

# thrive!

IN A SEASON OF QUARANTINE

APRIL 2020



# Editor's Note

In this upside down world we find ourselves in amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it's good to be reminded that this season of uncertainty will pass. In the not too distant future, we WILL once again gather together at church with our people, dine with friends at restaurants full of patrons, and travel to the beach or mountains for weekend getaways. Until then, however, we must not just contend with our restrictions, but thrive despite them.

How can we do that? Most importantly, we must focus our minds and hearts on the only One who can calm and center us. If we allow the Lord to, first, minister to us personally, then we will be better prepared to effectively minister to others. Follow these three simple steps to receive the spiritual strength you need to be a blessing to those around you.

1. Reach for your Bible the first thing in the morning, NOT your phone! Trust me on this. Instead, pour yourself a cup of coffee or glass of tea and take 15 minutes to read a couple of chapters of PURE encouragement.
2. Meditate on His words and allow them to sink deep into your heart. Ask the Lord to reveal more about Himself to you through what you've read. If you permit Him to, the Holy Spirit will renew your mind with His Truth and refresh your soul! Wow!!
3. Bow your head and pray for the Lord to quieten your mind and give you wisdom and direction for the day. His peace will flood over you and totally change your outlook!

After your Quiet Time, purpose to minister to at least two people a day. Get creative! With today's technology our reach can be farther than across town, now we can literally touch lives around the world! Need some ideas?

- Call, text, video group chat with Zoom or Skype
- Send a card or write a letter to your 'pew' family (those you sit near during worship), Sunday School members, senior citizens, Shut-ins, Youth, parents, widows, etc.
- Thank your delivery drivers with a big tip or hand-written note
- Grin a big smile of heartfelt thanks to the grocery store, pharmacy or take-out clerk who checks you out
- Bake a treat and leave on your neighbor's doorstep with a note.
- Wave and talk to people on your walks (at a safe distance, of course)

Quarantine doesn't have to be a curse. See it as an unprecedented opportunity to be a blessing to others. You will be changed, and our world will see the love of Christ in every small deed!

I hope this thrive! Newsletter encourages and reminds you that you are not alone, but rather, prayed for and missed greatly! See you soon!

Julie

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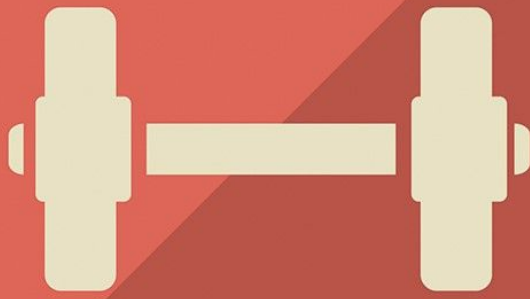
**By: Leigh Hollman**

# April Bible Reading Plan

- April 1 - Esther 9
- April 2 - Esther 10
- April 3 - Job 1
- April 4 - Job 2
- April 5 - Job 3
- April 6 - Job 4
- April 7 - Job 5
- April 8 - Job 6
- April 9 - Job 7
- April 10 - Job 8
- April 11 - Job 9
- April 12 - Job 10
- April 13 - Job 11
- April 14 - Job 12
- April 15 - Job 13
- April 16 - Job 14
- April 17 - Job 15
- April 18 - Job 16
- April 19 - Job 17
- April 20 - Job 18
- April 21 - Job 19
- April 22 - Job 20
- April 23 - Job 21
- April 24 - Job 22
- April 25 - Job 23
- April 26 - Job 24
- April 27 - Job 25
- April 28 - Job 26 & 27
- April 29 - Job 28 & 29
- April 30 - Job 30 & 31



The joy  
of the  
Lord is  
our strength.



# Healthy Quarantine Habits



By: Michelle Rabon

## 1. Drink Plenty of Water

Our bodies need plenty of water to thrive...drink half your body weight in water daily to flush toxins and maintain a healthy weight and digestive system.

## 2. Get Moving

Daily exercise has many benefits...get your heart rate up to fight off sickness, depression and sleep better! Get moving 30 minutes to an hour each day. Make it fun!

## 3. Get Enough Sleep

Our bodies need 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Have trouble going to bed at a normal time? Turn off the TV and phones at least an hour before bed to help you unwind.

## 4. Get up Early

Don't hit that snooze button. Make an appointment with God every morning. Spend time in Bible study and prayer before you begin your day. You may not have less stress in your day but you will be better prepared to handle it.

## 5. Go Outside

Soak up Vitamin D! Take a walk or play outside with your children. Get outside and enjoy the fresh air.

## 6. Read More

Exercise your brain! Read good books!

## 7. Choose Healthy Foods

Just say no to the junk and drive thru lines! Fill your body with good and healthy nutrients...eliminate as many processed foods as you can...seek to eat the yummy foods God has provided us with. Let this be the year you toss in the towel with all soda, even the diet ones!

## 8. Unplug

Get off your phones and turn off the TV in 2017. Focus on people...be present!

## 9. Say "No"

What held you back in 2016? Let it go in 2017!

## 10. Count your Blessings

Reflect daily on all of the blessings that God has placed in your life.



# Called to Serve

By: Holly Jenkins

As you look back at things that have happened in your life, it's then you see how God has purposed and orchestrated it all to bring you to where you are now. He equipped you with your own unique gifts that have helped develop the person you are today. Through every encounter and experience, God has used those unique gifts to help you grow. Whether that growth is through knowledge, strength or perseverance, He is laying out His plan for your life. Learning from experience is a process of developing those unique gifts and skills you were given.

When I was 9 years old, my mother was killed in a car accident. I had to grow up fast and face many hardships as a child. I look at my now 9 year old and couldn't imagine her having to face what I did. Many people faced with hard times give up, turn to drugs, or just mentally shut down. Thankfully my parents raised me to know the Lord and instilled in me God's promises to love me, take care of me, and never leave me. I always knew He was there.

My family situation wasn't the best and when I turned 18 years old I moved out on my own and started working to put myself through nursing school. I think that was another testament of how God was with me because if you've ever been to nursing school you know you can't make it through without God's guidance. It was there I found my love to help others - the true calling of a nurse. I not only found joy in helping others, but I guess you could say I found myself. God has shown me what He wanted me to do with my life. Had I not been faced with my mother's death at such a young age, I wouldn't have

valued life so precious and viewed it from the other side - the side of loss and how it feels to lose someone close to you.

God gave me a passion to help but He has also given me the desire to help the sickest patient in the hospital. Critical care is an area where you never know what to expect and things change minute to minute. You never forget the patients and families that you come to love. You never forget your first loss, or your first time having to tell a family member their loved one didn't make it. It is in those moments that God helps you use those unique gifts to help comfort grieving families such as helping a husband tell his wife of 60 years, goodbye or parents of a young adult who lost his battle with cancer say their final goodbyes to their child.

I have had many families ask me how I can work in this kind of environment and my answer is always the same. God gave me a gift to use and the desire of my heart to help others. I know without a shadow of a doubt God has put me where He wants me to be. Yes, some days I cry with my patients and their families, and yes there are shifts where I don't think I can handle it anymore. It is then I remember the patients that walked out of the hospital that the doctor said never would. Prayer is the best medicine and God is the best doctor.

Using those gifts God has equipped you with not only blesses others but blesses you in return. Use the gifts God has equipped you with and you may find that He opens your eyes to many things you never dreamed possible.

# Keep Calm

By: Karen McCorkle

Jeff and I joined Central Baptist in September, 2010. We weren't coming too long before Pastor Sydney found out Jeff could play the guitar. He encouraged him to come and play with the orchestra and as Jeff got accustomed to the practices and routine of being an orchestra member, his musical repertoire grew. With each new song he printed off the music and added the notations he needed for the guitar. He purchased a satchel-type folder with a handle to carry his music in. Each Sunday and Wednesday he carried the guitar and the satchel and sometimes the banjo, too (his favorite instrument).

After a couple of years his satchel became quite full and heavy. I oftentimes carried it for him and complained about how heavy it was. I asked him why he didn't just leave it at church altogether or at home and only bring the pages he needed. He explained that he took it home to pull out the songs he would need for Sunday on Saturday night and/or print them off and add them if he didn't already have them. Then, he took the whole thing with him on Sunday so that in case a song was changed at the last minute he would have the music for it.

Some of the orchestra members purchased iPads and loaded their music onto them. Jeff was reluctant to do this at first, choosing instead to stick with the familiar sheet music. Over time, as the satchel got too heavy to cart around any longer, he reluctantly purchased an iPad.

One Wednesday, Darbi Smith sat in orchestra practice with her mom and wrote each member an encouraging note and placed it on their music stand. On Jeff's stand she wrote "Keep calm, God is by your side". When Jeff got his iPad he took a picture of her note and saved it as his screen saver.

I began to think about this one day and wondered how often we are like Jeff and his sheet music. We carry around our burdens and problems until our satchel of worries becomes unbearable. We know we should give them up to God but we don't. We wait until it is so heavy we just can't cart it around anymore.

Here are a few verses that remind us that God cares about us and is waiting to help.

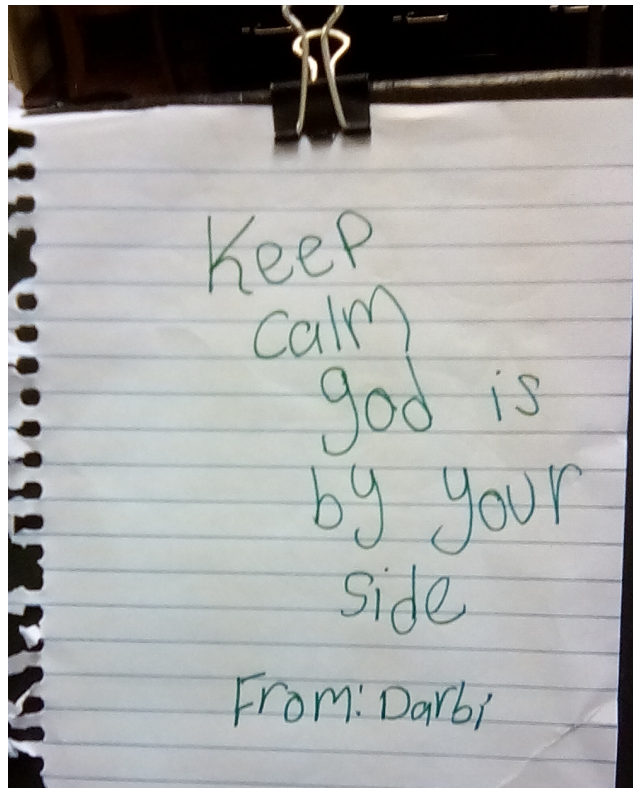
1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Isaiah 41:13 "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand,

saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

Psalms 34:17 "The righteous cry and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

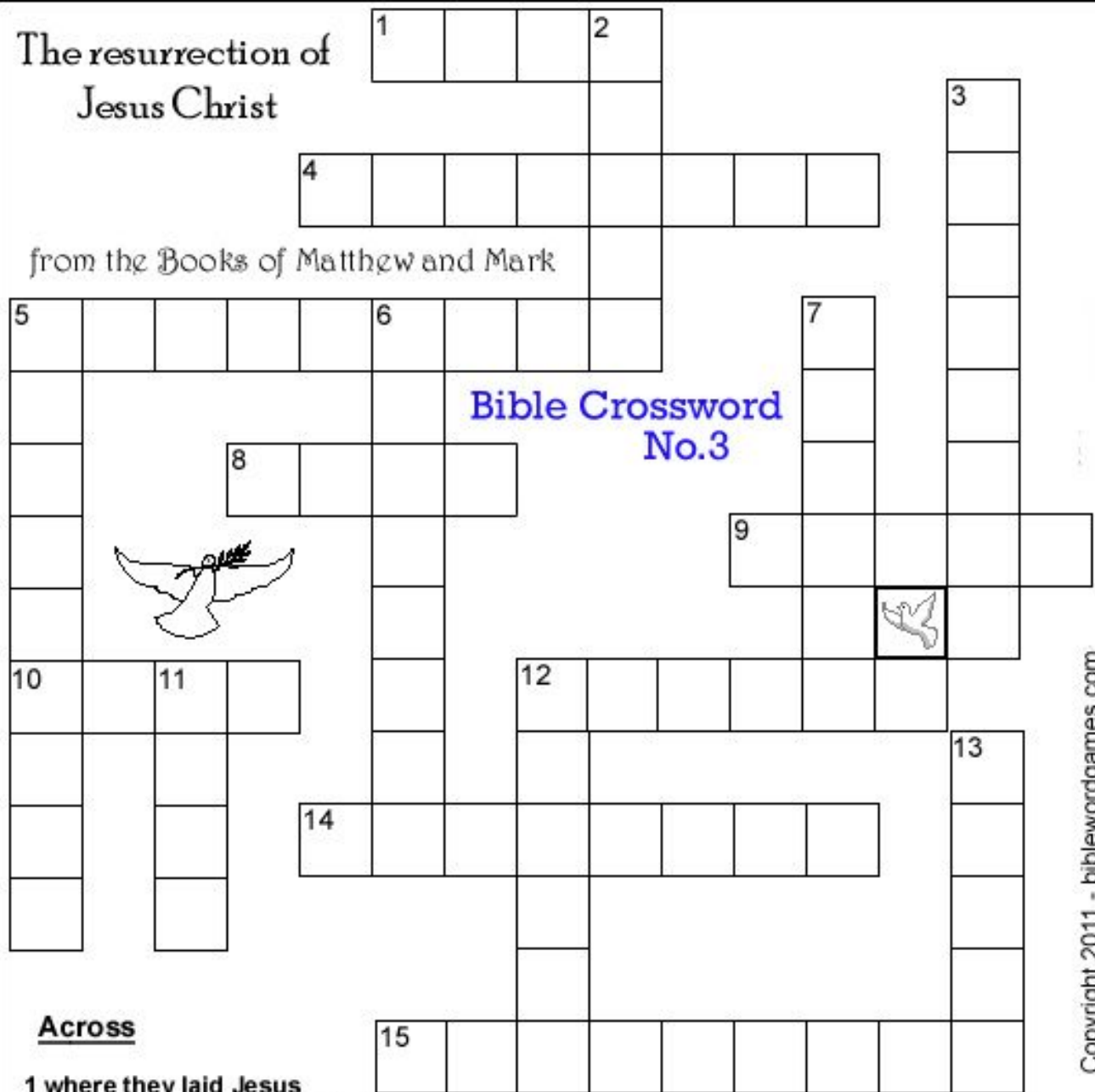
Darbi's simple word of encouragement in her elementary handwriting is a reminder to me to think about the "stuff" I am carrying around. Shouldn't I give it to God. He died on the cross for my sins and wants me to leave my burdens there. How about you? Will you put your satchel down at the cross too?





The resurrection of  
Jesus Christ

from the Books of Matthew and Mark



Bible Crossword  
No.3

**Across**

- 1 where they laid Jesus after He died (Matt.27:60)
- 4 the place where Jesus died (Matt.27:33)
- 5 Jesus and two thieves were \_\_\_\_\_ together (Matt.27:38)
- 8 mother of Jesus
- 9 The angel said "He is \_\_\_\_\_ He is not here" (Mark 16:6)
- 10 They made Jesus wear a scarlet \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt.27:28)
- 12 Jesus was betrayed for \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of silver (Matt.27:3)
- 14 Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ of any crime (Matt.27:4)
- 15 The 12 companions of Jesus

**DOWN**

- 2 Jesus shed His \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins
- 3 Judas Iscariot \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus (Matt.27:4)
- 5 Roman commander of a hundred men (Matt.27:54)
- 6 Jesus said " My God, My God why hast thou \_\_\_\_\_ me" (Matt.27:46)
- 7 a title of Jesus (it means anointed one) (Matt.27:17)
- 11 They laid the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus in a tomb (Matt.27:59)
- 12 Jesus wore a "crown of \_\_\_\_\_"
- 13 our Lord and Saviour

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# Serving God Where You Are

By: Beverly Barbee

When asked to write an article for the *thrive!* newsletter, I have to admit I was a little nervous. Anyone who knows me knows that I like to share verbally but not so much in written format. So here I go, writing about serving God where you are in this thing called life.

As women we wear many hats every day - wife, mother, sister, grandmother, aunt, teacher, leader, friend, co-worker, etc. I am sure you are thinking of how many hats you wore today. Sometimes its hard to juggle it all and more often than not, more than one hat is worn at the same time...imagine that!

How do we serve God with such a busy life? First, we have to realize God has a master plan for each of us. Where you are may not be where you see yourself, but God has a master plan and it is called **HIS plan!** His plan calls for a humble servant who demonstrates selflessness.

In every situation no matter how difficult or tiring it may be, we should stop and count our blessings. Even during everyday chores, stop and survey the blessings that God has given us in our families and friends to love, serve and lead! Unfortunately, our selfish society teaches that life is all about me. Let me stop and say, **"It's not all about you! It is all about serving God exactly where you are!"**

In this life we don't always find ourselves where we think we need or want to be. Here is a perfect example. As women we have the desire for close friendships. The ideal is to have our BFFs in close proximity to where we live. I feel the same way but my closest childhood friend has not lived in the same state as me for the last 10 years. We have not been able to see each other except for once or twice a year. However, we talk often, text and pray for each other regularly. Whenever we are together, we pick up right where we left off. God has blessed me with a faraway friend but He has also given me other friends that I get to see each week. Are you blessed with dear friends no matter whether near or far? If so, serve God exactly where you are and love them wherever they are.

Let's look at the model servant leader, Jesus. Read Matthew 23:11-12. Jesus challenged society's norms by teaching that greatness comes from serving. Jesus came to serve, not to be served.

He also met people where they were - the woman at the Samaritan well, the lame man literally lowered through the roof and Zacchaeus up in a tree. Let me give you an example of how I had the opportunity to meet someone in a store. As I was in line to check out, I noticed a lady in a wheelchair. She was trying to keep all of her groceries on her lap, balancing them so that they didn't fall to the floor. Some people stood by watching while others tapped their feet impatiently as she had maneuvered through the express lane which had lower countertops.

I recognized the lady as an employee of a retail store that I often visited. Instead of being an onlooker the Lord impressed me to assist her out of the store. I had the opportunity, yes opportunity, to help her to her van, load her groceries, have a great conversation with her and return her basket to the store. Here is the best part! As she was pulling her wheelchair into her van, God reminded me that I have two good legs with which I can serve Him and that we have to meet women where they are - we cannot expect them to always come to us!

Let me give you a few more "aha" moments for me. I am blessed to work with the best co-workers. They are dedicated Christians, one being a special lady who is probably reading this article. As a group, we have created a prayer room at work, right in the middle of a corporate office. No, it is not decorated like the war room, however it is just a plain huddle room where if any employee or anyone needs us to gather and pray, we pray. There have been prayers answered in that room.

One last thought, what about those car rides with your children? What an awesome opportunity to listen to them share with you what they have on their minds. This is also a time to have teaching moments for Jesus. I call these 'little life moments.'

I will end with one last Biblical example of serving God where you are. Let's look at Mary and Martha. Read Luke 10: 38-42. Martha was busy serving Jesus in the kitchen, while Mary was serving Jesus by sitting at His feet. Did you see that I said Mary and Martha were both serving Jesus? They were serving in different ways. Martha was so busy serving that she could not see that she was neglecting her guest, Jesus. The question arises, "Are you too busy serving that you fail to spend time with Jesus? We have to dedicate time to sit at the feet of Jesus and be in awe of who **He is** and what **He wants** to share with us through His Word. We must read and meditate on His Word, to survey our blessings and to always have a serving heart.

When serving God becomes part of you, you will not even realize you are doing it until you have the opportunity to reflect back on your blessings. Be planted like a tree by the water and do not move. There is always a moment to serve, right where God has placed you!

# It's Worth the Investment

By: Debbie Brumley

When asked to share my thoughts on why it is important to INVEST in the lives of others, my heart knew the answer but my mind had difficulty trying to find words to express it. So began this simple word study. Who knew that God would bring such delight from looking up words in the dictionary...then again...*In the beginning was THE WORD, and THE WORD was with God, and THE WORD was God.* (John 1:1)

Let's define the word INVEST and ponder its meaning in our daily life.

Invest-verb (requiring action) to DEVOTE one's time, efforts, or energy to a particular undertaking with the EXPECTATION of a worthwhile result.

Let's define the word, DEVOTE and ponder its relationship to investing.

Devote-verb (requiring action) to give, set apart, vow, consecrate all or a part of one's time, efforts or resources to a person, activity or cause.

Finally, let's define the word EXPECTATION in this simple word study.

Expectation-noun (person, place or thing usually referring to the verb) to anticipate a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future, a belief that someone will or should achieve something, one's prospect of inheritance.

(Dear reader, did you read between the lines...I had a little HALLELUJAH spell right there in preparing this little article! To God be the glory, great things He has done/is doing/will do!)

Before we were ever conceived in our mother's womb, God the Father made a great investment into each of our lives (you see we have been on His mind for all eternity). He set forth the plan of salvation which came at quite a sacrificial investment, yet He devoted Himself, and gave His beloved Son with the strong belief that we would be worth the prospective-certain-inheritance He has to offer!

Have you pondered the thought, "What if no one had ever told me about this great INVESTMENT?"

Certainly we should be giving Him praise and thanksgiving for those who devoted a portion of their lives so that we can one day realize our inheritance. However, if investments remain in one unit there is less gain. We must utilize our resources for we have been SAVED to SERVE. We have tasted and know THE BREAD OF LIFE and must bring others to the table. We should desire to be filled and to see others filled as well. We must plant seeds in order to yield growth and in turn we must see the fields watered, hoed and harvested. Our investment is so precious we must redeem the time for life is indeed short!

Ponder these simple thoughts:

How am I INVESTING in eternal things? (The things God cares about.)

What am I DEVOTING my time, talents and treasures to?

What do I EXPECT and believe will happen as a result?

God calls each of us to invest in unique ways. When we obey what He has asked us to do, the GAINS for investing will be out of this world! Those treasures are laid up in heaven and we will one day bow at His holy feet and present them to Him face to face. In the mean time, the earthly encounters bring such joy to us and the ripple effect of our investments bring joy to others. Some think they do not have much to invest, and my heart draws up this simple phrase, LITTLE IS MUCH WHEN GOD IS IN IT.

Have you ever received a tender hug or smile from a child? If yes, then you have been endowed a great investment and have the opportunity to double the growth by returning it again!

Jude 1:22 gives us an investment/growth strategy worth memorizing and applying daily, "And some have compassion, making a difference."

Be that compassionate person and GO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! God will make your investments count!

# Be Still

By: Rachel Martin

'Be still.' 'Stand still.' These commands are said by parents everywhere. When children hear these words they usually feel they are being punished. Is that truly our motive? If not, then why do we say it? Normally we want our children to "be still" in order to listen attentively, stand quietly or show respect.

What about us as Christians? We constantly busy ourselves talking, texting, or scrolling and all the while God is saying, "Be still." He says it to us for the same reasons we say it to our children. He wants us to be respectful and quietly pay attention... to Him.

How I fail at this command! I use the excuse of being too busy but when I stand before God, the words "too busy" will be shamefully inexcusable. God did not create us to be so busy that we fail to communicate and spend time with Him.

Obviously this word *still* is important. It means *not moving, deep silence, calm, to make quieter*. It is used twenty-six times in the Bible and even more importantly, it is a word strategically spoken by Jesus during the raging storm (Matthew 8:23-27). This passage reveals the disciples' fear and their frantic efforts to save themselves. These disciples, the same men who had daily followed Jesus and witnessed His miracles, were paying attention to the storm, not Him.

How true that is for us today? Are we so caught up in our own 'storms' that we fail to pay attention to the only One who can calm them? All He wants for us is to BE STILL. Jesus rebuked the waves and commanded them to be still but I think there was more to it. The disciples needed to be still as well and fix their eyes on Him. The Lord wanted their complete attention and quiet spirit... the same things He wants from us today.

This past year I learned firsthand the consequences of not obeying the Lord's command to "be still" and found myself in a place where all I could do was be still. So, I encourage you to still yourself so God won't have to.

The Lord wants the absolute best for us and stands ready to meet with us in the stillness and reveal that He is God. Will you take Him up on the offer?

You are  
Way Maker  
Miracle Worker  
Promise Keeper  
Light in  
the Darkness  
My God  
That is Who  
You Are

# Parmesan Tomato Zucchini Bake



## Ingredients

- 2 medium zucchini, sliced
- 2 medium yellow squash, sliced
- 5 medium tomatoes, sliced
- 1/2 cup quality parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian spices

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a baking dish, arrange zucchini, yellow squash and tomatoes in an alternating pattern (as seen in the photos).
3. Top with cheese and spices. Place into oven and bake for 20 minutes or until squash is soft.

## Ingredients

- 3 Bananas
- 1/4 lb Cored Pineapple
- 6 Strawberries
- 1 cup Dipping Chocolate
- 1/4 cup Chopped Peanuts
- 12 Popsicle Sticks (or skewers)

## Instructions

1. Cut strawberries in half.
2. For each strawberry half, cut an equal size piece of banana and pineapple.
3. Place pineapple on first, then banana and lastly strawberry.
4. Place in freezer for 10 minutes.
5. Line a tray with wax paper or





Has God called you to do something? Has He nudged your heart to move your feet and use your hands for Kingdom work? If you are a Christian - saved by incredible grace, the answer is yes. You may not know yet where He is calling you or for what, but He will. Friend, we are saved with a purpose; to live the calling God has placed on our life. Whether you feel called to work with children, women, the homeless, grieving, or foreign people groups on the other side of the world...the list could go on...wherever He has called you, it is for a purpose.

When God began to stir my heart to see women in the Word, I could not get away from it. Every sermon I heard pointed to God's calling, every person I spoke to affirmed the stirring God placed within my heart. Still, I questioned why God would call me? A woman with no Bible degree, who had a bad track record with spelling and grammar and one who ran away from God for so long. I had no qualifications...I came to learn, after a few months of wrestling with God, that the only qualifications I needed was to be His and be willing to serve whole heartedly.

As I began to write, teach and speak to women, the calling became clearer, not always easier but clearer. He opened doors and made possible things that I could have never planned on my own. Walking your calling takes prayer, work, effort and investment; it isn't going to be easy but we serve a faithful Father who loves us and gave His Son for us...not just for our eternal security but to serve Him fully here on earth.

One morning after speaking to a group of women at our church about following God's calling, a question was raised by a young woman..."How do I practically follow God's call?" A question I knew most of us have. Most of us who are looking to follow hard after God in our lives need a practical application. So, what does it look like? What is needed?

In my studies, God lead me straight to 2 Timothy 1:3-14. Timothy was a faithful servant of the Lord and he walked

his calling well from what Scripture tells us. Thankfully Paul pens instructions for us as to how we can also walk our calling well, just like Timothy.

**1. Sincere faith:** We must be a born again Christian having a true heart-changing relationship with Christ. The word *sincere* in this verse comes from the Greek *anupokritos* which means "without hypocrisy, pure, true, genuine, real faith."

**2. Fan the flames of your spiritual gift:** God has provided each of us with at least one precious gift because of His grace...gifts to use for His Kingdom. He doesn't offer these gifts to us to neglect but rather to use with skill.

**3. Being afraid and timid aren't from God:** Often when God places a call on our lives for His glory, our first instinct is fear and doubt. I know it was for me...I questioned how it could be possible that God would call me. We have to remember that those feelings of inadequacy are not from Christ, because He has equipped us fully.

**4. Be ready to suffer for the Good News:** *It may not be our favorite thought, but there will be many sacrifices to serve God fully. We must be ready to serve God no matter the possible outcome. Remember that walking our calling will not be easy.*

**5. Called with a purpose:** In verse 9, the word *purpose* is drawn from the Greek *prothesis* which means "God's intentions beforehand." It should give us comfort to know that God has a plan for us, a purpose for us, a calling for us. One that He has been orchestrating from the beginning.

**6. Our commitment to God:** Know where your faith, hope and trust lies, friend. Without our full commitment to Who God is and what He can do we cannot fully walk our calling. Our commitment to God keeps us going despite heartache and struggle, despite pain and oppression. Paul revealed in 2 Timothy 1:12 that despite all he had been through he knew who he believed and trusted in.

**7. Guard what has been entrusted to us:** As His children we are entrusted with the Gospel. We are entrusted with the job of taking the Gospel to all people. 1 Thessalonians 2:4 tells us that God entrusts us with the message of Hope...not for our own gain or to please men but to please Him. Friend, guard what has been entrusted to you.

Whatever your resolution is for the New Year, seek Christ first. Make your calling a priority, trusting God to show you where He wants you to be and then move forward in faith. Sweet friend, you may be surprised where He takes you. Lean in to Him in 2017 and walk your calling.

# Psalms: A Beautiful Centerpiece

By: Lynette Cannon

Why is Psalms one of the easiest books of the Bible to find? If you have ever participated in Bible Sword Drills, you know that it can be found by simply turning to the center of the Bible. Do you think that the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us something by putting such a wonderful compilation of scriptures in a central location? Just as a beautiful centerpiece enhances a dinner table, the book of Psalms enriches our lives with scripture verses applicable for each and every situation. And, just as a centerpiece is composed of a variety of flowers and greenery, Psalms is filled with words to help us in both the ups and the downs of this life. Psalms has been my go-to book more times than I can count through many different seasons of my life. No matter what I may encounter, whether good or bad, I know that if I open God's precious Word to the middle, He will have something to meet my need at the time.

The first things we might notice about a centerpiece are the brightly colored flowers, ones that are sure to catch our eye and focus our attention. Such are verses like Psalm 100:3 which remind us of Who God is and who we are: *"Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."* My heart is often encouraged by verses of thanksgiving and praise found in Psalms, the 'flowers' that bring a smile to my face: *"Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever"* (Psalm 106:1). There are so many verses like this! When I am feeling 'blue', all I have to do is open to the book of Psalms and start reading, and my spirits are soon soaring as I am reminded of the greatness of my God.

Just as a centerpiece is composed of flowers that anchor the arrangement, the centerpiece of Psalms contains verses that remind us of His saving power, the anchor of our souls. I rejoice in the miracle of my salvation experience every time I read Psalm 40:2: *"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings,"* and Psalm 34:4: *"I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."* Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord, for the verses in Psalms that take us back to when You first found us! Praise Him, too, for the ones that assure us of His keeping power: *"But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me"* (Psalm 49:15). What a promise!

In addition to gorgeous flowers, a centerpiece may also contain practical greenery in order to provide background. Similarly, God has provided words of guidance in the central book of Psalms. Psalm 119:105 reminds us: *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* He asks us to seek and follow His leadership, to prove Him, in Psalm 34:8: *"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."* I can testify to the truth of these words. In my almost thirty-six years of marriage to my precious husband, Tommy, we were blessed beyond measure. We truly found that ...*"they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"* (Psalm 34:10b). I am so very grateful for His blessings on our lives and our marriage.

Some centerpieces have prickly stems or thorns. Even though the verses in Psalms would not be considered prickly or thorny themselves, some are there to bring comfort and peace when we are faced with the difficult events of this life. When we fail the Lord, and our hearts are broken, Psalms offers hope and encouragement: *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."* (Psalm 37:23-24) And what about the 'thorns' of death and sorrow? Never has the book of Psalms been more precious to me than in the last twenty months since Tommy went to Heaven. A multitude of verses from Psalms have carried me through some sorrowful days and nights: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"* (Psalm 46:1); *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee"* (Psalm 56:3); *"A father of the fatherless, and a judge [defender] of the widows, is God in his holy habitation"* (Psalm 68:5); and one of Tommy's favorites: ...*"weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"* (Psalm 30:5b). And so many more than I could ever list here!! God is faithful to provide comfort and peace as only He can.

So, I do not believe that it is coincidental that Psalms was positioned in the center of God's Word. It is composed of verses that speak to all facets of our lives bringing encouragement, guidance, and comfort. It is truly a beautiful 'centerpiece' of God's Word! Just open to the center and be blessed!

A vibrant background image featuring a field of yellow daffodils and blue grape hyacinths in the foreground, with a bright, sunlit green field extending into the distance under a clear sky.

# Spring Cleaning

By: Jessica Brohman

At this time of year most of us take stock of our house and sigh with the disaster it has become over the winter months. We feel overwhelmed with what to do with all of our "stuff" and we get into the mode of spring cleaning. We see the whole picture of our house and what we want it to become or return to. With one ray of warm sunshine we see beyond the clutter in front of us and gear up to get to the goal of total "clean." We re-arrange our rooms, dust all the bunnies away, and clean every corner from top to bottom. Regardless of when or how we do it, we are cleaning up our living environment so that we can touch base with complete purity (even if it's until nap time is over) and a sense of accomplishment and achievement.

What if we did that with our relationship with God? And what if we did it more than just once a year? We need to examine our lives and hearts and spring clean what's inside of us. We need to mop up old grudges, wipe away judging thoughts, and trash the junk in our lives. These things we need to freely donate to God on a daily basis. Everyone around us would see the accomplishments of our self-cleaning because they would see a real difference in us.

Coming from a family of "cleaners", I can relate to what cleaning really does to us and our relationships. Overachieving in the cleaning area can take away precious

time and energy from our husbands and families, but if used wisely and correctly it can be a ministry to those around us and to ourselves. Now some of you are getting excited thinking about all the chores you can forget and I am not saying that, but I do want to stress that if you use your cleaning skills wisely, you can accomplish more than just a clean floor. Knowing when to stop the mop and put away for the next day is a skill that I have struggled with in the past. Realizing what it was doing to my own marriage (and remembering how it ultimately ended my grandparents' marriage) tugged on my heart as a burden to spend more time 'spring cleaning' myself and less on my house. It triggered me start making relationships with family and friends around me more important than those I had with my laundry, floors and dishes.

God has plans for us to prosper and He has intentions for us to live our life to the fullest. I feel certain that He understands when we have a sink full of dishes or loads of laundry waiting to be done because the cleaning we are choose to do is the cleansing of our souls for His Kingdom!



# Spring Cleaning Checklist

A ROOM-BY-ROOM BREAKDOWN FOR SEASONAL CLEANING. YOU CAN DO AS MUCH - OR AS LITTLE - AS TIME PERMITS.

	<h2>Every Room</h2>		<h2>Bathroom</h2>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>DUST</b> CEILING FANS, ARTWORK, KNICK KNACKS, AND VENTS.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>MAIN</b> SCRUB TOILETS, SINKS AND SHOWER. WIPE DOWN ALL FIXTURES. (BABY OIL WORKS WELL ON CHROME!)</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>WINDOWS &amp; WINDOW SCREENS</b> CLEAN WINDOW TREATMENTS ACCORDING TO TYPE &amp; MANUFACTURER INSTRUCTIONS.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>CABINETS</b> DUST CABINETS; GO THROUGH DRAWERS &amp; MEDICINE CABINETS TO DEJUNK AND REORGANIZE.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>CLEAN BASEBOARDS</b> USE WARM, SOAPY WATER. (YOU MAY NEED TO VACUUM THEM FIRST.) WIPE DOWN WALLS TO REMOVE DIRT AND FINGERPRINTS.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>MIRRORS</b> CLEAN MIRRORS. (I LIKE TO USE A VINEGAR-BASED CLEANSER AND NEWSPAPERS.)</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>FURNITURE</b> DUST, &amp; POLISH W/ APPROPRIATE POLISHING AGENT. VACUUM UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE AND LAUNDRER CUSHIONS IF NECESSARY. CAREFULLY SPOT CLEAN LEATHER FURNITURE WITH A DAMP WASHCLOTH IF NEEDED.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>TRASH</b> EMPTY AND CLEAN TRASH CANS.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>RUGS &amp; CARPETS</b> VACUUM, SHAMPOO RUGS &amp; CARPET. SWEEP &amp; MOP FLOORS WITH CLEANSER APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR SPECIFIC TYPE OF FLOORING.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>SHOWER</b> INSPECT SHOWER LINER AND REPLACE IF NECESSARY.</p>
	<h2>Kitchen</h2>		<h2>Bedroom</h2>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>OVEN</b> CLEAN OVEN ACCORDING TO MANUFACTURER'S RECOMMENDATIONS.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>BED</b> REMOVE AND LAUNDRER BEDDING. VACUUM AND FLIP MATTRESS, ACCORDING TO MANUFACTURER INSTRUCTIONS.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>REFRIGERATOR</b> UNPLUG REFRIGERATOR AND DUST THE COILS. REMOVE CONTENTS OF REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER. DISCARD ANY ROTTEN OR UNUSABLE FOOD. WIPE DOWN AND CLEAN ALL SHELVING.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>CLOSET</b> SWITCH OUT COLD-WEATHER CLOTHING FOR WARM-WEATHER CLOTHING. DONATE ANY UNWANTED ITEMS TO A THRIFT STORE.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>APPLIANCES</b> CLEAN MICROWAVE. WIPE DOWN SMALL APPLIANCES SUCH AS TOASTER, BLENDER AND SLOW COOKER.</p>		<h2>Office</h2>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISHWASHER</b> RUN DISHWASHER EMPTY, W/ A DISHWASHER-SPECIFIC CLEANER SUCH AS FINISH.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>DESK</b> ORGANIZE PAPERS AND DE-CLUTTER DRAWERS.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>COUNTERTOPS &amp; CABINETS</b> WIPE DOWN COUNTERTOPS AND CABINETS WITH DAMP WASHCLOTH. CLEAN INSIDE DRAWERS. SCRUB SINK.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>BOOKS</b> DUST BOOKS ON BOOKSHELVES.</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>PANTRY</b> ORGANIZE FOOD IN PANTRY, DISCARDING OUTDATED ITEMS, AND WIPE OFF SHELVING.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>COMPUTER</b> DUST COMPUTER KEYBOARD AND SCREEN WITH A MICROFIBER CLOTH.</p>



# Quarantine School

By: Alisha Plott

It has only been a few weeks of COVID19 and people are already feeling overwhelmed, especially parents recently forced into quarantine homeschooling. Understandably they are grappling to figure out how to handle this new 'normal'.

Hopefully I can offer some advice that will help you as you adjust to becoming your kids new schoolteacher.

- Give yourself some grace - your homeschool doesn't have to be perfect
- Remember that repetition goes a long way. You may not get everything done today but you can start over again tomorrow.
- Start your day with Bible study and prayer, personally and with your kids. This is the most important lesson of the day and helps fulfill the admonition to train our children up in the way they should go. No matter their ages, devotions will get everyone in right frame of mind.
- Suggestions: For small kids, read a Bible story. For older students, read the Proverb that corresponds to the date of the month. I have also found that a 1-minute Bible note or short devotion works well. Let your kids discuss and see what they take from it. They may surprise you. I know I have been impressed many times at how my kids view biblical content totally different than me. It really is God in action (me learning from them).
- Remember that younger kids will only be able to do seat work for a short time and will need some sort of movement.
- Encourage outside and inside play. By this time in your day you are probably ready for a break!
- Every child learns differently so what works for one child may not work for another. Adjust your teaching methods to your child's learning style. (i.e. lean heavily on colorful pictures, graphs, charts, etc. for your visual child but audiobooks, discussions, and verbal cues for your auditory child)
- Adjust your schedule as needed. It's OK to be flexible. You may need to do school in the evening where I do mine first thing in the morning. Both are just fine.

Many schools have assigned daily work, given out information for virtual school online or sent home nothing. Whatever

your situation, remember that you will only by quarantine homeschooling for a relatively short time. So, seize this opportunity to teach subjects utilizing non-traditional fun activities with your kids.

- Cooking teaches math with measurements
- Walking outside teaches science concentrations such as biology, astronomy and geology
- Reading aloud a book together fosters listening and comprehension skills

There are also online sites that offer free curriculum or help. I would encourage you to take advantage of them. Here are a few of my favorites:

- DUCKSTERS (I love this site for history, science, and geography)
- DUOLINGO ( for a second language - only takes 5 minutes a day)
- READWORKS (reading comprehension)
- SOFTSCHOOLS (printables)
- TEACHERS PAY TEACHERS (everything)
- MAGIC SCHOOL BUS (Videos for science - Netflix)
- SCHOOL HOUSE ROCK (Videos for grammar rules - YouTube)
- KHAN ACADEMY (older students - math and grammar)
- K12reader (for spelling)

Take this unique gift of time God has given you to fellowship with your kids. It's so easy to get caught up with things you would like to get done around the house, but don't let this opportunity to make precious memories pass you by.

Use this time to show your children who God is in your life. Share prayers God has answered over the years with them, because in doing so you will be reassured that He will also take care of you during this uncertain time.

There are many moms in our church that have been homeschooling for years and would love to give you a helping hand. Send us an email with your questions or look in the directory and give us a call.

Take it from a mom of a preschooler, elementary child, middle schooler, college kid, and one that is married, *WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE* and *THIS TOO SHALL PASS*.

# Easter at Home

By: Leigh Hollman



Things are changing around us minute by minute. Easter festivities are cancelled, but Easter isn't canceled! Christ has risen and we can celebrate anywhere – especially at home. From decorating to food to activities with the family, here are some ideas and tips to help make your Easter this year a joyous time with your family. Here are 4 areas that will enhance your celebration and time with your family this year.

**Decorating:** Since Christ is the center of the celebration, a Risen Box/Bowl would be a perfect centerpiece for your table or counter. Children can use plastic eggs and hang them from branches inside and outside. Children can use chalk to write messages and draw pictures on your driveway and sidewalks.



**Crafts:** From traditional dyeing of eggs, egg carton flowers, peep houses, painted rocks to look like decorated eggs, toilet paper tube bunny shapes, sun-catcher eggs (clear contact paper or wax paper – use tissue paper or crayon shavings)

**Food:** no bake cookie nests, pretzel butterflies, slow cooker breakfast casserole, and of course the traditional Southern



Easter meal – ham, scalloped potatoes/mac & cheese, deviled eggs, green beans, yeast rolls, coconut cake

**Activities:** traditional egg hunt, egg spoon races, bingo with Easter themed pictures or words, glow in the dark egg hunt, scavenger hunts (inside or outside), 14-day walk with Jesus countdown



These are just some suggestions to help you make Easter a special time of celebrating our Savior's resurrection and making some great memories with your family this year. This year may not be like any other Easter, but focus on Christ and time spent with family. Those memories will be price-less! And, if you need any other ideas, search Pinterest to help you and use supplies you already have at home!

# Ways to Connect with thrive!



**Awaken Live on Facebook**  
Saturday, April 4, 2020

*Join us everyday on social media  
for live check-ins and other events*

Facebook - thrive! Ladies Ministry  
Instagram – @thriveladiesministry

**Other Contact information**

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