

Women's Life



November 2004

My Journey

Beginning my story was hard. Stories are supposed to begin with an opening to enthrall or enchant the reader. But then I'm not writing a fairy tale. A cancer diagnosis is not entertaining.

"I'm sorry, you have breast cancer." Wow, these are words I never thought I'd hear at 39 years of age! I was stunned, and shocked. This wasn't supposed to be happening; I'm young, no family history, and very healthy, can't even remember when I last had the common cold. Inside I was screaming, "No! Please, God, no!" How will I tell my husband? What will we tell our young daughters?

I now have a membership in an exclusive club I never wanted to join. I clung to Proverbs 3:5-6 during this time, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path.*"

If it hasn't already, this disease will touch you, or someone you know. Every 3 minutes a woman in this country is diagnosed with breast cancer. Here's the truth: most women who get breast cancer have no family history. So listen up. It could happen to you; it happened to me.

In December 2003, when I went for my routine GYN visit, my doctor discovered a palpable mass in my right breast. Next, my mammogram, and sonogram came back negative, because a woman under 40 has very dense breast tissue. A biopsy later concluded Invasive Ductal Carcinoma. I had a mastectomy, followed up with 7 treatments of chemotherapy, and later, 28 treatments of radiation. Now I'm looking toward reconstruction. This has been a very long year, one of feeling most of the time like I'm on a roller-coaster ride, without the ability to get off.

"*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the Lord, "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*" (Jer. 29:11) Today is only one chapter, not the complete book of my life. I refuse to put a period in my life where God may only put a comma. God has a plan for all of us; we must trust Him every step of the way. I value my friends, and each one has

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My Journey (continued)

shared some special grace just at the time I needed it. Thank God for my wonderful, supportive husband Tim, who has been with me completely each step of this journey. Most of all, the Lord has allowed me to meet, and witness to people I would never had met if I had not traveled down this road (other patients in the chemo or waiting room, doctors, nurses). There's a chorus to a song I love that says: For as long as I shall live—I will testify to love—I'll be a witness in the silences when words are not enough. With every breath I take I will give thanks to God above. For as long as I shall live, I will testify to love...

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. Make it your reminder to get that mammogram you've never had, or have been putting off. Make your yearly GYN appointment. Do your breast self exam monthly. Another piece of advice: many of us make decisions about our health based on what one doctor tells us. While this might be fine if you have an earache, when a major medical problem arises, get a second opinion if needed. *Lisa Eder*

(ed. note: I use my birthday as a reminder for those yearly tests. That it's-been-another-year reminder works better for me. Whatever you use—just do it!)



“It’s not what I do that matters, but what a sovereign God chooses to do through me. God doesn’t want worldly successes. He wants me. He wants my heart in submission to Him. Life is not just a few years to spend on self-indulgence and career advancement. It’s a privilege, a responsibility, a stewardship to be lived according to a much higher calling—God’s calling. This alone gives true meaning to life.”

Elizabeth Dole at the National Prayer Breakfast, 1987

“Though no one can go back and make a new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.”

Henri J. Nouwen

Book report

Ruth Graham, the beloved child of Dr. and Mrs. Billy Graham, describes life on scary ledges as a lamb who needs her Shepherd's rescue, time and again. For her, what could go wrong, did go wrong. Christians aren't immune from life going terribly wrong. She answers the question – When life knocks us flat; when we choose unwisely – when we can't rise above the pain – when self-pity is easier than forgiveness – what hope do we have?

In her new book, *In Every Pew Sits a Broken Heart: Hope for the Hurting*, Ruth Graham, encourages those in a dark valley, and those helping someone else walk through dark valleys. If tempted to say, "Well, how can she know my pain?" a reader will learn the answer through her struggles, which were – and are – not much different from yours and mine. The struggles include enduring both people's sins against us, and the sins we commit. Ruth candidly and gently exposed the lies that put her on a lonely, dangerous ledge – or that temporarily kept her from running home to the Father who waits.

As she develops the events that rocked her, she also tells what she learned: first, suggestions for those who care for wandering lambs, prodigals, or their older brothers; second a checklist of reminders for living through the painful time; third, tips for care-givers, and finally, precious Scripture memory verses. The combining of these helps clarify and fortify hope for the hurting hearts.

Pain, shame and pride led Ruth Graham onto shaky ledges, and her three precious children also found themselves stranded and hurting on ledges of their own. Yet the great Shepherd of the flock came – every time – and led them to safety.

The strength of this book is her candor, her transparency while she confesses her heartaches and failures, from her husband's adultery to their tragic divorce, unplanned pregnancies, depression, eating disorders and coldness of heart. Yet, though it all, Ruth Graham magnifies God's unshakeable love which rescued and restored, repeatedly, while she has been learning who she is in Christ.

Barbara Smith



The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks this question: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer given is this: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." That means that everything that happens to us, every circumstance of our lives, is orchestrated by God to achieve those two ends.

(Lydia Brownback)

Teddy Bear
invented
(1902)

November 2000

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
	1 3 R's 9:30am Moms who have Daughters 7:30pm	2 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer I 9:30am Election Day Prayer Mtg 10:00am Single Moms 6:45pm	3 Playgroup 10:00am	4 3Rs Bible 7:00pm
7	8 3 R's 9:30am	9 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer I 9:30am Prayer Mtg 10:00am Single Moms 6:45pm	10 MOPS 7:00pm Playgroup 10:00am	11 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Veterans</div>
14	15 3 R's 9:30am Ebenezer III 9:30am Moms who have Daughters 7:30pm	16 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer I 9:30am Prayer Mtg 10:00am Single Moms 6:45pm	17 Playgroup 10:00am	18 3Rs Bible 7:00pm
21	22 3 R's 9:30am	23 Bible Study 9:30am Ebenezer I 9:30am Prayer Mtg 10:00am Single Moms 6:45pm	24 Playgroup 10:00am	25 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Thanksgiving</div>
28	29 3 R's 9:30am Louisa May Alcott born (1832)	30 Bible Study 9:30am Prayer Mtg 10:00am Single Moms 6:45pm		

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Study	5	6
ans Day	12	13 <i>Merry Widows Noon</i>
Study	19 <i>Pencil invented (1895)</i>	20
Thanksgiving	26	27 <i>Merry Widows</i>

Thanksgiving

recipes: <http://thanksgiving.allrecipes.com>
 activities: www.annieshomepage.com/thanksgivinggames.html



What does it mean to be adopted?

Teacher Debbie Moon's first graders were discussing a picture of a family. One little boy in the picture had a different color hair than the other family members. One child suggested that he was adopted and a little girl said, "I know all about adoptions because I was adopted." "What does it mean to be adopted?" asked another child. "It means," said the girl, "that you grew in your mommy's heart instead of her tummy."



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

Safety Tips (reprinted from the Merry Widows Newsletter)

- 1 - The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to use it, do!
- 2 - If a robber asks for your wallet and/or purse, don't hand it to him. Toss it away from you and run in the other direction (chances are that he is more interested in it than in you).
- 3 - If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy. The driver won't see you, but everybody else will.
- 4 - As soon as you get into the car, lock the doors and leave. Women tend to get in and sit (doing their checkbook, or making a list, etc.) It's the perfect time for him to get in on the passenger side.
- 5 - A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot or garage:
Be aware: look around you and into your car (passenger side floor and in the back seat).
If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Many victims have been pulled into vans while attempting to get into their cars.
Look at the car parked on either side of yours. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to go back and get someone to walk out with you.
- 6 - Always take the elevator instead of the stairs. (Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot).
- 7 - If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, always run! The predator will only hit a running target 4 in 100 times; and even then, it most likely will not be a vital organ. Run!
- 8 - Don't be sympathetic. It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, always played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He would use a cane, or a limp, and asked for help, then he abducted his next victim.
- 9 - Another Safety Point: If you hear anything unusual outside your door late at night (like a baby crying) don't open the door. Call the police instead. Predators can use recordings, etc. to coax women to open the door when they're home alone at night.



Safe Stuffing?

Use a roasting wand to be sure that the stuffing reaches the safe temperature. (A roasting wand is a long metal tube that's inserted into a stuffed turkey to heat the stuffing from the inside out.)

Shannon LaForge

Courtroom Deputy to Judge Robert Junell

U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas

Micki's Corner

On that day the Lord their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. How attractive and beautiful they will be!
(Zech 9:16-17a)

Do you ever think about how God thinks of you? Every once in a while I look up all the verses where God talks about His people. It's an important exercise for me.

I can get so focused on here and now—the things I see and the things I do. I'm so aware of the times I must disappoint Him. Of the times I fall so short of what He wants for me. And I start to imagine (again) that, when I see Him, He'll say "Oh, ok, you can come in." with that look of disappointment I remember from my father's face.

Then I go back and read those verses again. And I see that He doesn't think of me the way I think of myself. Or the way I imagine Him thinking about me. His perspective is so much bigger than mine. And He is able to do in me all that He can picture.

When He returns I will shine like a jewel of a crown—a beautiful jewel. Me! Just thinking about it gives me the encouragement to continue, to keep working with Him to form that jewel.

And not just me. He is working to form you into one of those jewels, too. I can't wait to see just how beautiful you'll be!

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

Saved by cake

A little girl was in an orphanage during World War II. When her soldier father, whom she hardly knew, came to rescue her, she recognized him only because he offered her a piece of poppy seed cake, her favorite.

(a true story from a letter received by Christopher Kimball, Cook's Magazine)



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