

*God gathers the remnants of your life
and weaves them into a work of dignity and purpose.*

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

(Philippians 1:6)

*Before you face the challenges of your day, face the day with God -
He will help you to meet those challenges.*

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him I will trust.”

(Psalm 91:1-2)

“Accustom yourself gradually to carry prayer into all your daily occupation... speak, act, work in peace, as if you were in prayer, as indeed you ought to be.”

- Francois Fenelon

“God builds his kingdom primarily through ordinary people who are willing to use daily encounters to tell others about the salvation that is available in Jesus Christ.”

- Anthony Campolo

“King David certainly was aware that his lust for power certainly had become a barrier to inwardness.

Careers, even religious careers, may become little more than forums for our own advancement.

But how are we to deal with such ambition?

Our longing after Christ must exceed our need for status in the world.”

- Calvin Miller

“Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil;
it has no point!”

- Author Unknown

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” *(Matthew 25:40)*

There is no higher privilege, no deeper joy, than to become Jesus Christ—if only for a moment—to someone who needs Him in a moment of trouble or deep distress.

It's more than just speaking or teaching about Him. It is actually stepping into His place, becoming His hands and feet. It is allowing Him to so fill your heart and empower your life that your touch becomes His touch...your voice becomes His voice...your compassion and mercy and tenderness become His, poured out to a hurting world.

And when we do these things...when we feed the hungry take in a stranger, clothe the naked, or visit the sick or the prisoner in His name and His power, something mysterious happens. The King tells us, "You did that for Me. You touched my life, in My need, and I will remember it for eternity."

On a Christmas long ago, He came as a light into a hopeless world. Through our yielded, available lives, His love continues to push back the darkness.

God's Purposes for Our Lives.... *By Rick Warren.*

(We have had excerpts from Rick's book on our purposes before....this is more of his thoughts on God's purpose for us. This third one is to make us like Christ. Quoted from Rick's book, Meditations on the Purpose Driven Life.)

"Once you understand that God's third purpose for your life is to make you like Christ, life begins to make more sense. When difficult, unexplainable things happen, we know that God is using it all for this purpose.

Everytime you forget that one of God's purposes is to make you like Christ, you'll become frustrated by your circumstances. You will wonder, "Why is this happening to me? Why am I having such a difficult time?" One answer is that life is supposed to be difficult! As rushing water smooths the rough edges off stones, God is polishing you for eternity.

No matter how difficult the situation, you can grow from it if you will respond to it with the question, "What do you want me to learn, Father?"

God is not in a hurry to make you like Jesus. In fact, he will take your entire lifetime to mold you. We get in a hurry but he isn't in a hurry.

Often we get discouraged and think, "I'm not growing, I'm not maturing fast enough." But God has promised to never give up on us.

Don't get discouraged and don't give up. Remember how far you've come, not just how far you have to go. You are not where you want to be, but neither are you where you used to be. Your heavenly Father is not waiting for you to be perfect or even mature before he loves you. He loves you at every stage of growth."

Sing Praises

“You are the light of the world.” - *Matthew 5:14a*

In August, 1874, a Methodist minister named John Heyl Vincent organized a Sunday school training camp beside beautiful Lake Chautauqua in upstate New York. Families came for two week summer camps that combined recreation, entertainment, and Sunday school training sessions. It was an enormous hit and over the next several decades. The “Chautauqua Circuit” spread to other areas and quickly outgrew its Sunday school origins.

Performers, musicians, lecturers and motivational speakers traveled the country, staying about a week in these summer camps. Enormous audiences gathered to enjoy Broadway hits, popular plays, and stars from the Metropolitan Opera. Speakers like William Jennings Bryan drew thousands, and Theodore Roosevelt called the Chautauqua circuit “The most American thing in America.”

In 1912, Ina Duley Ogdon received an invitation to be a Chautauqua Circuit speaker. Having long felt God’s calling on her life, she was tremendously excited by the possibilities of motivating thousands of people for the cause of Christ. But as she was packing for the tour, her father was seriously injured in a wreck in one of the new fangled “horseless carriages.” Ina, deeply distressed, cancelled her travel plans to care for him.

Though bitterly disappointed, she was able to surrender the disappointment to God and trust His purposes. Making up her mind to be as blessing wherever she was, she concluded that even if she couldn’t minister to thousands, she could be a blessing she concluded that even if she couldn’t minister to thousands, she could be as blessing to one—her father—and to those around him. She sat down and wrote:

Words by Ina Duley Ogdon 1913

Music by Charles H. Gabriel

Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do.

Do not wait to shed your light afar,

To the many duties ever near you now be true,

Brighten the corner where you are.

After this poem was set to music by Charles H. Gabriel, it was discovered by Homer Rodeheaver, the song director for Billy Sunday’s evangelistic campaigns. He was so taken by the song that he made it the theme song of his ministry, and for twenty two years, “brighten the Corner” opened every Billy Sunday meeting. In the process, it became one of gospel music’s most popular and uplifting songs.

Instead of speaking to thousands, Ina Duley Ogdon has ministered to millions.

Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,

Do not wait to shed your lights afar.

To the many duties ever near you now be true,

Brighten the corner where you are.

Brighten the Corner where you are!
Brighten the corner where you are!
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar, brighten the corner where you are.

Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear,
Let not narrow self your way debar.
Tho' into one heart alone may fall
Your song of cheer, brighten the corner where you are.

Brighten the corner where you are!
Brighten the corner where you are!
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar, brighten the corner where you are.

Here for all your talent you may surely find a need,
Here reflect the Bright and Morning Star.
Even from your humble hand the bread of life may feed,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Brighten the corner where you are!
Brighten the corner where you are!
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar...Brighten the corner where you are!

This Month In History

No Strings

Leaving the relative safety of the space shuttle, American Bruce McCandless II takes the first untethered space walk, February 7, 1984 . Sporting a backpack powered by 24 nitrogen firing jets, he roams 320 feet from his ship, all while orbiting the earth at 17,500 mph. Quips McCandless, recalling Neil Armstrong's famous small step, "it's a heck of a big leap for me."

Queen For A Day?

Lady Jane Grey, 16, Queen of England for just nine days in 1553, is executed for treason in the tower of London, February 12, 1554. The niece of Henry VIII, she was manipulated onto the throne in an attempt to keep England Protestant, but lost it, and her head, to her Catholic cousin Mary Tudor.

Al Aboard

Cornish engineer Richard Trevithick successfully tests the first steam propelled railway locomotive, in Penrydarren, Wales, in 1804. Pulling ten tons of iron, five wagons and 70 men, his invention reaches a speed of five mph. Crows Trevithick, "the publick call'd mee a schemeing fellow but now their tone is much alter'd."

He's Got Rhythm

George Gershwin, 25, takes to the keys at the 1924 premiere of his masterwork, "Rhapsody in Blue", at Aeolian Hall in New York City. Its irresistible vitality draws critical praise and helps propel jazz from clubs to the concert hall.

Iran's Imam

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns to Iran after 14 years of exile to lead a revolution to replace the monarchy with an Islamic government. He calls for the ouster of all foreigners, and later sanctions the taking of American hostages. Named Iran's leader for life, he dies in 1989.

Kitchen Things

"Better Homes and Gardens" has made a spice and herb chart which has suggestions for using various spices and herbs for many different foods. Below are a few of their suggestions, perhaps you have already used many of these ideas...then again perhaps they will give you some ideas to spice up your meals!!?

Salads and vegetables:

Beets:

Sprinkle in tarragon while they cook. For tart flavor use tarragon vinegar

Cabbage:

Cook with caraway or mustard seed.

Carrots:

Season glazed carrots with ginger.

Cauliflower:

Flavor with rosemary.

Coleslaw:

Sprinkle with caraway or dill seed.

Corn:

Flavor canned corn with chili powder; garnish with green pepper rings.

Eggplant:

Add just enough basil or thyme to enhance flavor.

Fruit salad:

Add allspice or mace to whipped cream dressing.

Green beans:

To cream sauce, add mustard.

Onions, creamed:

To cream sauce, add mustard.

Peas:

Drop in mint flakes or pinch of savory while they're simmering.

Potatoes, mashed:

Sprinkle in dill seed as you mash. Or season with rosemary as they cook.

Tossed salad:

Cautiously add curry powder to an oil vinegar dressing.

Breads

Biscuits:

Add mustard and thyme to dry ingredients. Bake and serve with any meat dish.

Blueberry muffins:

Add dash of nutmeg to dry ingredients.

Cinnamon toast:

French style, dip in egg, milk; fry . sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

Coffeecake:

Mix anise in the batter—just enough to taste.

Corn bread:

Mix rosemary in batter.

Croutons:

Toss toasted bread cubes with melted butter seasoned with onion salt, basil and marjoram. Serve with soup.

Date muffins:

Add a dash of pumpkin pie spice to batter.

Doughnuts:

Add mace to dry ingredients; after frying, roll in cinnamon sugar.

Dumplings:

Mix parsley flakes in the batter.

Garlic bread:

Slice French bread partly through. Spread slices with butter season with garlic salt. Wrap, heat.

Rolls:

Add caraway seed to batter, or put dill seed on top.

Scones:

Season with allspice – serve with honey. Or mix poppy seed with strained honey.

Sweet bread:

Add pinch of saffron to hot liquid. Soak ten minutes; strain. Add to flour mixture as usual.

Waffles:

Add poultry seasoning, serve with creamed chicken. Or add a dash of allspice and cinnamon.

Desserts

Apple pie:

Add cinnamon to crust.

Baked apples:

Core and fill center with brown sugar, stick cinnamon.

Cherry Pie:

Add dash of mace or nutmeg.

Chocolate cake:

To one pack chocolate cake mix, add 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon nutmeg, ¼ teaspoon cloves.

Chocolate pudding:

Add a dash of cinnamon or mace.

Grapefruit:

Sprinkle halves with ginger and coconut, chill to serve.

Molasses cookies:

Add pumpkin pie spice to dry ingredients.

Peach pie:

A shake of cinnamon picks up the flavor.

Pears:

Dot fresh or canned pears with butter; sprinkle with sugar, cinnamon; broil.

Pineapple:

Top slices with cream cheese, add shake of cinnamon, broil.

Rice pudding:

Season with apple pie spice – serve with stirred custard sauce.

Spice cake:

To one package spice cake mix, add 2 tablespoons instant coffee.

Sugar cookies:

Stir anise seed into dry ingredients.

Yellow cake:

To one package yellow cake mix, add ½ teaspoon nutmeg and ¼ teaspoon allspice.

Soups and appetizers

Beef soup:

Add mixed vegetable flakes while it simmers.

Chicken soup:

Add pinch of rosemary or dash of paprika or marjoram.

Consomme:

Season with allspice or a dash of savory.

Cranberry juice:

If served hot, spice with whole cloves; if served chilled, add cinnamon or ground cloves.

Fish chowder:

Cook with lots of vegetables, than add thyme.

Oyster stew:

Add light touches of mace or cayenne.

Potato soup:

Try a dash of mustard or basil.

Split Pea soup:

Sprinkle in savory.

Stuffed celery:

Mix caraway seed with cream cheese for stuffing; sprinkle with paprika.

Tomato juice cocktail:

Try a pinch of dill seeds or a bit of oregano.

Tomato soup:

Shake in sage and garlic salt.

Vegetable soup:

Add thyme or a dash of chili powder.

Meats, fish, poultry

Beef stew:

Add flavor with basil. Or cook with mixed vegetable flakes or dash of mixed herbs.

Chicken stuffing:

Use poultry seasoning; or sage, thyme, onion salt.

Fish filets:

Sprinkle with marjoram, tarragon or curry powder before cooking.

Fried chicken:

Use paprika or sprinkle pieces with thyme and marjoram. Roll in flour: fry.

Hamburger patties:

Basil or curry powder.

Ham loaf:

Mix in a bit of rosemary for complementary flavor.

Hash:

Add a pinch of marjoram or savory.

Meat balls:

Season with savory, mustard, garlic salt.

Pork chops:

Sprinkle with sage or thyme. Or add a shake of cinnamon.

Pork roast:

Blend marjoram, savory; add to basting sauce.

Eggs, cheese

Cheese casseroles:

Any cheese dish will respond to a dash of sage or marjoram.

Cheese rabbit:

Include basil and marjoram in the cheese sauce.

Cheese sauce:

Add ½ teaspoon mustard for zest.

Cheese soufflé:

Add basil to suit your taste.

Cottage cheese:

Add onion salt, dill or caraway seed.

Cream cheese:

Blend in basil or parsley flakes. Spread on thin rye or use as dip.

Cheese spread:

Season snappy soft cheese with thyme and celery salt.

Deviled eggs:

Add savory and mustard.

French omelet:

Dash of basil in the eggs.

Scrambled eggs:

Sprinkle lightly with savory.

Souffle:

Add from ¼ to ½ teaspoon marjoram to 4 eggs – serve with hot tomato sauce.

Tomato omelet:

Just a bit oregano.

Health Related (excerpts from “Health” magazine)

You already know it’s good for your waistline to take your time when you eat. Now new research finds that chewing each bite 40 times (instead of the typical 15) may help you eat 12 percent fewer calories per meal. The extra munching doesn’t just slow you down—it may actually help fight hunger by lowering levels of an appetite stimulating hormone called ghrelin and increasing an appetite reducing hormone called cholecystokinin.

COCOA

Keep your spirits up, your cholesterol down, and your skin radiant with this powerful powder. (by Leslie Barrie)

Treat your ticker to some cocoa its flavoniods are linked to a host of cardio perks, including lowering blood pressure, reducing “bad” LDL cholesterol, and decreasing your overall risk for heart disease, says Suzanne Steinbaum, DO., director of Women and Heart Disease at Lenox Hill Hospital. To reap the benefits, sprinkle it in your breakfast smoothie or on your oatmeal; shoot for a tablespoon per day.

Skip your candy run and take a whiff of cocoa instead. “The powder has a rich, indulgent aroma, so you’ll often be satisfied by simply smelling it.” Says Alan Hirsch, MD. Founder of the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research foundation. In fact, the scent may activate the same neurotransmitters in the brain that are stimulated when eating chocolate. Even if you’re still longing for a Kit Kat after a few whiffs, you’ll indulge less because your urge will have been eased.

Cocoa can help make past skin sins ancient history. It’s packed with antioxidants that help repair skin cells and neutralize harmful free radicals.” Says dermatologist Ava Shamban, MD. Mix up her rejuvenating cocoa mask in a bowl ...combine 1 tablespoon organic cocoa powder, 1 teaspoon honey, 1 tablespoon ground oatmeal and 2 tablespoons full fat plain

yogurt. Gently massage onto moist, washed skin. Leave on for 10 to 15 minutes and rinse off. Repeat once a week for maximum rewards.

“Cocoa not only makes your taste buds happy, but it can make you happy too., The powder contains more than 300 compounds, many of which have a positive effect on your brain chemistry,” explains Elizabeth Somer, RD, author of *Eat Your Way to Happiness*. Some of those compounds up your endorphin and serotonin levels, both of which generate a good mood. To feel warm and fuzzy, whip up some toasty hot cocoa, sip and smile!!

PERFUME YOUR ROOM ... NATURALLY...

Who doesn't love the smell of rosemary? Lavender? Lilies? Bring these intoxicating all natural aromas indoors this season with these home fragrance recipes from eco-expert Sophie Uliano, author of *Do It gorgeously*.

Fresh Kitchen scenter....chopped herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage, lavender + water + pot warmed on the stove.

Fragrant Centerpiece...2 or 3 white lilies + red berries + green leaves.

Soothing bedroom perfumer.....4 drops of lavender essential oil + 2 drops of lemongrass pure essential oil dropped into an aroma stone (a heated ceramic diffuser that releases the scent.)

Deodorizing room spray.....30 drops of your favorite pure essential oil + 1 tablespoon alcohol (to deodorize) + 1.5 oz water in a spray bottle.

Spicy fall aroma.....2 teaspoon of sweet almond oil + 5 drops sweet orange oil + 3 drops cinnamon oil + 2 drops of cypress oil + an aromatherapy diffuser.

Myth ... Air dryers are more hygienic than paper towels.

Truth ... Paper towels reduced the numbers of all types of bacteria on people's hands, in one study using warm air dryers increased the numbers of all types; using jet air dryers (which shot air out at high speeds fo remove water from your hands) increased the numbers of some types.

The new 'it' fruit!!

Move over acai!! The latest super fruit du jour is the exotic looking dragon fruit, which is grown in tropical climates and has been popping up in everything from cocktails to teas to vitamin infused water. While its taste is subtle—some describe it as a cross between a kiwi and a melon—it's loaded with nutrients including fiber, vitamin c, and other antioxidants.

* Treats under 80 calories, no need to resist these tasty **BOARDWALK TREATS!**

1. 2 cups Orville Redenbacher's microwave kettle corn.
2. Foster Farms Mini Corn Dog with 1/8 teaspoon mustard.
3. 3/4 Tasty Clouds Cotton Candy Cone
4. 2 pieces Salt Water Taffy
5. 1/2 cup Italian Ice
6. 12 dry roasted peanuts
7. 16 Re-Ida Shoestrings French Fries
8. 12 ounces A&W diet Root Beer

Answers To Last Month's Bible Trivia Questions

1. Pharaoh, at the time Joseph was in Egypt. *Genesis 40:20*
2. The one at the court of Persian ruler Ahasuerus. The winner was Esther. *Esther 2*
3. Stephen *Acts 6:7-8, 2*
4. The dream of Abimelech, in which he was told to return Sarah to Abraham *Genesis 20:3-8*
5. The war of the kings of the north, led by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam *Genesis 14*
6. Noah, who planted a vineyard after leaving the ark *Genesis 9:21*
7. In the temple at Jerusalem. It was a chest, ordered by King Joash, who had a hole bored in the lid to keep priests from stealing funds. *2 Kings 12*
8. Eutychus, who dozed off and fell out of a window during Paul's sermon *Acts 20:9*
9. "Be fruitful and multiply" *Genesis 1:28*
10. Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah as a tomb for Sarah. *Genesis 23:3-20*

Bible Trivia Questions For This Month

Second in Line!

1. At 969 years, Methuselah was the longest lived man. Who came in second at 962 years?
2. Saul was the first king of Israel. Who was the second? (Hint, it wasn't David.)
3. The first covenant God made with man was his covenant with Noah. With whom did he make the second covenant?
4. In John's Gospel, Jesus' first miracle is turning water into wine. What is the second miracle?
5. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. What apostle was the second?
6. Paul's first traveling companion was Baranbas. Who was the second?
7. The first plague in Egypt was the turning of the Nile waters into blood. What was the second plague?
8. Othniel was the first judge of Israel. Who was the second?
9. Jacob's firstborn was Reuben. Who was his second son?
10. David's first capital city was Hebron. What was his second, and more famous capital?
11. The serpent in Eden was the first talking animal in the Bible. What was the second?

THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT COLORADO

(from Abbot Fay's book More That I Never Knew About Colorado)

Daughters of the Moon - Rare butterflies in Unaweep Canyon!

“By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big Sea Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the moon, Nokomis.”

So begins Longfellow's famous narrative poem, “The Song of Hiawatha.” Nokomis is both nurse and mentor to the child Hiawatha. It was after this woman that the rare butterfly, the

Nokomis Fritillary, was named. Nokomis means “daughter of the moon.” The male is a spectacular sight, with blazing orange wings nearly four inches across, and with silver spots on the underside.

Also known as the Great Basin Silver spot, this lepidoptera breeds only in a few tiny selected places in the world, including one in southern Arizona and several in Nevada. It also has its home in what are called The Seeps in Unaweep Canyon, not far from the village of Gateway.

That is where a species of violets, *viola nephrophylla*, grows. The female Nokomis lays her eggs in that flower. When the larvae hatch from the eggs, they spend the winter among the dead weeds. As the violets bloom once more in the spring, they eat the leaves, form chrysalises and emerge in midsummer in all their magnificent glory. They are most abundant from mid July until early September.

The Bureau of Land Management has preserved an eighty acre reserve around what are also known as Unaweep Springs in order to protect the rare species. They have few natural enemies, but the ground scratching towhee birds sometimes get a few of the larvae.

Unaweep Canyon.... "Little Yosemite"

Some early explorers returning from California were so impressed by Unaweep Canyon's soaring cliffs that they compared it to the Yosemite Valley. It is now a part of the spectacular Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic Byway, State Highway 141.

There are the narrows of Nine Mile Hill, and the open valley above Thimble Rock protrudes above the valley which gives a miniature version of the formation at Yosemite.

Unaweep Canyon is a geological oddity – one of the few canyons anywhere with streams running in opposite directions.

Along the roadside are the remains of Driggs Mansion. These consist of arched stone relics of a fine home. It was stated by one reviewer that William Barrett was inspired to write his famous novel “Lilies of the Field” when he viewed these ruins. It later became the movie which won an Academy Award for Sidney Poitier.

Did You Know?

(for anyone who is environmentally conscientious, which should be all of us!)

Sodium bicarbonate is used in a clever alternative to industrial scale paint strippers. It eliminates the need for hazardous chemical or mineral processes and minimizes the creation and disposal costs, of toxic waste.

There have traditionally been two basic alternatives for stripping paint from large surfaces such as industrial equipment, metal superstructures and aircraft; the use of chemical strippers containing toxic metals and sand blasting. Chemical strippers form a chemical sludge that requires costly disposal as hazardous waste, and they pose a contact and inhalation danger to workers. Sand blasting is fast, effective and economical, but can generate hazardous silica dust. Blasting with minute plastic beads instead of sand removes the threat of silicosis, but retains dust inhalation problems.

During the restoration of the Statue of Liberty, a compressor was used to direct a stream of dry bicarb to clean the tar coating from the inside of the statue's delicate copper skin. Blasting with baking soda cleaned the copper without abrasion and without exposing workers in the statue to hazardous blasting media or chemicals. This led to the development of a new paint stripping technique that takes full advantage of sodium bicarbonate's effective and safe cleaning properties; blasting with a pressurized slurry of baking soda in water. The slurry form minimizes dust generation and can be used on virtually all hard surfaces, including plastic composites. Because the bicarbonate is water soluble, it is easily washed from the coating waste, which can then be concentrated for disposal. The separated bicarbonate solution can be sewerred, if local regulations allow, or recovered for additional use as an acid neutralizer in treating electroplating wastes or supplying alkalinity to sewage treatment plants.

On Industrial plant sites, bicarb blasting is preferred because it can be used to remove rust, corrosion and grease, in addition to coatings, and can be used safely on sensitive rotating and hard to reach equipment parts. This method of paint removal has also found growing acceptance in the aviation industry, where stripping paint from aircraft is vitally important to detect metal fatigue, cracks, corrosion and other structural problems. As an alternative to the normal methylene chloride based strippers, bicarbonate blasting has so far successfully addressed all safety, efficacy, environmental and worker hygiene concerns at the same time as it has minimized waste disposal problems.

A PRAYING PARENT

Lord, make me a faithful intercessor for my children. Show me what's on Your heart for them that I might pray in harmony with Your will for their lives. Widen my heart to pray for their teachers and their school and bring other moms to join me in prayer. Thank You that as I pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes, that I don't have to have the answers or solutions because You do! In Jesus Name, Amen

Father, hear us, we are praying,
Hear the words our hearts are saying,
We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil, from the secret, hidden peril,
From the whirlpool that would suck them from the treacherous quicksand, pluck them.

From the worldlings' hollow gladness, from the sting of faithless sadness,
Holy Father, save our children.

Through life's troubled water steer them,
through life's bitter battle cheer them,
Father, Father, be Thou near them.

Read the language of our longing,
read the wordless pleadings thronging,
Holy Father, for our children.

And wherever they may bide, lead them Home at eventide.
In Jesus name, amen

Amy Carmichael

A Prayer For Me As A Wife

Since February is the month of Valentine's Day and love in bloom, I thought this would be a lovely valentine for our husbands if we could be the wife of this prayer for him. (and for God)

Lord, Help me to be a good wife. I fully realize that I don't have what it takes to be one without Your help. Take my selfishness, impatience, and irritability and turn them into kindness, long suffering, and the willingness to bear all things. Take my old emotional habits, mindsets, automatic reactions, rude assumptions, and self protective stance and make me patient, kind good, faithful, gentle and self controlled. Take the hardness of my heart and break down the walls with Your battering ram of revelation. Give me a new heart and work in me Your love, peace and joy (Gal 5:22-23) I am not able to rise above who I am at this moment. Only You can transform me.

Show me where there is sin in my heart, especially with regard to my husband. I confess the times I've been un-loving, critical, angry, resentful, disrespectful, or unforgiving toward him. Help me to put aside any hurt, anger, or disappointment I feel and forgive him the way You do—totally and completely, no looking back. Make me a tool of reconciliation, peace and healing in this marriage. Enable us to communicate well and rescue us from the threshold of separation where the realities of divorce begin.

Make me my husband's helpmate, companion, champion, friend and support. Help me to create a peaceful, restful, safe place for him to come home to. Teach me how to take care of

myself and stay attractive to him. Grow me into a creative and confident woman who is rich in mind, soul and spirit. Make me the kind of woman he can be proud to say is his wife.

I lay all my expectations at Your cross. I release my husband from the burden of fulfilling me in areas where I should be looking to You. Help me to accept him the way he is and not try to change him. I realize that in some ways he may never change, but at the same time, I release him to change in ways I never thought he could. I leave any changing that needs to be done in Your hands, fully accepting that neither of us is perfect and never will be. Only You, Lord, are perfect and I look to You to perfect us.

Teach me how to pray for my husband and make my prayers a true language of love. Where love has died, create new love between us. Show me what unconditional love really is and how to communicate it in a way he can clearly perceive. Bring unity between us so that we can be in agreement about everything. (Amos 3:3) May the God of patience and comfort grant us to be like minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus (Rom 15:5) Make us a team, not pursuing separate, competitive, or independent lives, but working together, overlooking each others' faults and weaknesses for the greater good of the marriage. Help us to pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. (Rom 14:19) May we be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor 1:10)

I pray that our commitment to You and to one another will grow stronger and more passionate every day. Enable him to be the head of the home as You made him to be, and show me how to support and respect him as he rises to that place of leadership. Help me to understand his dreams and see things from his perspective. Reveal to me what he wants and needs and show me potential problems before they arise. Breathe Your life into this marriage.

Make me a new person, Lord. Give me a fresh perspective, a positive outlook, and a renewed relationship with the man You've given me. Help me see him with new eyes, new appreciation, new love, new compassion, and new acceptance. Give my husband a new wife and let it be me.

In Jesus' Name Amen

Do You Know....facts and figures about this month

- February was the last month of the year until the fifth century A.S. ancient Romans ended the year on a healthy note with a purification festival called “Februa.”
- A Tiberan ritual after the New Year’s feast – in February is to throw all leftover food into the road, signifying a cleansing of the bad of the past year to make room for the good of the New Year.
- In Europe, February 14 is believed to be the day that birds choose their mates.
- During Victorian times, rings were sometimes set with a series of stones that encoded a romantic message; for example, a diamond, emerald, amethyst and ruby would symbolically spell out DEAR
- Approximately 141 million valentine cards are exchanged annually, making Valentine’s day second only to Christmas in the number of cards exchanged.
- In addition to the U.S. Valentines day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Denmark, Italy and Japan.

In the United States, Miss Esther Howland is given credit for sending the first Valentine cards. Commercial Valentines were introduced in the 1800’s, and today it is greatly commercialized. The town of Loveland, Colorado does a large Post Office business around February 14, the spirit of good continues as cards are sent out with sentimental verses and children exchange cards at school.

Our Nations Godly Heritage

Since February is the birthdays of two of our great American historical figures, we will look briefly at one of them first. (George Washington, birthday Feb 22 and Abraham Lincoln, birthday Feb 12.)

The Founding Fathers - Their Credentials and Faith.

(excerpted from John W. Chalfant’s book America, a call to Greatness)

“The founding Fathers were clergymen, statesmen, educators, lawyers, physicians, and highly successful businessmen. In contrast to what we often hear and read, they were overwhelmingly committed Christians. Those few not affiliated with a denomination left no doubt that they held a Christian worldview.

The following is as brief profile of several of the best known founding Fathers. It is only symbolic of the volumes which have been written on their Christian lives and convictions.

George Washington (1732 – 1799) was the first president of the United States and commander in chief of the continental Army during the revolutionary War.

Was George Washington, the “Father of our Country,” a Christian? If so, to what extent? The answer to that question sets the stage for the heritage which all of us enjoy today. How outspoken was Washington to others about his faith?

Much has been written about Washington’s Christian convictions – convictions so conspicuous that they ruled both his personal and military life as well as his public life as president of the United States. When he took the oath of office as our first president, he leaned over and kissed the Bible, which was opened to his favorite book and chapter, Deuteronomy 28. His first and second Inaugural Addresses and National Thanksgiving Proclamation were permeated by references to God, the “Ruler of nations,” the “Author of our blessings,” and he spoke of His “Divine interposition” in the struggles of our nation.

Before and after battles, Washington led his troops in prayers of anticipation and thanksgiving. In fact, it is difficult to discover a publication of his in which he did not gratefully acknowledge or appeal to “Divine Providence.” Washington considered America’s victory over Great Britain to be nothing less than a miracle, and he constantly implored the citizens to be ever mindful of that fact.

But what about Washington’s private convictions? Was he truly a Christian - one who accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior? Beginning at a young age, Washington kept a personal prayer diary in which he wrote his prayers every day. Consider just a few excerpts:

Accept me for the merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ.

From other diary entries: Increase my faith, and direct me to the true object, Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life, bless, O Lord, all the people of this land, from the highest to the lowest, particularly those whom thou hast appointed to rule us in church and state.

Direct my thoughts, words and work, wash away my sins in the immaculate Blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by thy Holy Spirit....Daily frame me more and more unto the likeness of thy Son, Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in Thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life. Bless my family, friends and kindred, and unite us all I praising and glorifying Thee in all our works.

Nearly all of the founding Fathers possessed the same Christian zeal and depth of faith as that of Washington.

Thoughts ...

February, the shortest month, but still one with some important days. And for those of you who were born on Feb 29, this is your year to actually celebrate your birthday on the 29th! Yes, it’s leap year. Happy Birthday to all of you!!

We also celebrate the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln. These were important days for us when I was a child in school. We had pictures, stories from their lives and did skits etc for each of them. Each birthday was celebrated separately back then. Lots of patriotic stuff during the month of February for us.

And of course we can't forget Groundhog Day!! We couldn't wait to see if there was going to be six weeks more winter or if spring was about to appear!! Our winters then were long, cold and snowy so we were ready for spring ... though we did not mind the winters. Snow came in November, sometimes October, and stayed sometimes until April. Some of the worst storms came in March. But for us that was what winter was all about. We prepared ahead of time for temperatures in single digits or below and lots of snow...and actually I loved the snow and spent much time outside even in the winter. (How the years have changed that!)

And then the most popular holiday for February, of course, is Valentine's Day; a time of revealing your feelings toward that special person. It is a time of parties at school and giving of Valentines; often homemade to all the kids and the teacher. Hearts, candy, flowers, etc. all a part of it!

Today it has become the second holiday in card giving. Millions of flowers and other gifts are given to that special someone.

Love and cupids, bows and hearts...all so much a part of the holiday. As we enjoy all the fun things about it, let me suggest we take it a step farther. Let us show the true meaning of love, agape love, the love of Christ not only to those we love, but to those who are not quite as lovable. Make sure your family knows you love them, it's important to tell them often. (Guys, we women may know you love us, but still like to hear it spoken ...and often!) And then show by your attitude and actions that you really do...not just in word but in deed also.

Make sure God knows you love Him, by telling Him, Talking to Him on an ongoing basis, spending time with Him listening, spend time reading His Word, spend time worshiping Him and by obeying His commands in your life on a daily basis, asking forgiveness when you fall short, forgiving others and showing His love to those around you.

And to those who are the most unlovable, they need it the most. So spread Christ's love everywhere you go. It's not as hard as you may think. It doesn't have to be something big, or expensive, just small acts of kindness, words of encouragement, a smile, hug or other gesture to show you care.

Try it! You'll like it and so will they!! (And more importantly, so will God!)

Happy Valentine's Day with love to all! Bless and be blessed!

Lila