



"...I am making a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

WIVES WEEKEND!

We had such a great time at the last Wives' Weekend. It was so nice to have most of you there. We are really looking forward to the upcoming weekend November 14th-16th. We have some special things planned for you. My prayer is that you will all get a chance to get to know one another better.

It's such a blessing to be around other women who understand your circumstances. To the right are some pictures of the last Wives' Weekend.

If you have any questions about Wives' Weekend, or have something you would like to submit to this newsletter, please call Jennifer Ridgway at (515) 674-3713 ext. 221.



Couples enjoying brunch during the testimony of Bob and Diane Larson.



Jennifer Ridgway sharing between sessions.

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Jump!

A Bahamian priest related a story that captures the essence of biblical trust. “A two story house had caught on fire. The family-father, mother, several children-were on their way out when The smallest boy became terrified, tore away from his mother, and ran back upstairs. Suddenly, he appeared at a smoke-filled window crying like crazy. His father, outside, shouted: ‘Jump, son, jump! I’ll catch you.’ The boy cried: ‘But daddy, I can’t see you.’ ‘I know,’ his father called, ‘I know. But I can see you.’”

Many of us often feel this way. God’s asking us to jump, and we can’t see where we will land. We need to trust that God sees the big picture when we see only the circumstances directly in front of us. He loves you. You can trust Him.

Story taken from The Ragamuffin Gospel by Brennan Manning



Testimony of Restoration

David and I have been married for 11 years. The Lord has blessed us with two wonderful children. Olivia who is 5 and Gabe who is 3. Things have not always been easy for us. We can now see how God has used the difficulties in our past, to transform our hearts.

We met when David was 23 and I was 18. He was in the Navy. One year later we were married. We began to attend church, and God began to put a desire in our hearts for full time ministry.

While stationed in Pennsylvania in 1996, I discovered my husband’s addiction to pornography. I remember clearly the first time I stumbled upon it on the computer. I felt betrayed, angry, and ashamed. I cried out, “Oh Lord, why? How could this happen?” I had no idea what the real issue behind the addiction was. Neither did David. Seeds had been planted in his life when he was a young boy. He tried to overcome this bondage for years. Things would be great for awhile, then he would slip back into old habits.

In 1999, God opened the door to work in ministry. David got out of the navy after 10 years, and we went on staff at Teen Challenge. During our first year at Teen challenge we once again were staring at David’s addiction head on. I don’t know why I thought it would just disappear. By Spring of 2000, David wasn’t ready to be real and deal with his issues. We left Teen Challenge heavy hearted.

David got a job that was financially rewarding, but pulled him away from the family a lot. If he wasn’t playing softball 3-4 times a week, he was hanging out with his buddies from work. At the end of the summer, David confessed about an affair with a co-worker. I’ll never forget the

to me, “I think I want to be a weekend Dad, I’m not cut out to be a husband and a father.”

I gave him what he asked for: time to himself. The kids and I flew to Virginia beach for 1 month. During that month, I know that Satan was using what happened to get my eyes off of Christ and on David. I was dwelling on all of the progress and the disappointments during our marriage. I was also thinking on the lie that the enemy placed in my head that if I wanted out of the marriage now, I could leave it with a good conscience, and it would all be on David. I found out that my hope was lying in David, when it should have been lying in the Lord.

After three months being apart, our family was back together in Virginia Beach. What the Lord did in David’s life during the three months we were separated was amazing. He found himself in a place he had never been before, he was desperate! The Lord totally transformed David. He was a new man when he moved to Virginia Beach.

We lived in Virginia Beach for one year. Eventually, God opened a door and brought us back to the place we desired, Teen Challenge. I cannot explain the contentment, peace, happiness, and joy the Lord gives me everyday now.

My prayer for you is that you make Jesus your all in all and that His desires become your desires. He has a plan for you and your family.

In Him—Sonia Fouts

The Answer is in the Soil

While standing in line at the local plant nursery, I could not help but notice the woman in front of me. Her face was flushed as she held up her wilted plant to the customer service desk. "I need a bigger container," she said.

Like a doctor examining a sick patient, the customer service manager cupped the lifeless plant in her hand. "The answer," she said, pointing down the aisle of plant food and nutrients, "is not in the container, but in the soil." How true this is for us as believers, also!

So often, we get overworked and nearly overtaken by the never-ending demands of job, family, and church. As a result, we cry out to God as if we were complaining to the customer service desk, "Change my job (then I'll be a better employee)!" "Change my kids (then I'll be a better mom)!" "Change **my husband** (then I'll be a better wife)!" , "Change my house (then I'll keep it up better)!" "Change my church (then I'll be used more by you, oh God)!"

Like the wilted plant, we appear to be in need of something different—a better job, new kids (like the neighbors'), a new house, a bigger and more high-powered church that will use us and display our gifts.

Change, mind you, is healthy and good. Sometimes God calls us to change environments and friends and circumstances. Sometimes He wants us to do a new thing. But often, instead of having us change "containers"—people and

environments, God has us stay put And work with the soil at hand.

Jesus reminds us that our lives are rooted in Him. He says: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NKJV). That means that no matter what container-or circumstance-you or I are in, no matter what we are walking through as believers, we are grafted into Jesus, the life-giving Vine. That connection with Jesus places us in good soil.

Like any soil that supports living things, our life in Jesus has to be cultivated, watered and tended to. As believers, we must live life daily in Him—spending time with Him in prayer and reading His word. Soil needs nutrients and "working with." A life in Jesus, in this darkened world, feeds our commitment to growing in Him if we are to walk in His presence and power.

The Scriptures bear out this truth. In Matthew 13:3-23, we read the parable of the sower who scattered seed. Some seed fell on stony places, not surviving because of insufficient soil. But other seed survived, took root and yielded a crop because it fell on good ground.

When you and I "take in" God's Word daily, we receive seed in the good soil of a life in Jesus. We grow in Jesus and, consequently, in His likeness and in the power of His might

His might.

The answer to feeling as if the life is drained out of us, like that wilted plant, is not always in our seeking to jump to the new container of a better job, different boss, bigger house or better marriage. Often the answer is in cultivating the soil of a life in Jesus—simply digging in and experiencing His presence and practicing His ways.

By Sandra Clifton
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