



Meeting Notes: Closing the Loop (February 10, 2016)

These notes capture our February 10, 2016 meeting. We opened our meeting in prayer and then began our evening. Topic notes may not be in the order discussed during group, and they are not intended to cover everything discussed. They are intended as highlights to capture the essence of our evening. General notes follow each topic that was discussed. Documents used or created during this meeting are attached.

Current Vision: “2016 – The Year of Becoming Women of Worship Women of Witness”

Memory verse: Ephesians 6:11 – “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (NKJV)

Our approach: Since Ephesians is a letter, we are approaching it as a form of communication, which means, there’s a **messenger** (the apostle Paul), a **message** (what we’re seeking to discover), and an **audience** (the believers in Ephesus). Thus, we are looking at “What did the apostle Paul say?” and not “What does it mean to me?” This is so we can put Scripture back into its proper context.

Discussion Topic: Closing the Loop

- **Reflecting on Our Spiritual Blessings:** I asked those who were present when we discussed spiritual blessings to write down at least one of the blessings they could remember and how that blessing relates to her everyday life. The goal is to get us focused on what God has already done and what that now looks like in our lives.
- **Review:** After our reflection, we completed a comprehensive review:
 - **Definitions:**
 - **Summing up grace:** God’s favor influences our heart and helps us act differently.
 - **Summing up peace:** Two things work together as one.
 - **Grace and peace together:** Let God’s favor influence our heart to produce acts of kindness in our life so we can be a peacemaker working together with others for God’s praise and glory.
 - **Clarifying prosperity:** To gain a better understanding, we reexamined the connection between prosperity and two pieces working together. We noted how the whole is greater than the parts, because two things coming together can be greater than the individual parts. Our example was a

cake. The ingredients by themselves do not a cake make, but brought together, we have a delicious dessert!

- **Defining “lavish:”** The original word translated “lavish” relates to being over and above. To understand this concept, we likened our heart to a cup (as in Psalm 23, my cup runneth over). With this analogy, we were able to illustrate how God pours out His grace upon us (see attachment 1). Him lavishing His grace on us is dependent on Him, but our ability to receive His grace is dependent upon us. For example, when we have unforgiveness, anger, fear, worry--all of which can result in bitterness--and anything else of the flesh running our lives, we effectively put a lid on our cup and block God’s grace. In keeping with the parable of the sower and the seed, bitterness is a care of life that chokes out the Word. In addition, James 4:6 tells us God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, when we hold onto all these works of the flesh, our pride cuts us off from God’s grace, but when we humble ourselves and repent, we open ourselves up for a never-ending flow of His grace towards us. As He pours in His grace, eventually, our cup will overflow unto others! Understanding this concept of grace helps put the Scripture going before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace to help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16) into a different context. As we go before His throne of grace, He is able to influence our heart so we have mercy towards others and the favor we need to help guide us through the situation! **Takeaway.** God’s grace should be so over and above in our lives that it overflows unto others!

- **Nuggets from the evening:**

- **Pay it forward.** Grace helps us pay God’s love forward!
- **More than a gift.** Grace is not just a thing, a gift, but something that changes us IF we’re open enough to receive it. As we allow God’s grace to change our heart, those changes manifest as blessings to others.
- **Filling a God-size hole.** The closer we get to Him, the more we fill our God-hole and the less we seek worldly things to fulfill us, which helps us see people as God sees them.
- **Keeping prosperity in context.** We were reminded to look at the big picture, and when we did, we realized the largest context for prosperity is God’s Kingdom. If we allow His grace to influence our heart in such a way that we’re peacemakers, then we’re participating in the prosperity of His Kingdom. In essence, God’s grace helps us to be able to love people we wouldn’t naturally love! Therefore, to prosper God’s Kingdom, grace is not something we’re supposed to accumulate for ourselves; it’s supposed to overflow from us to reach others! For that to happen, we have to take the lid off our cup (heart), because if we’re not allowing ourselves to change,

we can't love others for Him. As a result, we end up blocking someone else's blessing!

- **Accumulated grace.** When we accumulate God's grace, but don't extend that same grace to others, we believe in God, but we don't have works to demonstrate our faith. And as we know, faith without works is dead.
- **Looking ahead towards spiritual warfare.** As we continue our study, we're looking forward to learning how grace and prosperity impact spiritual warfare.

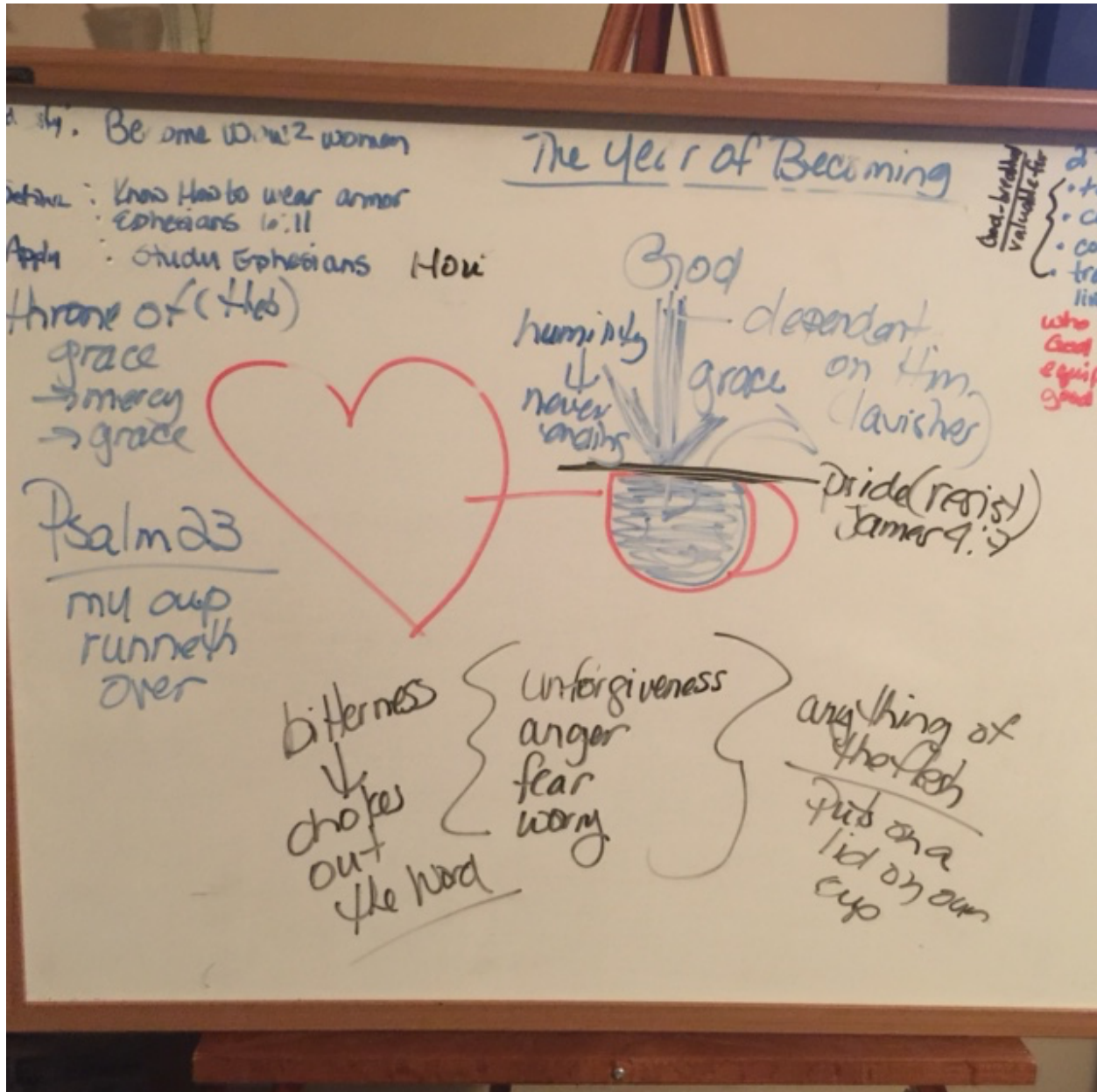
Homework: If you've not already, read through Ephesians 1:15-23 capturing your observations and questions as you read. While reading, please keep in mind the things we have already learned (for example, the spiritual blessings the apostle Paul has already outlined, along with the definition of grace and peace and how they work together in the life of the believer.

Next Meeting: We'll discuss our homework assignment.

Closing: We closed our meeting in prayer with a time of need-specific prayer for the challenges that were lifted up, for the group overall, and as the Holy Spirit led.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about information contained in this document, or would like to be added to or removed from the email distribution for the meeting notes, please email us at wow2@wow2women.com or complete a Contact Form on our site, www.wow2women.com.

ATTACHMENT 1: Our Cup Runneth Over



Note: The actual verse for God's resists the proud is James 4:6.