

COME AND SEE

PROVIDED BY THRIVE LADIES MINISTRY
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, KANNAPOLIS, NC

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For Such a Time as This [Beauty for Ashes]

BY MELANIE ELLIOTT

“...who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Esther 4:13.

Esther is a powerful example of someone who was willing to give of herself in order to serve a greater cause – the saving of her people. While we may not be required to serve in such a history-making way, we are compelled to serve the Lord in the ministry to which we are called. We read in Colossians 4:17 - “...Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.”

Esther was placed in the king’s palace at a critical time in history. No one else could have fulfilled Esther’s role. She was God’s minister and was forced to make some crucial choices that unfolded into God’s plan. She

chose not to reveal her true identity as a Jew until absolutely necessary. When the time was right, she risked her life, by going before the king without being bidden first. She stated, “If I perish, I perish.” What if she had refused to go before the king as Mordecai advised? It could have meant the end of the Jewish people. Wouldn’t you agree that she was fulfilling her ministry? She allowed God to use her for His purpose. We also have a God-ordained purpose.

You may ask yourself, “What is my purpose, my ministry?” I have asked myself that question an untold number of times. I wondered if it really mattered as long as I was serving. Of course, it is important that we serve. However, the ultimate service for the Lord is that special area of ministry just for us – a place

and a purpose that no one else can fulfill like we can. Our life experiences often lead us to our calling. Ephesians 1:11 states, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” We read in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” So, what does that mean for me, personally?

As for me, I have mourned over what I thought was a wasted life for many years– one riddled with domestic violence in my first marriage. Domestic violence has often been a taboo topic among Christian circles. Although, it is more common in our churches than we’d like to admit. My

For Such a Time as This (Beauty for Ashes) (cont'd)

abuser sat on a church pew and sometimes stood behind a pulpit. I sat on that same pew beside him in misery and hid the painful truth behind a smile. Our marriage finally ended in divorce. I often wondered how anything good could come out of such an experience. Recently, those feelings have started to change.

I recalled the messages that our pastor preached about Christian service and what we planned to do with the rest of our lives. He also preached on making ourselves available in service to the Lord. Recently, the Lord has been asking me, "Are you ready? Willing? Available? Will you put yourself at risk for such a time as this?" I felt the Lord calling me into a rather uncomfortable area – one that bid me to demolish some walls of protection and reach out to others who were

going through what I did so long ago. The Lord has given me strength to start stepping into places of discomfort. I have shared my story of survival with others – starting with one-on-one conversations and leading to a video where I shared my story with thousands. This has allowed me to come in contact with others who have had similar experiences. My co-workers and I had the opportunity to assist with gardening, housework, and organizing donations at the women's shelter. These seemingly small acts, are reflections of Jesus. I see the Lord's hand moving through all of this and He continues to speak to me in a still small voice.

I came across a scripture that resonated with me in Isaiah 61:3, "...to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of

praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." Ah, now I see! He has given me beauty for ashes and my mourning has been replaced with joy! The LORD can be glorified through my painful experiences! And, oh, the blessings He has bestowed!

Throughout this journey I have found rest and unexplainable peace through Christ. I have a wonderful husband who supports me in this journey. My daughter has even been a part of some of the visits to the women's shelter. I encourage you to step into what may be an uncomfortable place. God may be calling you there "for such a time as this". He longs to give you "beauty for ashes"! You are a daughter of the King, Sister! Serve Him!



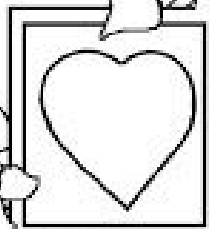
".....to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...." Isaiah 61:3

To all who
mourn in
Israel, he will
give a crown
of beauty for
ashes, a
joyous
blessing
instead of
mourning,
festive praise
instead of
despair.

In their
righteousness,
they will be
like great oaks
that the LORD
has planted for
his own glory.

To all who
mourn in
Israel, he
will give a
crown of
beauty for
ashes,

Isaiah 61:3





Valuable You

BY PHYLLIS LEMMON

A beautiful picture is depicted in Scripture of Mary, who anointed the feet of Jesus (Matthew 26). Despite the scrutiny she received for “wasting” such expensive perfume, she lavished her worship on the Savior in this most humbling, intentional display of love, gratitude, and honor to the Son of God. Neither the perfume, nor her worship, was wasted. It provided a picture for all to see that what is truly of value to us, is worth our greatest sacrifice.

Do you understand who God is? God is the creator of the universe. All things were made by Him. Without him, nothing was made that was made (John 1:3). God is eternal (Revelation 1:8). God is just (Deuteronomy 32:4). God is righteous (Psalm 145:17). God is love (I John 4:16). God never changes (Hebrews 13:8). God is holy (Isaiah 6:3).

Do you understand who we are (outside of Christ)? We are sinful (Romans 3:23). Our hearts are desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). We are dead in our sins (Colossians 2:13). We are without hope (Ephesians 2:12).

But God commended his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Holy God, the creator of the universe, valued us so much, that although we had nothing to offer Him, and were totally undeserving of anything from Him, He gave his greatest sacrifice for us; His only son, Jesus Christ. God's

great sacrifice shows how much He values each one of us! He invites each of us to repent of our sins, accept His sacrifice and to be called the sons of God (John 1:12).

As Christians (those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior), we have been called to be “Christ-like”. Being Christ-like involves helping others see how God values them. Considering the “throw away” society we live in that extends beyond paper plates and napkins, to relationships and babies, value is often not given as it should be. We need to see others through the eyes of God, who values them, and help them come to see that value as well.

Your actions can credit value to the people in your life:

~Say “Thank-You” (recognize when something kind has been done for you).

~Focus on the positive of a person (not what rubs you the wrong way).

~Give gifts (it can make someone feel like king for a day).

~Speak your appreciation, privately and publicly (everyone likes to know they are appreciated).

~Make eye contact! (Undivided attention screams, “You are valuable to me!”)

~Really listen – not just hear (listening and hearing are two totally different things).

Do you know the story of the 8-cow wife? The story was told in an article in Reader's Digest (February 1988). On the Island of Kaniwata in the Pacific, it was customary to give a dowry for the wife-to-be. Two to three cows were given for a nice wife; four to five cows for a very nice wife. The parents of the shy and plain Sarita were very aware their daughter most likely would never find a husband. Until one day, Johnny Lingo, a very skilled and smart man, saw Sarita and wanted to marry her. Without bargaining, he presented 8 cows for the one he loved. Weeks later the people on the island could not believe the change in the girl. Sarita had become a very beautiful woman displaying grace, inner confidence, and dignity. The evidence of her husband's value of her had transformed her. She knew she was worth more than any other woman on the island to Johnny.

God loves you! You are of such value to Him that He gave His only Son to die for you and pay the punishment for your sins. Jesus rose from the grave, victorious over sin and death! You need to know this. Everyone we meet needs to know this. Accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. He paid the greatest price for you! Even more than the man who got an 8-cow wife. Jesus gave His life so you could have eternal life. Who has ever valued you that much?

At a Loss for Words...



BY REBECCA SCOTT-FIELDEN

Cold War: March 12, 1947 (end of WWII)–December 26, 1991 (Soviet Union dissolved)

From the time I began school and until the mid 1970s, we participated in air raid drills. Sirens screamed with regularity throughout the building, like the spelling tests every Friday, prompting teachers to herd all the students down to the basement corridors. There, we assumed the position of “duck and cover;” crouched, backs against the cold, concrete block walls, our arms over our tucked heads. I still remember the deafening silence among my classmates, and discreetly lifting my head, peeking around, desperately hoping to see my little brother. I wondered if it was the “real thing” this time, if my Mom and Dad were safe, and repeatedly whispering, “Help us, Jesus.” It was the only prayer I could muster in the moment while anticipating whether the next sound we would hear might be the implosion of our school, trapping us all in the rubble beneath. This began my indoctrination of Russian fear.

What I believed about this fearsome and malevolent threat was that they hated Americans, they didn’t believe in Jesus, that our town, Niagara Falls, was one of their primary targets because of its’ importance to the

power grid. and they were bent on our destruction, for reasons unknown to me. They could even be masked as a trusted neighbor living among us. I eyed the crotchety, old man next door with considerable suspicion. I was perplexed though...how could Communist spies actually be living among us when they had to first, get around from what I perceived to be a literal “Iron Curtain.”

I was also convinced that my 10 year old, Jesus-believing, self was likely a target and most certainly, a threat to them and to their national security.

I had already written the script, in my head, for the 1984, Cold War classic, *Red Dawn*, 5 years before its’ release in the theater. The movie chronicles the heroism of a band of high school rebels, engaged in guerrilla warfare, resisting communist occupation of the U. S. by the Soviet Union, but in my version, it was a bunch of 5th graders. I’m still waiting for the royalties to start flowing in!

Where in the world, did I even get the information that fueled my childhood fears and imagination? It wasn’t from my parents or any other adult I knew. But kids talk among each other; sharing secrets they weren’t intended to hear, eavesdropping on adult conversations and the eleven o’clock

news (of which, I wasn’t allowed to stay up that late for). To this day, I can still tell you which of my friend’s parents were secretly installing a bomb shelter in their yards. Whether they really did install one, I do not know, but I did know my parents did not; so we were sure to perish, or worse yet, be imprisoned and tortured, attempting to coerce us to denounce Jesus, as the Son of God.

Now, more than half a century later, I feel like that same little girl crouched against the concrete walls of a basement, watching on every media platform, my childhood nightmare unfold onto the people of Ukraine. The searing images of destruction, the slow holocaust and terror inundated on the Ukrainian people crushes my very core.

The thing is, I am no longer my 10 year old self. I am more mature, both chronologically and in my faith and relationship with Jesus and am significantly more versed in current events and global affairs. Yet, here I am again, muttering, “Help them, Jesus,” finding myself weak, still struggling to find adequate words to pray. What do I pray? How do I pray? I want to pray and need to pray, but the words just aren’t there.

In my weakest moments, I am so

At a Loss for Words... (cont'd)

grateful for the Holy Spirit and what Paul wrote in his letter to the church of Rome, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Romans 8:26).

What a comfort! When we are weak, He is strong! Even when we don't have the right words, the Holy Spirit, helps us to pray, speaking the words for us!

And I am grateful beyond measure that Jesus himself modeled for us, how to pray (Matthew 6:9-14); that we don't have to have a bunch of needless words (Matthew 6:5), that He knows everything about us and what we need even before we ask (Psalm 139, Matthew 6:8). Thank You, Lord!

The IMB (International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) has asked Christians across the nation to pray for:

- peace
- Jesus Christ to be glorified through the crisis in Eastern Europe, and that Southern Baptists would remain vigilant in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who are suffering
- strength, courage and perseverance for Ukrainians whose homes are threatened by imminent conflict;
- safe passages out of conflict zones for displaced populations;
- government officials to lead with wisdom in this tense time;
- the estimated 5 million people displaced from their homes;
- the psychological, emotional and spiritual healing for Ukrainians;
- soldiers on both sides of this conflict to be safe from harm;
- local churches, relief workers and humanitarian aid organizations to care for the massive wave of displaced peoples in Ukraine;
- the Disciples Church in L'viv, Ukraine, and its church plant in Bryukhovychi (many members are displaced from the east and had hoped this conflict from eight years ago was over);
- the Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary as it wrestles with how to assist its students in this time of crisis;
- Ukrainian believers as they seek to be a light in the darkness; and
- Ukrainians who have never heard the Gospel to have an opportunity to experience the hope of Jesus.

(Paul Chitwood, president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention)

"Prayer is the portal that brings the power of heaven down to earth."

-Priscilla Shirer



The Master Teacher's Encouragement

BY LYNETTE CANNON

“Good job!”

“I knew you could do it!”

“I am so proud of you!”

As a schoolteacher for thirty-two years, I realized that words of encouragement were important to students as they navigated through their learning experiences. These words often made all the difference in their perceptions of themselves and in their abilities to succeed. We, too, as Christian adults, need words of edification and affirmation on our spiritual journeys. Jesus, the Master Teacher, knows this and supplies what we need with His precious Words.

What kind of students are we? Are we the fearful ones, like the children who are afraid of new concepts or new situations? What does our Teacher, Jesus, say to us to encourage us?

“But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid” (John 6:20).

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1).

“...In this world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Students, we do not have to be afraid because the Master is in control. One of the greatest challenges for a teacher is convincing a student that he is capable of succeeding when he doubts himself. I remember a particular third-grader who struggled with math concepts. She had the ability to succeed, but she just did not trust that she could do it. Eventually, taking small steps with encouragement, she was able to understand and achieve what

had seemed impossible to her. In much the same way, Jesus encourages us in our spiritual learning when He says:

“...What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter” (John 13:7).

He was speaking to the twelve disciples when He said these words. For today’s believers, there will come a time when things we do not understand now will be revealed to us, just as the math concepts became clear to the confused student. And, just as she achieved what she thought was impossible, we can be encouraged in our spiritual struggles by these words from Jesus:

“...With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

The Master Teacher's Encouragement (cont'd)

Students, we can trust that the Master will resolve seemingly impossible situations that we do not understand now.

Throughout my teaching career, my heart was broken to see students who were disadvantaged by poverty, broken or abusive families, or illness. These additional burdens really interfered with their abilities to learn. Again, however, it was mazing to see how encouraging words and actions could help the situation. By meeting physical and emotional needs, teachers can often instill a

love for learning that overcomes the obstacles. Likewise, we are needy students under the tutelage of Jesus. He lifts us up in our poor, broken, and sinful condition.

"...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:8).

"Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

Students, we can depend on our Master to understand and meet our needs.

So as spiritual students of our Master Teacher, Jesus, we are encouraged when we are afraid, confused, or needy. His own Words assure us as He urges us to learn of Him and achieve all that He has for us, no matter what obstacles we may face in our spiritual "education".



My Way or the Highway!

BY LAURA JANE HUNTER

I know we've all heard the saying, "It's my way or the highway." And I'm sure if we are honest, we can admit we have behaved that way a time or two. As mothers of screaming toddlers, rude tweens, or rebellious teenagers, it's very easy to use our authority and do it OUR way. As wives of sometimes stubborn men, it's very easy to use our position and do it OUR way. As women with seemingly oblivious friends at times, it's very easy to use our influence and do it OUR way.

But...is this what God's desire for us is? Does He want us to handle situations OUR way?

God tells us in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine

heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

Trusting and waiting can be very difficult, especially when we see someone we love making bad decisions and we think we can fix it on our own. But God tells us that He will direct our paths. When praying for a loved one, He may not give us or show us that direction as quickly as we would like, but he WILL direct us in His perfect timing.

He also tells us in Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Even

when we feel that we know what to do or how to fix the problem, we must remember that our thoughts or ways are NOT God's. We must seek His guidance and wisdom and not assume we know what to do or how to handle a situation on our own. He sees the big picture that we can't see and handling a situation on our own may make it worse without even realizing it. He says that His ways are higher than ours. Thank God for that! He can help us in every situation if we just trust Him to guide our paths.

Even in the hardest of situations and circumstances, our Lord is ready and willing to guide us to do what He would have us do. We must pray for those loved ones and for God's guidance in our lives. If we wait on Him to show us, we will be so glad we did!



Hello Friend!

If you are reading this, I hope you know you are not here by accident! Do you know how much God loves you and wants you to experience the peace and life He offers? He has a plan for you! The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16.

BUT...by nature, we are separated from God because He is holy and we are sinful. "For the wages of sin is death;" (Romans 6:23).

THANKFULLY...there is a remedy! God's love for you bridges that separation through Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, and rose from the grave, He bore your sins on Himself and paid the penalty for your sins. He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, and that by his wounds you have been healed (1Peter 2:24).

God invites you to cross that bridge of separation from Him and into a relationship with Him, by accepting Christ's free gift of salvation. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

How will you RSVP to this invitation?

- Admit you are a sinner and you need the Savior.
- Be willing to turn from your sins, and ask God to forgive you.
- Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
- Invite Jesus into your life through the Holy Spirit. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

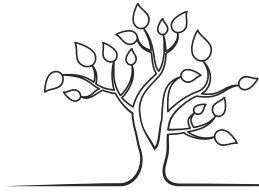
Can we lead you in a prayer to receive Him now?

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. I want Jesus to come and live in my heart. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to trust and follow Jesus follow Him all the days of my life. Thank You for saving me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

Relationship with Him is sweet, my friend! Be encouraged! Get connected with a Bible believing church. It is not good for us to be alone. God means for us to be in community with a body of believers. Stay connected with other Christians so you can grow in your relationship with Him.

Oh, sweet, new Sister in Christ! We are so filled with joy for you! If you prayed to accept this invitation and received Jesus, we are SO HAPPY for you! Please let us know so we can celebrate with you!

Blessings ...



Who Am I?

Do you know who each of these significant biblical women are?

Text your answers to 704-680-2613 to claim your prize!

Be sure to include your name!

1. I am the Jewish queen of Persia.

Jezebel	Deborah
Esther	Priscilla

2. Peter raised me from the dead.

Lydia	Priscilla
Dorcas	Joppa

3. I was barren, and when God answered my prayer for a child, I dedicated my son's life to the Lord's work.

Hagar	Phoebe
Hannah	Eunice

4. I committed adultery with David, and a few years later gave birth to Solomon, the wisest king.

Abigail	Michal
Bathsheba	Bilhah

5. I am an 84-year-old woman who saw baby Jesus when he was brought to the temple for his circumcision.

Anna	Hadassah
Jerusha	Bernice

6. I am the prostitute who married the Old Testament prophet, Hosea.

Drusilla	Hepzibah
Vashti	Gomer

7. I am a Gentile and the great-grandmother of King David, which places me in the genealogy of Jesus.

Naomi	Ruth
Tamar	Rahab

8. I am Jacob's first wife.

Rhoda	Leah
Lois	Mara

9. I am Moses and Aaron's sister.

Miriam	Elisabeth
Damaris	Tirzah

10. I am the mother to the twins, Jacob and Essau.

Rebekah	Zipporah
Sarah	Judith

Notes and Journaling

- Do you sometimes struggle with what to pray or how to pray?
- **READ:** Romans 8:26, Matthew 6:5-14, and Psalm 139
- **WRITE or DRAW** your thoughts:

Notes:

Favorite & Easy SPRINGTIME Recipes

- 
- COBB SALAD IN A JAR WITH BUTTERMILK RANCH
 - STRAWBERRY CRISP

COBB SALAD IN A JAR WITH BUTTERMILK RANCH

Dressing:

- 2 tbsp light mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup 1% buttermilk
- 1/4 cup fresh chopped scallion
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/8 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/8 teaspoon dried basil
- fresh black pepper

Salad:

- 2 strips center-cut bacon
- 10 grape tomatoes, quartered
- 2 large hard-boiled eggs, diced
- 4 ounces cooked or grilled chicken breast, diced
- 1/2 ounce 1 generous tablespoon crumbled gorgonzola or blue cheese
- 4 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1/2 small avocado, diced (optional)

Directions:

1. Whisk dressing ingredients in a small bowl until combined. Set aside.
2. Cook bacon according to directions. Allow to cool on a paper towel lined plate. Chop tomatoes, avocado, eggs, and chicken. Once cool, chop bacon.
3. In each wide mouthed, quart size mason jar, divide all ingredients evenly. Layer the dressing, chicken, tomato, eggs, cheese, bacon and top with chopped romaine. **If using avocado, add avocado the day you plan to eat it.

STRAWBERRY CRISP

For the Filling:

- cooking spray
- 5 cups fresh strawberries, stemmed and quartered
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch, or arrowroot for Paleo

For the Nut Topping:

- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1/4 cup almond flour
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray (8) eight 4-inch ramekins with oil.
2. In a large bowl combine strawberries, honey and orange juice in large bowl, sprinkle with cornstarch and toss until fruit is coated.
3. Transfer to the ramekins.
4. Combine the remaining nut topping ingredients in a medium bowl with a fork and sprinkle over the fruit.
5. Bake 40 minutes or until the top is golden and the berries are soft and bubbly.
6. Serve warm, with 1 tablespoon of ice cream or whipped cream, if desired.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 12 - FOOD PANTRY
APRIL 16 - COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT
APRIL 17 - EASTER SUNDAY

'SHE READS' BOOK CLUB

MEETING ON ALTERNATE SATURDAYS @ 10:00 AM
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
REBECCA SCOTT-FIELDEN 704-680-2613

APRIL 9TH

"EVERY GOOD GIFT"

BY URCELIA TEIXEIRA

GRIEF SHARE

"IT HURTS WHEN WE LOSE SOMEONE. FIND HELP AT GRIEF SHARE."
THURSDAY EVENINGS - 6PM
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
LISA SCEARCE 704-640-4381

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH OFFICE
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CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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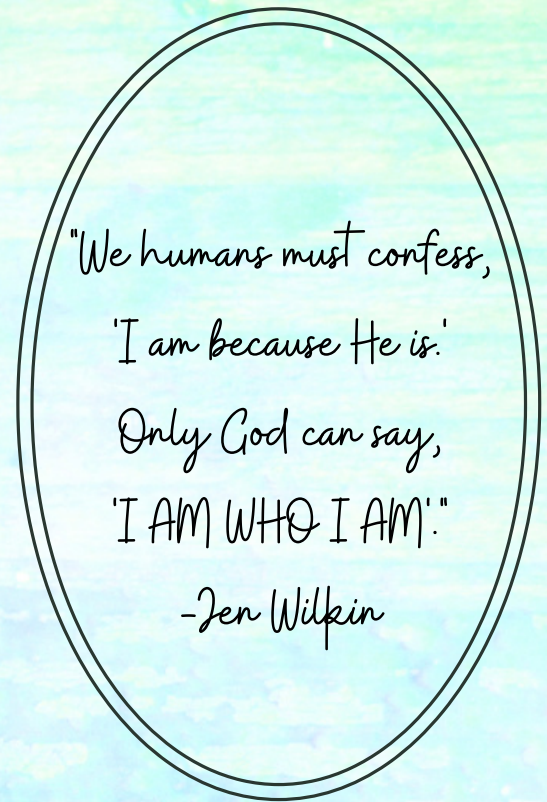
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[HTTPS://CVAN.ORG](https://cvan.org)

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704-633-7695
[HTTPS://PREGNANCYSUPPORT.COM](https://pregnancysupport.com)

PRESENT AGE MINISTRIES
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COUNSELING CENTER AT CONCORD
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