



*Meet Me In
The Garden
In The
Morning*

A guide to intimacy with your spouse and God.

Janice Leasure Woodrum



Man was created to live in a
garden and to experience the
presence of God with his
helpmate, naked and without
being ashamed.
Genesis 2:25





I know a place called
'early in the morning.'
I so often meet
my Beloved there.
He goes before
to prepare a place,
in a garden
where a Man
became a Lamb...
in a garden
where a Man
became the Lamb of God.



Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning



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JANICE LEASURE WOODRUM

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DEDICATION

Some of my oldest and fondest memories originated at my Grandmother Day's house. I dedicate this book to the memory of Elva Day, my mother's mother, who lived about a mile from my childhood home in La Cygne, Kansas.

It was my delight to spend the day, and sometimes all night, with her when my mother had an appointment or shopping to do in Kansas City, about 60 miles north of our farm. Grandma Day and I would do 'special' things together. Two things stand out in my memory. The first was that of baking cookies together – always the same delicious 'sugar cookies' for which she had a reputation among the Methodist ladies and others.

But one memory surpassed that of her scrumptious cookies. And that was a priceless glimpse I still retain from my childhood. As a young girl, I would sit alongside her in her comfy rocking chair. Next to her chair there was a small shelf where she kept a few necessary items. She had a small notepad and pencil, and a copy of *'The Upper Room,'* a popular 'page-a-day' devotional booklet. I always looked forward to sitting next to her and reading the devotional message together. I believe that my desire to read the Bible, and my love for Jesus were born right there in that rocking chair.

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If I had spent the night with her, (which was a special treat) we would start the day by reading the devotional message from *'The Upper Room.'* When she finished a month, she would give the booklet to me and start on a new one. These booklets were a treasure to me, and I kept them on a shelf next to my bed. I believe that my love of reading and later writing was born from these seeds of devotion, which my Grandmother Day tenderly and graciously planted into my young heart.

This book "Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning" is an offspring from those seeds. I earnestly pray the same seeds will find fertile soil in your life also.



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Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning



MEET ME IN THE GARDEN IN THE MORNING

A guide to intimacy with your spouse and God.

Do you want a more intimate walk with God than you have ever experienced? Would you like to see your love relationship with your mate kindled to a new depth and fire? There is a secret which very few Christian couples seem to have experienced. We want to share that secret with you, believing that your life together and your walk with God will never be the same.

Come with us to the garden, and we will share the treasure with you.

There is a way to recover the intimacy and transparency with God that Adam and Eve experienced. This type of intimacy was purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ when He redeemed us with His sinless life, the restitution of His suffering, His death, the grave, and His resurrection from the dead. We need only to meet Him there in the 'garden' and allow Him by His grace to reveal Himself to us in love, intimacy, forgiveness, and newness of life day after day in His presence.

The secret garden is outlined in the scriptures, yet so few find it for themselves, and even fewer find the wonder of sharing it with their mates.

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How can we find it for ourselves and for our marriages? You as a couple have only to resolve and follow through to meet together with Him in the garden in the morning, and He will be waiting there for you, day by day, just as He was for Adam and Eve.

But to initiate this meeting together with God in the morning may require a change in our usual patterns, an adjustment from what has become familiar, and a transition from our normal comfortable routines. To make a commitment, or to even venture a try, we need to be convinced by the scriptures that this is God's design and will for us. Then, and only then can we undertake the discipline and obedience to change our schedules, our patterns, and our daily lives as disciples of Christ - in order to follow after what we as a couple are convinced is an extremely valuable and vital pearl in the Christian marriage. Please follow as we set the scriptural stage for a daily pattern that may change your life and your marriage forever.

CHAPTER ONE

God wants to meet with each of us at the start of every day.



Let's examine some scriptures which show us that great men like David and Isaiah waited to hear from God in the morning.

Psalm 5:3 “In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation.”

This verse is at the head of the list, because for me it holds the most powerful secret of walking out our lives with Christ. And yet it is one that

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many people find almost impossible, with the demands of *time* to get the kids off to school, or the lunch box prepared, or the shave or hairdo completed. But just as we insist on feeding the children breakfast, we must take in spiritual food in the morning that will sustain us through the events and challenges of our days. I like to remember it with the little acronym: **TIME**

~~~ **Take In the Most Essential!** ~~~

I can imagine how my relationship with my husband would dwindle if we both got up in the morning and went about the day without saying a word to each other. If we left with no hug, no kiss going out the door, and no idea what challenges each of us are facing in the day ahead, we would lose out on a source of connectedness and strength to face the events resident in the day.

**Psalm 57:7-8** “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.”

As I read this verse, I think of the “heart” as a place of residence for the things of the spirit. And the “soul” is more a place of thoughts, memories and decision-making.

Here the Psalmist repeats the statement that his “heart is steadfast.” We sometimes

hear an excuse from someone who had good intentions toward a certain action, but failed to carry it through and finish the task.

We see that the Psalmist for emphasis repeats the energizing truth that the heart is in control, and it **will** awaken the soul, to successfully awaken the body to rise with the dawn to worship God with songs and praises.

He ends this section with the phrase “I will...”

We often hear the phrase “mind over matter,” which to me means the mind tells the body what to do. But in this scripture it is the heart, the dwelling place of the Spirit within us that tells the soul what to do... wake up in the morning and praise God!

**Psalm 119:147** “I rise before dawn and cry for help;  
I have put my hope in Your Word.”

Here we see not only an exercise of crying out to God for help, but a very tangible expectation or hope that the Word of God can bring us illumination and empowerment to meet the challenges of the day ahead. We see a declaration of the pattern or habit that the psalmist has developed, for hope in God’s Word is his choice and his expectation for success. May the Holy Spirit establish such a frame of mind and heart within each of us!

**Psalm 143:7-8** “Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails! Do not hide your face from me, or I will be like those who go down to the pit. Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul.”

The morning is emphasized as the optimum part of the day for experiencing a reminder of God’s presence and His directions for the events of the day.

The words, “to You I lift up my soul” make me think of a small blank chalk board which I hold up to God, for Him to fill in the blanks with the expectations and directions He has for the events facing me each day.

**Isaiah 26:9(a)** “My soul yearns for You in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for You.”

This verse seems to indicate a sub-conscious yearning of the inner man to seek God’s presence even during sleep. Reading a scripture passage or listening to a worship song at bedtime is a helpful pattern for restful sleep, as well as to lay the groundwork for spiritual dreams and visions to be experienced.

**Isaiah 50:4-5** “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning; wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The



Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.”

This verse reminds me of when I was a school-age girl who loved to stay in bed as long as possible in the mornings. Mother would come to wake me up to get ready for school, but I was reluctant, and tried to get away with turning over to sleep a little longer. Then finally when it was nearly time to catch the bus, I had to hurry up to get dressed and catch the school bus. I didn't seem to realize that it would have been so much easier to get up when she first called me, taking time to get dressed and eat breakfast in an unhurried fashion before walking out to catch the school bus. When I got a little older I finally realized that it was much less stress to get out of bed when mother first called me, being responsible to get myself ready for school.

These verses remind me that I have a message from the Lord to share with those who are weary. It is almost always within my morning time in the scriptures that I receive my instructions for the events of the day, the people I expect to meet and the word from the scriptures that I might want to share with them to build them up in the Lord.

This verse is such an encouragement to me to gladly obey my first “wake up call” from the Lord, and prepare myself to receive the wisdom from His Word that He wants to share with me

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This is a good time to evaluate your own life routines to see if the Lord would like to make some adjustments in your schedule in order to receive the important words He has for you first thing in the morning.



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I have a choice to draw back into my pillow for a little more sleep, or to eagerly get myself prepared for the time of meeting with the Lord at the start of the day.

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**Lamentations 3:22-23** “Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for Him.’ ”

This verse brings up a vital aspect of our fellowship with God ... waiting. Sometimes we will hear the Lord's voice right away as we examine the scriptures, but other times we need to pray and then wait for Him to “give us this day our daily bread” as the Lord's Prayer reminds us. The scriptures say His compassions are “new

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every morning.” Like a young child waits for his mom to finish making the pancakes, we need to trust in God to bring us a fresh daily portion of His revelatory Word as we read and wait prayerfully.

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Thank you to Donna and Dan Treat of Chehalis, Washington, for allowing us to take so many photos of your beautiful garden for this book.

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## **CHAPTER ONE QUESTIONS**

1. From your own experience list three reasons why God may want to meet with you in the morning before you start your daily routine.

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2. List three items from your daily routine that may make it more difficult for you to take time to meet with God first thing in the morning.

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3. Prayerfully consider how you might want to make changes in your schedule, so that you are free to meet with the Lord in His Word and prayer before any other events of the day.

List two or more changes you will attempt to make:

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

**Jesus met in prayer and fellowship with the Father early in the morning.**



**Luke 6:12-16** “One of those days 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, whom He also designated apostles...”

Let us consider more closely the life of Jesus as our example of the pattern of meeting with the Father first thing in the morning.

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In this passage, we see that Jesus not only met the Father in the morning, but He had spent the entire night praying. The selection of the disciples who would walk most closely with Him through the days and nights of His ministry was perhaps the most important task He had at the start of His ministry. The passage seems to imply that the choice of these men was very important, and there were many things to be considered.

He needed unbroken and undisturbed time with Father God to hear His voice clearly and make these decisions according to the will of the Father. It seems that He may have intentionally prayed through the night, in order that He would be less likely to have interruptions from other persons, which could cloud His process of intense prayer and consideration of these vitally important decisions.

**Mark 1:35** “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.”

**Luke 4:42** “At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place, where He prayed.”

It seems that Jesus intentionally selected a time to meet with the Father, with fewer interruptions. Almost daily He was continually developing a larger following of those who wanted to hear what He had to say, and the weight of



administrating the work before Him grew steadily heavier.

**John 5:19** “Jesus said, I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.’”

**John 12:49-50** “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that His commands lead to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

This level of obedience mentioned in John 12:49-50 seemed to require that Jesus would spend some time waiting in the presence of the Father before His busy days of preaching, teaching, healing and other ministry began. If He, the Son of God, needed to wait for direction from the Father at the start of the day, how much more do we who would call ourselves His disciples?

After considering these verses for a time, I recognized it was the pattern Jesus chose to demonstrate for us also, in order that we as His disciples might follow in His footsteps.

As a young Christian, I didn't sense it was necessary to emulate this pattern which Jesus demonstrated. It was not unusual, with two young children, for me to be up one or two times in the night to answer a call for a drink of water, or

## *Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*

simply a hug and consolation when a child was awakened in the night. And I just didn't see how I could possibly work into my morning schedule a time to meet with God. After quite some time, however, I came to an awareness that I just didn't remember in the morning much of what I had read eight hours earlier at bedtime; and I went into the tasks of the day without the near presence, the instruction, or the consolation that only God's Word could provide.

Finally, as my faith matured, I began to recognize how vital the need for fellowship in the morning had become for me. And I began the discipline of learning to set the clock a little earlier, in order to come into my personal quiet time with the Lord before the children would need to rise up for school or other activities.

This practice was quickly rewarded, as the Holy Spirit opened to my understanding verses and passages that would pop up later in the day to encourage and refresh me. Or if I was facing a challenge, I would remind myself of the Bible truth I had studied in the morning, and often it was just the instruction or encouragement I needed to face the issue or problem at hand.

The reward was worth the effort it required, and by the Lord's gracious wisdom and strength I have continued this pattern over the years.



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As my faith matured, I began to recognize how vital the need for fellowship in the morning had become for me.

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## **CHAPTER TWO QUESTIONS**

1. List two or more reasons why Jesus found it essential to meet with Father God by Himself in a solitary place early each morning:

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2. Prayerfully consider your own patterns of Bible Study and prayer. Is the place where you are reading and studying the scriptures relatively free from interruptions from other persons?

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3. How can you change or select an environment that is relatively free from outside interruptions? I can ....

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If Jesus, the Son of God,  
needed to wait for direction  
from the Father at the start of  
the day, how much more do  
we who would call ourselves  
His disciples?

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

**God wants to meet with all believers at the start of their day to give them a word to minister to their personal needs and the needs of others.**



**2 Corinthians 1:3-5** “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows ... And

our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”

This passage is such a wonderful promise of the Lord’s role in sharing in our trials, and providing the comfort we need to experience. In return we need to yield ourselves to the touch of the Father, who also wants us to share and comfort others in their points of need. In order to prepare ourselves for whatever assignment we might encounter throughout our days, we need to meet with the Lord to receive the “word” in the morning that we will need later.

The scriptures give us good evidence that God wants to meet with His followers at the start of their days. Let's take a closer look at **Isaiah 50:4-5**. He says that “God has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me ***morning by morning***, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.” Isaiah was a faithful servant of God who heard God's voice and spoke from the heart of God into the heart of the situation. He knew a most basic principle... “If you want to go to men for God, you must first go to God for men, in order to have something to take to men from God.”

Isaiah allowed God to waken him early every morning and instruct him, causing him to listen and learn what *word* God had for him to speak to



the weary, which might sustain and encourage them. Verse 5 goes on to say, “The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.”

Isaiah knew God as a sovereign being, who could do what He wanted, when He wanted, and how He wanted; and Isaiah did not argue with the truth of it. Have you ever tried to reason with a child or a teenager, giving them a word of instruction or correction, only to have them pull their shoulder away in rebellion? Isaiah had learned not to rebel against the Lord in His choices. It became clear that God's best choice for him was to meet with God early in the morning to receive the words which he would speak to others that day or in the days to come. (This passage in Isaiah and the verses which follow are also prophetic of the life of the Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ.)



**Psalm 118:24** “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

God has designed each day for us, as He promised in **Psalm 139:16...** “All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before

one of them came to be.” As we meet with Him early in the morning and trust Him to lead us step by step through the day, He reveals His plans for us. He knows precisely which person may cross our paths, who is weary from the trials of life and needs a word from the scriptures for encouragement. Or perhaps they need someone to intercede for them or just listen and comfort them. Often the sufferings of our lives can be used by God in order that we are prepared to comfort others with the same soft comfort which we have received from God when going through a similar trial.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5** “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.”

When we fail to meet with God in the morning, we reduce our full potential to minister God's love, comfort and direction to others in our lives who are needing a special touch of understanding, encouragement or wisdom.

In **Hebrews 10:24** the author says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,” and one of the best

ways to consider each other is in the presence of God as we take the concerns and burdens of others to the throne of God in prayer.

**Ephesians 6:18** “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

And in that context as we think about and pray for a specific person, family, group or ministry, the Holy Spirit is able to direct us in ways He may want us to spur each other on toward love and good deeds. He may give us a scripture to share, or instruct us to go and visit someone, or write a card, or make a phone call, or take a gift, or go and pray for someone ... or any number of other possible actions to minister God's love toward others.

But as we meet with Him in the mornings, day by day, on some days we will be the weary ones who need the sustaining word from God. On these times He may speak encouragement to our hearts to strengthen and build us up, within the challenges and stresses of our lives and those of our families. David said in **Psalms 5:1-3** “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray. In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation.” And in **verse**

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**8** he continues, “Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies - make straight Your way before me.”

It is obvious that David had an expectation that God would answer the cries of his heart and give him some word of consolation, encouragement or direction in the midst of his troubles. Likewise, we can also come daily before God in expectation to hear from Him, both for our own needs, and for the needs of others.

A dramatic example is found in **Exodus 3:1-12**. In this story Moses is simply tending sheep, when he notices a bush which appears to be burning, but is not burned up.

**Exodus 3:4** “So Moses thought, I will go over (turn aside) and see this strange sight - why the bush does not burn up. When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’”

God was watching, and when Moses turned aside from his usual routine and conversed with God he was given instructions for ministry to the people of Israel, which altered the course of Israel and human history from that time forward. What if he had not turned aside? Would God have found someone else to lead His people out of bondage? Perhaps, but we can see in retrospect how wonderfully God had prepared Moses’ life for just such a work. We are thankful

that he did turn aside, and did not rebel against the word spoken to him from God. We see in his life a dependence upon God for the direction he desperately needed in order to lead this people group as God had planned.

In **Exodus 17:1-7** Moses is struggling with a complaining and quarreling, thirsty people. Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people?” Moses needed God's answers, not the answers of his flesh. And so do we. As we mature in our life and ministry, we will want more and more to walk, speak and act in the Spirit, rather than in the flesh. This takes time in the presence of God to commune with, receive from, and learn from the Spirit of Truth, who guides us into all truth (John 16:13).

God is constantly using the experiences of our daily lives to prepare us for ministry to others. However, we can miss blessed opportunities to allow God to minister to others through us if we do not take the time to “turn aside” from our busy lives and our routines regularly, in order to meet with God and wait upon Him for the wisdom and anointing we will need.

**Isaiah 30:18** “Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!”

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We believe God is even more eager to meet with us than we are to meet with Him. We could even imagine that He is calling to us just as He did to Adam in the cool of the day, “Adam, where are you?”

Insert your name in place of Adam's, and consider that God's heart, which longs for fellowship with His created beings, has not changed. He is calling, and He is waiting for us to respond with eager, hungry, loving and obedient hearts.



He is a gentle and loving father, who longs to help us find the best path for each day and walk in it.

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## **CHAPTER THREE QUESTIONS**

1. Name one reason we, as believers, are allowed to experience trouble and suffering in our lives.

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2. According to Isaiah 50:5, why does God want us to waken and meet with Him morning by morning?

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3. As we consider each other in prayer, we may learn how to stir each other up toward ...

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

**God wants husbands and wives to meet together daily with Him.**



You have been presented with a sound scriptural basis for meeting with God at the start of your day, to minister to Him in praise and worship, to wait and experience the joy of His presence, to receive His Word for that day for you (and sometimes for others), and to lift the needs of yourself and others to His throne.

This disciplined, consistent daily meeting with God is the most elementary of principles for us as we “take up our cross daily and follow Christ” (Luke 9:23). However, for married individuals, we believe

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God wants to take us beyond the daily personal private “quiet time” with Him, and help us also discover the wonder of “naked transparency” as we come together into His presence. He is also a gentle and loving father, who longs to help us find the best paths for our days and walk in them.

Let’s look at ten good reasons why we believe married men and women should take advantage of their God-given opportunity for spiritual intimacy *together* with God daily.

They are as follows:



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**1. The full potential of the Church can be present when only two or three are gathered together.**

**Matthew 18:20** “For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.”

This is the smallest number of believers that are necessary to operate as “the Church,” and we are expected to operate according to scripture.

**1 Corinthians 14:26** “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the Church.”

Even within the fellowship of husband and wife, there is present the very wonderful and unique privilege to experience “Church” every day! Wow! All the aspects of what the Church can be when it comes together may be present in this meeting of only two; i.e. the “one has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a prophecy, etc.” Doesn't that sound exciting to have all these possibilities of reaching out to God and hearing back from Him ... resident within this wonderful covenant relationship already established?

We don't have to come together as 10 or 120 in order to experience it. Jesus promised His special presence with only two or three.

Hallelujah!



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**2. We have the potential to confirm any issue out of the mouth of two or three witnesses.**

Jesus said in **Matthew 18:16, 20** “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” Verse 16 is quoted a number of times in the Bible, having originated in the Old Testament, (one reference is Deuteronomy 19:15(b)).

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Jesus chose to bring it forward into the New Testament life of His disciples. Paul also teaches it in **2 Corinthians 13:1**, “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” We will do well to use it when we make decisions affecting ourselves, our families, or other parts of the Church. If we have our own personal “quiet time” with God, we may feel He is giving us direction in any of many different areas ... from interpretation of scripture, to something as personal as a decision to make a considered job change.

One very good reason to meet with your mate and God together daily is to allow Him opportunity to give a testimony or witness through the one who knows you best and loves you most. Don't miss it. Be open to any method God might use to speak to you through your mate; that may be a scripture, a song, a vision, a prophecy, a dream, a tongue, an interpretation, etc. (And expect that God will use similar opportunities to speak to your mate through you.)

You will soon find that this practice brings you as a couple into places of intimacy and trust that you have not previously experienced. You will more eagerly bear one another's burdens, and pray more appropriately and consistently for your beloved.



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**3. Two have more prayer power than one.**

**Matthew 18:19** “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.”

How often do we save prayer needs for that weekly Bible study with the other wives, or the weekly prayer breakfast with the men? Yet we neglect the most obvious prayer partner solution: our marriage partner as our prayer partner. Let's not wait even one day to pray those important things with another; let's take them to God with our partner every day, every morning!



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In regards to making decisions concerning what to pray for and how to pray efficiently, we can also consider the guidance given by Paul to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13:1: “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”



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### **4. We can carry each other's burdens to the Lord.**

**Galatians 6:2** “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

In our busy schedules of maintaining the home, employment, children, etc., we must be ‘on the lookout’ for opportunities to listen to others with empathy, giving a measure of rest within their circumstances.

**Matthews 11:28-30** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

If you are not in the habit of sharing your concerns and cares with each other in your ordinary patterns of life, what better reason is there

to learn to share these things with each other, than the decision to take them to the Lord together? Within this framework, you do not need to be as dependent upon each other to have an answer to the problems or concerns you are facing. But together you can look to the Lord for understanding, courage and answers.



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**5. We can strengthen and encourage each other.**

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

This is a lot like carrying each other's burdens, but it is more inclusive. When my husband and I were married, we received a prophetic word after the ceremony, that there would never be a time when we would both be “down” together and not able to get up. Life certainly has it’s “ups and downs” and this is such a great strength to fall

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back on when the going gets tough for either partner. This has always proved true so far in our married life, and partly because we have learned the secret of recognizing the power of the third strand of the cord (God) to do what we are unable to do for ourselves or each other.

Paul, in the first chapter of Romans, writes about his concerns for his brothers and sisters in Christ, and his prayers on their behalf.

**Romans 1:9-12** “God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of His Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times, and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong – that is, that you and I may be *mutually encouraged* by each other’s faith.”

How appropriate it seems that we can be our mate's best encourager in the faith!



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**6. We have a stronger defense against the enemy.**

In **Nehemiah chapter 4** the rebuilders of the wall were experiencing attacks from their enemies. They are instructed in verse 20:



“Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us.” How often do we struggle with discouragement, fear, depression, or some other battle all by ourselves, instead of “sounding the trumpet” so our mate could join forces with us in prayer? Unless we have established a pattern of daily prayer together during the ordinary days of our lives, we may be too weak to start this pattern in the middle of an attack, or in a time of crisis.

No matter how loving and attentive we try to be for our mates, we each face things daily that command our attention and put stress upon us. Unfortunately, we often don't want to lay another burden upon our mate, and we fail to express fully the challenges and concerns that weigh upon our hearts. Our time of prayer together is a perfect opportunity to lay these at the feet of the Lord Jesus; and at the same time our concern is made known to our best friend and mate. He or she can see clearly and understand that we are not expecting our mate to “have all the answers,” but that together we are expecting the Lord Jesus to take our needs into consideration within His mighty power.



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**7. We can have greater unity within our marriage, our family and our ministry.**

**Amos 3:3** “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”

Sometimes our philosophies for raising our families, paying our bills, managing our time, and conducting the responsibilities of whatever ministry God has given us to do are based on the popular ideas of the world, tradition, culture, habits passed down from our parents, etc., rather than on the patterns revealed in the Word of God.

When we learn together how our life patterns should line up with the Word of God, we consistently add more and more unity into our marriage, our family life and our ministry. Where our life patterns don't line up with the Word of God, our prayer together helps us trust in His ability to help us come to agreement both with Him and with each other.

My husband and I have often concluded a time of prayer with a surprising conversation with each other. One of us will say something like, “I had no idea you were facing such challenges at work right now!” As we learn to bear each other's burdens in prayer, the Holy Spirit often brings to our minds ways that we can help lighten the load by taking on some part of the responsibilities. Or at the very least, we can learn together how we can more effectively pray for each other in the midst of our trying situations and life challenges.



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**8. Meeting together  
regularly with God in  
Bible study and prayer  
helps us become  
conformed to the image of  
Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 8:28-29** “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.”



It's amazing how God uses the everyday experiences of marriage and family life to help conform us into the image of Christ.

**Proverbs 27:17** says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." In order for iron to sharpen iron, the two have to rub together, and the experiences of marriage rub persons together more closely than any other relationship. As Christian marriage partners, we are committed to each other "for better or for worse," and we can't escape the rub of some of our unpolished character traits with each other; though we might be able to escape some other relationships which have become uncomfortable for us.

As we study the Word of God and pray together, we can gently help each other see the areas in our lives that need attention and change. Then together we can seek God for the power and grace to make the necessary changes so we can be conformed more closely to the image of Christ, and more compatible with each other in the marriage relationship.

In **Colossians 1:27** Paul says it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and in **2 Corinthians 3:18** he says, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." When we tend to become discouraged because of certain character traits or habits of ourselves or our spouse which displease us, there is hope that with the assistance of the Holy Spirit these can be

changed. We believe the intimacy of the precious bond between man and wife in daily communion with the Holy Spirit is the most effective tool for our transformation to become more like Jesus.

Communication in Bible study and prayer together is a powerful key which can help us begin to love, understand and assist each other more effectively.



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**9. We can pray for each other's needs and healing.**

**James 5:16** “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

This perhaps is one of the most difficult aspects of meeting with God and praying together. The confession of sin is sometimes almost impossible in the presence of your spouse. We are not saying that your meeting with your spouse and God should be the only time in which you would confess your sins. You may still have your personal times with God apart from each other. But there is a place within this trio for confession of sin, especially if the sin has been against both God and the other spouse. To hear your spouse confess his/her sin and seek forgiveness from you and from God makes it

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nearly impossible for you to withhold your forgiveness.

Often there has been some fault in the behavior of both partners, and there is need for a mutual confession and seeking of forgiveness. After this, the healing of the breach in your relationship is usually quick in coming. If your times of prayer together are daily or even more frequent, then you can keep short accounts with each other, and you will not give the enemy a foothold which could begin to erode the strength and intimacy within your marriage.

It is an obvious benefit for the couple to be able to pray for each other's needs and for healing. You are the ones committed to each other "in sickness and in health," and you may see each other in a time of illness when others do not see you. The priesthood of the believer may allow you the grace to anoint each other with oil, and pray for healing within an intimacy unmatched in other relationships.

We have lots of needs in addition to the emotional and spiritual ones we have touched upon. What about that window that needs repair, or the first installment of the fees to send a child to Church camp? These needs for the ongoing operation of our lives and families can weigh heavily on both mom and dad. There is no better way to more fully express these needs than to discuss

them together, and then pray together about them, laying them at the Lord's feet. Then when the Lord brings an answer, the two of you can rejoice together, and proceed with further plans.

It is not uncommon for us to feel that we shouldn't "bother God" with the mundane and common concerns of life. But **Psalm 55:22** reminds us to "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall." He knows what is on your heart anyway, so you might as well just talk about it with Him in the company of your spouse; then together you both can experience the joy in seeing how He answers the various heavy concerns of your hearts.

This scripture reference brings me to an unusual side note. I find it amusing when numbers are repeated as they are in **Psalm 55:22**. Five is the number of grace, and two is the number within the bond of the husband and wife. So it reminds me of an increase in God's grace, and also in our bond of love when we are a couple!



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**10. You can see the spiritual side of your relationship increasing as the physical side may be decreasing.**

**2 Corinthians 4:16** “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”

Let's face it, we all grow older and face the inevitable gray hair, balding, wrinkles, sagging skin in certain places, as well as the possible manifestation of some chronic illnesses... in addition to the natural aging processes. At an extreme old age or very serious physical conditions, the physical intimacy side of the relationship may wane or become impossible for one or both partners. If the pattern of daily time in prayer and spiritual intimacy has been established, this will have grown so vital to their union over the years, that the decline of the physical aspects of the relationship becomes much less important. My husband and I have been married for years, and yet we still appreciate the physical side of our relationship a great deal. However, our love and practice of our daily time together with God has grown into a very strong and intimate union. If a physical problem or condition were to interfere with our sexual experience, there would be no question that our intimate daily time together with God could be a vital piece to help fill in the gap. Once you have tasted the wonder of finding that secret place together in the garden with your precious Savior, you won't want to give it up for anything.



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## **CHAPTER FOUR QUESTIONS**

1. Write out the text and the address of a scripture passage which encourages us to come to God in prayer and cast our cares and concerns upon Him.

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2. How many people need to be gathered together to have the full potential of “the Church?”

(Give the answer and quote the Bible verse it comes from.)

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3. When we pray with others we have a greater \_\_\_\_\_ against the enemy of our souls.

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Unless we have established a  
pattern of daily prayer  
together during the ordinary  
days of our lives, we may be too  
weak to start this pattern in the  
middle of an attack, or in a  
time of crisis.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

**The enemy of our soul opposes our attempts to meet together with God in Bible study, prayer and fellowship.**



As a couple, we are sometimes in a position to counsel couples as they prepare for marriage, experience challenges in their marriages, or undertake ministry for the Kingdom of God together. We find that the most useful tool for successful marriage and for the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit within their ministry is too often lying unused, neglected, and undiscovered by many of the couples whom we have had

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opportunity to counsel. We believe this priceless tool is the most prized possession within the Christian marriage: that is the opportunity to meet together daily in communion with God, searching the truths and treasures hidden within the scriptures, and praying together for each other and for those persons, needs and concerns upon their hearts.

We believe this unity of man, wife and God was present within the Garden of Eden, but was tarnished by the insertion of the false testimonies of the serpent. This intimacy has been restored however by the second Adam, our Savior Jesus Christ, and man and wife can once again know the wonder of walking in the garden daily with God without shame or pretense, but in naked transparency.

**Genesis 2:25** “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

So why is there so much resistance in even strong Christian marriages to this logical, scriptural, and obviously beneficial practice within the routine daily schedule? In counseling couples, we have heard a great variety of excuses: “She needs more sleep than I do, so I get up without waking her.” “She is busy getting the kids off to school.” “I have to go to work so early that I don't expect her/him to get up with me.” “We were taught in

Bible school (or ministry training) that we need to have our own personal time with God. Isn't that enough?" "We have such different styles of Bible study. We would never be able to study together."

These are only some of the explanations we have heard from couples who had trouble getting together day by day to meet with the Lord together. But I believe a deeper and more logical reason why it's so hard to get started and continue in prayer and Bible study together is hidden within the realm of Adam and Eve's circumstances in the garden.

Let's go back to the garden and consider again the fellowship which Adam, Eve and God had before the fall. It will help us better understand and overcome the obstacles necessary to enter into the fullness of fellowship which God has purchased and prepared for Christian marriages.

Before the fall, Adam and Eve enjoyed undisturbed fellowship with the Father in the Garden of Eden. Then they believed the word of Satan, "You will not surely die," above the word given to Adam directly from God.

They sinned by acting in disobedience to His command. Inherent in knowing good and evil is the responsibility to do that which is good. From this time forward until Jesus' death

on the cross and His words “It is finished,” men would continually strive to enter into fellowship with God by “being good”.

After their eyes were opened to know good and evil, Adam and Eve began to experience for the first time the presence of guilt and shame ... either as a result of recognizing their disobedience to God's command not to eat the fruit, or in some way judging nakedness as not good, or both. They also began to experience fear, embarrassment, self-centeredness and self-justification.

In **Genesis 3:9** God called to Adam, “Where are you?” and Adam replied, “**I** heard You in the garden, and **I** was afraid because **I** was naked; so **I** hid.” Genesis 3:8 says “they hid,” but in Adam's repeated “**I**” statements of verse 10 we don't see any mention of Eve's condition. We could wonder briefly if Adam in his “**I**” statements was trying to hide or minimize her presence, for her own safety. However, by verse 12 he is blaming her for his situation, with the exclamation, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and **I** ate it.” So he blames the woman in verse 12, and she blames the serpent in verse 13. So enters into the human realm the tendency to choose self-justification and self-preservation; even at the expense of others.

And as they made their fig leaf coverings for their nakedness, the age of “naked transparency” in their fellowship with God in the Garden was sadly ended.

What had been an intimate triune fellowship between Adam, Eve and God ... had become a self-centered, fearful, embarrassed relationship, which now included the serpent. Adam and Eve had run from God and hid in their embarrassment, fear and shame. Yet in Genesis Chapter 3, verses 13 and 14, as soon as Eve explains her behavior, God turns to the serpent and curses him. The Bible doesn't say He needed to call for the serpent, or go looking to find him. The serpent seems to be right there during Adam and Eve's fellowship with God. God spoke to him as if in the very next breath, because the serpent was right there near them.

We believe the greatest hindrance to the desire of couples to come together in prayer, Bible study and fellowship with God is the difficulty in finding that *naked transparency* again in relationship with God and each other. Admitting and praying out your weaknesses, fears, needs and sins can be a very humbling experience even in prayer by yourself. But praying out these things in the presence of another person requires great vulnerability ... more vulnerability than many couples are comfortable with. It may also require

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emotional healing and possibly even spiritual deliverance.

Psychologists tell us that it is far more difficult for men to express their deep thoughts and emotions than it is for women. The woman can afford to be weak, emotional, and able to depend upon the help of a man when she needs it. But the image of man is one of strength, dependability, and infallibility. This image is a difficult one to break, and to some in our culture it seems weak or wrong somehow to allow men to have their times of emotionality, weakness, and the opportunity to be wrong. The traditional viewpoint of the man as the 'Priest of the family' can seem to put more pressure on him to always be *right* in the sight of his wife and of God.

The naked transparency and vulnerability necessary to openly and honestly pray together before God... confessing faults, asking forgiveness, seeking answers, admitting defeats and weaknesses, and asking for strength and grace for difficult tasks ... requires the grace that only comes through the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we need to see that a man's responsibility is not to always be strong, or steady, or even right... but to bring his wife together with him in prayer to the One who is always strong, steady and right. This is the role of the family head.



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### **Gathering the Manna**

If we look back to **Exodus 16** we see that each man was to gather enough manna for the members of his household. We may have seen Sunday School pictures of days of old when the small children or even the wives were gathering the manna into baskets, but according to the scriptures it was the man's responsibility. If he gathered against the clear rules set out by God, he would be responsible for the sin of it. The Bible in **1 Corinthians 10:3-4** says, "They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."

So as it was with gathering the *food*, manna described in **Exodus 16**, man today is responsible for gathering the *spiritual manna* for his family. He probably will not do the preparation or distribution of it by himself, but the gathering is primarily his responsibility.

When my husband and I teach in men or woman's conferences and marriage seminars, we often teach the men this little song: "*Make a mini manna muffin for your mama in the morning, and she'll love you all day long.*" We are speaking now of the man's responsibility to initiate the time of early morning prayer, Bible study and togetherness with God for himself and his wife. Together they will be nourished

by the spiritual manna from the Word of God, and strengthened for the events of the day.

We believe that there is nothing more attractive to a woman who loves God, than a husband who will take her into the scriptures and prayer every morning. We believe no other thing he could do all day long will win more 'love points' for him in her 'love bank.' Do you hear this, men? From your wife's perspective, if God is in the center of her life, this practice is a vital priority for your marriage together.

You see, it is *less* important to her that you make enough money to meet all the perceived needs of the household, and *more* important that you will consistently go to prayer with her to ask of Him who can help you provide for the needs and resources for the family. It is less important to her that you always be right, and more important that she knows you are praying with her to God for the wisdom to lead the family and make good decisions. It is less important to her that you always be strong, and more important that you pray with her for the strength which you both need to hold together and cultivate the Christian marriage and family.

**1 Peter 5:6** "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time."

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For the Christian man the Christ-like goal is not so much to always be strong, but to be humble. It is the pride of some men that won't allow them to humble themselves in the transparency of sincere prayer with their wives before the Lord. But the model of this is Jesus Christ, who “made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name...” **(Philippians 2:7-9).**



Perhaps the best scriptural basis for Bible study and prayer together as a couple, initiated by the husband, is in the letter to the Ephesian Church.

**Ephesians 5:25-27** “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

The man who will model his life after the humility of Christ will find himself put on the highest pedestal of his wife's esteem for him.

Earlier in Point 8 of Scripture Truth Number 4 we mentioned the importance of meeting together with God to facilitate the formation of the image of Christ in your personal character. Here we see it reinforced, that the husband's responsibility is to wash his wife daily with the Word of God. This involves reading and sharing it together, studying and examining it with her, discerning what parts might be most useful for the challenges she is facing in life, and then applying it not only to her life but his as well, as they join together in prayer from the Scriptural truth which God has given to them.

Christian husbands, **hear this!** No other action which you could perform as a husband in your life with your wife is more important than

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this daily practice of meeting together with the Lord in His Word and in prayer. If you don't believe us, **ask her**. In the experience of almost every couple with whom we have counseled, there may be several reasons given why they are not meeting together for even a brief time of prayer and Bible study. But in our experience, it is a very rare Christian woman who would not be delighted to re-organize the schedule for her sleeping, waking or chores in order to meet with a husband who is determined to institute this principle and practice within their marriage.

When we counsel with Christian couples before marriage, we advise women not to settle for a man who will not assume a measure of this responsibility to initiate a habit of Bible study and prayer within their lives together during the engagement period, so she can be sure he is willing and capable of this responsibility after they are married.

Sometimes men fail to follow through with this practice after they are married, because it requires a death to self-will. It requires a discipline to help get the family to bed at a reasonable hour. He may need to turn off the TV or put down the good book in the evening in time for his wife and him to get a good night's sleep and prepare for their morning time with the Lord.

If they have guests for the evening, he may need to gently ask the guests to go home if they are staying too late, and making it hard for him and his wife to arise at the appointed time the next morning to meet with the Lord.

Following through with a regular intimate time with the Lord requires a death to self, and reaching out for the grace of Jesus Christ to humble ourselves in naked transparency with each other before God.

**John 15:13** “Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends.”

To initiate and follow through with God's pattern for husbands and wives in intimacy with Him will require men to die to self in order that their wives might be matured and perfected in Christ, just as “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” Ephesians 5:25-28.

*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*





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## **CHAPTER FIVE QUESTIONS**

1. What word did Satan give to Adam and Eve to try to convince them not to be afraid to eat of the fruit which they had been warned not to eat from?

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2. After Adam and Eve tasted of the fruit they were warned not to eat from, what did they experience?

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3. What does it mean that a husband should be prepared to gather the “spiritual manna” for his family?

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*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*



## **CHAPTER SIX**

**Jesus Christ, the second Adam, has purchased back for us the intimacy with the Father which the first Adam gave up in the Garden.**



**Romans 5:17** “For if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.”

**Romans 8:1** “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of Life set me free from the law of sin and death.”

**2 Timothy 1:7** “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (fear), but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”

**Hebrews 4:15-16** “For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”



Because our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ resisted every temptation of the enemy, lived a sinless life, and triumphed over death and the grave, He purchased the restoration of everything lost by the first Adam in the garden. So now we can have fellowship not only with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but we can come boldly to the throne of grace and fellowship once more with the Father.

**Hebrews 10:19-25** “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ***Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.***”



## *Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*

The greatest wealth of ...

- depth of loving and respecting each other,
- healing for any wounded areas of your marital relationship,
- intimate transparent fellowship together,
- fulfillment of longings for rich fellowship with God,
- knowing and obeying God's laws for your marriage and family together ...

are found in meeting with Him together in the morning.

Won't you now accept the invitation and challenge which God offers to you today?

**"Meet Me in the garden in the morning."**

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## **CHAPTER SIX QUESTIONS**

1. Because our High Priest has been tempted in every way, as we are, but was without sin, what can we expect as we approach the throne of grace?

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2. What is promised to us in Hebrews 10:19-22?

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3. According to the author, what is the challenge being offered by God at the close of this book?

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## **EPILOGUE**



Earlier we examined **Isaiah 50:4-5**, identifying it as the pattern which Isaiah (and later Christ) used to meet with God in the morning before meeting and ministering to others in need during the remainder of the day.

If we believers in the Body of Christ could universally grab this principle for ourselves and put it into practice, we would experience perhaps the greatest reformation the Church has ever known. You see, we are yet waiting for the reformation which will set God's people free to serve Him and each other as they did in the early Church years,

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and as He desires for us to experience in these last days prior to His return. I believe the Church is on the cusp of a great revival, which will spring out of reformation; and from these will flow a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These conditions will precipitate a massive end-time harvest of souls in season for our Lord's return.

We often look to the reformation which Martin Luther spearheaded as one of the greatest, or perhaps the greatest in the history of the Church. But we have failed to see that this reformation is only half finished. None who have followed Luther have gone much further than Luther's era in one particular crucial area. Before the reformation, believers were forced to come to God and hear from God through an intermediary, the priest. He read to them the scriptures, for common men had been forbidden to read them themselves, and they had often been in a language they could not read anyway. The priest had to hear their confessions, pronounce their forgiveness, and pass their prayers on to God (that is the ones which were not directed falsely to Mother Mary or the Saints). He was responsible to speak to the people from God, until the reforms of Luther changed many things.

Man's approach to God was changed by the Reformation. In addition to realizing that salvation was by faith and grace, not works, the way to

reach God was transformed. Luther began to make the Bible accessible to common men by translating the scriptures into German and printing them. Men no longer needed to confess their sins to the priest, but they could go directly to God, expressing not only confession and repentance, but their other heartfelt needs as well. The man-to-God link was radically transformed, resulting in the greatest reformation of the Church in history.

But I dare to say that the God-to-man link still waits for some long overdue reformation. In Luther's day, the 'priest' was simply replaced by the 'pastor', and men still went to this one man in order to hear from God. The majority of Christendom worldwide still sits face-forward every Sunday waiting to hear the message of God from one or a few men (or occasionally women) who are called 'Pastor'. Yes, diligent believers do seek God privately in their daily 'quiet time;' yet they still wait to hear this weekly 'word' from God, delivered by a single priest-like person. They tend to esteem the Word from God out of his (or her) mouth more highly than a 'word' spoken from an ordinary believer, who might dare to speak a 'word' from God's heart to them. This is not God's scriptural plan for His people, and it grieves the Holy Spirit who seals every believer and desires to empower every part of His Body for service to the other parts. "From Him the

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whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (**Ephesians 4:16**).

We see that this God-man link is the reformation which the brave prophets and apostles are speaking and living forth in the world today. God doesn't need, nor does He desire to bring His message to His people through only one or a few ‘special people,’ Bible school trained or not. **1 Peter 2:5** says “You also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” And from verse nine we read, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” Peter was not speaking to a few, but to every believer as a part of the royal priesthood. This is God’s season to re-establish the priesthood of the believers which existed in the early Church.

**1 Corinthians 14:26** “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the Church.”

In **1 Corinthians 12** he describes a multiplicity of gifts which “He gives to each one, just as He determines.” These gifts are given not only for a special few, but for all who are a part of the body, in order to meet the needs of other parts of the body. In **Ephesians 4:11-13** Paul said that Jesus Christ “gave some to be **apostles**, some to be **prophets**, some to be **evangelists**, and some to be **pastors** and **teachers**, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ... and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Nowhere in the Bible do we see any evidence of teaching for a pastor to act singularly to lead a congregation; nor do we ever see any of the other of the 5-fold ministries (apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists) acting in submission to that of the pastor. The pattern of the 5-fold ministry functions given by Jesus, through Paul, in **Ephesians 4** was His intention throughout Church history, which became grossly distorted by the role of priest in the Catholic Church, and only minimally reformed with the works of Martin Luther and other reformers. In the New Testament we always see leadership operating in plurality, using the 5-fold ministries, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, the oversight of elders, and the

## *Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*

help of deacons to carry out the practical care of the body.



In order to see believers mature into the relationship with God that He is longing for, we must reform our thinking on the way God speaks His Word to men ... not through one man; not even through a few men, but through every member of the Body of Christ who has accepted the privilege and responsibility of the priesthood of every believer. **Isaiah 50:4-5** defines this more clearly: "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.” Our desire and goal is that this would be a true reality for every authentic disciple of Jesus Christ.

We have grown so lazy in expecting the ‘priest’ figure at the head of many of our congregations every Sunday to speak to the entire group of people from God ... that we have neglected to expect that God would desire to speak to a number of people through a number of different people.

The believers’ gathering which Paul describes in **1 Corinthians 14:26** is God's heart; each ministering to the others with song, psalm, teaching, prophecy, etc. as the Holy Spirit would lead. Because we have had little or no expectation of participation in ministering to God's people in the fellowship of the saints, but have delegated this responsibility to one or a few, we have neglected the discipline required to prepare to be used by God to minister to others. If we could only believe and accept God's pattern for ministering to the various parts of His body through the various other parts of His body, we would begin to understand and accept the responsibility that is ours to find out what God may be wanting to speak through us to others with whom we are in acquaintance or fellowship.

**Isaiah 50:4-5** is a part of the ‘how’ of implementing God's best and most edifying plan

## *Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*

to minister to His people on a daily or weekly basis. “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.”

If we will take upon ourselves the discipline to meet with God every morning, as Isaiah did, expecting to hear from Him the message for someone else who is “weary,” we will quickly discover that He is most ready and eager to provide opportunity for us to minister a sustaining word to the person whom He knows is at a point of need.

But the problem is we often rebel at this plan of God's. It is much easier to sleep that extra 30-60 minutes in the morning, and leave the ministry to the one whom we have hired to stand in the pulpit once or twice a week.

When we refuse to take upon ourselves the privilege and responsibility of ministering to each other, and refuse to undertake the discipline to go to God in the morning to get the Word which we will minister to others that day or that week, then we could say that, unlike Isaiah, we have been rebellious, and we have drawn back from God's best for us as His children, and as true disciples of Jesus Christ.



It is a time to let the Holy Spirit entirely reform our thinking about the traditions of men which have made the Word of God of null effect (**Mark 7:13**), and allow Him to teach us anew through examples and models in the book of **Acts** and the instruction of the New Testament, His plan for ministry to His precious people, the Church. It is time to repent of our laziness, relaxing ever in the 'perpetual childhood of the believer,' being spoon-fed the Word of God by a few, and never taking responsibility or undertaking the discipline to seek God and His Word for ourselves and for others to whom He expects and desires that we minister His love, His Word, His healing and His other good gifts.

We challenge you couples to read the book of **Acts** again (together) soon, asking God to open your ears, minds and hearts to hear and discern anew God's plan for His children in regular fellowship with Him as His Church, and His plans for you personally as you stretch out to grasp the new horizons of ministry in Jesus' name which He has prepared for you.

*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*



**EPILOGUE QUESTIONS**

1. If we throughout the Body of Christ accept the challenge to meet with God in the mornings, as Isaiah and Christ did, what might we expect?

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2. Name three aspects of reformation executed by Martin Luther?

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3. What 'link' is still waiting for some measure of reformation?

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*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*





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## **CHAPTER FOUR ANSWERS**

1. Peter 5:6-7, Matthew 11:28-30,

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_two or three\_\_

Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 14:26,

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Defense

Personal Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*





**CHAPTER FIVE ANSWERS**

- 1. “You will not surely die.”
- 2. They experienced guilt and shame as a result of their disobedience to God’s command and warning.
- 3. Ideally the husband should take the initiative to bring himself and his wife together daily for a time of Bible reading/study and prayer.

Personal Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*



## **CHAPTER SIX ANSWERS**

1. We can approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we can receive mercy and grace to help in our times of need.
2. We can have fellowship with not only Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but we can come boldly to the throne of grace and fellowship with God the Father.
3. “Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning.”

Personal Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **EPILOGUE ANSWERS**

1. ANSWERS will vary according to individuals.
2.
  - 1) Truth that salvation is by faith and grace, not works.
  - 2) Scriptures translated into German (common language of the people).
  - 3) Man could pray directly to God, not through a priest-type mediator
3. The God-to-man link. (We are still looking to hear from God through the preacher/pastor person and position), rather than by man himself to God, and man searching the scriptures regularly for himself.

Personal Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*



*Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning*

The following nine pages include the test which the students of Harvest of Jubilee School of Prayer & Missions Bible Colleges take following the study of this course: “Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning.” It is included here to provide the reader with an opportunity to review and consider their personal comprehension and retention of the materials, concepts and principles presented in their reading and study of this book.

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**HARVEST OF JUBILEE GROUPS, INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF PRAYER AND MISSIONS FOR THE
NATIONS**

P 102 – TEST

“Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning”

1. Two Old Testament figures who waited to hear from God in the morning were...
 - a. Jeremiah and Joshua
 - b. Isaiah and David
 - c. Samson and Nehemiah
2. Isaiah said God would waken him in the morning to...
 - a. Encourage him to get to work
 - b. Get him to so he could go to the church and pray
 - c. Teach him the word that sustains the weary.

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

3. The “word that sustains the weary” could be...
 - a. A message from the Lord to encourage someone who is weary in the challenges of daily life.
 - b. A message for someone who is discouraged, lacking in faith, or needing direction or instruction from God.
 - c. both a. and b.
4. What do the scriptures say is “new every morning?”
 - a. God’s love, compassion and faithfulness
 - b. God’s anger at sinners
 - c. The mood He is in that day
5. What is the Psalmist saying in Psalm 57:7-8?
 - a. I have a strong heart.
 - b. I will make it a practice to praise God early every morning.
 - c. I will play a musical instrument before sunrise.
6. Who was our best example of meeting with God in prayer in the mornings?
 - a. Paul
 - b. Peter
 - c. Jesus
7. Where did Jesus go to pray?
 - a. To the temple
 - b. To a friend’s house
 - c. To a solitary place

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

8. What atmosphere could be good for meeting with God?
 - a. A quiet place where I can be alone with God.
 - b. A place with an atmosphere of worship music.
 - c. both a. and b.
9. What is our best reason to meet with God every day, especially in the morning?
 - a. The Bible tells us to.
 - b. Jesus did it; He is our best example.
 - c. Our friends all do it.
10. If we don't meet with God in the morning...
 - a. we may miss a chance to share with someone later in the day, giving him or her a needed word of encouragement or comfort.
 - b. we may not see His full and best plans for what we should do that day.
 - c. both a. and b.
11. It is good for us to consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds as we...
 - a. talk with other people about our friends.
 - b. pray for each other.
 - c. spend time riding the bus.
12. Which verses contains an expectancy that God will hear our morning prayers, answer our prayers and give us some encouragement?
 - a. Psalm 118:24
 - b. Mark 1:35
 - c. Psalm 5:1-3

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

13. When did God begin to speak with Moses?
 - a. When he watched the sleeping sheep.
 - b. When he noticed the bush appearing to burn.
 - c. When he turned aside and went closer to see why the bush didn't burn up.

14. What is the smallest number of people who can meet together as the Church?
 - a. 4
 - b. 10
 - c. 2

15. What verse teaches us the answer to #14?
 - a. Matthew 18:20
 - b. Luke 9:23
 - c. Isaiah 30:18

16. The Old Testament says every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Who taught this same principle in the New Testament?
 - a. James and John
 - b. Paul and Silas
 - c. Jesus and Paul

17. We can fulfill the Law of Christ if we ...
 - a. Pray for each other
 - b. Go to church every Sunday
 - c. Carry each other's burdens.

18. A cord of _____ strands is not quickly broken?
 - a. one
 - b. two
 - c. three

19. We can best help our marriage partner in his/her times of weakness if we...
 - a. Have already developed a habit of praying together often.
 - b. Know our partner's likes and dislikes.
 - c. Think about starting to pray together.

20. It is God's will that our patterns of spending money, raising children, and setting priorities in our time will all line up with ...
 - a. Habits we learned from our parents.
 - b. Patterns revealed in God's written Word.
 - c. The way our friends do these things.

21. What is a very effective tool to help us become more like Jesus?
 - a. Listening to a Bible tape or CD
 - b. Having times of communion with God and our spouse
 - c. Going through difficult times in life

22. If your spouse sins against you, but you hear him/her seek forgiveness from you and from God, it is easy to ...
 - a. Think your spouse is weak.
 - b. Avoid meeting together.
 - c. Forgive your spouse for the offense.

23. Circle the letter by every answer that describes what happened to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God, eating the fruit God told them not to eat.
 - a. Their eyes were opened to know good and evil.
 - b. They began to experience guilt and shame.
 - c. They realized they had disobeyed God.
 - d. They recognized their nakedness.

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

- e. They experienced fear, self-centeredness, and self-justification.
24. What can a man do to make himself most attractive to his Christian spouse?
- a. Take a bath and put on clean clothes
 - b. Get an attractive beard and hair cut
 - c. Lead his wife in Bible study and prayer together daily
25. What is the best scriptural basis for husbands to lead their wives in Bible study and prayer together?
- a. Ephesians 5:25-27
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:3-4
 - c. James 5:16
 - d. 2 Cor. 4:16
26. Sometimes men fail to lead their wives in this way because it requires ...
- a. Having completed Bible school.
 - b. A death to self-will.
 - c. More Bible knowledge than they know.
27. As Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and lost intimacy with God, who purchased back for them the privilege to have such intimate communication with God again.
- a. The wife by her obedience to her husband.
 - b. The husband by his faithfulness.
 - c. Jesus Christ by His death on the cross and resurrection.
28. The Bible in 1 Peter 2:5 says we ...
- a. Each are a part of a royal priesthood and holy nation.

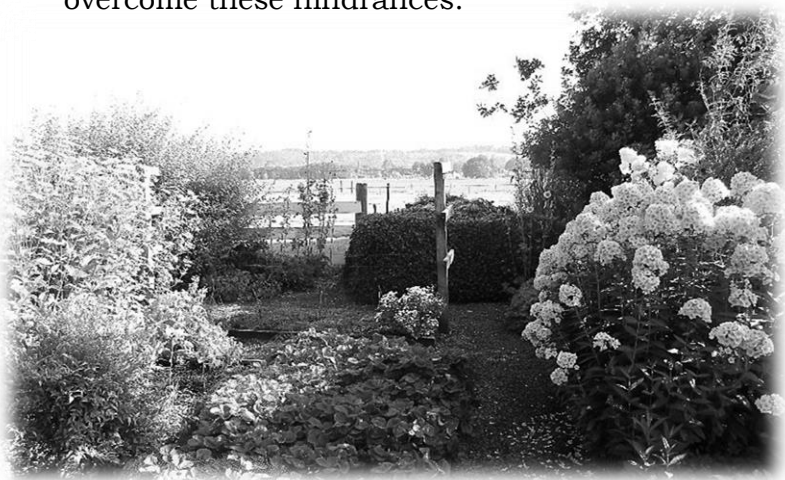
- b. Each are living stones and a people belonging to God.
 - c. both a. and b.
29. Leadership in the Biblical instruction regarding the New Testament Church is ...
- a. made up primarily of Bible school graduates.
 - b. made up primarily of the 5-fold ministers of Ephesians 4:11, elders and deacons.
 - c. made up primarily of one leader called a pastor.
30. What verse describes people ministering to each other in the Church meeting?
- a. 2 Timothy 1:7
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:26
 - c. Isaiah 50:4-5

TRUE or FALSE Write a T or an F in the blank before each statement.

- ___ 31. As married people we can have an intimate fellowship with God similar to what Adam and Eve had in the garden.
- ___ 32. God wants wives to initiate a time of Bible study and prayer with their husbands.
- ___ 33. Two people praying together have more prayer power then one person alone.
- ___ 34. As we grow old in years, our physical intimacy with our spouse may decline, but our spiritual intimacy may increase continually.
- ___ 35. The devil will not usually oppose our plans to meet with each other as husbands and wives in Bible study and prayer together.

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

- ___ 36. Engaged couples should begin to study the Bible and pray together.
- ___ 37. It is less important to a wife that her husband makes enough money to meet all the perceived needs of the household, and more important to a wife that the husband will consistently go to prayer with her to ask God to help provide for the ongoing needs of the household.
- ___ 38. It is not necessary for us to confess our sins to each other as marriage partners.
- ___ 39. When a husband takes the initiative to lead his wife in prayer and Bible study together, this is the most important thing he can do for her in their relationship with God and with each other.
- ___ 40. It is easy for husbands and wives to make excuses why they don't need to meet together with God, but they should ask God to help them overcome these hindrances.



P 102 – ANSWER KEY

“Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning”

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. b 1-5 Scripture Truth #1 | |
| 2. c | 22. c S.T. #4 (9) |
| 3. c | 23. all S.T. #5 |
| 4. a | 24. c S.T. #5 |
| 5. b | 25. a S.T. #5 |
| 6. c 6-9 S.T. #2 | 26. b S.T. #5 |
| 7. c | 27. c S.T. #6 |
| 8. c #4 (9) | 28. c EPILOGUE |
| 9. b | 29. b EPILOGUE |
| 10. c 10-13 S.T.#3 | 30. b EPILOGUE |
| 11. b | 31. T Introduction |
| 12. c | 32. F S.T. #5 |
| 13. c | 33. T S.T. #4 (3) |
| 14. c 14-16 S.T.#4 (1-2) | 34. T S.T. #4 (10) |
| 15. a | 35. F S.T. #5 |
| 16. c. | 36. T S.T. #5 |
| 17. a S.T. #4 (4) | 37. T S.T. #5 |
| 18. c S.T. #4 (5) | 38. F S.T. |
| 19. a S.T. #4 (9) | 39. T S.T. #5 |
| 20. b S.T. #4 (7) | 40. T S.T. #5 |
| 21. b S.T. #4 (8) | |

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning



Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning



Janice Woodrum is a retired RN, and a writer who began to minister part-time in 1988, and in 1991 answered a spirit call to full-time ministry.

She and her husband Dave have worked in prayer and revival ministry, and founded Harvest of Jubilee Groups, Int'l., a Christian missions' organization in 1994. They currently oversee ministry efforts in 16 countries throughout Asia and Africa; travelling several times a year to provide oversight and sponsor leadership conferences and evangelistic outreaches.

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning

Together they developed a 2-year Associates Degree in Bible and Christian Ministry curriculum, and a 4-year Bachelor of Divinity curriculum which are offered freely and used in many of these mission sites. Janice wrote 29 articles for "Diabetes Self-Management Magazine" from 1986 - 2000. Since then she has authored several books described on the subsequent page.

Janice presently holds a:

Doctorate of Theology in Leadership

Focus Bible College

Master of Theology in Worship and Prayer

Focus Bible College

Master of Ministry

Triune Biblical University

Bachelor of Science

Nursing – with special honors

University of Colorado

Janice is co-owner and editor of Preparing the Way Publishing, and loves to edit and write when she is home from the mission field.

She and husband Dave have 5 children who are each married, and 16 grandchildren.

They are convinced that God intends for Christian individuals and couples to enjoy the privilege of meeting with Him throughout their entire life, morning by morning.

Other books by Janice Leasure Woodrum

Hope to Hear Soon:

This is a book designed to go deep into the area of personal spiritual growth and intimacy with God. The person with a hunger and thirst to hear a clear word from God every day will devour this book and its wise and sound advice.

Each letter of the title, HOPE TO HEAR SOON is the first letter of a word corresponding to a reason we may be having difficulty in hearing the voice of God clearly in our time in prayer and with God's Word.

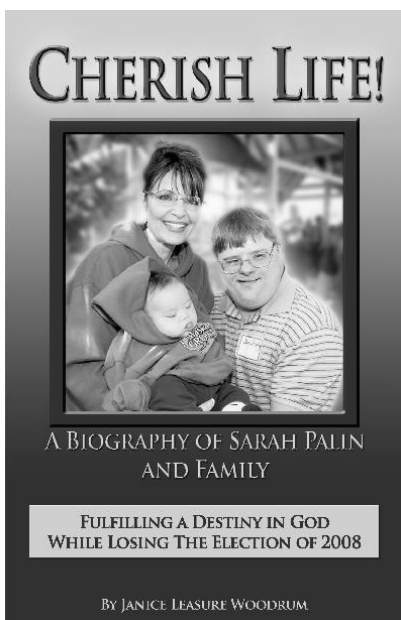
The book is packed full of scripture verses to back up the teaching with the power to put it into operation in our personal lives and our walk with God. It is filled with personal experiences from the mission field to add adventure and authenticity.

(140 pages)

March, 2009



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CHERISH LIFE!

A Biography of Sarah Palin and Family.

Fulfilling a Destiny in God While Losing the Election of 2008:

Sarah Palin's life story and commitment to life. This biography of Sarah Palin and her family authored by a minister and Christian missionary gives deep spiritual lessons in 'winning', though losing a battle. High Biblical standards of ethics and

character taught in family's life drama, cherishing life at a cost, and providing a pro-life standard for the vote of 2008 US Presidential elections. Many scriptural teachings embellish real-life lessons, demonstrated by this role model family.

Includes in-depth studies of Sarah and husband, Todd and comparisons are drawn to Biblical character sketches of Jesus, Deborah, and Joseph. Each family member gets a chapter too! Great for all ages: working professional moms, family devotions, home school families, and men too! Janice hopes to give a spiritual "jump-start" to encourage Pro-life advocates.

(160 pages)

December, 2008

This Fiery Love:
Fanning the Original
Flame:

Do you need to put some "pizzazz" into your lukewarm or cooling marriage relationship? This 60+ year old author with 5 children, 16 grandchildren, and a 20+ year history of ministry/missions, gives helpful scriptural and practical applications, laced with transparent personal stories to bring the points home.

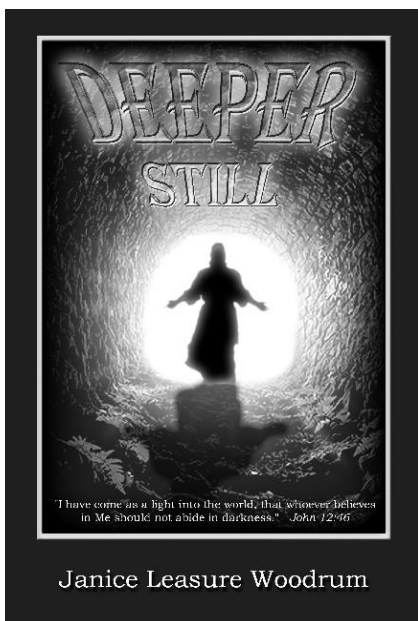


It's never too late to "fan the original flame" of your marriage to bring forth "this fiery love" that cannot be quenched (Song of Songs 8:6-7).

(158 pages)

April, 2011

Meet Me in the Garden in the Morning



Deeper Still:

A famous quote from Betsie ten Boom included the phrase, "There is no pit so deep that He is not Deeper Still."

This book describes how the love and presence of Jesus Christ permeates the "deep" places of our lives where there are trials, disappointments, challenges, deaths to vision, and other

traumatic and painful experiences... to bring us forth victoriously.

(154 pages)

January, 2012

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