

Hearth to Hearth

Woman to Woman

Vol. 2, No. 3

“And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:10

May./June 1999

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Be a Heaven Maker!

Early in February spring peepers started filling the air with their voices, and out my kitchen window, across the backyard, I saw daffodils blooming in the woods. During that same week I watched two bluebirds checking out the nesting box on a post in our yard. Evidently the unseasonably warm, spring-like weather had sparked their interest in looking for a place to build a home where they could raise their family.

These sights and sounds, harbingers of spring, were very welcome. Suddenly, like the bluebird, the desire to refurbish my own “nest” surged within me! For starters I threw open the doors and windows and welcomed the fresh, sunshine-filled air that poured in, brightening and freshening all the rooms in the house. Then I was seized with an almost uncontrollable urge to go after every speck of dust or grime that might have accumulated over the winter and to eradicate any clutter that stood between me and the “nesting place” of my dreams! Once done with that I would look around for ways to renew and beautify my surroundings, both inside the house and out. I want my home to be attractive and well kept on the outside; neat, clean and pretty on the inside. Aaah, spring time! Revival time!

My home is dear to my heart; my favorite spot in all the world. At any given moment there is no other place, this side of heaven, I would rather be. When I am required to be away for any reason I yearn for my own space, my own surroundings, my own things, and the best part of the trip is arriving back home.

Does that mean that my home is my idol? Does my desire for beauty in my home mean that I worship things? Does my concern over the appearance of my home mean that I have too much pride? Does God read my heart and write “proud, envious, covetous” by my name? In all honesty, I have often grappled with those questions. A thought comes to my mind: “Should I be satisfied with less heart longings,

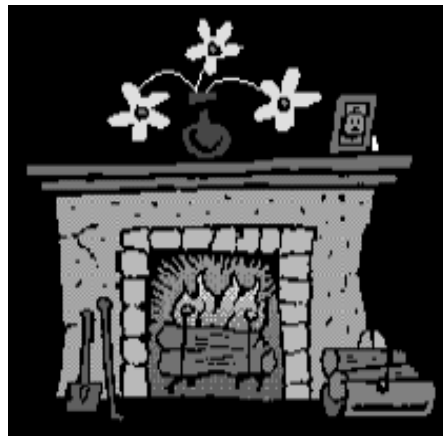
less striving for things difficult to obtain with which to beautify my home, cherishing instead that which God values above jewels, a meek and quiet spirit?” Undoubtedly yes, but I ask myself: “Does the meek and quiet spirit for which I yearn preclude my having a home that is comfortable and attractively appointed both inside and out?” I hope not, because I want to have both!

Then another thought takes hold in my mind: “It is a mistake to think that order, neatness, taste, and convenience are actually pride and love of the world.” A gaudy style and needless ornaments could be symptoms of vain pride, which would not be pleasing to God, but God has given us tangible proofs that He loves the beautiful. He created for man a beautiful world and planted a lovely garden in Eden. He decorated the earth with exquisite flowers of many varieties and colors. Yes, I believe God is pleased with the beautiful.

Do I yearn for an earthly mansion beyond our means to acquire or maintain? Do I spend large sums of money to decorate in a style that does not match our way of life? My answer to both questions is

No. I am very content with our modest home and my decorating style definitely could not be described as elaborate or gaudy. Rather, it is relaxed and I try to achieve an atmosphere of softness, warmth and comfort that appeals to the senses. I like to furnish our home with simple things that wear well, can be easily kept clean and can be replaced when necessary without breaking the budget. With some

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Our Mission Statement: Believing that we can find completeness in all areas of our lives only “in him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10), it is the mission of *Hearth to Hearth* to provide a forum for Christian women to reach out to each other in friendship, with joy and hope; and to encourage each other to find our completeness in Christ as we sojourn here on our way to the kingdom.

Mothers and Brides and Heaven Makers

May and June, a beautiful time of year when the earth is fully awake after its winter sleep and hard at work producing its bounty of food and beauty. May and June, the season of mothers and brides. What wonderful subjects on which to focus this issue of *Hearth to Hearth*!

The “Hearth Circle” feature in this issue deals with the importance of making pleasant family memories for our children. We would like to plan a follow-up feature in which you, our *Hearth to Hearth* readers, share with each other your own favorite memories of home and childhood, or the things that you are now doing to make special memories for your children. So please write and tell us the things you would like to share, and we will include as many of them as possible in a future issue.

Also dedicated to mothers in this issue is the “Hearthside” feature, “Mothers, Do You Know Jesus?” You will be inspired to seek an ever closer relationship with our Lord and Savior as you read the author’s heart-felt call to really know Jesus in a personal way in order to share Him effectively with your children or grandchildren. Once again, you, the reader, are invited to submit your own experiences that you think might be appropriate for this feature. Perhaps you feel that you have no talent for writing. Go ahead; give it a try! We will work with you if necessary and help you arrange and polish your article for publication. We definitely

need your participation not only in the “Hearthside” feature but in other sections of the paper as well.

You will not want to miss “The Proposal” in the “Hearth Kettle” feature. It is an allegory that we believe you will find captivating and provocative. We trust that it will be a blessing to you.

As women, our homes are a very special part of our lives. We enjoy furnishing and decorating them—yes, even cleaning them! I believe we were created with that trait inherent in our makeup. And that is why we include a “Hearth Care” feature in each issue of *Hearth to Hearth*. If you have ever felt a conflict in your mind over whether your desire for beauty in your home bordered on pride or covetousness, take heart and read “Be a Heaven Maker!” in this issue.

The devotional featured in “Hearthstone” focuses on prayer as it has for several issues. This is because we believe that prayer is essential to our becoming “complete in him” (Colossians 2:10). Prayer has been described as the key in the hand of faith that unlocks heaven’s storehouse. We trust that these articles have been a blessing to you as they have to us.

It is our prayer that each article in this issue will minister to a need in your heart. Thank you for your kind letters sharing your enjoyment and appreciation of this little paper. We look forward to them, and they inspire and encourage us to continue with this project as long as our Lord opens the way.

Grace Cox

NOTE OF THANKS:

We gratefully acknowledge those readers who have prayerfully helped with the costs of printing and mailing *Hearth to Hearth*. Without your support, we would be unable to continue this project. It is our desire that God will use this paper to His glory and we earnestly covet your prayers, your ideas and your participation as we plan future issues.

MAIL CALL:

I just wanted to say thanks for *Hearth to Hearth*. I am always looking for little stories or interesting poems to use [for worship]. I really liked the candle story this time and the “Rules For Your Character Garden.” Thanks a lot. Miranda/CO

A special “thanks” for the *Hearth to Hearth* publication. I appreciate the articles. I could really relate to “Phoebe’s Hospice.” [See Vol. 1, No. 2.] Enclosed is a check to help with your ministry.

Ann/WV

I appreciate so much the work you are doing. It is a special treat to receive your newsletter. I share it with others and encourage them to subscribe also. I sent a copy to my sister... and she told me she really enjoyed it. She said it made her think.

Annette/TN

Just a note to thank you for your newsletter... I am enclosing my check...to help with your expenses. God Bless!

Joanne/OH

I happened to stumble across the description of *Hearth to Hearth* while browsing Smyrna [www.smyrna.org]. I am very much interested in receiving this bi-monthly publication. Please send me issues regularly and let me know the suggested price.

Monique/NY

[There is no subscription price. The paper is sent free upon request. Ed.]

I have been on your mailing list since the very beginning of *Hearth to Hearth*. I cannot tell you how much I have been enjoying your newsletter. I like to curl up on the couch with a cup of hot apple cider, and

read it. I am a “new convert” less than a year old, and I am hungry for all of God that I can get. It is my goal to never have that change in me. I believe that *Hearth to Hearth* nurtures the spiritual growth of its readers. It has done this in my case. I somehow received two copies of the March/April issue, but I had planned to give you my sister’s address to add to your mailing list. So I’ll just mail the extra copy to her.

When I read this month about your wanting your readers to participate more, I guess I got what I was waiting for. I write poetry, and have started a book. I love to write... I love to share my poetry with others, especially those with whom I have a strong common bond—that bond being Jesus Christ. My first submission is enclosed. [We plan to print Kathy’s poem in the July/August issue of *Hearth to Hearth*. Ed.]

I just recently learned how rewarding it can be to get involved at church, and “work” for the Lord. I don’t really call it
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Faith and Prayer

An important element in prevailing prayer is faith. The prayer of faith is the only kind of prayer that is ever answered. Prayer is either an audible or an inaudible expression of the desires of the heart, but unless our prayers are backed by faith, they fall lifeless at our feet or go no higher than our heads. Faith is the power that sends our prayers heavenward. It gives them wings so that they reach God.

Sometimes when we pray, it seems that the very heavens above our heads are brass and that our prayers cannot penetrate to the throne of God. That imaginary brass barrier is composed of doubt. This great obstacle to answered prayer is pierced by faith. Faith is the bow that sends the arrows of our petitions to the throne of the Eternal. A painted fire is no fire; a dead man is no man; and a faithless prayer is no prayer, because it has no life or power. Faithless prayers are like arrows without heads, swords without edges, birds without wings. They cannot pierce or cut or fly.

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* Christian and Hopeful, while on their way to the eternal city, got off the highway of holiness and fell into the hands of Giant Despair, who locked them up in the dungeon of Doubting Castle. After having tried every means within their power to escape from prison, they

storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching, we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation."—*Steps to Christ*, p.99.

What is faith? The answer is given in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." (Weymouth.) Practically everything the Christian hopes and prays for is out of sight, or invisible. Faith is the assurance that these things are real, that God's promises are good, and that He will keep His word. Faith means depending wholly upon the promises of God with no evidence in sight except a "thus saith the Lord."

One of the most beautiful illustrations of the prayer of faith is found in Matthew 8:5-10. A Roman officer made supplication to Christ in behalf of his sick servant. Jesus promised to visit his home and heal the palsied man. The centurion decided that he was not wor-

experience in walking on the water. When the frightened disciples were assured that the "ghost" was Christ, Peter cried out, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." Jesus answered, "Come." Peter knew that to jump out of the boat without an invitation would be presumption. He knew that the waters of Galilee could not hold him up. That had been demonstrated many times in his fishing experiences. Christ must speak first before he could exercise faith. It was his faith in the word "come" that held him up. This was the substance of that for which he hoped and asked. When he took his eyes off Christ and exultantly looked back at his fellow disciples, he began to sink. Jesus saved him and rebuked him for his little faith.

James declares that many of our prayers are unanswered because we "ask amiss." It is the Word of God that tells us what we need and gives us a knowledge of the promises of God. Therefore it is the Word that regulates our praying so that we know what to ask for. We show our faith by earnestly asking for what God has promised to give. The Lord delights to fulfill His word in answer to the prayer of faith.

We are told that the Lord is very liberal in His dealings with those who ask in unwavering faith. The petitioner whose faith wavers does not get anything from the Lord. (See James 1:5-8.) Faithless prayers are unanswered prayers. Doubtless this is the chief reason why so few prayers are answered in this faithless generation of doubt and skepticism. The promise is that if we ask anything in His name, it will be granted. A bank note without a signature at the bottom is a worthless piece of paper. It is the stroke of the pen that confers on it its value. Prayer is a feeble thing in itself; but when endorsed by Christ, it is valuable and availeth much. It is faith that endorses the check with the name or promise of Christ.

[Reprinted from *Prevailing Prayer*, by Taylor Bunch, published by Review and Herald Publishing Association, Copyright 1946.]

Faithless prayers are like arrows without heads, swords without edges, birds without wings. They cannot pierce or cut or fly.

despaired of deliverance. As a last means they resorted to prayer, and continued praying till almost break of day. Then Christian thought of the key of faith which was concealed in his bosom and had been entirely forgotten. To their delight this key opened the door of the dungeon, the outer door, and the iron gate leading out of the yard and to freedom. Many professed Christians are in despair, locked up in Doubting Castle. Their prayers are not answered because they do not use the key of faith.

Moody declared that "prayer is the golden key that unlocks the treasures of heaven." Another has said: "Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's

thy to receive a visit from such an honored guest, and asked Jesus to "speak the word only," and with assurance added, "and my servant shall be healed." Jesus spoke the word, and the Gentile officer, with no evidence in sight, believed Him, and went his way rejoicing because his servant was healed. He believed that what he hoped and prayed for was his even before it was confirmed by eyesight. Jesus marveled at such faith, and told His disciples that he had not seen "so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Since faith means depending on the word of God, there can be no genuine faith till God speaks or until we know what He has spoken. Otherwise it is presumption. This is illustrated by Peter's

Mothers Are Memory Makers

Happy memory making is one of the most beautiful things we can do as mothers. Memories provide a basis for the future lives of our children for blessing, or for bitterness and hurt. Will our children have precious memories of their childhood, or will their memories be bad ones?

God is very interested in preserving memories from generation to generation. If it is important for God to organize things for us to remember, don't you think it should be important to us too? "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name." (Malachi 3:16)

Recently I gave a message on "Making Memories." Before I shared I thought I would call each of my children and ask them to tell me their favorite childhood memories.



They recounted a number of things but two things were mentioned by all of the six children: my reading to them and the fun we had at the family meal table each night.

Whenever the little ones would get fussy I would gather them around and read to them. This always settled them. Also, each night before bed I read to them, usually serial stories with a number of chapters each night.

The family meal table was a special time in our home. We canceled schedules that interfered with the evening meal. I believe that this cementing time which establishes lifetime memories is more important than the so-called pressing infringements that scatter so many families at this hour of the day. We would often give the children a subject to consider at the table; it always produced animated discussion, which they loved.

We never left the table before opening the Word of God and praying together. Family devotions is such an important part of the meal table, isn't it? I believe that the table is not only a place to feed the bodies of our children, but to feed their souls and spirits too. Bible

reading and question time open the way to talk about the things of the Lord.

Do you notice something else? The favorite childhood memories of our children did not cost money! Often we think that in order to make wonderful memories for our children we have to take them to this and to that—and usually these things cost money. It is the simple things of life that can make the most pleasurable memories. It is not running here and there, but the atmosphere of your home. I feel sad that when many young people get together they always have to "go out" or "to a movie" to enjoy themselves. Have they lost the joy of just communicating together?

God believes in feasts. When he wanted the people of Israel to remember something very important He commanded that they keep a feast once a year to remember it! Today, the Jewish people still keep the Passover Feast every year. It is a feast of remembrance. If God thinks that a feast is an important way to keep memories don't you think this is a good way to celebrate a special occasion? I think we should make any excuse for a celebration meal!

When the children were younger we often had "color nights." For example, I would say to them, "Tonight is Red Night. Come to the table dressed in red." This would keep them busy finding red clothes to wear while I prepared a red meal of potatoes colored with red, beetroot, tomatoes and anything else I could create to be red! Dessert would be red plums and red jelly. It wasn't such a healthy meal but it was fun to have on the odd occasion. We did this with many different colors.

When the children were all home we used to have an annual family concert. We would have a nice dinner after which everyone in the family—parents, grandparents and all the children—would present something. They would read a poem they had written, sing a song, perform a skit or give a speech on a subject of interest.

Family celebrations to mark special occasions is a very good way to make memories. While living in Australia we annually celebrated the date of our arrival in that country, the date of our coming into our home, the date of starting our church and so on. Birthdays are always special times in our family and definitely precious memory makers. We like to give speeches to the birthday person, recounting all the nice things that we can

say about that person to encourage them and inspire them to be all that God wants them to be.

Keepsakes are important to God. For example, regarding the manna with which God fed the children of



Israel, “And Moses said This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer [almost three quarts] of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 16:32.)

Of course we cannot hold on to everything, but keepsakes—special things for remembrance—should be important to us. Photo albums are wonderful keepsakes. Children, both small and grown up, love to spend time poring over photo albums, recalling the memories of their lives. Do you keep snippets of your child’s hair? Their hair color changes so much over the years; it is a wonderful memory to know their color when they were little. One mother audio-taped each of her children laughing and crying when they were babies; she also taped them singing and talking to each other at different stages of their lives. Now that they are older they love to listen to how they sounded when they were little.

When my seventh grandchild was born my son-in-law purchased a trunk for a keepsake for his daughter that he will give to her when she is 21 years old. So far he has put into it the newspaper of the day she was born, a Nashville magazine of current events the week she was born, uncirculated coins of the year she was born, her first dress, her first shoes which have been bronzed, and a snippet of her first haircut!

What are you writing and recording for the generations to come? “The LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book.” (Exodus 17:14) As parents we have the awesome mandate from God to pass on His ways not only to our children but to our children’s children and to their children! God is so interested in having words recorded that He left us with our most precious legacy, the infallible Word of God, our guideline for life.

In this day of easy communication by telephone we often delay putting pen to paper. I have been challenged

about writing for the coming generations and recently wrote a legacy for our children that I will give to them at the appropriate time. As each grandchild is born I write a poem for them—the story about their birth and the destiny that I feel that God has for them. Many mothers keep special baby books to write down all the little things their children say. We think we will remember all the cute things they say or do but as the years go on the memories fade. It is so important to write them down.

We keep a hard-covered book on the family table. Everyone in the family can write in it—what is happening at the time, their thoughts or something they want to say to someone else. When visitors come, rather than signing a visitor’s book, we ask them to write in the family diary, and so it becomes a record of our lives to keep for the generations.

There are a number of instances in the Old Testament where God’s people erected monuments as memorials of special occasions. For example, after God performed the miraculous parting of the Jordan River to allow the Israelites to pass through into the promised land God commanded Joshua to make a monument of twelve stones. “...these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.” (Joshua 4:7) There may be special incidents in the life of your family when you should build a memorial. When our seventh grandchild was born here at our home we planted a willow tree to remember her birth. The tree will grow with her and she will remember the place of her birth.

As we seek to make precious memories for our families let us remember that the most important memories are the works and ways of God. Let us daily teach our children and remind them and remind them and remind them of God’s principles and His living Word. “I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.” (Psalm 77:11)



Nancy Campbell

[Abridged from “The Power of Motherhood,” a study guide available from *Above Rubies*, PO Box 351, Antioch, TN 37011. Used by permission.]

The Proposal

“Marriage, Josh? but you’re my brother, and besides, I hardly know you.” Try as I might, I cannot keep my mind from replaying his words. It’s true that I was adopted into his family years ago and because of that fact a marriage would not be taboo, I guess. I just always thought of him as my older brother that’s all; the perfect one; the one who could do no wrong. Surely he couldn’t be serious about wanting to *marry* me!”

“Our father has everything ready,” he said. “He’s planning a huge banquet to celebrate; and I have the house nearly completed.”

“But why would you choose me, Josh?” I wondered. “I’m not sure we have anything in common. Besides, you’re just too serious. I like to have fun, you know. And you say our father approves of this? I can’t believe it! I’ve given him so much grief. Why would he even consider it?”

His words will not leave me alone. “I’ve been waiting many years for just the right person to come along. I’ve been watching you and I really believe you’re the one. I’ve loved you ever since I first saw you.”

Loved me? How could he say that? There are so many sides to me; I don’t even know them all myself. But I do know about some really dark chapters in my life. If he knew about those he’d change his mind for sure.

There is something that just seems to draw me... No, I’d better not risk it. I’ve been hurt too many times already. I’m sure if he really did get to know me... Well, it’s just too big a risk.

“No,” I told him. “I need more time. I’m just not ready to make that decision now. You better look for someone else.”

“I don’t think you know what you’re turning down,” he said. I could

see the hurt in his eyes when he said it. I can’t forget that look. It’s haunting...

But I’m right, you know. I’m sure most of my friends wouldn’t approve of him. For one thing, they just don’t believe everything he’s tried to tell them about our father, and they certainly wish he’d quit spreading his ideas everywhere. I kind of wish he would too—especially around my friends.

I’d really been through it when I met them. I’d been hurt so many times. They were kind to me and made me a part of their group. They had heard some of the dark parts of my past, the things that others had mocked and ridiculed me about, but they said it didn’t matter to them. They made me feel good about myself and I really do love them for it. I can’t forget the things they’ve done for me. They deserve my loyalty, don’t they?

There’s nothing really impressive about Josh; at least he wouldn’t seem impressive to my friends. I understand he was really handsome at one time but now he has all those scars. Looks are pretty important don’t you think? After all, I’d want my friends to be really impressed if I told them I was going to *marry* someone.

I know he would take good care of me, though. He is so talented; he can

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do anything. He has an “inside track” with our father also. I’ve really never understood our father...

My biological father used to intimidate and manipulate me. He could be really cruel at times, but he always said he was doing it for my own good. When I complained about the way he was treating me he would just sneer.

He’d point to Josh’s dad and say, “Now he’s the one that’s cruel. You’re so lucky you don’t have *him* for a father. He said a lot of other things too. I can’t help but wonder about them now though.

Most of the time he seemed pretty good to me. He really loved to party and always had lots of tasty food, alluring entertainment, fancy decorations and plenty of guys. For some reason though the happiness these parties brought didn’t last. Besides, there always seemed to be ulterior motives behind his “goodness.” But it really *was* a lot of fun—while it lasted. Finally, I came to understand fully that he was just using me and I began to really resent being his pawn.

One day I had taken all the abuse I could take so I ran away. I wandered around a long time until I finally realized I was totally lost. There I was, lost, hungry and penniless with my clothes in rags. I thought about going home but I knew I couldn’t do that unless I consented to be under my father’s control. He never gave me any freedom to think or act for myself. I didn’t want to go back to that but what was I to do?

It was then that Josh came along. “Come home with me,” he said, “my father would be glad to give you a home. You look like you need one, you

know.” I just didn’t have anywhere else to go and I was destitute, you understand. I was really afraid of his father but Josh was so kind to me. He assured me that his father was exactly like him; I just needed to get to know him, he said. “And don’t worry about a thing. I’ll take care of everything. You don’t even have to *see* my father until

you're ready. In fact, I wouldn't dare take you in to see him in your condition. We need to get you cleaned up first. He's so clean that dirt just can't exist in his presence."

Well, I went home with him all right. What a contrast! Josh tried to clean me up, and I really did look and feel much better, but without my total cooperation he couldn't do a very good job of it. He was really disappointed. He had wanted so badly to introduce me to his father. "Maybe later," I said.

Josh had a nice home all right but it seemed too tame for me. There was plenty of good food, a roof over my head, and a comfortable bed. There was just one thing. That strange-looking garment I needed to wear before I could meet his father. And I couldn't even put it on until I had allowed Josh to thoroughly clean me up. "No, thanks," I said. I'm certainly not ready for that. Since I wouldn't wear that garment, Josh provided me with the fabric from which to fashion my own clothes. I felt really good in my new clothes though I sensed that Josh was disappointed.

"You have perfect freedom," he told me. "You can come and go as you wish but I hope you'll stay. There are others here—you can make new friends."

Well, I left! I remembered the party my father had planned and all my friends would be there. I just had to go. I invited Josh to come along but he didn't think he would fit in there. He was probably right.

It seemed good to see all my friends and I didn't see my father at all. I'm sure he was there somewhere but I certainly didn't go looking for him! There were times when I remembered rather longingly the utter peace of Josh's home. Especially when things at the party would reach a crescendo—everyone vying to be heard at once, everyone wanting to make themselves the most visible. After the party I went home with one of my friends. We both had a hangover the next morning. I was really ashamed of

myself; especially since I could remember the utter cleanliness and the simple beauty of Josh's home—and the pained look on his face when I'd left. I decided to go back. He met me at the door with a huge smile on his face. Then he did his best to clean me up. As much as I would allow, you understand. He said, "The door is always open. Come any time. The table is always set and the bed is always ready. Stay as long as you like." I just couldn't understand it. It certainly wasn't that way in my father's house. I was a

"You have perfect freedom," he told me.
"You can come and go as you wish but I hope
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prisoner there—and a slave! That's what I was.

Then the day came when Josh said he had "wonderful" news. His father wanted to adopt me. "Really?" I asked. "Why?"

"Because he loves you," he answered. "And he wants you to always belong to him; to be his child."

"Loves me?" I queried. "I don't understand. How can he love me?" Then the words just tumbled out: "I couldn't let him adopt me! Once I belonged to him all this freedom would be gone. I'd be stuck here. I'd never get to see my friends again and he'd take me and scrub me against my will and make me put on those awful-looking clothes!"

Josh just hung his head and tried to hide the tears in his eyes. "You don't know my father," he said. "He wouldn't want you to stay here against your will—even if you belonged to him. He isn't like that!"

"I'm sorry, Josh. It's all so hard for me to comprehend. Just give me a few days to think it over," I pleaded.

"Certainly. Take all the time you need—but hurry!" he coaxed. "I can hardly wait!"

As you know, the day did come when I agreed to it. I really do like it at Josh's house. It's a nice reprieve

anyway. Sometimes I miss all the neon lights, the loud music and the sugary desserts. It's true that the lights tend to hurt my eyes and make me feel a bit dizzy and I know my hearing has suffered. (They have to keep turning up the volume on the music.) Many of the desserts are a bit too sugary and leave a bad taste in my mouth afterwards and most of the guys are just plain jerks!

My biological father keeps trying to get me back. He says I seem to enjoy playing on his "playground" so I might as well come "home." I really don't

want to go back there but the truth is: I'm really not "at home" anywhere. I'm so confused.

Josh was right, however. I've been allowed to come and go just as before. Now I've begun to notice that there's been a bond growing between us. Not a very strong one, but a bond nonetheless. I still feel closer to some of my old friends though I am beginning to tire of the parties. Somehow, after living at Josh's place, their lifestyle has begun to seem pretty hollow and cheap. To his delight I've been spending more time at my new home.

Now his proposal... Whatever am I going to do? I've mentioned to a few of my friends that there's this guy who wants to marry me. I've even told them my father would like to see it happen. They don't think it's a good idea. They have pointed out that he doesn't belong to our crowd and they don't believe those things he's told me about his father. (I didn't dare tell them that *his* father is *my* father too.) They asked to see his picture. Reluctantly I showed it to them—I knew what they would say and they said it all right: "You can get someone better than him. He's ugly—look at those scars. Besides, you don't really know him do you?"

Well, it's true that I don't really know him. That's my fault though. I

have seen enough of him to know that he would be really kind and loving to anyone he chose to marry. But me? Why would he choose me? Maybe if I share with him all those dark secrets... I really don't want to lose him (he is so very good to me) yet I can't bear this huge wall that seems to be between us. Day and night my thoughts torment me. "You're pressuring me," I say, but deep inside I know the pressure is coming from within.

Finally I could take it no longer so I blurted out the whole sordid tale. What did he say? "I already knew it all," he admitted, "and it doesn't matter. That's your past not your future! Don't you understand?" Something within me really began to love him when he said that. How can you reject that kind of love? I really did want to get to know him better though my friends were still making it difficult for me. Secretly I spent quite a bit of time with him.

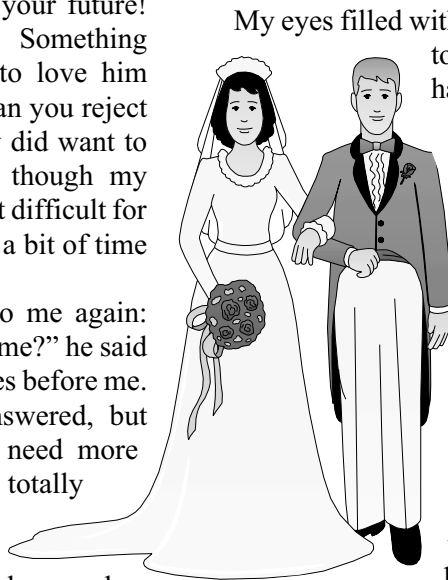
One day he put it to me again: "Won't you please marry me?" he said as he got down on his knees before me. "Someday I might, I answered, but please understand that I need more time. I'm not ready to totally commit myself just yet."

"I'll be waiting," he answered. "Please let me know when you make up your mind."

One of the other adopted children in our home, my sister I guess you'd say, told me an amazing story. She said that Josh had gotten those scars because of me. I couldn't believe it. She said he had risked everything to rescue me from my biological father's snares. In the process he had been brutally beaten and terribly mistreated by my father's allies. She told me that his (and now my) father was the king of the universe. That it is because he is a KING that I couldn't be introduced into his presence until I was willing to surrender every visage of my former life.

I just couldn't take it all in but she wasn't through: "In fact," she said, "Josh, the prince, was once as unapproachable as his father to such as

yourself. The father isn't totally like us, you know. He dwells in light unapproachable. He has never been stained by the "dirt" of your father's world." (When she said, "your father" I knew she was speaking of my biological father.) It was a truly amazing story she told me. She even said that the Father and Josh had been the creators of my race (and hers) but that our biological father had taken over the race through trickery, and fathered children of his own. According to her, Josh and his Father had devised a plan to buy back the race of people that they had lost to that deceiver; my former father.



My eyes filled with tears when she told me how Josh had actually become one of my race in order to save us. And they killed him! "Those scars were for you," she insisted. "And for me—for all of our race." Suddenly those scars were beautiful! They were for me! Imagine the Son of the King of the Universe on His knees before me! I could not take it in. What truly amazing love! And He's giving me a choice? I can refuse to accept His proposal? How can there be any choice? There is only ONE choice!

"Joshua," I say, and I'm trembling, "are you sure you want me?" With that He holds out His hands and I see the scars. I look again at the scars on His face and I wonder how I could have even asked the question! "I love you," He says. "I always have."

"Joshua," I venture, "the answer is YES! I love you too."

Christina Church

[Christina Church is a pseudonym.]

(Continued from page 2)

work. It makes me feel so good inside that I can't really consider what I do for the Lord as work. It brings joy into my life. I love God so deeply. You can never out-give God in any area. ...

Once I start talking about spiritual matters, it's hard to shut me up. Thanks again for your newsletters. I think that you have begun a wonderful ministry. Kathy/TN

I wanted to write you for a long time and thank you for your newsletter, *Hearth to Hearth*. The stories have been very inspiring to me, especially your last one about "The Word of God and Prayer." ...Enclosed find a little something to help you with the cost of mailing *Hearth to Hearth*. Marion/CA

Just a line to let you know how much I'm enjoying *Hearth to Hearth*...Keep up the good work; God bless and help you.

Juanita/KY

Thank you for sending the *Hearth to Hearth* publication. I enjoyed the story [Mattie Laurel] wrote, and am looking forward to more good stories from her. Please send *Hearth to Hearth* to the following addresses. If they can get the back issues I will appreciate it. Enclosed is a... check.

Billie/MS

[We appreciate readers' requests for the paper to be sent to their friends and relatives. Back issues are available, and we will gladly send them. Ed.]

REMINDER:

The editors solicit your participation! Keeping in mind that *Hearth to Hearth* is not planned as a "theological" paper or for in-depth study of doctrines or issues, please feel free to submit articles for consideration that you feel would be appropriate and of interest to other women.

There are several papers in circulation which provide in-depth study of theological issues. One such paper that we highly recommend is *Present Truth*, published monthly by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801, Phone: (304) 732-9204, E-mail: berean@smyrna.org. It is sent free upon request.

OFFER:

If you are having trouble in the area of getting to know Jesus (see page 9), we would like to recommend a little book called *Happiness Digest* (also known as *Steps to Christ*) which we have found to be very helpful in our own lives. We are making this book available to our readers for a suggested donation of \$1 to cover postage and handling. This donation is not required, but would be appreciated.

Mothers, Do You Know Jesus?

A Grandmother's Perspective

In Jesus' prayer to His Father as recorded in John chapter 17 He says (in verse 3), "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "Life eternal!" to know our heavenly Father and His dear Son. But do we know Them?

As a young mother it never occurred to me that I really did not know Jesus. I knew an awful lot *about* Him. I had been taught from the time I was a toddler to "Share your toys with Brother; that will make Jesus happy." Or, "Jesus is sad when you hurt other people."

I had gone to church-related schools where I also learned what would and what would not "please Jesus." Somehow, I mistook all these things that I knew *about* Jesus for *knowing* Him.

Somehow, I mistook all these things that I knew *about* Jesus for *knowing* Him.

Then I became a mother and the process was repeated. Why, I wonder, did it never occur to me that I simply could not introduce my children to Someone I did not know?

From long-time observation I have concluded that I am not alone. There are many other well-meaning parents out there who are trying to make Christians out of their children when they do not know Christ themselves. How sad! How futile!

How do we remedy this situation? How do we get to know Jesus so that we can introduce our children to Him? And once we know Him, how will that change our methods of dealing with our children?

Mothers are an extremely busy segment of our society today even if they do not hold a job outside the home; and those mothers who *do* find themselves in the workplace have a monumental task. When does a Mother find time to get to know Jesus? There is only one possible answer to that question: she has to *make* time. Her eternal life and the eternal destiny of her children depend on it!

Perhaps it will take getting up an hour earlier in the morning. What? Did I hear someone say she's already *been* up half the night with a sick child? Did someone else say (or could it have been the same person) that her colicky baby has had her up every night for the last *three months*?

Mothers, Jesus knows! He knows everything about you and He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30) Take your cares to Him and ask for His solution. Then step out in faith to do

whatever He tells you for "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6), and "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)

Every promise in God's Word is for you. Believe it because He said it and claim it as your own. One such promise that has become very precious to me is found in Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

When you take that time out of your busy schedule to "wait" upon Him, you can be sure that He will fulfill His promise to you and your strength *will be* renewed! When you take the time to behold Jesus you will find yourself becoming like Him. (See 2 Corinthians 3:18) His presence in your life will have a calming influence upon your home.

As you teach your children to behold Him, and as they see Jesus in you, you will find that they also will become like Him. You will not need to be continually telling them, "do this," or "you can't do that." Jesus, living in them, will be *inclined* to do what is right. Thus you will see that His yoke truly is easy and His burden is light.

I only regret that I did not understand this valuable truth until my own children were grown and gone from my home. Those of you who still have your children at home, I plead with you. Stop everything else and get to know Jesus! Are you arguing with your child or teenager over externals? It isn't worth it. You cannot save them and they cannot save themselves by following a set of rules. It is only the blood of Jesus that can accomplish salvation for you or them, but you must get to know Him in order to understand all that.

As you teach your children to behold Him, and as they see Jesus in you, you will find that they also will become like Him.

Keep your focus on Him no matter what. Keep a song of praise in your heart continuously for His bountiful blessings. If you do not see an immediate change in your home or in the attitudes of your children, do not give up and do not allow Satan to dissuade you from your resolve. Change will come though it may take years. (How many years did it take to get your home into the condition it is now in?) Seek out God's promises and claim them. He will reward your faith.

God bless you as you seek to know Him whom to know is life eternal.

Esther McDaniel

Bride Song

I wear my best love every day.
 “Extravagant!” the gossips say;
 But love, like linen, smooths with care
 And softer grows for daily wear.

Perhaps I seem to overdress—
 It’s just this trousseau-happiness
 In which, at last, I’ve found my style.
 Oh, nothing fits like one’s own smile!

Elizabeth McFarland



To My Darling Wife

Today I sit in retrospect, looking back
 To that day when you said, “I do.”
 Twenty years! But it seems a short bit of time
 For the love we have shared, we two.
 Some of our dreams have been set aside,
 Others we know have come true,
 But the path has been pleasanter all along
 For the love we have known all through.
 We began wedded life on a noble theme—
 Love to God and our fellow man.
 Though sometimes we slipped and failed, I fear,
 We’re still pressing on in that plan.
 Oh, God has been good, no doubt of this;
 He has led every step of the way.
 So together we’ll work and carry the load
 ‘Till we come to His perfect day.
 So today I think of our blessings and joys—
 What lies ahead none can portray
 But while it’s today with all my love I say
 To you, Dear, “Happy Anniversary.”

Kenneth Griffith

[This poem was submitted by Mattie Laurell. It was written by her late husband in 1954 and presented to her on their twentieth wedding anniversary. Mattie Laurell and Kenneth Griffith are the parents of our layout and design editor.]

Mother Love

She mends small socks and mends each hurt,
 And smiles at faces caked with dirt.
 She answers questions all day through
 Like, “Why did God make heaven blue?”

“Mommy, come quickly! I found a bug!”
 She oohs and aahs and gives a hug,
 Then takes the time to stop and praise
 Some daring feat meant to amaze.

She packs a lunchbox, shiny new,
 Inserts a note: “I’m glad you’re you!”
 And then puts in some extra stuff
 In case some kid won’t get enough.

She watches o’er each little one
 From break of day ‘till setting sun,
 And when the clock says time for bed,
 When bedtime tales and prayers are said,

She plants a kiss upon each cheek,
 And through the night she checks to peek
 To make sure everything’s okay,
 ‘Cause mothers...well, they’re just that way.

Before she sleeps she says a prayer,
 Entrusting each to Jesus’ care:
 “Although I give them room and board,
 Each one belongs to You, dear Lord.”

And since this old world first began
 It’s been the heavenly Father’s plan
 To place small babies from above
 Within this haven, “Mother-love.”

Connie

[Reprinted from the May 30, 1998 church bulletin, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mojave, CA. The author was designated only as “Connie,” and inquiries failed to produce any more information about her.]

“Perspective”

Lord, thank Thee for this sink full of dirty dishes.
We have plenty of food to eat.

Thank Thee for this pile of dirty, stinky laundry.
We have plenty of clothes to wear.

And I would like to thank Thee, Lord, for those unmade
beds in there.

They were so warm and comfortable last night. I know that
many have no bed.

My thanks to Thee, Lord, for this bathroom, complete with
all the splattered mirrors, soggy, grimy towels and
dirty lavatory.

They are so convenient.

Thank Thee for this finger-smudged refrigerator that
needs defrosting so badly.

It has served us faithfully for many years. It is full of food
and enough leftovers for two or three meals.

Thank Thee Lord, for this oven that absolutely must be
cleaned today.

It has baked so many good things over the years.

The whole family is grateful for that tall grass that needs
mowing and the leaves that need raking.

We all enjoy the yard.

Thank Thee, Lord, even for that slamming screen door.
It means my kids are healthy and able to run and play.

Lord, the presence of all these chores awaiting me says
that You have richly blessed my family.

I shall do them all cheerfully and I shall do them
gratefully.

And all God’s people say—AMEN!

Author Unknown

“What greater thing is there for two human souls than to
feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other
in all labour, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to
share with each other in all gladness, to be one with each
other in the silent unspoken memories?”

George Elliott

Spring

I saw young buds upon the trees
Unfold themselves in prayer,
And heard no sound—but I knew
That Spring was in the air.

I saw the tender blades of grass
Grow green against the sky,
And heard no footsteps—but I knew
That Spring was passing by.

I saw each flower lift its face,
Charmed by a strange perfume,
And knew the silent grace of Spring
Had taught them how to bloom.

Strange, how the pastures of the soul
Grow greener when Spring starts—
How hope can blossom like a leaf
When Spring is in men’s hearts.

Author Unknown

The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was entertaining a visitor one day when the conversation turned to children.

“I believe,” said the visitor, “that children should be given a free rein to think and act, and thus learn at an early age to make their own decisions. This is the only way they can grow into their full potential.”

“I would like you to see my flower garden,” Coleridge interrupted his visitor, and he led the man outside.

The visitor took one look and exclaimed, “Why, this is nothing but a yard full of weeds!”

“It used to be filled with roses,” said Coleridge, “but this year I thought I would let the garden grow as it willed without my tending to it. This is the result.”

Selected

(Continued from page 1)

forethought and planning a very modest home can be made attractive and inviting.

Years ago I dispensed with heavy draperies at my windows, preferring window coverings that permit light to enter and brighten all the rooms. This arrangement also tends to visually bring the outdoors in, adding a feeling of spaciousness that is important to me. I don't care to use rigid precision in the colors and arrangements within our home. I look around the countryside surrounding our home and observe that the flowers of the fields are scattered rather than organized and the trees and shrubbery in the woods behind our house do not march in orderly rows. The Creator has arranged a diversity of color and form and placement in the natural world that is pleasing to the eye and restful to the mind. While there should be compatibility of colors and suitability of furnishings, the same principle of harmonious variety can be achieved indoors and will help to create an atmosphere of comfortable relaxation.

As women, I believe God has given us a mission to make home a little heaven, an attractive place of enjoyment for ourselves and our families. Of more value than wealth or luxury are thankful hearts, kindness to others, contentment with simple things and—most of all—love in the home. If true affection is there, along with simplicity and meekness, the humblest home can be a paradise. By faithfully performing our duties to our husbands and children, by seeking to let

God's holy light shine through our lives to brighten all within our sphere of influence, we are fulfilling the work the Master would have us do. Let us not allow ourselves to be so cumbered with extravagant and needless display within our homes that we fail to prepare to inhabit the mansions in our Father's house—the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us; for He is coming again, *soon*, to receive us unto Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. (John 14:1-3.)

I would like to share with you a lovely word picture from a Christian magazine that was printed in 1882: "Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home—that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'"

Amanda Mallory

[Amanda Mallory is the pen name of the author.]

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Hearth to Hearth Ministry

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