military coup - with her designer jeans and high heeled shoes - to check on the five orphan girls she's sponsored and collect shea nuts for her line of beauty products. The trip would only last a few weeks, but little did she know she'd be there almost a year and escape with only a carry-on bag and her life.

Sandy had left nursing behind a decade ago to build her multi-million dollar health spa business, but a pastor convinces her to vaccinate the African children in the wake of an epidemic. She is shocked by the practices used to feed and bathe the babies and she fears the parents will only bring them harm. While at a hospital, she meets a baby girl whose

mother had died. The child has been abandoned since and the villagers are sure the child is cursed.

The hospital official lets Sandy take the child who she names Blessing. Sandy wants to show the local parents how to care for their children using Blessing as an example. Sandy breaks local taboos and is confused by their unusual customs and is accused of prostitution then Blessing's father demands money from Sandy for his child.

The military officers continually harass Sandy telling her she is under investigation. They make her wait hours to receive the proper stamps to allow her passage among the villages where she treats the babies and the locals. When rebels try to take over the country, Sandy and Blessing are in grave danger.

Sandy realizes through her ordeals that she is strengthened in the Lord and must obey his will to survive, even if it means giving up everything that was once so precious to her.

Celeste Charlene writes a powerful story of growth and redemption. The situations in Africa are frighteningly real and found the main character in one dilemma after another, but rescued through God's saving grace.

To order this ebook by this fabulous, local author, visit <http://www.amazon.com/Shaken-Blessings-Innocent-Faith-ebook/dp/B00D71ZBYE#>



In Search Of Stillness

By Cathy McCormick

I came to the ocean seeking stillness. I came to the ocean in hopes of becoming still enough to hear God. I needed God to speak to me. I needed his direction and his guidance.

I came to the ocean seeking stillness. I thought it would be easy. When we're seeking stillness, we tend to think: If only I could get away; if only I could be quiet for a few moments; if only I didn't have to do a,b,c. I thought I would find stillness by coming to the ocean. I thought I would find stillness by slowing my life down. I thought I'd find stillness by spending more time in prayer. What I found, however, is that true stillness the shutting out of the world, the quieting of the mind is NOT easy to achieve. Being at the ocean, I definitely was feeling calmer ... but the stillness I was seeking remained elusive.

One day, quite by accident, I found/experienced complete stillness. That magical time when all the noise of the world, all of the responsibilities and obligations of life ceased to exist! I found that moment of stillness by floating face up on the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Mexico. As I floated I purposefully opened myself up to the wonder and beauty of God's universe. I did not pray. I did not speak. I just floated in pure silence. All noise was gone both internal and external. All there was was me, suspended on the turquoise water, staring up at God. Without a word, without a thought, I felt as though the power and peace of God's creation had entered me and lifted me up. I had a true sense of stillness and everything was well with

my soul. I found stillness, but it was momentary. As I arose from my glorious time floating without a care or a thought, the "noise" of earth gradually overtook the silence and peace I had been feeling. Slowly, but surely, the stillness was replaced with reality. Ugh! You know that pesky old thing called "reality"—the responsibilities of life, the chores to be done, the shoulda, woulda, couldas.

In her book, *Gift From The Sea*, Anne Morrow Lindbergh states that "distraction (noise) is, always has been, and probably always will be, inherent in woman's life." How true! Our days are filled with endless obligations and responsibilities. Children, husband, home, work, grocery shopping, laundry ... on and on and on. How do we get still? How do we find stillness in our days, weeks, life? How do we keep still? There is no On/Off switch. We can't just flip a switch and become "still". There's no way I could remain floating on the water for hours, let alone days (I'd get pruned and sink!). I am finding that stillness happens in moments and that true stillness is a habit to be developed, day by day.

Silence helps us to understand our inner self. If we want to understand God's way for us, silence is needed. Stillness and quiet are like nourishment. —O.S.B. André Gozier

I know. I know. Easy for him to say! But, think about it for a minute. All of us busy women crave moments of silence ... to be able to hear ourselves think, to hear our own voice, to hear God's voice. We think, "If only I could win the lottery and have several days, weeks or months

to just get away and commune with myself and my Lord".

There's an old saying that I love "no matter how far your run, when you stop, there you are". Truer words were never spoken! I can run to the ocean. But, when I stop and stare out at the ocean I am still present with my mind spinning, juggling all my responsibilities and obligations. We have to STOP ourselves. We have to be STILL in order to experience STILLNESS.

I think my floating experience is a great metaphor for daily life. I cannot possibly spend enough time silently floating on the water to avoid the noise of the world. I can, however, float for a few minutes of divine silence in order to commune with my God and to receive His energy, His strength, His power. Ahhh.....those few moments of quieting MYSELF, of turning off all the noise, all the obligations, leave me recharged and ready to confront my day, my duties, my obligations.

I don't have to fight for His attention. I don't have to go out into the wilderness and seek isolation to achieve the stillness that allows Him to talk to us. Exodus 14:13 instructs us, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

We can do that. Each of us can make a choice every single day to commit to a few minutes of mentally floating on turquoise water and being still. You will be amazed at how refreshed you are and how God opens up a channel to talk with you, encourage you, and show you the way. *Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10*



Let's Go Planting: Communication

By Cathy C. Whisnant

How is your garden doing? We have planted several seeds now and I hope you are reaping a great harvest!

This month's seed is one of great importance in families today; especially in the home where those teenage aliens reside. Today, we plant the seed of Communication. In recent studies, it is shown that the stay-at-home mom spends only 30

minutes a day conversing with her child. That cuts the mom who works outside the home down to spending 11 minutes a day in conversation with her child.

To understand our child's innermost thoughts, feelings, and struggles, we must take the time to really listen to our children. The best way to plant this important seed is by using good conversation and listening skills ourselves. We must use these skills when our children are young in order for them to have good communication skills as a teenager and

adult.

Fifty-five percent of the way we communicate is through our body language. It is so important to realize that many times our actions speak louder than words. Here are seven quick keys to effective communication taken from Family.org.

1 ~ BE A GOOD LISTENER. Many of us think we are listening when we are really trying to think about what we are going to say next. In doing that, we miss what was said. The key to real listening

Let's Go Planting: Communication (Cont'd)

By Cathy C. Whisnant

is eye to eye attentiveness. Work on developing the skill of getting behind the eyes of your child. Put down the dish-towel, turn off the noise, and get eye level with your child so they can understand you are truly listening to them.

2 ~ CARRY ON A CONVERSATION, NOT AN ARGUMENT. Please don't argue with your child ~ especially in public! Remember, you are the parent! An argument is just simply talking with the volume turned way up. If the conversation turns into an argument, end it right there! Agree to revisit the topic when all parties have cooled down. Keep in mind that you don't have to reveal all that is on your mind. This is a lesson we should all learn!

3 ~ DO NOT RESORT TO SARCASM. To be sarcastic, is to make a cutting comment. Sometimes those comments cut straight to the bone, don't they? It hurts feelings and damages self-confidence. Proverbs 18:21, "Words kill...words give life..." You must decide which you want

your words to do.

4 ~ DO NOT USE SILENCE AS A WEAPON. Silence, in itself, is a powerful tool of communication. Children assign meaning to your silence as being in trouble or not being important to the parent. Even if you are going through a difficult time, always make sure to explain to your child why you are silent in terms they can understand.

5 ~ ASK QUESTIONS. How well do you really know your child; their hopes, their dreams, their plans? We must learn to ask good questions. When you actively listen, you will know what the right questions are to ask your child.

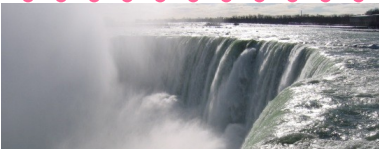
6 ~ DEAL CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH ANGER. Yelling and screaming at one another is not only displeasing to our ears, but also to the ears of God. Anger results in a combination of hurt feelings, disappointment, and worry. Anger can be verbally expressed with respect for the other person.

7 ~ PRAISE YOUR CHILD OFTEN. Don't you like to receive praise for a job well-done? Our children are no different. Even if you have to look hard, make sure you find something to praise them about daily. They want to see and hear that you are proud of them.

This is a big seed to plant and so much more we could say if we had the space. But I hope you take these easy steps to start meaningful communication with your children. Until next time, happy planting!

Psalm 127:3-4

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.



The God Funnel

By Sharon Hawkins

Ever put a penny in one of those big yellow funnels at Walmart and watched it go round and round and round and round? Although it is quite entertaining, there's never a surprise ending. No matter how fast or how slow or the angle of entry, you know where the penny is going ... *down the funnel.*

Ever felt the unmistakable call of God in your life? No matter the choices. No matter the circumstances. No matter if you're trying to avoid it or if you're embracing the journey, you're being propelled to a certain call on your life. It's like driving a ship and you see an island ahead of you, you turn the wheel to head in a different direction. You look up 10 minutes later and you're headed toward it again.

While there is an indescribable peace that comes with being in God's perfect will, at times, "the God funnel" can feel pretty unsettling. Never have you felt things were so completely out of control,

yet so completely in control. That's because, while we want to be in charge, we're not—the sovereign God of the universe is! He sets the world in motion along with the sun, the moon, the stars. It's no problem for Him to propel a surrendered life too.

Whether your call is feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, encouraging the lonely or sharing His Word with the brokenhearted, if God has a special call on your life, it's hard to miss it. I'm convinced that we can't be as happy doing anything else. Avoiding it leaves us unsatisfied and searching for something to fill that longing with. Theologian Frederick Buechner has written that vocation is where our greatest joy meets the world's greatest need. A vocation is not what we do for money, but what we would do anyway even if we didn't get paid.

God had a special mission for Jonah—go to Ninevah and proclaim His word. Jonah decided to run the other way and we all know how that worked out for him. He still ended up in Ninevah although he took a detour on a boat ride toward

Tarsus, into a storm, through the digestive track of a big, smelly fish and finally was vomited up on the beach. *You know that was a fun ride down the God funnel! I bet he couldn't get to Ninevah fast enough after that!*

Through our struggles, God is preparing us for what's to come when we are ejected from the God funnel. It's the perfect training ground to get our priorities straightened, our attitudes adjusted and our hearts set right toward God.

He's a patient God and if it takes us more than a few bumpy spins around the funnel to get us where we need to be, well, He's willing to lovingly watch and wait. He's waiting for us to arrive with huge smiles on our faces in Ninevah.

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."



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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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Our 4th Annual Special Day for Moms of Special Needs Children is July 20, 2013.
Register at www.wildernessgrace.org

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Children are like wet cement. Any word that falls on them makes an impact. —Dr. Haim Ginnott

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