

Women's Life



March 2004

An early spring lesson

At Christmas I received a pot and four bulbs for paper whites, the encouraging tiny flowers that hold the promise of spring in them. As I write this at the end of January, someone must have forgotten to tell two of those tiny bulbs they need six weeks to bloom, for there are several brave blossoms nestled up close to my frigid bowed window, keeping watch over the dogwood limbs struggling to hold up under an inch of ice on every bough. There's something about the spunk of the paper whites and the dogwood that made me think of God's ways with us.

Some of us take on the "push-forward-ahead-of-schedule" lifestyle and thrust our efforts toward the sky, regardless of the weather outside. We seek the challenge and press on. That's our style, the way we do things. And the kingdom of God needs such women. These women push upward to get things accomplished; they make sacrifices and huddle near some tough decisions, some cold windows that overlook wintry difficulties.

Some of us take the position of the dogwood. It's anchored deeply in the soil of life and it takes what conditions surround it. The branches aren't able to dance now with the weight of the ice straining and threatening to tear them off. Later in the spring, others may think the dogwood is too showy with its proliferation of pink blooms. But the tree has stood as a sentinel over the yard in winter and will bloom later. And the kingdom of God needs such women.

I suspect that if these plants had voices and personalities (as plants and trees do in C. S. Lewis' Narnia tales) the tree might feel the paper white has it easy in the house. The window might be cold, but those bulbs should try the icy outdoors for comparison. From the inside, the paper whites can't wait to bring on spring. The white blooms might even complain about the slowness of those dogwood blossoms, or wonder if the lazy tree was doing anything to grow right now.

Is there someone in your life who is just not doing things the way you think they should? Are you the "paper white woman" who can't wait or are

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you the “stoic dogwood tree lady” that deals with the ice and hangs onto her branches with determination, not worried about blooming right now? The beauty of this early spring tableau is that God has placed both the bulbs and the tree right where He wants them. Perhaps the Lord is asking us to take a lesson from His world and ease up on the woman who is currently hard for us to handle. There’s room for all to bloom in His world and make life beautiful for all who see us.

Flo Wolfe



Reviewing M&Ms Next Book

If the book, *When Life and Beliefs Collide* by Carolyn Custis James, has given you a deeper appreciation of the importance of theology in a woman’s life, then I think you will enjoy reading our next M&Ms book club selection, *Five Women of the English Reformation*, by Paul F. M. Zahl. Order the book and have it read by April 15, then watch the bulletin for announcements of scheduled discussions.

In this slender volume (just 120 pages including footnotes and bibliography), Zahl provides a glimpse of “five strong and intellectually gifted women” who “paid the cost of their reforming convictions with martyrdom, imprisonment, and exile.” Zahl puts his spotlight on Anne Boleyn, wife to King Henry the VIII and mother to future queen Elizabeth, Catherine Paar, the last of Henry’s many wives, Jane Grey who held the British throne for nine days before being executed for her Protestant beliefs, as well as Anne Askew and Catherine Willoughby, ladies in waiting in the Tudor court whose faith led one to execution and the other to exile.

What binds these five women together and what causes Zahl to recommend them to us today is that they provide inspiring examples of women who “thought theologically” and were willing to throw themselves into the most important religious battle of their times. (Footnote: when you read this book you will notice the author’s Episcopal tradition, including references to women in ordained ministries.

Two copies of *Five Women of the English Reformation* are available in the church Resource Center. Or you can buy your own new copy for about \$12.00 at amazon.com or christianbooks.com. Search the internet for best pricing. Better yet, order together with a friend and save on shipping.

Christiane Carlson-Thies

Can You Afford to Work?

Wonder if you should go back to work? Will it really help the budget as much as you think it will? This article may help: www.christian-homemaking.com/affordtowork.html

Quick Clutter Control

- 1 - Whenever you have a few minutes to spare put away five or ten items that are not in their correct place.
- 2 - Dump junk mail the moment you receive it. Deal with other mail at least once a week.
- 3 - The five boxes method – Rubbish, Give Away/Sell, Keep, Sentimental and Not Sure. Go through everything in the area consigning each item to one of the boxes. Theoretically, by the time you have got rid of the Rubbish and Give Away/Sell boxes, you should have enough space to store the Sentimental and put the Keep items back in an orderly way. The Not Sure box should be sealed up, stored in basement or attic and if not needed after six months or one year, given away unopened (so that you're not tempted to keep the contents all over again).
- 4 - Be ruthless. If you haven't used an item in the last two years you are not likely to need it again.
- 5 - If you can't face an entire room, break the job down into manageable tasks – the kitchen junk drawer, the letter pile, the hats, coats and shoes area.
- 6 - Make staying tidy easier. Buy storage boxes. Plastic or fabric hanging shoe bags aren't just for shoes – store small toys, hair brushes, etc.
- 7 - Clean and put away 50% of your knick-knacks. Not only will this give your home a more modern minimalist look, you will get your dusting done in half the time.
- 8 - Consider enlisting the help of a family member or friend to be your organizing buddy. Hearing yourself try to explain why you need a whole kitchen cupboard full of plastic containers can help you get them into that Rubbish box.
- 9 - Don't keep buying things. Stop and think, do I really need this and have I got somewhere to keep this? Some people work on a one in, one out system, i.e. if you buy a new sweater, toy for the children etc. then one goes to the charity shop or is given to a friend.
- 10 - Don't give up. It will take time. All the clutter didn't come into your home in one day and you won't get rid of it all in one day.
from an article by Colleen Moulding
www.allthatwomenwant.com/cluttercontrol.htm
(used with permission)



Ready, set ...

Make next Christmas smoother – get a Christmas Timetable: www.onlineorganizing.com/Tool_Christmas_Countdown.htm

First Hot
Fudge
Sundae
(1906)

March 20

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
	1 <i>B. Moore Study 7:00pm</i> <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i>	2 <i>Bible Study 9:30am</i> <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i> <i>Prayer Mtg 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i>	3 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>Playgroup 10:00am</i>
7	8 <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i>	9 <i>Bible Study 9:30am</i> <i>Brainstorming Noon</i> <i>Prayer Mtg 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i>	10 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>MOPS 7:00pm</i> <i>Playgroup 10:00am</i>
14	15 <i>B. Moore Study 7:00pm</i> <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i>	16 <i>Bible Study 9:30am</i> <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i> <i>Prayer Mtg 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i>	17 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>Playgroup 10:00am</i>
21	22 <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i> <i>First US nursing school chartered (1861)</i> <i>Sanctuary Clean 9:00am</i>	23 <i>Bible Study 9:30am</i> <i>Prayer Mtg 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i>	24 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>Playgroup 10:00am</i>
28	29 <i>B. Moore Study 7:00pm</i> <i>Ebenezer II 9:30am</i>	30 <i>Bible Study 9:30am</i> <i>Prayer Mtg 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i>	31 <i>Body & Soul 9:15am</i> <i>Playgroup 10:00am</i>

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Craft Circle Noon	5 Body & Soul 9:15am	6 Merry Widows 4:00pm
11 J.R.'s Study 7:00pm (B.B. meeting) Craft Circle Noon	12 Body & Soul 9:15am	13
18 Craft Circle Noon	19 Body & Soul 9:15am	20
25 Craft Circle Noon	26 Body & Soul 9:15am	27

Next brainstorming lunch

March 9, Noon in the Ministry Center



Try a different kind of Journal

History Journal – describe the events and add some of your thoughts.

Children’s Journal – record what you see God doing in their lives and your hopes and prayers for them (to give to them someday).



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

Easy Tuna Recipes

by Rachel Paxton
creativehomemaking.com

Chopstick Tuna

1 can tuna, drained
1 can cream of mushroom soup
2 cups chow mein noodles
1 cup celery, chopped
¼ cup onion, chopped
½ cup almonds or cashews,
chopped

Combine soup with ¼ cup water. Add 1 cup chow mein noodles and remaining ingredients. Place in baking dish and spread rest of noodles on top. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes.

Classic Tuna Casserole

1 env. chicken noodle soup mix
2½ cups boiling water
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
1 can tuna
2 cups canned peas, drained
¼ cup buttered bread crumbs
Pepper

Preheat oven to 450°. In a small saucepan, combine soup mix and water; heat to boiling. In another saucepan, melt butter over low heat and blend in flour and pepper. Gradually stir in hot soup and cook until thickened. Add tuna and fold in peas. Pour into a greased baking dish and top with bread crumbs. Bake for about 15 minutes, until heated through.



“When you seek to play the role of the Holy Spirit in another person’s life, you will misdirect that person’s battle with God onto yourself.”

Neil Anderson

By the numbers...

9 Deadly Home Buying Sins

www.onlineorganizing.com/Tool_Homebuying_Sins.htm

10 Questions for Selecting A Mover

www.onlineorganizing.com/Tool_Selecting_Mover_FAQ.htm

13 Ways to Spend Time with Your Teenage Daughter

www.christian-homemaking.com/teendaughter.html

Micki's Corner

“There is as much guidance in what does not and cannot happen in my life as there is in what can and does – maybe more.” (Parker J. Palmer, quoted in *The Intentional Woman*)

That quote struck me when I read it and it's been on my mind ever since. When I pray for guidance, I look for opportunities or open doors. It's what comes naturally. But what if closed doors are guidance? And what if fences that have no doors at all are guidance, too?

Every life has its fences. And there are lots of different kinds. I can try to ignore the fence, but walking into it really hurts. I can beat it with my fists until I'm exhausted. I can scream and yell until I'm hoarse. I can cry and mourn the loss of freedom. But the fence remains. Why?

Paul knew. His “thorn in the flesh” was frustrating and kept him from the things he wanted to do. He was an Apostle. You would think that God would have opened every door and torn down every fence to make the way clear for him. But He didn't. “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’” (2 Cor. 12:8-9a)

How would it change the way we respond to illness, disability and all the other fences if we thought of them as guidance? Would we sit down and just wait for it to be over? Or would we actually look for what is inside the fence? If it is God's guidance, then I have to believe that there is something for me right where I am – inside the fence.

And, if His power is made perfect in weakness, then what I do inside the fence actually shows God's power more than all the things I would like to do outside it. It's going to take more thought and practice, but I hope someday to say with Paul, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Cor. 12:9b,10b)

Micki Parkinson



Behind the Scenes of Women's Life

Flo Wolfe, Director of Women's Ministries
Barbara Smith, Newsletter Coordinator
Micki Parkinson, Design and Editing

Want to write some
encouragement to
Julia Garrison?





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