



In Every Season

Pentecostal Church of God Women's Ministries Devotional



Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." If you continue reading verses 2 through 8 of the chapter, you'll see that God already knew we would face many good seasons AND many hard seasons in our lifetime. But as verse one states, there is a purpose in all of them.

Additionally, Hebrews 13:5 tells us that He "will never leave you nor forsake you." So whatever season of life you find yourself in, take heart for you are not going through it alone!

In the pages of this devotional, you will receive encouragement to help you add the seasonings, the spice to your life. You'll also learn some seasons are just that: seasonal. Then they pass. Hallelujah! Did you know there is a "season for hunting?" Now what could that possibly mean? Studying more about that will help you through your "season of growth."

I pray that you are blessed by this devotional and that you realize the God-given purpose in every season you go through. It's so easy to praise God through the good seasons yet whine through the hard ones. Just remember, God is there to help you grow in every one of them.

Happy reading!

Trisha Naten
National Director
Empowered Women's Ministries
Pentecostal Church of God

2018

January	February	March	April
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Empowered Women's Ministry Day: January 7

MLK Jr. Day: January 15

Promotion for Alabaster Box devotional giving: February 4

Good Friday: March 30

Easter: April 1

National Day of Prayer: May 6

Mother's Day: May 13

Memorial Day: May 28

Fathers Day: June 17

Summerfest: June 25-29

Empowered Women's Ministries Leadership Meeting: November 12-13

Thanksgiving Day: November 22

Impact Appalachia: December 6-8



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Crystal is a graduate of Missouri Southern State University with a BSE in English education. She is married to Sherman Doyle and together they have two of the sweetest boys ever, Crosby and Nash; just don't turn your back on them. She happily works from home as a copywriter and vlog producer for Advertising Savants, an ad agency in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. She can cook a mean roast, do a pretty good Cher impression, and is a classic movie lover, who is a sports freak. "So don't bet against the St. Louis Cardinals or the Dallas Cowboys ever," she says.

By Crystal Doyle

Introduction

We're sitting, scrolling through other people's Facebook or Instagram from weeks, ok, months ago, you know just "catching up." We've all done it. Don't kid yourself. It's part of our culture. Sure, it may be a bit stalker-ish but we do it anyway. It's our barometer to see how we're stacking up against everyone else; the friend who captures their family's perfect day at the park because she's the best most perfect mom in the whole world. Sometimes I'm lucky just to get my three-year-old to brush his teeth any given day

I'm guilty, guilty of the problem so many of us won't admit: comparison. This is a daily fight, and all seasons aren't for growing. Some are for fighting, and fighting for the right things is always worth it.

I. Instafight: The Two-Headed Monster

Monster #1- Comparison

To compare ourselves to anything or anyone, we put everything side by side. Frame by frame. Inspecting, examining each little piece of evidence that only leads us to feel we aren't as put together or as good as somebody else. Aren't we too busy for this? Yet we STILL find the time to steamroll any sort of self-esteem we have built just to fill our minds with how horrible of a parent, wife, friend, daughter, and basic human being we are. Just stop!

Comparison is born out of insecurity. I have fought insecurity my entire life. I've just been really good at covering it up. It's almost become an art. Except what I see as art is really a mask. The mask of being "fine" when people ask how I'm doing. Masks do nothing but separate us, which makes sense because that's what we do when we compare. We separate two things and go to town. But isn't life so much easier when we are together instead of treating each other like rivals? Even in our own assumptions and judgments, we don't know what life is really like for people. We see their snapshots and highlight reels on social media, not their struggles and reality.

Monster #2- Discontentment

As a mom with two young boys who works from home, I have given my insecurity and comparison a voice too many times. This only leads to watering the seed of discontentment. The grass is always greener on the other side. What if one day we decided to stop craning our necks toward the fence and water our own lawn? To be completely satisfied with our present and current situation. The present. Not wishful thinking for the future of what could be, or past regrets, but being content with the right now. And right now, I have a healthy baby boy sitting on my lap tickling my face. Yeah, I'm content with that.

Being a Christ follower is making a conscious choice to live by God's word and to fight every day where we are. It's not all butterflies and rainbows. It's a messy fight. We don't win fights instantly. There's preparation, and sometimes we even lose so we prepare harder. These are called struggles, and we all have them because we're human. So keep churning your feet because our readiness to dig in and fight must be instant in every season of our life. Single season. Newlywed season. Old married season. Parenthood season. Empty nester season. Fighting for the right things has never been more important. So when someone asks how we're doing, we can say we're in a fight but we've never felt more alive.



II. Instaword: Our Weapon of Choice

"I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances"
Philippians 4:11.

Paul's message to the church is pure joy. How in the world is Paul so happy? He's writing this from prison. Prison! And he's this content? No way. It's easy to say we have nothing in common with Paul, a thankless missionary guiding a group of baby Christians who don't know what they're doing. Um, hello, motherhood! Mom or not, the truth of it is, living life is hard all around no matter who you are.

Paul's triumphant joy comes only from his time spent with Christ. His daily fight isn't even mentioned. He doesn't talk about his problems and magnify them like we often do. Oh, and we do. He only talks about how content he is. If he can say that in prison, why can't we say that after we've just finished scrolling through our Instagram feed?

Conclusion

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought" Matthew 5:5.

Jesus teaches directly that humility and contentment bring favor and gracious happiness. This is our reward when we fight for the right things. Fighting to be exactly who God created us to be, not somebody else. This fight takes perseverance. Perseverance produces hope. So keep going and be content in that.

Key Scriptures

Philippians 4:11.

Matthew 5:5

Cauliflower Chowder

Recipe submitted by Crystal Doyle

4 slices bacon, chopped up
2 tbsp unsalted butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 onion, diced
2 carrots, peeled & diced
2 stalks celery, diced
¼ cup all purpose flour
4 cups chicken broth
1 cup 2% milk (I usually substitute heavy whipping cream to make the chowder creamier & thicker)
1 head cauliflower, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
Salt & pepper to taste
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Heat large stock pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add bacon and cook until brown and crispy, about 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate; set aside.

Melt butter in large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add garlic, onion, carrots, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 3-4 minutes. Stir in cauliflower and bay leaf. Cook, stirring occasionally, until barely crisp-tender, about 3-4 minutes.

Whisk in flour until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in chicken broth and milk, and cook, whisking constantly, until slightly thickened, about 3-4 minutes.

Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer until cauliflower is tender, about 12-15 minutes; season with salt and pepper, to taste. If the chowder is too thick, add more milk as needed until desired consistency is reached.

Serve immediately, garnished with bacon and parsley, if desired.



By Tera Wurtz

Tera Wurtz was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and transplanted by her parents at a young age growing up in the Kansas City, Missouri, metro area. She met her husband in high school and will celebrate 22 years of wedded bliss this year. She has 5 sweet and precious kiddos (18—3 years old). She thrives in the planning and creation of events and activities for her family and friends. She finds joy in the simple things of life. She currently holds her substitute teaching license and enjoys getting to fill in as much as possible in her kids' school district. She is very active in her church Gospel Lighthouse KC where she assists the Pastor's wife whenever needed, as well as working with the Children's Church, and stepping in to help anyway possible.



Introduction

Growing up with southern roots and a Mexican heritage we were never without some sort of mouthwatering food dish! Our menus consisted of arroz con pollo (chicken with rice) or enchiladas with rice and beans to biscuits and gravy and chicken potpie. Our dishes were made tasty by the mix of seasonings and spices but also by the love that was used to make them. Their aromas drew you into the kitchen to see what was cooking every time! They enticed you to the table even before the food was ready! You just couldn't wait to sink your teeth into the yumminess. Just like the dishes of my childhood that continually draw people, it is the same with the Spirit of the Lord God Almighty. His presence is what seasons our life and draws others to us! The aroma of His Sweet Spirit attracts the hurting, the broken, those seeking comfort or needing encouragement. We must continually carry that seasoning throughout our lives so that we enrich the lives of our self and those around us.

So how do we add that spice to our lives? How can we go from the doldrums into a spicy and memorable life that leaves a legacy for Christ? I believe there are a few steps we must take for that

1. Add the required spice—get a good spice blend going
 2. Go Bold—do something that can scare you
 3. Know your spices—don't mix the cumin with the cloves
- When we take these steps, we not only add spice to our life but to those around us. The boldness that Christ puts in our lives takes us on an adventure that we can go on only with Him.

I. Back to the Basics

For us to add the spice of Christ, I believe we must go back to the fundamentals. Go back to our first Love. We must make that time for daily reading and devotion. We must return to our prayer room and seek His face earnestly. We must sing His praises and worship Him. We must make time for the sacrifice of fasting. That means we must put away the phone, set aside the electronics, turn off the TV and 'taste and see the Lord is good.' We must immerse ourselves in Him completely. Our life will never be seasoned if we don't get the right spice combination!

II. Go Bold!

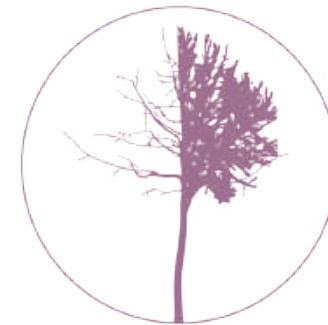
Secondly the spice must be so bold it knocks our socks off! Second Corinthians 3:12 says that since we have such a hope, we are very bold!! The queen of Sheba was very BOLD! She traveled over thousands of miles to ask questions to a king who had not invited her so she could find answers to stories she had been hearing! The Bible says she questioned King Solomon fearlessly in her search for the Truth! The disciples prayed for boldness knowing they would have not been able to share the gospel or withstood the trials they faced without Christ's power that would move through them. The hope that God infuses in us gives us a godly boldness. Not one of loud-mouthed, arrogant pushiness but one that humbles us and fills us with a confidence and sureness to do His work and His will. Our strength becomes greater than skin deep!

III. Know Your Spices

The final step we take is to make sure we are mixing our spices correctly. Just like in cooking, if you mix a wrong blend, then you can have a disastrous situation on your hands. When we mature and marinate in His Word, we become seasoned from the inside out. We can't send mixed signals! We must be constant! The Word says in James a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. We can't offer an ear for confiding but then share it like a 10 pm news story. We can't speak about trusting God and having faith but, when a trial comes, walk away from Him. We must not judge one who is in sin when, if not for God's grace, we would be in their very shoes. To have the right blend of Christ we must show the Fruit of the Spirit. We must become a physical reflection of the spiritual man of Christ who lives within us.

Conclusion

We only 'taste good' when we become seasoned by our King; when we let our self be saturated in the spiced aroma of His presence. That's the desire I have for my life. Do you? If I were to ask you to list out the ingredients that made up the recipe of your life, would it be spice-filled? Would you reflect the Christ?



Key Scriptures

Psalm 34:8: "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him"

Psalm 138:3: "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

2 Corinthians 3:12: "Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."

James 1:8: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Arroz Con Pollo (Chicken & Rice)

Recipe submitted by Tera Wurtz

2 cups long grain rice
4 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup tomato sauce
2 tsps oil
2 tsps cumin
1 tsp each chili powder, garlic powder, salt
1/2 tsp black pepper
1 shredded and diced carrot
1/2 cup peas as desired
pinch of saffron if desired
grilled and seasoned chicken
cilantro
salsa
queso

Season chicken with salt, pepper, cumin and saffron (if desired) and grill. Set aside once done.

Add oil to sauté pan on medium heat, add carrots; cook till soft.

Add rice and stir with the carrots.

Add all spices, tomato sauce, peas, and chicken broth. Let come to a boil.

Cover and turn to low. Don't touch it; just let it cook!

After approx 30 minutes or once water has cooked out, take a fork and fluff rice, turn off heat, and let sit for about 10 mins.

Serve with grilled chicken.
Garnish with salsa, queso, and cilantro.



Barbara Stewart

Barbara Stewart is the wife of author and pastor Thomas C. Stewart. Barbara was raised in a pastor's home and had hands-on experience with the JOY of ministry. She has had the opportunity to be guest speaker for various women's conferences, retreats, Bible studies and motivational venues throughout the nation. She captivates her audience with humor and captures their hearts with the passion and love of God. Her heart and passion is that women will have a deeper relationship with God their Father, and know the JOY that comes in serving Him.



Introduction

The empty nest season is something each of us who have raised children, be it birthing, adopting, through social service, or any child you have embraced as one of your own, will experience. You have spent countless hours going through the ups and downs of their lives praying that they grow up to be independent, productive, loving, and caring individuals. This season of your life was supposed to last forever. Your every concern is their health, happiness, and good fortune. You never scheduled a vacation, dinner, without considering their needs and their calendar of events. Christmas and holidays were centered on their Christmas lists and their favorite foods. Your budget and busy schedule included them. And then it happened, without a warning; you no longer heard their footsteps coming in the front door, or voices yelling, "Mom, I'm home," and you are no longer setting the dinner table for four or more. Now, what do you DO? Who are you now that that season is behind you? How do you survive and gracefully make the transition into the empty nest season?

I. Survival

I was always known as the pastor's daughter, or James and Leona's daughter. Then that identity was changed to Tom's wife, then to Cherie and Thomas's mom. Now at this season of my life I'm faced with "Now, who am I?" and "What do I do with this season of my life?" My choice may look different from yours, but I realized that I had to either make choices or wallow in self-pity. One choice would have been to sit around and become self-absorbed and try to manipulate my family into feeling responsible for my dilemma and the confusion I was encountering, or, I could make sound choices that would benefit myself, my family, and the generations to come.

I. Personal Choices

I elected to join a gym that had a program for my age group, in order to take care of my physical body, this was a challenge. If you don't take care of yourself, you will never be able to help others. When Jesus said, "Love your neighbors as yourself," I realized that if I didn't take care of my own spirit, soul and body, I would be of no benefit to others. I also signed up for Bible study classes over the internet so I could renew my passion for the Word—not only inputting spiritual information into my heart, but volunteering to teach Bible studies. Then for the soul or intellectual part of me, I enrolled in our local college to pursue my educational degree.

III. I'm Not Alone In This

My decisions, however, began affecting my marriage. My husband had worked hard at being the provider and covering for our home and family, and all of a sudden he felt as if his reason for working and providing was gone from his life. Then with me out of the house going to school, etc., he felt as though he was losing me too. I was reminded of the story in 1 Samuel, chapter one: Elkanah who had two wives, one named Peninnah and one named Hanna. This was not a picture of supportive sister/wives. Each year Elkanah would take his wives and family to Shiloh to worship. Hannah was broken-hearted because she was barren and would weep, refusing to eat during this

time of worship. Verse eight reminds me of my husband during this empty nest season; Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" After, many heartfelt discussions, my husband and I realized we had to allow each other the space and support to be able to maneuver through our own season of life.

Conclusion

It may seem strange, but in the same setting of scripture I found God speaking to me. Hannah kept praying to God, even though she was misunderstood, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on me in my misery . . ." (1 Sam 1:16). Webster's definition of misery is "a very unhappy, painful time or experience." The prophet spoke to her, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant to you what you have asked of him." I related completely.

It's nearly impossible to move on from a traumatic event when you stay in the same place emotionally. Moving on requires change. Changing the things you allow through your thought gate is HUGE! The things you think on will control your emotions, your attitude, and most importantly, your heart. You give voice to what's in your heart; words from that voice are seed that goes forth and produces fruit, and you and I will always reap the harvest of our spoken words.

"More than anything, guard, protect your mind; for life flows from it" Proverbs 4:23. Then hang on and prepare for your next season.

Pray with me today: "Father God, thank You for creating me a woman, a woman of strength, courage, and confidence. Even before I was born, You knew me and had all my days written in Your book. I'm confident in knowing that in every season of my life nothing has taken You by surprise. I choose to believe today, that the woman You have created me to be will be an example to the next generation of power, strength, grace, and dignity. I will be victorious in every season of my life because Your word is my compass and my guide. In Jesus Name! Amen!



Quotes

"It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings." Ann Landers

"Your child's life will be filled with fresh experiences. It's good if yours is as well."
Dr. Rutherford

"The best way to keep children at home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant, and let the air out of their tires."

I said, "I want to live long enough to watch my kids experience the same pain and sadness that they caused me when they left the nest." However, I found no joy when it happened to them . . . I cried all over again."

Broccoli Salad

Submitted by Barbara Stewart

3 cups broccoli, flowers and stems
1 package bacon, fried crisp and crumbled
2 cups red seedless grapes
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
Dressing
1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
1/4 cup white sugar

Cut the broccoli fairly small; mix with bacon, grapes, and cheese.

Mix dressing separately, then add to broccoli mixture.

You may add more dressing if you like as this salad tends to soak up the dressing over time.



Kari Lineberry

Raised in the small town of Pierce, Idaho, Kari Lineberry grew up among the mountains and the trees. After graduating from Timberline High School and attending Lewis-Clark State College, she married her high school sweetheart, Kelly, and they settled in the upper Clearwater Valley of Idaho where they raised their two girls, Kelsy and Kristen. She now has six grandchildren, Canyon, Brooke, Syringa, Nic, Cache, and Dom.

Kari's hobbies include sewing, cooking, and music. She is partner and co-owner of KD Resources (www.kdresources.org), a small business designed to resource educators both Christian and secular. Up until 2016 Kari was a children's pastor. She is gifted in communicating with the younger generation in teaching, facilitating, and writing curriculum. For several years she wrote, produced, and directed children's musicals performed in her church and throughout the northwest.

Kari is also trained in accounting and bookkeeping with a focus on helping non-profit organizations, keeping accurate records, and knowing tax laws. She is currently employed by two non-profit organizations and volunteers for many others.

Kari is an ordained minister and for 30 years pastored The Life Center PCG with her husband in Kamiah, Idaho. Kelly is currently the Bishop of the Pacific Northwest District of the Pentecostal Church of God, and Kari is the Women's Ministry Director. She is also founder of Women Together, an organization of caring women in the northwest. She is a strong believer that ordinary people can do extraordinary things. She speaks to inspire ordinary people like herself to do what can't be done knowing that "with God all things are possible."

Recently, Kari has served as the secretary for the 2015 Wildfire Unmet Needs Committee of Clearwater, Idaho, and Lewis Counties (WUNCCIL) in north central Idaho. This is the long-term recovery group for the 2015 Firestorm that hit Kamiah, Idaho, and destroyed 75 homes and damaged many others so that they were uninhabitable, including her own. She worked with the initial case management and distribution center for the survivors and helped administrate the immediate recovery. She was given the "Spirit of Idaho" award by Senator Mike Crapo for her outstanding work on the recovery effort in Kamiah.

Since the Firestorm 2015 she has been invited to speak in several areas concerning disaster recovery. Recently she traveled to Saipan, working with FEMA and the Mennonite Disaster Service on rebuilding the island after a typhoon.

Her life's message is that of unconditional love and service. "Christ has given to us His all" she says, "and we, in turn, owe it to Him to give it to others." She believes that if you can reach past the outward behaviors of people and touch their hearts then you can reach them for Christ.



Introduction

Grace is more than a female name. Grace is something that we can carry with us. There are seasons when life is going wonderfully, and we wonder what we have done to deserve such blessings. We wake up each morning with the sun on our face. We stretch our arms toward heaven and take a deep breath knowing we are cared for and that we matter. This is a season when grace is so thick we can taste it!

Then there are seasons when life is hard and a bit overwhelming, and we don't know if we will make it even one more day in our current circumstances. Our eyes overflow like rivers in the spring. Our stress level is through the roof, and our faith is tested like never before. Grace seems far from us. What we need to understand is that those are the times when God pours His grace on us in extra measure and gives us a spiritual boost to get us through the season.

Think of it this way: Grace is like a snowplow during a winter storm. The road is still in front of us, but sometimes it gets covered up and we seem to be snow blind. For a split second panic starts to set in. Then out in the distance we see that unforgettable set of headlights coming our way, and that feeling of relief comes over us because we know we will be okay. We are now safe. The road is still hard, but that snowplow makes the traveling easier, and it guides us through the storm. Grace is like that. It enables us to keep going in the direction that God is leading even during the worst of life's winter storms. He doesn't always take the storm away, but instead makes a way through it.

I. Grace Is Given, Not Earned

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" Ephesians 2:8-10.

Matthew Henry states that "the grace that saves them is the free undeserved goodness and favour of God."

I have no clue why God would bestow such blessing on us to give us salvation nor why He would sacrifice His only Son to do it. What I do know is that He did. Through His grace (undeserved goodness and favor) He gave us a priceless gift; eternal life in heaven.

II. We Can Draw on the Grace

There are ways to draw God's grace to you. Proverbs 1:8-9 says:

My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck.

These verses reveal one of the secrets of keeping grace as your closest friend. Listen to your mother and father. This refers to more than just your biological parents, it's referring to all of those who have been around a little longer than you and those who have been put in authority over you. We should not just listen to what they experience, but we should listen to really understand what they experience. Learn. Really learn. Get all the insight and wisdom you can from them. That puts a draw on the grace of God. It's like the power cord to the vacuum cleaner. Once the power is plugged into the source the vacuum can't help but pull things into it.

III. Grace Has Results

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NLT)

"But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace."

Here Paul says he worked harder than any other apostle. Was that to boast about how much he worked to follow God? Was it to let everyone know that he was something special? No! It was because Paul knew how far he had come because of God's grace. He considered himself to be among the worst of sinners. He was appreciative to God for the man he had become by the grace that God had bestowed on him. We have that same grace poured out on us today!

Conclusion

Grace Should Be Given Away

A photograph of grace is described in John 7:24: "Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly."

Things are not always what they seem. In fact, they very rarely are. Be careful of the judgements you make quickly. Extending grace (giving the benefit of the doubt) to each other means we don't depend on what we see with our eyes but we depend on what we see with God's eyes. Look past the behavior and the appearance and see the heart. That's how God sees us. It's the least we can do for others! And remember, the more you give, the more you get!

Kari's Original Apple Pie

(1st Place Winner 2012)

Filling:

5 large Honey Sweet apples
2 medium Bartlett pears
1 ¼ cups sugar
3 heaping Tbsp. cornstarch
¾ cup cold water
1 ½ cup hot water
1 Tbsp. cinnamon
¼ cup raisins

Crust:

3 cups instant oatmeal
2 cups brown sugar, packed
½ cup cream cheese
½ cup butter or margarine

Filling:

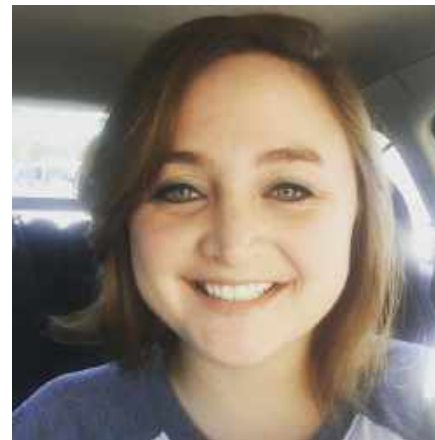
1. Put cold water and cornstarch in a bowl.
2. Stir until cornstarch is completely dissolved. Set aside.
3. Put peeled and diced apples and pears in a sauce pan over medium heat.
4. Add hot water and cinnamon.
5. Stir slowly with a wooden spoon until liquid starts to boil.
6. When at a full boil, add sugar, stirring constantly.
7. When fruit mixture is boiling, stir in cornstarch mixture.
8. When fluid around the fruit thickens and clears remove from heat and add raisins. Set aside.

Crust:

1. Melt cream cheese and butter or margarine.
2. With a fork, mix oatmeal, brown sugar, cream cheese and butter together until they form a slight paste.
3. Dip your fingers in butter and pat the oatmeal mixture into a large pie pan until all sides are covered. Be careful not to use it all.

Combined:

1. Pour filling mixture into the crust.
2. Add very small pieces of the remaining oatmeal mixture on top of the pie.
3. Bake at 350* for about 30 minutes.
4. Let cool slightly before serving.



Mary Price

Mary Price grew up in the small town of Arlington, Ohio. She graduated from Bowling Green State University in May of 2014 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Shortly after graduating, she moved to Texas and started working at the Pentecostal Church of God headquarters in the World Missions and accounting departments. Mary is now a credentialed minister in the East Texas District of the Pentecostal Church of God. She is also very involved in the New Life Family Church worship team ministry. Her passion is in missions work and she enjoys going on missions adventures with family and friends.

Introduction

In the summer of 2006, I was a typical fourteen-year-old, Christian girl at church camp. I had been raised in and very involved in church my entire life thus far. I accepted Jesus Christ at the age of five. I was filled with the Holy Spirit when I was ten, and I was simply attending church camp because that's what teenagers that are seeking Jesus do. Of course I went expecting the Holy Spirit to move in my life, but what I received one night at the altar call was much more than I could have ever expected. Long story short, I received a call to missions that night. Ever since then, I have had and will always have a burden on my heart for missions. I'm not sure where this calling will take me in life, but I know that in due season, The Lord will use my passion for missions for His glory

I attended college after I graduated from high school, and I received my bachelor's degree in business management with the confidence that I could use those skills in ministry. Currently, I am working for the PCG World Missions Department, and I absolutely love it. At this time in my life, I feel as if I have acquired all of these skills and have been preparing for my calling for years; now I am trusting for God's will to be done. It is in this time that I have truly learned what "in due season" means. During this period of my life I have learned three valuable lessons, He's in the waiting, His timing is perfect, and He is forever faithful.

I. He Is in the Waiting

No matter what you're waiting for, whether it is a new job, a long-awaited relationship, a financial blessing, a prodigal to return to The Father, or a transition in life, it is easy to be overcome with impatience and eagerness. These emotions can often leave us feeling disappointed until we reach the point where we start losing faith in whatever we are waiting for. Giving up completely may seem easier than continuing to press on. It is at that moment when our trust in God must override the fear and anxiety. I once read a quote, "Joseph waited 13 years, Abraham waited 25 years, the Israelites waited 40 years, Jesus waited 30 years. If you are waiting for something, God has put you in good company." Psalm 46:10 instructs us to, "Be still and know that I am God." There is no reason to grow impatient. The Bible reassures us in numerous scriptures that The Lord will never leave us and that we are never alone. He is walking with us every step of the way, and we can go to Him for comfort and guidance at any time. He's in the waiting.

II. His Timing Is Perfect

Have you ever been waiting for what seems like forever for something to take place? You pray and pray and pray some more, and then, when you're least expecting it, it finally happens! I'm sure that Abraham and Sarah felt like they had been waiting forever for God's promises to come to fruition too. In Genesis 18, we read about when The Lord promised them a son even though they were far past the age of having children. Sarah laughed when the promise was given to them, but in Genesis 18:13-14 (NLT), it says, "Then the LORD said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, "Can an old woman like me have a baby?"' Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.'" Sure enough, in God's perfect timing, Sarah and Abraham were given a son, Isaac. Sometimes we as humans feel like we have our lives figured out. We develop a plan for our life, and when something does not go as we have planned, we panic. We must remember that God's timing is perfect. His ways are greater, His thoughts are higher, and His word says that His plans for us are good. Instead of trying to tell God what needs to happen when, let's try being still and trusting in The Lord in all aspects of our life. His timing is perfect.

III. He Is Forever Faithful

Sometimes in our day-to-day lives, it is good to be reminded that God is still God. He is still on the throne. He hasn't forgotten about us and the trials that we are going through. Psalms 117:2 (NLT) states, "For his unfailing love for us is powerful the LORD's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the LORD!" So let us praise The Lord, whether we are on the mountaintop, or in the valley. Whatever our circumstance, we can rest assured in knowing that God is righteous, He is sovereign, He is omnipresent, and He is forever faithful.

Conclusion

In Galatians Paul writes, "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up" Galatians 6:9 (NLT). May we be strong women of God and remember that He's in the waiting, His timing is perfect, and He is forever faithful. May we never forget to praise The Lord, no matter the trials that we are facing currently. May we lead people to Christ not only at church but by the way we live our lives for Him. The Word says that IN DUE SEASON we will reap a harvest if we don't give up. Let's press on and be ready to reap the harvest when it is ready!

Aunt Missy's Banana Nut Bread

Submitted by Mary Price

1 cup sugar
½ cup softened Butter
2 eggs
1 ½ cups flour
1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt
1 cup mashed bananas
½ cup sour cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup chopped walnuts

1. Preheat the oven to 350°.
2. Cream butter, sugar, & eggs together.
3. Sift dry ingredients into butter/sugar/egg mixture. Mix well.
4. Add mashed bananas, sour cream, vanilla extract, & walnuts.
5. Bake at 350° for 1 hour in 9"x5" loaf pan; 20 minutes for muffins.

Mama's American Lasagna

2 Tbsps butter
2 lbs hamburger
28 oz can of diced tomatoes
6 oz can of tomato paste
2 lbs Velveeta block cheese
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup finely diced celery
½ tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp oregano
16 oz bag of extra wide egg noodles

1. Grate Velveeta cheese and set aside in a bowl.
2. In a large pot start water to boil for noodles.
3. In a deep skillet, melt 2 Tbsp of butter, add onions and celery. Cook until translucent and set aside in a bowl.
4. In the same skillet, brown the hamburger.
5. Drain the hamburger, and then add onions, celery, tomatoes and tomato paste.
6. After well stirred, add seasonings.
7. Boil and strain noodles.
8. Layer noodles, hamburger and Velveeta cheese in a 9" x 13" casserole baking dish.
9. Bake at 350° for about 35–40 minutes or until cheese is melted and browning lightly.



Terri Hammond

Terri Hammond is the worship leader and women's ministries director for Bethel Community Church in Los Banos, California, where she has served alongside her husband who is the senior pastor for over 21 years. Terri has an intense passion for worship that draws people into the very presence of God. She leads Camo & Lace Women's ministries and desires to see women endeavor to become poised for battle and growing in grace. She works for the Los Banos Unified School District. She has been married to her husband Steve for 26 years and has two sons and one daughter-in-law.

Introduction

I absolutely love crazy weather, as a matter of fact, the crazier the better. I am a girl from California who, sadly to say, doesn't get to see enough of it. However, we do see all four seasons come and go. And if by chance I get to see a storm, I soak it in. Literally, I am the girl whose daddy taught her to go stand in the rain to find some peace and solace from the craziness from life. So are the seasons of life. They come in quickly moved by the weather patterns of our lives. Some seasons we welcome like a refreshing morning rain, while others we try to muster the strength to just ride out.

Here in California we have been in a drought for several years, and as hard as it was for me, I learned the phrase, "Don't frown on brown." This meant that we sacrificed and kept our sprinklers off for two years. It was difficult, but the sacrifices made by many got California through a critical water deficit. This reminds me that sometimes our seasons feel pretty bad like stormy weather or worse, like an extended drought. So what then can be done to help us weather these harsh seasons so that we make it through to the other side still intact, or better, with grace having grown from it? After all, we don't want to go through these harsh seasons for nothing, right?

I. Abigail's Story

First Samuel 25 tells of a woman named Abigail who was married to a wealthy man named Nabal. Her husband was a shrewd businessman who treated people very harshly. In fact, his name literally means, "fool." The story goes that David and his army had protected all of Nabal's servants and herds in the wilderness. A short time after, David sent ten messengers to ask Nabal for some food for his men during a feast. Nabal foolishly denied and even mocked David and acted like he knew nothing of David. David reacted with anger and set out with 400 of his fighting men to kill Nabal and every male in his household. Abigail found out what her wicked husband had done and set out to save her life and the lives of her servants with a peace offering of food for David and his men. The offering was not enough to stop David's anger, but the graceful way she presented herself before David calmed the storm of his anger and immediately changed her season.

II. Choosing Humility

Abigail was able to weather the harsh and unfair treatment from her wicked husband, and instead of choosing bitterness she was able to show humility, which not only changed her season but her entire life. How can we, like Abigail, show humility and grace today in our difficult and unfair seasons? First Peter 5:5-6 tells us this concerning humility, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (NIV).

We can choose to clothe ourselves in humility as Abigail did or choose to live in the bitterness of our season. It is not what the season brings but how we respond to each season that will determine if we will weather that season or if the season will weather us. Abigail bore the brunt of her husband's foolish actions, yet she chose to weather that storm with grace and humility instead of anger and bitterness. Each of us face seasons of harsh circumstances and we all have the choice to bear the brunt, to endure, to withstand, to survive, to rise above, to weather those difficult storms as Abigail did with humility and grace or allow the storm to destroy God's grace in us with bitterness and anger. Abigail was later rewarded for her humility by becoming David's wife.

Conclusion

We Californians have weathered the season of drought with sacrifice and prayer. We joined together and prayed for rain, and God answered with an abundance of rain. There were many negative effects of the drought, but we did not allow it to rob us of our hope that the rain would come again. And it did, Oh, it did! You may ask if I went and stood in the rain, and the answer is, "Yes, I did!" But this time I stood in the rain with much more appreciation because of having gone through the drought. Each season in our lives brings both challenges and lessons. But when we overcome the challenges and learn the lessons, we can move forward with greater appreciation for the journey ahead.

Quotes

When the storms of life come, if they come to me personally, to my family, or to the world, I want to be strong enough to stand and be a strength to somebody else, be a shelter for somebody else.

Anne Graham Lotz

Kindness is the only service that will stand the storm of life and not wash out.

Abraham Lincoln

'Tis the set of the sail that decides the goal, and not the storm of life.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox



The Works Cheesy Potato Soup

Submitted by Terri Hammond

8 medium peeled and diced russet potatoes

3 quarts chicken broth

2 cups milk

1 tsp dry minced onion

1/4 tsp garlic powder

1 stick real butter

3/4 cup of flour

Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

Toppings

1 cup cheddar cheese

1 cup jack or pepperjack cheese

1 lb. Bacon cooked and diced into bits

8 oz. sour cream (optional)

Instructions

In a standard sized pot, boil potatoes in broth. Cook until they begin to break down from softness. Add in salt, pepper, dried minced onion, and garlic powder. Do not drain; this is your soup base.

Using a potato masher, mash all potatoes in the broth.

Add milk and bring to an almost boiling point.

Make a roux using butter and flour; sauté until golden brown. Add roux to soup while using a wire whisk to combine until desired thickness is obtained. Make more roux if needed.

Once desired thickness is obtained, your soup is done and can be served with the desired toppings.



Chelsea Terry

Chelsea Terry has grown up in church and is a very missions-minded person. She is from Madisonville, Kentucky, where she devoted six years of her life to youth ministry. Along with her experience in youth ministry, she was appointed by the PCG General Missions board as a mid-term life changer missionary. She has spent time in Chile, South America, and in Guatemala, Central America. She is currently finishing her degree in Intercultural Studies at Messenger College in Euless, Texas. Chelsea is also employed by the Pentecostal Church of God World Missions Department. Upon graduation, Chelsea plans to become a full-time missionary with the Pentecostal Church of God, and she is anxiously awaiting her return to the mission field.

Introduction

There are two types of reactions when hearing the word "solitude." You could either be desperately seeking it (shout out to all the moms out there), or you could be avoiding it at all cost. If you're the latter, then you're like me, and there's some good news for us: it is extremely hard to have any real solitude in today's society.

Solitude is countercultural and goes against the norm. Even when we're away from people, there's still television, email, text messaging, and good ole Facebook. We are never truly alone; however, there's some bad news. We are never truly alone, and the Bible tells us that sometimes we need to be alone, we need to embrace solitude. Our greatest example the Bible presents us with is the call to replicate Jesus Christ as He demonstrated perfect solitude.

I. Solitude Like Jesus

Jesus modeled solitude before critical events in His ministry. He was secluded during the 40 days in the desert, "At once the Spirit sent [Jesus] out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him" Mark 1:12-13. Also the night before choosing the disciples: "Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them" Luke 6:12-13. And Luke 5:16 tells us: "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." We see throughout the Gospels that Jesus needed solitude to gain strength in order to accomplish the will of God.

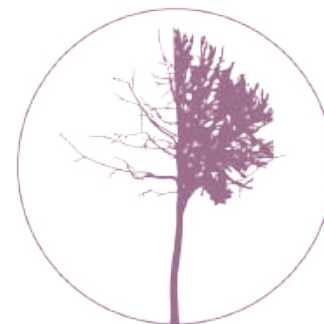
Much like Jesus, we too need solitude. I recently moved to Dallas, Texas, after living in my hometown for 15 years where all my close relationships were. I was optimistic about moving though. I would make new friends, and we would spend all our time together going to the movies, going out to eat, going to church, and loving Jesus. I was excited, but after the first month in Texas I found myself sad, lonely, and, quite frankly, depressed. I would lie in bed all day staring at the ceiling, having no desire to do any of the things that I used to like. I didn't understand what was going on with me. I prayed and asked God, "Why don't I have any friends? What's wrong with me?" Because that's what we do sometimes when we find ourselves alone: we think there's something wrong with us. People must not like me; I have some sort of flaw. I'm not funny enough; I'm not adventurous enough; I'm not pretty enough. However, none of that is true. It was later that I felt God telling me, "Chelsea, my child, I want this time with you. Please spend this time with me". God was calling me to a season of solitude.

II. The Discipline of Solitude

My flesh did not like this season. True solitude is being alone with God without an agenda. It wasn't me coming before Him asking for things. It was simply time sitting in His presence, sometimes in complete silence. Being alone with God required no human interaction, and for someone who refreshes her Instagram feed every five minutes, this was a difficult task. However, it is so vital to our relationship with Christ to learn the discipline of quieting ourselves before the Lord. Creating an intimacy with God the Father will get you much further in life than having 1,500 friends on Facebook or seeing the latest blockbuster.

Conclusion

When an opportunity for solitude arises I encourage you to take it. In fact, go a step further and start creating opportunities for solitude. I know that we all are busy women. We have houses to keep in order, families to care for, degrees to study for; let's face it we run the world! But we also need to make time for Him, the Creator of the world. Don't be afraid of solitude. Jesus gained strength from times of solitude, as will you. If God calls you into a season of solitude, embrace it and grow from it, for God has plans He is wanting to accomplish through you.





Chilean-style Fried Cheese Empanadas

Submitted by Chelsea Terry

2 cups flour
2 Tbsp vegetable shortening or lard,
softened
1 Tbsp salt
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 Tbsp sugar
3/4 cup milk
1/2 cup water
16 oz whole milk mozzarella, or other
meltable cheese
Vegetable oil for frying

Instructions

1. Whisk together the flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and sugar in a large bowl.
2. Gently mix the vegetable shortening into the flour.
3. Place the milk and water in a saucepan and heat until almost boiling. Stir the hot liquid into the flour mixture. Add more water (1 tablespoon at a time) if mixture seems to be dry and crumbly, or add more flour if mixture is too wet and sticky.
4. Knead dough gently until well mixed and homogenous. Divide dough into 16 portions, and roll each piece into a ball. Let dough rest for 5 minutes.
5. Grate or finely chop cheese.
6. Roll each ball of dough into a 6-7 inch diameter circle. Place one ounce of cheese in the center of each dough circle.
7. Fold dough in half over the cheese to form a semicircle. Press down firmly along edges to seal. Roll edge inward over itself and press down again to seal. Crimp edge decoratively with fork, pressing to seal.
8. Heat several inches of vegetable oil to 350 degrees in a deep-sided skillet, pot, or deep fat fryer. Fry empanadas in batches, turning at least once, until golden brown. Drain empanadas on paper towels.
9. Empanadas can be kept warm in a 200° oven for up to 1 hour before serving. Serve warm.



Charlsey Long

Charlsey Long, is a wife and mother of three, and has been a long-time member of the Pentecostal Church of God. She has been a Praise & Worship Director since the age of fifteen years old. Since the year 2002, Charlsey and her husband Rev. Scott Long, have been the Senior Pastors of Miracle Temple PCG in Nashville, Tennessee. Some may remember when their church was flooded in May of 2010 featured in the Pentecostal Messenger. Charlsey is passionate about teaching the Word of God, ministering in music, and shining the light of Christ to everyone she meets.

Introduction

Life is so busy, as women our minds are racing before our feet even hit the floor. We run through our list of chores, errands, work, children, shopping, etc. while we are trying to wake up every morning.

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” Ecclesiastes 3:1.

Because of our fast-paced world, and the general disposition of women to get everything done to the best of our ability, we can get lost in the moments that perpetually never end. Without thought, we stop paying attention to the things that really matter. I've said many times I get so busy doing God's work, I forget to take time for Him. I have to purposely make time, for the things that actually matter, or I end up spending all my time on temporal things, not eternal.

I. Don't Rush The Seasons

As my children were growing, I can remember "wishing their life away": I can't wait till my children can eat on their own, talk, walk, dress themselves. With my first two children, twins Hope and Faith, I didn't enjoy the moments because I was always looking for the next milestone. So, after years of praying for God to bless our family with another child, I didn't take one day for granted with my youngest, Charity Grace.

There are many instances in the Bible where old saints went through seasons. Seasons of doubt, seasons of plenty, seasons of famine, abundance, growth, and even death. Just as the saints of old, we too go through seasons. But, through each and every one, Christ never leaves us nor forsakes us.

II. Ruth's Example

After losing her husband and all that she held dear, Ruth decided to follow Naomi to her homeland. Ruth did not know what life was going to have in store for her. Her season had been rough. Ruth went into the fields to gather the leftovers after the reapers of the day had finished. But Boaz had mercy on her. Telling her to keep close to his ladies so that she may have plenty. Boaz eventually took Ruth as his wife and she bore a son, that eventually led to King David, that eventually led to the King of Kings!

III. The Hard Seasons

God can take the awful seasons of our life, and turn them into something extraordinary. Just as a stained-glass window may look like a bunch of different colors of rough cut glass with black dividing iron up close, when we stand back, we can see the beautiful portrait within. Sometimes we need to take a step back, we have to change our perspective, because only God can see the entire picture.

Years ago I had three terrible knee surgeries that left me wheelchair bound for months, and unable to walk without an assistive device for over a year. During that time I could not see how God was being glorified through my situation. I was in constant pain, frustrated at my limitations, and felt like I was failing as a mother and as a pastor's wife. I was rough-cut glass being held together by dividing iron.

Conclusion

When an opportunity for solitude arises I encourage you to take it. In fact, go a step further and start creating opportunities for solitude. I know that we all are busy women. We have houses to keep in order, families to care for, degrees to study for; let's face it we run the world! But we also need to make time for Him, the Creator of the world. Don't be afraid of solitude. Jesus gained strength from times of solitude, as will you. If God calls you into a season of solitude, embrace it and grow from it, for God has plans He is wanting to accomplish through you.

No matter what season you are in, know that you are not alone. This season will pass, and God has the sun ready to shine on your horizon.

Deuteronomy 31:6

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."



Chocolate Oatmeal (no bake) Cookies

Submitted by Charsley Long

2 cups sugar
3 Tbsp cocoa
1 Tbsp butter
1/2 cup milk
1 cup creamy peanut butter
2 cups quick oats

1. Mix sugar and cocoa
2. Add butter and milk
3. Bring to a boil
4. Count to 50
5. Remove from heat
6. Add peanut butter and quick oats
7. Stir
8. Drop onto foil
9. Serve and enjoy!

Makes 24 cookies.





Audra Walsh

Audra is a wife, a mother of five, and a grandmother of six (and counting). She serves the Tennessee District as Women's Ministry Director and Christian Education Director while pastoring with her husband, Bishop Rick Walsh. She spent 15 years as a worship leader and now focuses most of her time mentoring others in the areas of worship and being godly women. Her heart's desire is to see people come together in unabandoned worship—forgetting differences in each other and our musical preferences and focusing solely on our Creator. In her 'spare' time she enjoys writing, baking, cake decorating, and crafting.

Introduction

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" Isaiah 26:3-4.

Our willingness to trust Him in all things is what our relationship with God boils down to. I'm not just talking about giving lip service but I mean trusting him to our very core, down in the deep recesses of our heart where no one else sees. This is not always easy to do. Sure, it's easy during the good times when things are going the way we want them to, but learning to trust Him during the hard times—those moments of distress and grief that rock us to our core—that is where we need to be.

I. Times of Grief

It was just over three years ago when I went to let my mother, who had been living with us for several years, know that it was time for dinner only to find that while she was napping she had left the burdens of her earthly body behind to enter into the Lord's presence. In that very moment I entered a place of distress that I had never experienced before. I had experienced loss before, but none that compared to this—so sudden, so unexpected and someone so instrumental to my life. I did not have any doubt that I would see her again one day, but that didn't help me with what I was feeling at the time. To this day I cannot think of the words to describe what I went through that day. I can remember sinking to the floor outside of her bedroom door and just sobbing uncontrollably, not knowing what to do. What was happening? Why did it happen? What was the last thing I said to her? I would never get to exchange another word with her. It was like all of the air had just been sucked out of the house and I was existing in some sort of vacuum. I just can't describe it. I was facing an inner turmoil that was blowing inside of me like a tornado.

II. Be Still

"Be still and know that I am God. . . .The God of Jacob is our refuge" Psalm 46:10-11

There comes a time when the tears subside. Our screams turn to whimpers which finally give way to quiet and exhaustion. It is then that we are left with our thoughts. It is in these moments that the Holy Spirit begins to whisper. If I listen, I can hear Him speaking peace into my spirit: "Be still my child – I calmed the raging sea, I can calm your storm too"; "Trust me – My ways are higher than your ways. Only I know the plans for you"; "Remember who I AM – I am the one who saved you. I am the one who loves you—even more than she did. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you"; "Lean on me – Even though you can't see your next step, I have them all laid out for you. You only need to follow."

Conclusion

Seasons of distress and grief will come, but if are able to keep our mind on Him and trust in Him they can be just that . . . seasons. They will have an impact on what your landscape looks like but they should not define who you are. Trust in Him and find peace for your weary soul.



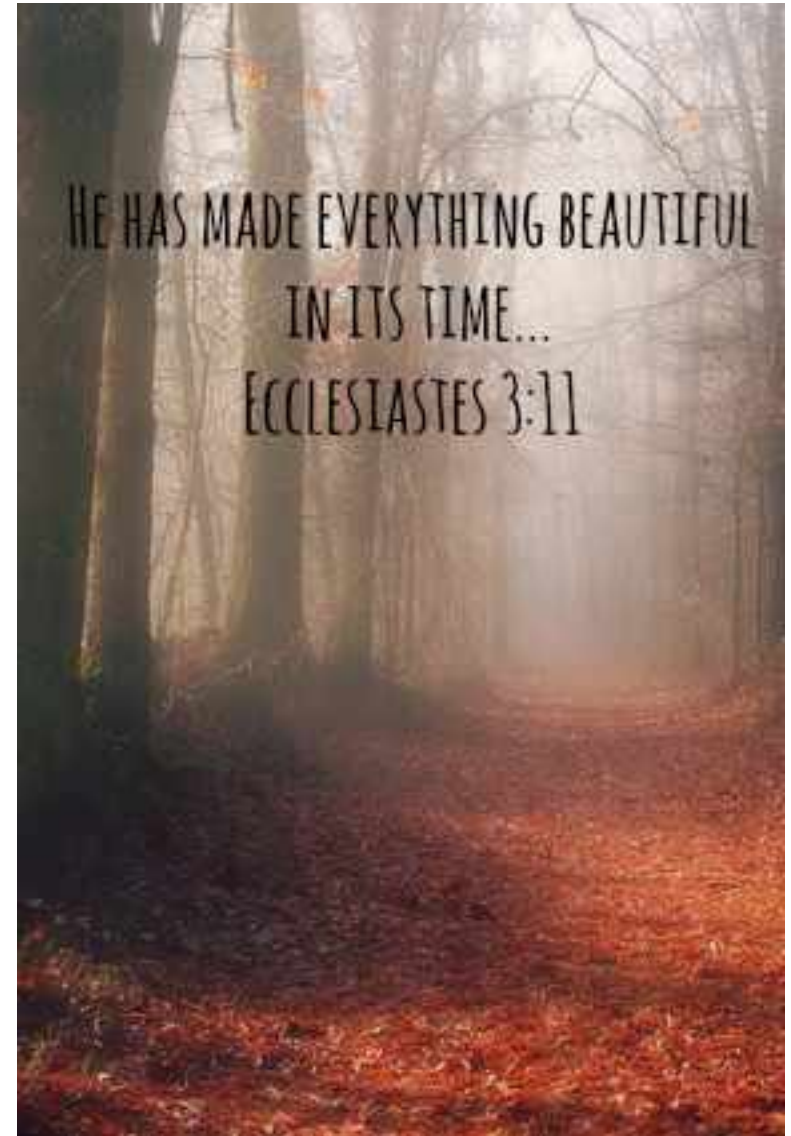
Crockpot Pork Chops

Submitted by Audra Walsh

- 4 pork chops
- 1 envelope onion soup mix
- 1 can (14oz) chicken broth
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 envelope dry pork gravy mix
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 3 tbsp corn starch
- 3 tbsp cold water

Instructions

1. In crockpot combine onion soup mix, chicken broth, cream of chicken soup, and pork gravy mix.
2. Whisk together until combined.
3. Season both sides of the pork chops with a little bit of garlic powder.
4. Place pork chops in the crock pot, cover with liquids and cook on low for four to six hours.
5. Just before pork chops are done, whisk together the corn starch and cold water in a small bowl.
6. Once it is smooth, pour it in with your pork chops and stir gently.
7. Cover and switch the crockpot to high for another 30 minutes until gravy is thickened.
8. Serve it with some mashed potatoes.





Kimberly Mullins



Kim Mullins was born and raised in the Philippines of missionary parents. When she was a kid, her schooling was done by correspondence. Her transition from being a missionary's kid to being a missionary came gradually. Her parents, Wayne & Mary Emma Mullins, began giving her more and more responsibilities. Now she has met the Missions' board, and she is a missionary to Indonesia. She teaches modular classes, preaches, advises pastors, assists the Bible Schools, and helps Sunday School teachers obtain materials.

She is still single but not actively looking for a man. She is not against marriage and would get married if she felt the Lord leading her in that direction. To her, it would be wrong to rush into a marriage just because everyone else her age is married. She also needs to make sure that she doesn't marry someone that would hinder the call of God. That is why instead of searching for a husband, she is just leaving it in God's hands, because He knows what's best for her.

In 2016 she graduated from Messenger College. This was done by studying online. Since she had a number of commitments, she usually only took one class at a time. There were even some semesters that she didn't take any classes at all. She really learned a lot and enjoyed her classes, but was ready to graduate. Her degree is in Pastoral Ministry.

As a missionary, she does a lot of traveling, meets lots people, and makes disciples. A few of these experiences have been "challenging." By far, the good adventures outweigh the "challenging" ones. Being a missionary is a privilege that she doesn't take lightly. Just thinking that she is doing something that will last into eternity is awesome. She is looking forward to many more years of serving God on the mission field.

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." -Philippians 1:6

Introduction

The budding season can be seen in many areas of life. It begins when we first start noticing buds. Picture a spring day when the trees are covered in beautiful buds. Remember, these buds are only the beginning of what God is doing.

I. The Cycle of the Bud

Flower buds are a natural indication that the seasons are changing. They display the ending of a season and a starting of another. When we see the budding of spring, it is evident that a long gloomy winter has ended and the colorful season of spring has arrived.

In looking at the cycle of a flower bud, it is also important to note that buds are still immature. In order for us to see the full potential of a bud, we must wait patiently. We cannot pick them or bother them but must give them time and room to blossom. Because buds have not yet reached their full growth, they must be protected as well. Weather can affect the integrity of the bud, but they should be shielded from this. Buds bring a sense of hope to us. Looking at a flower bud, we can be assured that something beautiful will grow from it. It will one day develop into a blooming flower. Leaves will soon cover bare trees, as the budding season comes to life.

II. A Spiritual Budding Season

In the same way that there is a physical budding season that takes place in nature, there is just as real, a spiritual budding season. Whether it be a vision, talent, spiritual gift, fruit of the spirit, or provision, most of us can find ourselves waiting for something to come to full bloom.

We can find hope in these spiritual buds. They mean that there is a coming improvement of our circumstances. These buds are a sign that we are beginning to see the answers to our prayers.

God gives us many budding and growing opportunities. Mothers have an opportunity to plan a bud in their child's life. Employees can be a Christian witness at their job. A retired widow can become a prayer warrior. A pastor can make a difference in the lives of everyone in their congregation. There are many areas in our life in which God gives us the opportunity for budding; we just have to know where to look.

However, there are some spiritual buds that can be negative too. Our old, fallen, sinful self may find itself budding back up into our lives. The devil could plant buds of temptation for us to easily grab at. We could have buds of doubt that rise in us as well. Laziness in prayer and Bible reading can also act as a bud of complacency in our lives.

III. Spiritual Buds' Proper Use

We need to be thankful for the positive buds in our lives. It is important that we are constantly thanking the Lord for the work we see Him doing. We should thank Him for bringing budding opportunities into our lives. We also are to be grateful for the spiritual buds we see in those around us. We have to position ourselves in a place of appreciation for these buds in our lives.

It is vital that we rid ourselves of the negative buds in our lives. We can do this by repenting of our sins and dying to our flesh daily. We also must resist temptation so that the devil's buds will flee from us.

In order to determine which buds should stay and which should leave, we have to examine the buds. We should analyze the ground producing the buds. (The Parable of the Sower. Luke 8:6-8; 13-15). Decide what type of ground is producing the buds. Know that some buds may look good but will not last in poor soil. Remove the "stones" or "thorns" through prayer, and give the buds fresh soil and water by encouraging those receiving the Word.

We also must realize that buds are immature. Be patient when your vision is budding. Usually, God does not expect you to act immediately. These are just buds God is developing in you. This should calm us down when we feel overwhelmed by all God has called us to do. We also should not give too much responsibility to people starting to spiritually bud; know their limitations. At the same time, however, we must be gentle when we see fault in those who are budding spiritually.

Lastly, let's be hopeful for the buds. We must live in expectancy that the buds will mature and continue in prayer for each bud in our lives. Trust the Lord, believe that He is faithful to His promises, and you will see the completion of the work that He has started.

Conclusion

Observing buds is exciting. At this point we can't quite see the harvest. But seeing the buds is encouraging. It's definitely better than the previous barren season of seeing nothing for your efforts. It shows progress. Suddenly we realize that our labor is not in vain. Our text is Philippians 1:6. We, mortals, can't make buds mature, but God can. If we do our part, prayerfully tending the "buds" in our life, God will do His part. Trust the promise of God to complete the work that He started. That work is to bring the buds in your life into maturity.



Recipe for Strawberry Cream

(An Americanized Version of Filipino Mango Float)

Submitted by Kimberly Mullins

2 lbs of strawberries
1 box (14.4 oz) graham crackers
8 oz Cool Whip
1 can 14 oz sweetened condensed milk
3 tps sugar (optional)
2 pinches of salt

Instructions

1. Stem and slice the strawberries. Add two pinches of salt to bring out the natural flavors. After one minute taste the strawberries. If they need more sweetening, sweeten to taste. My estimate is about three teaspoons of sugar. Let the strawberries sweeten about 5 minutes.
2. In a large bowl mix Cool Whip and sweetened condensed milk together.
3. In a 9 x 13 dish begin to assemble the dessert. Layer the desert like you would a lasagna. Lay down a layer of graham crackers. Leave the crackers whole. Add a layer of cream from the mixed Cool Whip and the sweetened condensed milk. Spread the cream evenly over the crackers with a butter or table knife. Add a layer of strawberries. Repeat the layering process twice in the same order. You should have three layers of each ingredient.
4. Smash several remaining graham crackers into crumbs. Sprinkle the crumbs on top.
5. Cover and refrigerate (but not freeze) for 24 hours. Cut and serve.



A Season for Hunting

Anita McCullough



Anita McCullough resides in Grants, NM, and is currently the Empowered Women's Ministries Director for PCG, New Mexico District; pastor's wife for PCG, Temple of Peace church in Milan, NM; Office Assistant (volunteer) for her husband, who serves as Secretary/Treasurer for the NM District; and part-time caregiver to her precious mother. She has served the Lord and people in many capacities throughout her life, including Sunday School teacher, Children's Church Director, Women's Ministries leader, church janitor, church secretary/treasurer, HR Director at a local nursing home, and one of her greatest passions in life—music ministry, functioning

as the church choir director and church pianist. Anita has been married to Reverend Darryl McCullough for 29 years, and is the proud mom of four sons, and the very happy Nana of 10 perfect grandchildren! Most importantly, Anita is madly in love with Jesus, He is the Love of her life!

Introduction

"Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment . . ." Jude 1: 23 (NLT). Come with me. Let's go hunting!

Let's hunt for those who need to be shown Christ's mercy. Let's hunt for those who need to be "snatched" from Satan's schemes of destruction! And, like any great hunter, we must be prepared, we must be observant/patient/courageous, and we must be vigilant.

I. Prepare

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God . . ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.

"Put on the whole armor of God . . ." Ephesians 6:11.

One of the men in our church congregation, Terry Farley, absolutely loves to hunt, so he is the one I went to for tips on how to prepare for a hunt. He said the first thing he does is to find out, where are they (the prey)? He then determines the weapon and most effective ammunition to use, and I'm quite sure he also has to determine what he needs to wear for the hunt.

Where are they? EVERYWHERE!

They are our co-workers, our neighbors, the person holding up a sign for food/money on the corner, the person standing in line at the grocery store, the waiter/waitress at the local café, our own family members . . . and, oh my, the list goes on. . . .

Several months back, God revealed to me a "new" way He wanted me to minister to people I encounter. I call it "soul-hunting."

The first step is preparation through prayer, then I ask God where He wants me to go (which store, which restaurant, etc.). Where are they, Lord? In what way do I need to minister?

Then I get dressed—in the "armor of God."

Finally, I get my (spiritual) weapons/ammunition ready: Bible verses written out and signed by me on little cards; a little notepad, pen, and scotch tape, in case I'm supposed to write something specific for the precious souls to read later. . . . You might say I have become a spiritual "Soul-Stalker!" You can, too!

It has been an amazing experience to live this way! My husband was initially surprised at this change in me because he knows it is WAY out of my comfort zone, but he loves it and has supported me wholeheartedly. He gets quite excited, in fact, when he sees the results in the changed countenance/response of those whose lives are touched by our awesome, living, all-loving God! We have had people see us again, and they have been profoundly touched that God reached out to them in a personal way!

II. Be Observant, Patient, Courageous

". . . let your light shine before others . . ." Matthew 5:16.

Once I've entered into the sacred territory, I begin to observe the person: Do they seem happy/sad/tired? Do they have a nametag on? If so, I begin addressing them by their name. If not, and if it seems the appropriate thing to do, I ask their name. I make friendly conversation with them, trying to put them at ease with me.

I patiently wait upon God to show me how I should minister to them. Sometimes He directs me to leave them a specific note; sometimes a note taped to the gas pump, addressed to "the next customer;" or maybe a signed Bible verse; and occasionally—and this is where "courage" comes into play for me—God directs me to verbally minister to them. Although this form of ministry requires the most bravery from me, it is also the most rewarding! To see their face when I mention that God has dealt with me to pray for them, to ask how they're doing, to remind them that He is thinking about them and loves them—words cannot begin to say how precious this is!

Even as I write this, my heart is overwhelmed by emotion, and my eyes well with tears as I remember those faces, faces of people loved by God, and perhaps they have a momma, a daddy, a grandma, a friend who has been praying for God to send "someone" to minister to them! Who knows? Only God—and that is enough for me!

III. Be Vigilant

"Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" 1 Peter 5:8.

We often read this verse, and rightly so, to remind ourselves that we, ourselves, should watch out that Satan does not devour us, but this scripture can and should also be applied to our call to win souls for Christ, remembering that we must do all we can to make certain the vile, evil devil cannot "devour" them. NOT on our watch!

Conclusion

We are called to “go ye therefore . . .” to “rescue/snatch them from the flames.” We are called to hunt! So, let’s go hunting! Is there not a “cause”? Yes! More so now than ever in the world’s history! May we zealously answer God’s call for this “Season for Hunting!” And, as God leads you on your hunt, I pray He will direct the ammunition of His mighty Word to hit its intended target fully and completely—going directly to the heart—a direct hit. Nothing—absolutely NOTHING—can withstand the power of His Spirit, nor the conviction of His anointed Word! I assure you the evil predator, Satan, is vigilantly “hunting,” but to him, those lost souls are prey to destroy. To Christ, and to us, they are “treasures” to save! Let’s do this! I guarantee you, if you will dare to live this way, you will never be the same!

Quotes

“This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls on the earth!”
—Keith Green

“There is no greater honor than to be the instrument in God’s hands of leading one person out of the kingdom of Satan into the glorious light of heaven.”
—Dwight L. Moody

“If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions.” —
Charles Spurgeon

No Sugar Added Gluten Free Banana Nut Muffins

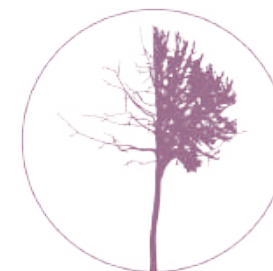
Submitted by Anita McCullough

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients in one bowl
2. Spray your muffin tin with cooking spray.
3. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

3 bananas, mashed thoroughly
2 cups oats
1/3 cup cooking oil
2 eggs (beaten)
½ tsp salt
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp vanilla

Optional: nuts of your choice, and/or
chocolate chips, and/or raisins/dried
cranberries
(my favorite add-ins = ½ cup chopped
walnuts and ½ cup dried cranberries)





Josie Carignan



Born and raised in Sweden, Josie currently lives in Texas with her husband Brad and their three children. Brad and Josie are the lead pastors of New Life Family Church in Grapevine, Texas. Josie is also the founder of Rescue Her, a non-profit that fights human trafficking both in the US and around the globe. She heads up the Beloved, the women's ministry at New Life, and she is passionate about seeing young men and women who are called to ministry equipped and raised up to fulfill the calling on their lives. Brad and Josie have served God together in full-time ministry for over 20 years, a journey that has taken them all around the world on missions trips, anti-trafficking ventures, speaking engagements, three international moves, and many other adventures. For more information about Josie, visit her website: josiecarignan.com or connect with her on social media @josiecarignan

"But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the Lord's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green" Psalm 92:12-14.

Introduction

There is a man I knew growing up who had an amazing walk with God. He had raised people from the dead, multiplied food to feed a village during a famine, cursed a tree that withered and died overnight, and when the wind took his hat, he commanded it to come back in Jesus' name, and it did! Landed right on his head! When I think about people like him and other heroes of faith, I suddenly don't mind growing older (although don't get me wrong, I wouldn't mind if there was some sort of "no wrinkle miracle" that happened too). But in light of our walk with God, every year that passes is one year that I can be stronger in my faith, know more about God, and learn to operate in the gifts of the Spirit to a greater level.

Here is the thing though, growing old is compulsory (sorry to say it, but none of us get out of that one), but growing in our faith is optional. Just because we are one year older doesn't guarantee that we are one year stronger in our faith. Growing spiritually is intentional, not automatic.

But if we partner with God and intentionally draw near to him, the Word of God promises that we will flourish and grow. So let's say you are like me and you WANT to grow. You desire to continue to get stronger with every passing day. How do we maximize seasons of growth and partner with God to get stronger in our spirit man?

I. Hear, Think, Speak

What are you listening to? What are you thinking? And what are you saying? If you can get these three areas to line up with the will of God for your life, you will radically increase your growth. First, be careful of who you let speak into your life and make sure the Word of God is always the loudest voice. Second, take captive thoughts of doubt or sin and fix your mind on Jesus. Third, realize that the words you speak today are literally creating your tomorrow. Your words have creative power. "The tongue has the power of life and death" Proverbs 18:21.

II. Living Spirit Led

Our muscles atrophy when they are not in use. The same is true of our spirit man. In order to get stronger, you have to put your spiritual muscles to use. When was the last time you gave a word of knowledge, prayed for healing, or shared your faith with someone? Use the gifts (spiritual muscles) that God has given you and they will continue to grow stronger. Going to church on Sundays and listening to Christian radio is not enough to make you grow; you need to put what you have learned into practice.

III. Embrace the Hard Times

There have been experiments done with trees in controlled environments. They were given ideal amounts of rain and sun, as well as fertile soil. However, the roots of the trees didn't grow down deep and the trees didn't thrive. Scientists were baffled. Why? The answer was simple: there was no wind. Without the need to withstand the outside forces of wind, the tree didn't have the need to grow its roots. We all go through seasons where the pressures of life surround us on every side. This is never fun, but you can be sure of this: it's causing you to grow! So embrace it. The Bible says: "When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing" James 1:2-4.

Conclusion

A final thought: I remember when our son Joshua hit a growth spurt around age 15. It seemed as if he outgrew all of his clothes overnight. Suddenly pants that had fit him for several years were inches too short. His shirts were all too small, and he looked ridiculous when wearing the clothes that had looked great on him a few months earlier. The same is true for spiritual growth. All of a sudden the things we used to do do and say don't fit us anymore. We have outgrown them. Matured. Entered a new season. When you have grown in a certain area, don't shrink back to fit into old habits. Don't let all the work God did in you be wasted by not living it out for the long haul. Forget what is behind and continue to reach forward for greater things in God. You have limitless growth potential in seed form on the inside. Don't waste time shrinking when you could be growing.



Swedish Waffle Recipe

Being born and raised in Sweden, I sometimes miss my childhood foods. One of my favorites are Swedish waffles. They are crispy, buttery, and utterly delicious. Serve them with home-made whipping cream and strawberry preserves. Or, my family's favorite; nutella and whipped cream. Enjoy!

Submitted by Josie Carignan

WAFFLES:

- 1 stick of butter
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 ¼ cup flour
- 1 ¾ cup milk

Instructions

1. Melt the butter, but don't let it brown, and set it aside to cool slightly.
2. Mix half the milk with the baking powder and flour to form a smooth batter. Add the remaining milk and cold butter.
3. Heat your waffle iron and brush with butter if needed. Pour in a third of a cup of batter at a time, and cook the waffles until golden.
4. Serve immediately with fresh berries or jam, whipped cream, or vanilla ice cream.

HOME-MADE WHIPPING CREAM:

- 1 pint of heavy whipping cream
- 2 tbsp sugar

Instructions

1. Combine the ingredients.
2. Whip until the cream forms stiff peaks. Ready to serve. (Store in the fridge in an air tight container.)

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