

Women's Life



April 2004

Principles for change

It seems to me that the most constant thing about life is change. There are seasons of life – longer lasting times like mom-of-a-preschooler. But that isn't a constant either. Dealing with a preschooler isn't the same from year to year. As the child changes, so must the mom. Then there are the other kinds of changes. Things like a new house, new job, a car in the shop. Well, you can name a lot of your own.

I recently found 5 principles for change that I found helpful. Hope you do, too.

Micki Parkinson

Maximize the pros and minimize the cons. Every change in life has both positive and negative aspects to it. Sometimes the balance isn't equal. But in every situation of change, we choose where we will dwell... maximize the positive points and don't linger on the negative ones. Choose to smile.

Enjoy the moment. Change is inevitable and this particular space in time is a treasure, even if it is hard. Don't wait to enjoy life. Engage in this moment in life. Choose to laugh.

Appreciate people. Without people, life is empty. God created us as social creatures. We need each other. Dare to reach out.

Cultivate a thankful heart. Never doubt the goodness of God toward you. Find the little things to raise your heart in thankfulness. Gratitude puts a softness in your eyes and is tonic for the soul. Choose thankfulness.

Invite God into every change. Some changes are hard, and we struggle against them. Ask God to give you the strength and wisdom you need. He can be counted on when no one and nothing else can! Hunger after Him... He promises you will be filled. He is the sure source of a grateful heart and an outlook on life that finds the joy. Invite Jesus.

from an article by Gail Rodgers (www.christianwomentoday.com)



Calendar
Thots and Things

For all of us

Recently, I read an essay that I felt was worth saving and sharing. While it was written to share the experiences of raising a disabled child, I felt as I read it that it could certainly apply to *all* of us.

So many times we focus so strongly on *our* goals and *our* agenda. We forget that God has plans for us and He has *everything* under control. He does not need our help, only our willingness to yield to His authority and wisdom.

As you read *Welcome to Holland*, I hope that you will also be encouraged by the beauty of Holland.

Cathy Miner

Welcome To Holland

by Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

(continued on page 3)

Busy? Don't
have hours
to cook? 
Check out the recipes
at LazyGourmet.com

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

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M&Ms: Small investment. Big rewards

What does it take to become a member of M&Ms book discussion group? It's very simple:

First, you need to read the currently recommended book. We'll try to allow at least six weeks of reading time so you can fit it into your personal schedule. If you don't own a copy of the book, two copies will be available through the church lending library.

Second, try to attend one of the scheduled discussion sessions to chew over thoughts and ideas with other readers.

We hope that M&Ms will become a meeting ground for women of all ages to read wonderful books, discuss great ideas and deepen our sisterhood in Christ. Questions? Books to recommend? Call Christiane Carlson-Thies at [REDACTED]

Discussion Dates:

April 18

Meet in the SPEP Parlor after the 11:00 service. Bring a brown-bag lunch.

April 25

Meet in the Parlor after the 9:30 service. Mom's with nursery-age children may find this a convenient session to attend.

April 30

Meet at the Carlson-Thies' home at 7:00pm. Call or email Christiane for directions.

Connect with your teens

Movie Nights (by Bob Smithouser) is a book from Focus on the Family that gives you activities and discussion questions for 25 films.

April 2004

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
				1 Craft Circle
4 Daylight Savings- ahead 1 hour Pony Express begins (1860)	5 Ebenezer II 9:30am	6 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer III 9:30am Prayer Mtg. 10:00am Single Moms 6:30pm	7 Body & Soul 9:15am Playgroup 10:00am	8 Craft Circle
11	12 B. Moore Study 7:00pm	13 Bible Study 9:30am Brainstorming Noon Prayer Mtg. 10:00am Single Moms 6:30pm	14 Body & Soul 9:15am MOPS 7:00pm Playgroup 10:00am	15 Craft Circle
18 M & Ms 12:15pm	19	20 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer III 9:30am Prayer Mtg. 10:00am Single Moms 6:30pm	21 Body & Soul 9:15am Playgroup 10:00am	22 Craft Circle
25 M & Ms 9:45am	26 B. Moore Study 7:00pm	27 Bible Study 9:30am Prayer Mtg. 10:00am Single Moms 6:30pm	28 Body & Soul 9:15am Playgroup 10:00am	29 Craft Circle

Next brainstorming lunch

April 13, Noon in the Ministry Center

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:00am - Noon	2 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i>	3 <i>Merry Widows 4:00pm</i>
9:00am - Noon	9 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i>	10 <i>Safety pin patented (1849)</i>
9:00am - Noon	16 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i>	17 <i>Womens Tea</i>
9:00am - Noon	23 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i>	24 <i>Moms of College Kids 9:00am</i>
9:00am - Noon	30 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>M & Ms 7:00pm</i>	



Ladies Tea

Saturday April 17 2:00-5:00pm
(at the Polms')

All women are welcome. It will be a time to continue what we began on the retreat – or bring anyone who couldn't attend up to speed. Let's gather 'round the teapot and chat together! Thomas Kincaid original artwork will be on display for our enjoyment as well.

Questions? Call [REDACTED]



Things change

This newsletter has a long lead time - plans can change before it arrives in your mailbox. Be sure to check the weekly bulletin for updated information.

Thots and Things

On the bookshelf

Household Winners for Working Women by A. Kingsley Bishop – full of strategies for battling chaos, targeting 18 household concerns.

Secrets of Organizing Small Spaces by Stania Rensberger – organizing tools especially for apartments and condos.

Ages and Stages of Getting Children Organized by Marcia Ramsland – gives a logical, age-level sequence of skills.

99 Ways to Guide Your Child to Success in School by Jay Davidson – a 19 page plan written by an educator and professional organizer.

Conquering Chronic Disorganization by Judith Kolberg – tried every organizing fad with no success? This book promises a plan that fits you perfectly.



How Long Should You Keep Your Records?

The IRS usually has three years – called a period of limitations – to audit your return, so you should keep all the relevant records at least that long. But it's important to keep some records longer. For example, you'll want to keep confirmations of stock purchases until you sell the stock and report a capital gain or loss.

If you've underreported your income by 25% or more, the IRS has six years to audit your return. And if you don't file, or you file a false return, they have forever to investigate what you owe.

Type of Record	How Long to Keep It
Most records of income and expense	At least three years, seven if possible
Investment other than real estate	Until you sell (keep the buy/sell info to report on that year's taxes)
Real estate (initial cost, improvements, costs of selling)	Until seven years after you sell
Tax returns	At least six years, ideally forever

(from the Strong Investments website)

Candles without the fumes and the fire hazard?

Check out candela lamps.

www.thinkgeek.com/gadgets/lights/5cf5/

Women's Theology Matters

Do you know any great women theologians? Have you ever thought that women and theology don't mix? Well, the SPEP M&Ms Book Club recently finished a challenging and thought provoking book entitled *When Life and Beliefs Collide* by Carolyn Custis James. In this book, the author challenges women to consider the state of their theology. She broadly defines theologians as people whose "hearts are captivated by God himself, who cling to the truth in life, who humbly kneel to adore him, and whose lives are transformed by what they have learned." (p. 26)

The book focuses on one of the first great women theologians, Mary of Bethany as an example for all of us. Ms. James analyzes three major encounters that Mary has with Jesus. First, there is the famous scene of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus while her sister Martha works in the kitchen. Mary assumes the role of a student ready to receive the teaching of Jesus and learn; this is the beginning of a relationship. Secondly, we see Mary during a crisis, disappointed and confused with Jesus over the death of her brother Lazarus. Mary is in real pain and Jesus enters into that pain as he weeps with her. This is a strengthening time for Mary's theology. Thirdly, Mary anoints Jesus for his burial. "By anointing his body for burial, Mary was the first of his disciples to proclaim the gospel-that Jesus has indeed come 'to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45)." (p. 165) It is in this scene where we really see Mary's strong theology in action.

Interwoven with the story of Mary of Bethany, Ms. James discusses how a woman's theology not only affects her life but also those around her. Our families, friends and church benefit when we have good theology; they need us to be strong "ezers" (Hebrew for "helper"). Furthermore, the author looks closely at suffering and how our theology affects how we deal with pain. She reminds the reader that God is good and that He has a plan for us even in the midst of suffering. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus when the race of life becomes difficult and trust Him. (Hebrews 12:1-2) "Trusting God means we embrace his goodness in this part of the race and determine, by his grace, to run." (p. 126)

In conclusion, this book was an encouragement to me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus during the trials of life and to continue to sit at His feet to deepen my theology. The book concludes with an outstanding recommended reading list to encourage women on their theological journey. I recommend this book to the women of SPEP; it will definitely get you thinking about the state of your theology. Don't you want to be known as a great women theologian?

Ann Soltis



"So live that
your memories
will be part of your
happiness."

Unknown



Flo Wolfe, Director of Women's Ministries
Barbara Smith, Newsletter Coordinator
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