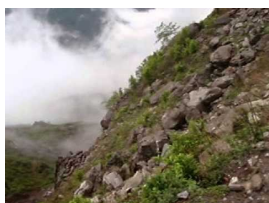


GRACE IN THE WILDERNESS

A MINISTRY FOR TODAY'S BUSY WOMAN



I WILL EVEN MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS, AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT - ISAIAH 43:19



When You Cannot Understand By Sharon Hawkins

Patient is not a word that comes

to mind for most people when they describe Today's Busy Woman, Grace Ankles. And she doesn't blame them.

She thought she would never get her three children potty trained. It's a wonder they don't all have complexes from her pacing, staring at them, patting her foot, checking her watch and telling them to hurry up and "do their business".

Today, if someone in front of her in line at the grocery store has to have a price check, she can feel herself starting to come unglued. And it's all she can do to keep from squealing her tires when the light turns green. She has places to go, people to see, things to do...right now!!

When it comes to waiting on the Lord, she's not any more patient with Him either.

God answers prayer. Sometimes it's "yes". Sometimes it's "no". Sometimes it's "wait". But while she is worrying that her prayers are not being answered, often God is working a bigger, better plan for her than what she's asking for. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Sometimes what she thinks is an unanswered prayer is God painting a picture in her life more beautiful than anything she could have ever imagined. At times, she can only catch a glimpse of this picture. She may not fully see it until she gets to heaven.

It's true that bad things often happen to good people. Where in the world did she ever get the idea that if she believes enough, loves enough, serves enough and does enough that her life will be a cake walk, free from pain and worry and stress?!? Not!!

Rather than a cake walk, the path for Today's Busy Woman is often narrow, winding, steep and challenging. At times, it gets long and treacherous. But just because she looks weary, don't count her out. It doesn't mean she doesn't know where she is going and Who walks with her.

As J.R.R. Tolkien once said, "Not all those who wander are lost." And even though she is sometimes afraid and impatient in trying to hear God speak, it doesn't mean she doesn't know Who is talking. As His child, she trusts God. She knows He is there.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.

We have to remember we are His "Be-loved" not His "Do-loved". We can't measure how much He loves us by how much He does for us or by how easy our life is. It's about the fact that although He is the awesome Creator of the

Universe, He still loves us enough to be our personal God, our personal Savior, our personal everything! If He never did one more thing for us than send His Son Jesus to die for us, that is unmistakable proof of His amazing, inexplicable love for us.

And even after all that, He is there for us helping us through the hard times.

James 5:13-16 says, Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

He continues to be faithful ...

When You Cannot Understand
—LB Cowman

When the frosts are in the valley,

And the mountaintops are gray,

And the choicest blooms are blighted,

And the blossoms die away,

A loving Father whispers,
"This all comes from my hand";

Blessed are you if you trust
When you cannot understand...

If, after years of toiling,

Your wealth should fly away
And leave your hands empty,

And your hair is turning gray,
Remember then your Father
Owens all sea and land;

Blessed are you if you trust

When you cannot understand...

November/December 2012

Volume 5, Issue 6, Bi-Monthly

Inside this issue:

<i>When You Cannot Understand</i>	1
<i>Woman's Future Dreams</i>	2
<i>An Uncloudy Day</i>	2-3
<i>Transparent Tenderness</i>	3
<i>Letter to a Death Row Inmate</i>	4
<i>Choices</i>	4
<i>Rio</i>	5
<i>Grace Ankles</i>	5
<i>The Circle of Life</i>	6
<i>Most Important Mistake</i>	6-7
<i>Sometimes There Are No Do Overs</i>	7
<i>About the Ministry</i>	8

Grace In The Wilderness Conference for the Teen Girls—Empowered Jesus Girl Friday Night, November 9, 2012—Tickets No Charge. But Registration Required

Proverbs 3:5-6

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.



Financially Speaking: A Woman's Future Dreams Take Financial Planning

By Steve Borklund
State Farm Agent
Travelers Rest, SC

I have never met a mom who wasn't working – or any other woman for that matter. More than ever before, women are handling their own or their family's finances. It's not about what you have; it's what you do with it to secure your future.

We all have unique needs and resources, but everyone wants to protect what they've worked so hard to acquire. It's all about taking what you have, making the most of it, and building a solid financial future that is uniquely yours. A woman has different financial needs than a man. Everyone must face the good news that women live longer and the potentially bad news that they will spend more years in retirement than the last generation.

Why is that bad news? More years in retirement could mean potentially outliving your nest egg. Women, having greater life expectancies than men, must place a greater emphasis on planning for retirement and long-term care to ensure they have saved enough to last through their golden years. The Administration on Aging estimates that seven of 10 women will outlive their husbands, highlighting the need for retirement planning even more.

Whether they are the breadwinner in their household or not, preparing for retirement should be extremely important to women. One item of planning that must be considered is the financial situation of the surviving spouse and what can be done to prepare for a potential short-fall.

Unfortunately, women are often at a disadvantage when it comes to resources available for retirement. The average woman spends nearly 15 years away from the workforce, while the average man will be away for 1.6 years. This translates into lower benefits from company pensions, 401(k) plans and Social Security.

Various estimates indicate expenses after the death of a husband will be 80 percent of what they had been when he was alive. Unfortunately, a widow's income may likely be much less than that. Of all elderly persons with income below the poverty level, over 70 percent are women. More than half were much better off financially before their husbands died.

Less time in the workforce may also mean fewer women qualify for health benefits. This can put an even greater burden on their retirement income.

It is imperative for women to start saving now for their retirement, which can be accomplished through several savings vehicles. It is equally important to protect

your nest egg through adequate life insurance coverage and insurance options should your health care needs change.

Adequate planning for retirement and surviving a spouse can be a deciding factor in living comfortably.

Taking the time to examine household finances and planning carefully will help to ensure there are adequate means of support for either spouse during the golden years. Talk to a qualified individual about your retirement needs to prepare for and enjoy a comfortable retirement.

Proverbs 27:23-24

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.



Titus 2 Wisdom for Women: An Uncloudy Day

By Roberta Brown

My Grandma Perkins was such an inspiration in my life. I know we all think our grandmothers are the best ever.

Well, mine definitely was the most courageous, loving and humble woman I've ever known in my life. She raised six daughters and one son, mostly by herself. We lived far up on a mountain in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia in a small cabin. We had no bathroom, no running water and nothing else to speak of, not even the necessities of life. Back then, there was no welfare, no food stamps. And if they had been available, she probably would not have taken them.

At this time, our country was in the middle of a depression, a war was raging the poverty was rampant everywhere, especially up in the mountains where we lived.

My grandmother raised me from the time I was 18 months old until I was 5. This was after my mother died at the age of 24.

This next part is not only embarrassing but very sad. Maybe I could have understood this if she was a bad woman. But everyone that ever had the pleasure of knowing this special woman loved her. I, and everyone else, would say we never heard her complain or say an unkind word about anyone.

Now back to the sad part. One day when all seven of her children were small, my grandpa went to the store and never returned until years later when he came back for a "visit".

My dad had gone up north and worked, saved every dime he could and then came back to Virginia and bought and operated his own country store. He sold everything anyone would call for and he would credit them a year at a time until they sold their tobacco crops. He had known nothing but poverty so he said he wanted to give back as he had been blessed with making money with only a third grade education.

I had to go live with my dad and my new stepmother. They had married in

An Uncloudy Day (Cont'd)

By Roberta Brown

1948. Grandma Perkins was allowed to visit us any time and when she could she would come, stay a week and then go home. Needless to say each time she left to go home, my heart and hers were broken all over again. However, I looked forward to her visits.

If I had been left with nothing to speak of and seven children, four of whom I had to bury in their twenties (one being my mother), I just know I would have lost it completely, but not her. There was something special about this woman.

She and my grandpa's sister, who was our neighbor, worked from sun up until sun down in the fields and also doing cooking and cleaning, etc. That little cabin was void of most necessities but filled with an abundance of love.

Now back to my grandpa. I get all choked up when I think of how he just left her and his children. Years later he dropped by our store and asked my dad if he could take my picture. It was then that we found out that he had hitched a train and chased his dream of being a professional photographer.

My dad allowed him to take my picture. I was seven or eight at the time. He had this large camera on a stand and he put

his head inside a black tent-like contraption. If I had been like him, I would have worn the black tent to hide my face. But he seemed proud that he was a photographer. After the picture was taken, he developed it right there and gave it to my dad. He didn't even know that four of his children were dead in their twenties—sad but true.

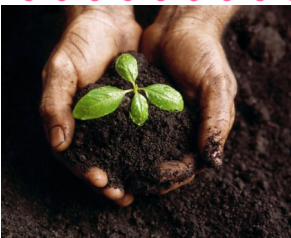
Grandma had a cherry tree in her front yard. Every Spring it was a bright crimson red as it was always covered with cherries. I can see myself about three or four years old when I was still living with her. I was sitting on the front step with my cotton stockings and high-top shoes, Little-House-on-the-Prairie style. As she gingerly put her cherries in her basket, all the while she would sing so loudly that the neighbors could hear her. She sang, "O they tell me of a home far beyond the skies, O they tell me of a home far away; O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise, O they tell me of an uncloudy day."

I didn't have a clue what those words meant until I became a woman, a Christian woman. Every time I remember my grandmother, I think of all the trials she went through, and mostly alone except for her Lord and Savior.

Now when I'm down and feel like I can't make it, I remember Psalm 90:10 as it tells us we are blessed for the length of years we have. I realize that this precious woman was really blessed as she lived to be 91 years old and never was in a hospital until she passed away. My grandmother is in a place where there are no cloudy days and no storm clouds rise. This lets me know that if she can make it, anyone can. Praise my Savior! One day I will be there too ... where there are uncloudy days.

Revelation 21:10-11

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.



Let's Go Planting: Transparent Tenderness

By Cathy C. Whisnant

If you have been following my articles for the last few months, you know we have begun a series on motherhood. This month it is time to start planting seeds in the lives of our children and grandchildren. I hope you have your garden tools ready ~ let's go planting!

Transparent Tenderness is the first seed we want to plant in young lives. Tenderness is a trait that must be taught, or at least that's how it was in our home of all boys. If you watch toddlers play, you quickly realize this is not part of their DNA. If someone takes their toy, they are prone to hit, push, bite, or all three. None of which portray one morsel of tenderness.

I think this is a hard, but necessary seed to plant especially in the hearts of boys. Most dads have taught them to be macho, macho men. While they are standing there with their finger dangling, obviously broken, dad is saying, "Toughen up, shake it off. Your finger is fine." We must teach our sons to have a tender spot. Their future wives will thank you!

We look at our Savior as our example of tenderness. He wept over the death of a friend knowing He was going to raise him from the dead. He wept because these were his friends and He had compassion for them. Their pain became His pain. Jesus also wept in the garden when He prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He wept over an entire city where they lined the streets shouting, "Hosanna!" knowing these same people

would soon be shouting, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him."

We teach tenderness with our life's experiences. Does your child see and hear you having compassion and empathy for others? Do they see you as a gentle person instead of someone who is always harsh? Jesus says that it is the quiet and gentle spirit that He loves. So let's go out and plant a few rows of tenderness.

1 Peter 3:4

Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.



Letter to a Death Row Inmate

Author Unknown

man whom the person on death row had killed...

You are probably surprised that I, of all people, am writing a letter to you, but I ask you to read it in its entirety and consider its request seriously. As the father of the man whom you took part in murdering, I have something very important to say to you. I forgive you. With all my heart, I forgive you. I realize it may be hard for you to believe, but I really do.

At your trial, when you confessed to your part in the events that cost my son his life and asked for my forgiveness, I immediately granted you that forgiving love from my heart. I can only hope you believe me and will accept my forgiveness.

But this is not all I have to say to you. I want to make you an offer: I want you to become my adopted child. You see, my son who died was my only child, and I now want to share my life with you and leave my riches to you.

This may not make sense to you or anyone else, but I believe you are worth the offer.

I have arranged matters so that if you will receive my offer of forgiveness, not only will you be pardoned for your crime, but you also will be set free from your imprisonment, and your sentence of death will be dismissed. At that point, you will become my adopted child and heir to all my riches. I realize this is a risky offer for me to make to you -- you might be tempted to reject my offer completely -- but I make it to you without reservation.

Also, I realize it may seem foolish to make such an offer to one who cost my son his life, but I have a great love and an unchangeable forgiveness in my heart for you.

Finally, you may be concerned that once you accept my offer you may do something to cause you to be denied your rights as an heir to my wealth. Nothing could be further from the truth. If I can forgive you for your part in my son's death, I can forgive you for anything. I know you never will be perfect, but you do not have to be perfect to receive my offer.

Besides, I believe that once you have accepted my offer and begin to experience the riches that will come to you from me, that your primary (though not always) response will be gratitude and loyalty. Some would call me foolish for my offer to you, but I wish for you to call me your Father. Love, God

Choices

By Wanda Nalley

There is an old George Jones song that talks about choices. There is a part that says, "...living and dying with the choices I've made". It makes you wonder what choices exactly he is talking about.

My daddy always liked to sing George Jones songs. He did a pretty good job too I might add. "Choices" was one that he liked to sing. One Friday evening at Oolenoy, he was singing that song. As he sang the words, "...living and dying with the choices I've made," I wondered which choices he might have been referring to. As he sang, he looked straight at me. When he sang those words, I couldn't help but wonder if that was sort of his way of apologizing for the bad choices, for the wasted years we'd had.

You see, we had a lot of wasted years—twenty to be exact. That was because of the choices we both made. It wasn't a good choice to go that long estranged from each other. A lot can happen in twenty years. He built a lot of houses (I don't know how many). I had children, five now.

I can't say exactly why he made that choice, foolish pride is my guess. For me, it was just easier that way. I like easy!

We have to live with the choices we

make. Good, sad, bad, or indifferent, we live with those choices.

But have you ever thought about dying with those choices? Dying puts a whole new perspective on things. Not only do we live with our choices, we also die with them. When you put dying in the equation ... and I really mean dying..., it makes you think totally differently.

Forgiveness comes so much easier. Family becomes so much more important. That person that you have hardly spoken to in twenty years, now you're suddenly telling them just how much you love them. All of those worldly goods that you thought you couldn't live without, now are not as important. All that you fought so hard to keep in that divorce settlement doesn't mean nearly as much. The only thing that really matters to you is having your family surround you.

You don't want all your worldly possessions piled up with you on your death bed, you want your family. You don't care how many houses you have, how much money you have, or what kind of car you drive, all you want is to see your family. All you know are the choices you made and how much those choices matter now. There is only one choice that matters when you reach that point.

You have two choices—eternal life or eternal death. Eternal life is the only choice that gets you to heaven. In John 14:6, Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Thinking of things that way makes "...living and dying with the choices I've made" come to a whole new light. Some of the choices I've made are easy to live with, but are those choices equally as easy to die with? Always remember you might be able to live with the choices you've made, but can you die with the choices you've made? ...Living and dying with the choices I've made...

I wrote this while I was helping to care for my dad while he was dying with cancer. He passed away on August 23, 2011.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.



Rio

By Brenda Horne

We have a new dog. His name is Rio. He was beaten, bruised and tied to a fence, left to starve to death. His weak eyes show how weary he is. The scars on his face show the abuse he has suffered.

Rio cannot eat without constantly looking around to see if anyone is going to snatch his food away. He will not allow anyone to touch him without cowering to the floor in sheer terror. The beatings he endured must have been horrible. This poor dog has had a hard life.

Rio wants to trust us, he wants to be petted and loved, but he cannot accept it right now. His tail is tucked under him in fear all day, every day. He looks at us with his head lowered and eyes wide,

constantly waiting for the next beating or the hard hand of rejection.

Every chance we get, we slowly pet Rio to earn his trust. When Rio is across the room, we call, wooing him to us. We want to prove that he come to us without fear. We allow him to lay beside us on the couch, so he can feel the warmth and compassion we have for him. He is our dog now and we will protect him from any further harm, and in time, with much love, he will learn to trust us.

How many of us are just like Rio? Beaten, bruised and afraid... Jesus understands. He knows you are weary. He knows about that sin that will destroy your life. Yet knowing the truth about you does not deter Jesus, **He still woos you to Him.** He wants you, just as you are ... scared, broken and tired. Allow

Him to show the warmth and compassion He has for you.

We do not have to be afraid like a frightened animal. We are God's children and if we, as humans, can have compassion on an abused dog ... how much more will Jesus love on us ... His children!!

Isaiah 12:2

*Surely God is my salvation; **I will trust and not be afraid.** The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."*



Grace Ankles

By Sharon Hawkins

In 2008 after I lost my mom to cancer, I knew that God was calling me to start a women's ministry. It started with a verse of scripture, Isaiah 43:19: Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

It was a new thing that was for sure but I didn't know right away all that God was doing. And I still don't fully. He's still revealing it. I knew that it was about the wilderness, a place I've become all too familiar with. I first thought it should be called Wilderness Way. No, that sounded too much like a men's ministry. Wilderness in High Heels, no that wasn't quite right either. After some time in prayer and reflection, I realized that it was all about Grace In The Wilderness, God's grace that had always been there for me through good times and bad, no matter what.

As God unfolded His plans to me about the ministry, I knew that

there was supposed to be a character called Grace. She represents today's busy woman who is trying to survive while raising children, caring for her parents, working full time and meandering through the financial, physical and emotional obstacles of the wilderness of this life. She finds she can only do this with God's help.

In my vision of her, she had red hair and was beautiful but didn't know it and she was funny. I was praying about it and searching for her before our first women's conference when, one Sunday morning, I opened up my church bulletin and there she was. "For anyone interested in working with our Drama Team at church, you should contact Wanda Nalley," it said. She had red hair—check. She was beautiful and didn't know it—check. And I could see how she could be funny. So I approached her and asked her if she would be our Grace Ankles for our upcoming conference.

She looked at me like I had four heads (haha!) but told me she would think about it and pray about it. I

was a little surprised at her surprise after all she was working with the Drama Team. Later I found out why.

The name in the bulletin was supposed to be her daughter, Jennifer. Wanda was not into drama or comedy at all. But I have absolutely no doubt that it is her gift and that God orchestrated this. To make a long story short, she came back to me and told me that she felt God was leading her to say, "Yes!" And if you've ever been to one of our conferences, well, let me just say that Lucille Ball ain't got nothing on our Grace Ankles! She's a natural. And her sidekick, Hope Counts, who is Tara Posey is just as funny! Together they make you laugh so hard you hold your side.

Wanda told me that that first conference she was sweating bullets coming up the drive at the church. But when she walked through the doors, she became someone else, Grace Ankles, a funny nut who is crazy for Jesus and the women and girls she ministers to by making them laugh at her, at life and at themselves.



Grace And The Circle of Life

By Cathy McCormick

We tend to think of life as having a beginning and an end. We are born. We die.

fairly short, he knew his grandchild and his grandchild knew him. In the midst of this great loss, Grady was our peaceful, beautiful reminder of the circle of life.

As I finish this article, I'm still swooning from the news that our youngest, David, and his wife, Jessica, are going to bring another McCormick into the world and into my life.

And, in between is LIFE. I am coming to realize that life is a continuous circle with no breaks from the "starting" line to the "finish" line.

Yes, this first grandchild was a blessing direct from God—a much-needed reminder that life goes on that even as we grieve the loss of our dear husband and father, a new life had been added to our circle.

There is a sadness underlying the happiness of each new life -- a sadness that their grandfather will not be there to share their lives, to teach them to shoot, to take them on tractor rides, to pour his love out on them. I feel the sadness in my own heart and I hear the sadness in my children's voices.

May the circle be unbroken, by and by Lord, by and by. We sing this song as an anthem, a prayer, when we are saying fare thee well to a loved one; when we are looking forward to the day when we will be reunited for eternity. We sing this song in celebration of the salvation and eternal life that we are promised. Perhaps as we get older we start seeing life as cyclical rather than linear. We see people born. We see people die. We see the endless renewing of life through these different phases of the circle and we come to realize that there is NO beginning or end.

I truly believe that God pours out his blessings on us when we are hurt and suffering. I believe it, because I see it. Since my husband went home to be with our Savior, God has blessed my life and the life of my family with three more children!

God's Grace has led me to be able to see and savor the continuity of life --- of the lineage that continues, thrives, strives, overcomes, celebrates, mourns and loves. I so miss my sweet husband, but each time I am in the presence of my children and grandchildren I still CAN see him, feel him and hug him!

A year and a half ago when my precious husband passed, I was comforted by the presence of our first grandchild, Grady. In that sweet child I not only SEE, but also FEEL, my husband's presence—his blood, his eyes, his heartbeat. My husband was blessed to have met this long-awaited grandchild and to get to hold him and know him and to dream of the things they were going to do together. Although the future turned out to be

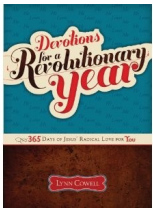
Five months ago, my first great niece, Catherine Grace, and my second grandbaby, Ryland, were born. As I first looked into their eyes and held their precious bodies, I could feel the blood of my loved ones coursing through them.

Thank you, heavenly Father, for these gifts of love that you allow us to nurture, love and share In their eyes we can see You, if we only look!

My grandmother, Catherine, for whom my great niece is named, my mother, Carol, my father, his parents, my sweet Aunt Pattie and Ann and on and on and on. Here in my arms is the next generation of McGovern women --- reminding me that the McGovern women who have passed are NOT gone they continue on in the body and spirit of this remarkable gift from God.

Psalm 127:3

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.



The Most Important Mistake a Mom Can Make

By Lynn Cowell

Do you ever worry about the young women in your life? Your daughter, niece or granddaughter?

her consistency quietly spoke of the importance of this time. Without knowing it, she was mentoring me through her example.

In the days when Sunday School is all but a thing of the past, I worry if, as moms, we are making a very important mistake. Are we missing teaching the girls in our lives the importance of daily time in God's Word?

The girl at your son's school or the one who sits next to you in church?

You see the choices she makes. You watch the way she dresses, the friends she keeps or the empty look in her eyes and you feel concerned; worried even. You wonder, "What will her future hold?"

Heading into junior high, my youth pastor asked me to be a part of the leadership team. There was one non-negotiable commitment: you had to spend 30 minutes a day reading God's word. Since I had seen my mother doing this each day, the commitment didn't seem unusual. That's what Jesus followers did, right? So from the age of 13, I began my own discipline of spending time with Jesus.

As a mom and a mentor of teen girls, I know that my role is to prepare them to live a responsible life on their own. My responsibility to teach them God's word is my most important role of all. My passion is to help set young women in motion for a lifetime of studying God's Word.

I, too, am that mom, aunt and mentor in the church and I've asked myself, "What's missing?"

Growing up, I knew I could count on one thing every morning. My mom would be in the living room, Bible in her lap, spending time with Jesus. Witnessing

Probably not able to define it then, now I can look back and see the impact my mom and my pastor had on me. I see the foundation they instilled by teaching me to be a woman of the Word.

The question is how and where to start. When you brought your baby home, you didn't start your child out with whatever was on the family table. Their diet was milk, filled with exactly the nutrients

The Most Important Mistake... (Cont'd)

By Lynn Cowell

they needed, in a way they could take in. That's what today's girl needs: a steady diet of God's Word, filled with exactly the nutrients her tender heart needs.

While teaching God's word might seem intimidating, it doesn't have to be! You don't have to be a Bible scholar, know how to find out what the words mean in Hebrew and Greek or own big Bible commentaries. What you do need is 2-3 minutes set apart each day to fill your girl with God's truth. I've got just the tool to help!

My free [7 Day Faith Builder](#), seven days of devotions straight from my new book "Devotions for a Revolutionary Year" can

be sent directly to your email box. These devotions are designed to speak to the issues that girls face each day. You can receive these devotions free of charge! <http://www.lynncowell.com/7-day-faith-builder/>

Maybe you're looking for a resource to last longer than seven days? "[Devotions for a Revolutionary Year: 365 Days of Jesus' Radical Love for You](#)" is written specifically for girls ages 13 - 17, each day addressing issues close to a young girl's heart such as body image, crushes, performance, and social media. "Devotions for a Revolutionary Year" fills a girl's heart with the truth that only Jesus can fill the love gap in her heart.

Seeing God does have something to say about the important things in her world, she can establish a history with God and a pattern to last a lifetime. Would you invest in a young woman in your sphere today?

Lynn Cowell is a Proverbs 31 speaker and the author. She lives in North Carolina with her husband, Greg, of 25 years and their three children. The Cowells enjoy hiking, well-worn sweatshirts and anything that combines chocolate and peanut butter. Connect with Lynn at www.LynnCowell.com and on Facebook at Lynn Martin Cowell.

Sometimes There Are No Do Overs

By Sharon Hawkins

It was a beautiful Summer day on the beach—a much needed break, a much needed time away with my family. Our peaceful relaxation and fun were interrupted as we heard chatters and saw groups of people standing near the shore pointing and staring out to a spot in the ocean.

My eyes focused there, out in the distance, on the source of all the attention. He was a young man with dark hair. He was on a float and he was way too far out. His arms were violently thrashing the water as he tried desperately to propel himself toward shore. The sea kept overtaking him and pulling him back out. He would disappear under the water, then reappear. The water would recede and he would catch his breath and try again only to be flung out to sea farther and farther. He was in trouble.

This repeated for what seemed like an eternity. The harder he tried, the more the sea was enveloping him. As he tired, his thrashing became less violent and more that of weak desperation.

Where were the lifeguards? Why wasn't someone helping him? Were we all just going to stand there and watch while he drowned? I felt so helpless. We all did.

Then an older man who appeared to be a seasoned surfer, ran by us on the beach with his board and into the water. He was headed to save the young swimmer. After about 20 minutes of wrestling with the tide, the surfer brought the swimmer

in. Panting and coughing, the young man collapsed on the shore. Several people worked with him for a few minutes to make sure he was breathing okay and after a while he sat up. A roar of cheers and clapping could be heard all up and down the beach that this young man's life had been spared, that this surfer had saved him. It had been very alarming for the whole crowd. Nobody wants to watch helplessly as someone dies and there were times when it appeared that that was exactly what we were doing. Praise God, He had other plans and sent a rescuer!

Later that evening, I passed the young man who almost drowned while I was walking on the beach. God whispered to my spirit right then and there to tell him that God was the one who had saved him that day and it was for a reason because God had big plans for his life.

Sounds easy enough, doesn't it? Just relay the message.

BUT ... I DIDN'T DO IT!!!! ... AND TO THIS DAY I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN WHY NOT!!!!

Maybe I was afraid of what he would say. Maybe I thought I would come across as being critical or being a "know it all" or sounding sarcastic. Maybe I was worried about what others would think. The truth is none of those things mattered. The bottom line is I disobeyed a direct order from God and I missed that opportunity.

Now that was 5 years ago and at times I still think about the young man and wonder if God used someone else to relay His message to him that day. I wonder, "Was that a life-changing message that I was supposed to convey?"

It was a missed opportunity I can never get back. Our paths crossed that one time and then the young man was gone. There was no second chance to do the right thing.

When God calls on us to do something, it might cause us to be uncomfortable, sometimes for a brief moment, sometimes for longer. But I will tell you, in looking back, a moment of discomfort would have been so much better than the regret that I have felt for the years since that day.

Jesus is a great example for us. He wasn't worried about His comfort in carrying out what God called Him to do as He hung dying on the cross while His life's blood drained from His body. And He did that for us!

What are we doing for Him? We have to take advantage of every opportunity. Sometimes there are no do overs!

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.



Grace In The Wilderness Ministries

139 Commons Way
Greenville, South Carolina 29611

Sharon Hawkins Phone: 864-380-2358
Email: sharon@wildernessgrace.org
Follow Sharon's cancer journey at
www.caringbridge.org/visit/sharonhawkins
Twitter: [SharonYHawkins](https://twitter.com/SharonYHawkins)

Marie Pritchett Phone: 864-979-5281
Email: marie@wildernessgrace.org

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).

This is a bi-monthly newsletter. Visit www.wildernessgrace.org to subscribe for a free email copy or please call or email us for paper copies.

Grace In The Wilderness Conference for the Teen Girls— Empowered Jesus Girl Friday Night, November 9, 2012—Tickets No Charge, But Registration Required

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

We can stand affliction better than we can prosperity, for in prosperity we forget God. —D. L. Moody

Grace In The Wilderness Ministries
139 Commons Way
Greenville, SC 29611