

Beat the Winter Blues!

Visit the library. There's something for each family member!

Join some friends for lunch or dessert at a café.

Use this indoor time to get organized. Go through closets, toy boxes, kitchen cupboards, the attic. Put items aside for a garage sale. Use the money earned for a special family project or outing.

Grumbling about the cold doesn't make it go away! Make the effort to smile and give some warm hugs.



With the Kids:

- *Make supper together.
- *Learn to ski or use snowshoes.
- *Take a trip to a craft store for an indoor project.
- *Read a missionary biography or chapter book as a family.
- *Play games; teach strategy.
- *Build a snowman or igloo.
- *Visit a nursing home.
- *Write letters to grandparents, missionaries, friends.
- *Bake cookies for a neighbor.
- *Go ice skating at The Ice Box in Scranton.



Eat supper by candlelight—even if you're having mac and cheese.

Invite someone for dinner or dessert.

Make time to read God's Word, journal, and pray. Begin a book that will stretch you spiritually (We recommend *As Silver Refined* by Kay Arthur). Take some quiet moments to reflect, make specific goals and gain perspective.

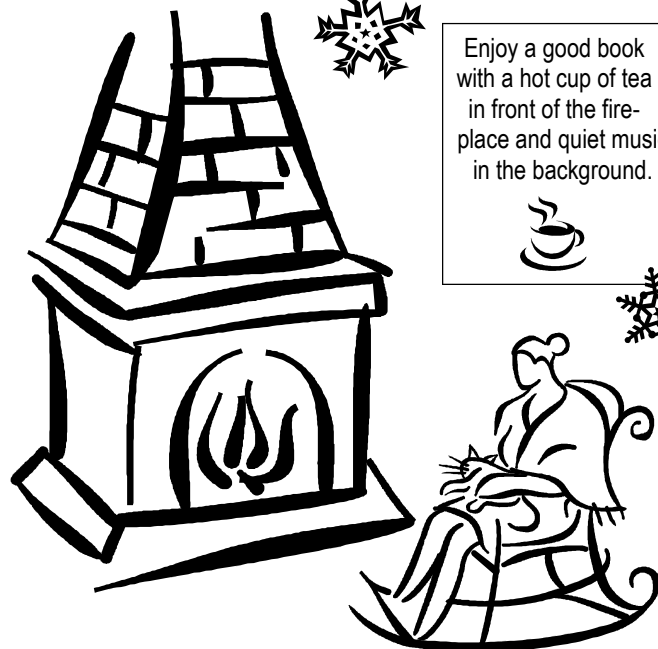
Enjoy a good book with a hot cup of tea in front of the fireplace and quiet music in the background.



In the Spring Issue:

A Look Behind These Faces:

- Single
- Divorced
- Caregiver
- Missionary
- Daily Physical Limitations
- Mother Who Homeschools
- Mother of Elementary Age Kids
- Grandmother Raising Grandkids
- Mom Who Works Outside Her Home



Faces



Sunday mornings find us gathered in tidy rows, reaching for a word from God, offering a bit of human praise. We smile, chat and pray together, and sometimes give a hug. We are family, God's family...the household of faith.

In this and the next issue of *The Women's LINK*, we want to explore what's behind the various faces of the women at Summit and beyond. Many different roles represent our gender. We find ourselves with diverse needs, concerns, challenges, and yes, blessings. We've asked twenty women from all walks of life to share their hearts. With a ready willingness, they've disclosed their needs, what helps them...and what hurts. Over two newsletters, we hope to raise an awareness of these areas and encourage a keen sensitivity to each other, stimulating ideas for tangible support. No doubt, our prayers for those we see every week will be strengthened as well.

But first, a few words about what's ahead. Each article is anonymous. Rather than center on a specific personality, we are focusing on the ideas presented. Our authors include those from within our church walls as well as from the outside. We recognize that each experience shared here is unique to the writer and may not be the same as another in the same role. Still, it is worthwhile to pause and listen with an open heart to the sincere and candid accounts of what's behind the faces we see on a regular basis.

May we read these articles prayerfully with a view toward offering a blessing to the women "of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Sarah L. Phillips

"And let us not lose heart *and* grow weary *and* faint in acting nobly *and* doing right, for in due time *and* at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage *and* faint. So then, as occasion *and* opportunity open up to us, let us do good [morally] to all people [not only being useful or profitable to them, but also doing what is for their spiritual good and advantage]. Be mindful to be a blessing, especially to those of the household of faith [those who belong to God's family with you, the believers]."

Galatians 6:9-10, *The Amplified Bible*



“I have preschool children.”



I am in the midst of the phase of being a mom of preschoolers. I depend on and am blessed with a community of believers who offer support and laughter during this wonderful but trying time in my life.

Within the church body, I seek encouragement and look to those who have "been there and done that" to offer me perspective and understanding. Yes, this is a God-given, amazing time in my life, but the days can also be trying, lonely, and overwhelming. Having those around who are either in the midst of this phase themselves or who have blossomed as a result of it is empowering. I don't seek sympathy, just friendship. This is a time of celebration as I get to participate in molding young people into God-fearing individuals. What an honor!

In the midst of this time, however, it can be easy for me to become discouraged because I won't see the fruit of my work for years. I can become focused on the opportunities that I can't have because of the little ones for whom I'm responsible. Women within the church body can guide me, however, in turning my focus upward.

Tangible services are obviously extremely encouraging to a mom with young children—church nursery workers willing to serve even if they do not have nursery-age children, Sunday school teachers who pour hours into our children on a volunteer basis, and the countless times church members have been willing to accommodate situations for young children and understand the unpredictability of little ones. These services and acts of kindness are invaluable to me because members of our church are coming alongside my family and showing that they care about the spiritual development of my children. Not much means more than that!

God-given friendship is such a crucial part of maintaining an upward focus in the midst of caring for young children. I have found that having friends in all phases of life helps me keep this perspective. They may listen when I'm bursting with pride or frustration, or simply recognize this uniquely great but challenging time. In addition, these women can gently remind me that God is good and His focus is eternal. I sincerely appreciate that my husband and I do not feel alone in raising those God has entrusted to us. What a reward awaits those who invest in God's children today!



“I am a mother of prodigals.”

As our children were maturing—physically, mentally, and spiritually, I never dreamed we would be faced with a “prodigal.” We prayed for them, were involved in church with them, and taught them the Scriptures. Now we have two prodigals and one living for the Lord, along with her family. WHY? The only answer I can give is that *one* was willing to submit to the Lord and His Word, and that made all the difference.

As a mom, I think it is particularly hard on women to accept the fact that a child has spurned the Lord. A mom is so used to “fixing” things in our children's lives. We bandage hurt knees, help with the traumatic first day of school, stand by through the sometimes turbulent teenage years, and breathe a sigh of relief when our child is launched in a career or marriage. But a “prodigal”—a mom cannot “fix” that problem.

Perhaps it is natural to run the gamut of frustration, grief, and blame. IF only I had done this, IF only I hadn't done that—and the self recriminations go on and on. “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past” (Isaiah 43:18a). We all can review past shortcomings and sins, but the past cannot be changed! Our adult children

have made *choices not* to follow the Lord; they are responsible before God for those choices. We are not. “Whenever we hit rock-bottom, we can be assured of God's love and care. His encouragement breathes new possibilities into impossible circumstances” (Margaret Fishback Powers).

“If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; *but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness*” (Psalm 89:30-33). THAT is a promise that should be a comfort to us.

All we can do for prodigals and parents of prodigals is PRAY! We too often make prayer the “last resort,” but prayer can unleash the *might of Almighty God* on our behalf! “There is no more significant involvement in another's life than prevailing, consistent prayer. It is more helpful than a gift of money, more encouraging than a strong sermon, more effective than a compliment, more reassuring than a physical embrace” (Chuck Swindoll). “Lord, the world is smaller than I realize and my prayers, like shortwaves,

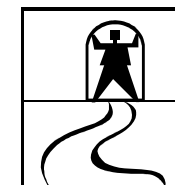
go farther than I imagine. Even though my intercessions for others seem so faint, thank You for amplifying prayer with Your power.” (Joni Eareckson Tada).

I have personally been so encouraged by a young lady for whom I have been praying for several years who recently came back to the Lord. A gentleman for whom a woman prayed for almost 40 years, came to know the Lord a short time ago. God is working. We need to be faithful in encouraging and praying for prodigals and their families.

“God may be invisible, but He's in touch. You may not be able to see Him, but He is in control. And that includes you—and your circumstances. That includes what you've just lost. That includes what you've just gained. That includes all of life—past, present, future” (Chuck Swindoll).

For Further Reading:

Luke 15:11-32,
John 8:2-11, Ezekiel 18



— “My husband is in full-time ministry.” —

My husband has been in full-time ministry for over twenty years. While these years have been filled with rewards and blessings, there have been challenges as well. With inadequate income came the need for me to work to supplement our family earnings. God provided a way so I could work at home and raise our children. Now that our children are young adults, God has opened the door for me to work outside the home and minister to those without the hope of salvation. Loneliness and isolation has also been a challenge, with my husband putting in long hours to help others or having to take a second job to supplement our finances.

Something I have struggled with over the years has been the unfair criticism of my husband. How hard it has been to sit among brothers and sisters in Christ and to unexpectedly hear

something negative spoken about the person you love. I have had to be careful not to let it bother me and to especially remember that they speak without knowing all the facts. Unfortunately, discouragement is something we have had to deal with through the years, but we continue to trust God. Forgiveness and dependence on Him help us respond in the right way to the various circumstances God allows into our lives in ministry.

One of the greatest blessings has been to see young people, with whom my husband has worked, grow into adults, give their lives to full-time service, and have them come back and say, “Thank you for your influence on my life.”



— “My husband is not a believer.” —

The people with whom I’m the closest, namely those in my Adult Bible Fellowship, have been extremely sensitive to my husband not sharing my faith. They ask me regularly and genuinely what they can do to include him in church activities and men’s outings. They also call from time to time. Dave (not his real name) isn’t comfortable having people over to our house, so people have invited us to theirs.

Many have stepped out to introduce themselves to me and taken the time

to get to know me. This has made me comfortable communicating what Dave would be open to. I think it’s important to have people you can do that with; it doesn’t happen overnight. Since I am limited in what I can attend because of Dave’s lack of desire to go to church and activities, it has been helpful when friends call, email, and facebook me.

BUT, I also cannot sit back and expect everyone to jump up and minister to me and my family or to even remember that Dave is not a believer. I want to be just as involved as I wish others to be, but not for that

reason. I need Christian women in my life, and that is my responsibility.

It is different and sometimes difficult having an unsaved husband. Yet it is through Christ that any of us can be truly happy. The truth of the sovereignty of God has greatly helped me. I know God is a reality in my life. I haven’t been able to depend on my husband or his faith, but only on God. Credit for my growth goes to God alone who has given me the desire to grow, to read the Bible, to change, and to pray. Through Him alone I have peace and happiness.

— “I’m a stay-at-home mom.” —

We come together like a flock of geese who instinctively know we will fair so much better as a group than alone. We depend on each other for companionship to carry us through the lonely job of staying at home for hours on end with little human beings who don’t speak our language. When we gather with other women, we fill ourselves with the nourishment that comes from a time of talking and laughter. We remind ourselves that we are not alone.

We confer about pediatricians and share passionate opinions about feeding and discipline. We borrow a clean change of clothes for our little ones when they wet through, and for us when they spit up on us. We exchange much needed maternity clothes, baby clothes, parenting books, advice, and every so often, a shoulder. We carry each other’s burdens: the sick child, the naughty child, the terrible twos, the difficult relatives, the strained marriage, and the tight finances. We schedule children’s naps to coincide with our lives, and convince ourselves that we can make it one more day if we can get at least six hours of uninterrupted sleep tonight.

We come to each other’s rescue with a casserole, a dishtowel, or that look in the eyes that says, “I know. I get it. And I’m praying.”

Mothers are champions for an eternal cause, whether they work outside the home or not. For the stay-at-home mom, it can be a lonely road. Many of us are far from family and find ourselves in unfamiliar territory. We can feel lost and insecure as we start our own mothering journey. We (young moms) need nourishment, encouragement, acceptance, and support. We need older women to come alongside, to say “I’ve been there.” We find blessing when asked over to your home for coffee. So ask!

And invite me to bring my toddler along. Sure, he may smear your glass window and mess with the books on your shelf. If you love my children, you are loving me.

There is nothing more hurtful to us than judgment and criticism of our children and/or our mothering. Be kinder and gentler than you think necessary. Emotions are fragile for us who have struggled through lonely days, sleepless nights, and wish we could throw off our spit-up covered T- shirt for a nice blouse and be whisked away for a girls’ day out or a romantic date night with our husbands.

Most of all, we need each other. If you are new to Summit or new to mothering, find your “flock” in which to gather. The best support for a new mom is other moms. I have found encouragement through my Adult Bible Fellowship and Ladies’ Bible Study. I found older women in these circles to mentor me and other young moms like me. We carry each other and listen with open hearts. We nod in agreement that it is an honor and a privilege to love and raise these little people for God’s glory. On good days and bad days, we wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world. And at the end of the day, we are so thankful to God for the body of Christ, which means we don’t have to do it alone.



“My husband passed away.”

Widow. Loneliness—even in a crowd. Major decisions. Home repair. “Odd-ball” in a group of couples. Missing half of you.

I had a wonderful husband who loved the Lord. He had ministries, and I had ministries. We had ministries together. So when my husband went home to be with the Lord, I felt like half of me left (“Two shall be one.” Genesis 2:24). I miss our lives together. I even miss our disagreements because they showed our individualities. We had deep respect for one another, which is the “key” to a happy, successful marriage.

Here are some tips on how to encourage a widow: Tell her (if you can be honest) that she looks nice. She doesn’t have anyone to tell her that before leaving the house. Ask if there is anything you can pray about. Even if she says, “Not really” at first, ask again at a later time. Be sincere. She can perceive if you’re not serious or just being polite. Inquire if she needs anything done around her home. Her family members may live too far away to consistently help, or have double jobs and a full schedule themselves. Most widows can’t afford to hire someone for every job that needs to be done.

When you are at a wedding and the tables are set up for an even number, some widows look at the empty chair as a reminder that they are single and alone. It bothers me, but not as much as it used to. Ask the woman if she would like you to remove the empty chair. It may make her feel more comfortable.

May I suggest some specific “don’ts”? Please do not ask a widow when she is going to get married again. Avoid asking what is wrong with the men, that they don’t know a good woman when they see one. Refrain from saying to a new widow that she will get married again, so everything will be okay. It makes us feel like we have to be married to be “somebody” and don’t have any worth of our own. It’s best to keep from telling a widow how “lucky” she is to be free to come and go as she pleases now that her husband is gone. I do not feel “lucky.” I did not want to be a widow, even though I have accepted it as the Lord’s choice for me.

I have appreciated the prayers of others more than I can say. Two specific requests come to mind: Pray for godly wisdom for major decisions. Family, friends, and pastors give wonderful advice, but

the weight of each decision rests heavy on *my* shoulders.

Pray also for relief from loneliness. I am working on that. Elisabeth Elliot (who lost two husbands) wrote, “Loneliness is a wilderness, but through receiving it as a *gift*, accepting it from the hand of God, and offering it back to Him with thanksgiving, it may become a pathway to holiness, to glory, and to God Himself.” I love Paul’s words in Philippians 4:11. He *learned* to be content in whatever state he found himself. The key word is “learned.” And it always takes time.

Through my experience, I have found strength through God’s Word. I am grateful for His grace. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).



“I have teenagers at home.”

An older and wiser parent once told me, “The reason so many young people fall away is because their parents spent too much time looking at the hood of the car when they should have been looking farther down the road.” It was good advice.

Adolescence comes quickly. One day you’re reviewing spelling words and the next you’re enforcing curfews. I wasn’t prepared to face the change: learning to relinquish much of the control I had just spent the past twelve years or so perfecting. I didn’t get it that my kids were on the verge of becoming young adults. Learning to limit my reminders of what they “needed” to do was tough. Keeping quiet and allowing them to hopefully succeed or even possibly intentionally fail on their own was even tougher. Allowing consequences to be their guide instead of me—totally out of my realm. Admitting that sometimes the reason I wanted my kids to succeed was so I could feel comfortable—a very painful and harsh truth.

It takes discernment to raise a teen. Do I demand obedience because I am the authority and should be obeyed? Or do I adjust my expectations and give them a little room? “Rules + Respect = Relationship” is a helpful equation. The opposite is also true: “Rules – Respect = Rebellion.” Easy to understand, hard to comply with. Especially after you’ve spent years controlling, or at the very least, influencing every decision they’ve ever made.

Can you help me raise my teens? Yes you can. Be supportive not judgmental. Don’t be fooled by appearances. Just because my daughter has dyed her hair black or maybe my son’s hair is a little on the long side doesn’t mean they are rebellious or out of control. When my family attends church, I frequently notice other people watching my teen. It’s as if they’re looking for



evidence to support a conclusion. It’s not a pleasant thing. Even if my teen does not see you watching, they feel it, and they know what you’re thinking.

Pray for our teenagers. I will gladly share with you specific requests if I know that you’re willing to pray for my family. It would mean the world to me to have someone ask, “How are things at your house? Is there anything I can pray about?”

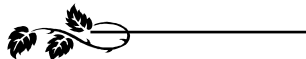
I recently heard Pastor Frank say, “There is no proven formula for how to raise kids.” We all know this, but somehow when they’re little we think that if we just discipline them enough - do family devotions regularly - take them to church faithfully, then by the time they turn 16, they’ll be okay. How I wish this was true, but painfully it is not. Look around. People that you know and admire have kids who aren’t what you might have expected them to be. (Did they miss the Ranger Bill memo...?) Simply, yet profoundly, what it all comes down to is this:

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

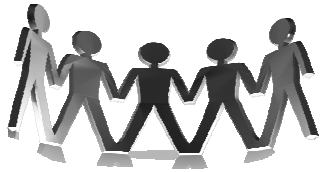
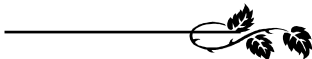
We are to take principles from God’s Word and apply them to the unique individual that is our child. Guiding them in the way. Doing our best to keep our eyes farther down the road and off the hood. It’s easy to panic when our teen starts heading in a direction that we don’t like. We tighten our control, make threats, and raise our voices—creating perfect conditions for a “car crash.” Perhaps we need to focus more on the positive. Spend more time guiding their potential. Trust the investment we’ve already made. Allow God to use whatever tools He desires to reveal who He is to them, trusting Him to be in control and acknowledging that we are not.



“Can you help me raise my teens? Yes you can.”



“I have a large family.”



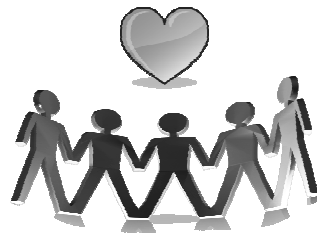
I am the mom of a large family. Large families seem to scare a lot of people. They are afraid of us in stores, planes, and restaurants. I think most just don't know what to do or what to think of us. However, we aren't really scary at all. We just have a lot of kids, and we really do enjoy our family that way. To us, it doesn't seem like there are a lot of us. We truly believe "children are a gift of the Lord," and "blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." Generally, our children love having many brothers and sisters. They always have someone to play with or do things with. They don't worry about being alone. They learn responsibility at an early age. Everyone helps out. They all learn to cook, clean, do dishes, laundry, and outside chores. They all feel free to say things such as: "Did you learn to watch out for each other. I have extra eyes to care for the younger children, and I trust them to be there for each other."

Because our family is large, we aren't able to do everything smaller families do. We can't go out to eat as much or do family activities that require fees per person. Mom and Dad don't go out on dates very often. Things can be financially tight; if we have money to go out, sometimes it is hard to find a babysitter if you have five children under the age of ten. The sitter might cost you more than the night out. However, as our children get older we then have built-in babysitters. Probably my older children are the ones you want to baby-sit your children since they have learned how to take care of babies well!

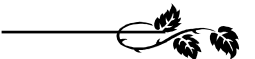
Probably the thing that frustrates us most (and we find very rude and intrusive) are the comments we get about our large family from friends, family, acquaintances, and total strangers. They all feel free to say things such as: "Did you plan them all?" "How many more are you going to have?" "Don't you know how that happens?" These comments are ones they would never express

to a mother of one or two children, but somehow they feel they have the right to say them to a mom of a large family. We love that we have so many children. My children always ask when we are going to have another baby. Babies have never been resented, and we always looked forward to them.

I love having a lot of children. I don't think there is any right or wrong size for a family; it is different for everyone. We each chose what God has placed in our hearts, follow that path, and allow others to do the same. I feel my life has been blessed in ways that never could have been otherwise. I am a full-time mom and will be for more years than most mothers, yet I have no regrets.



“I'm experiencing the empty nest.”



Empty nest. It even has a sad used-to-be-useful sound to it. It is the time in a mother's life when her child moves out, moves on with his or her life. The empty-nest feeling hits again with each child because it is a transition in relationship between parent and child to parent and *adult* child.

It is a time of loss, of questioning. How did this happen so fast? Did I do enough to train my child? Will he really be okay without my help? For many, the empty nest is a time of grief. That special time of being needed by your child as a child has come to an end. It is the loss of a purpose that has been a priority for a couple decades. Change is always hard, but it is a part of life.

It is a time to trust God with my child. It is a time to transition into relationship with my adult child. It is a time to grow in relationship with my husband. It was harder for each of us when the child of the same gender left. We spend time together doing what we had done separately.

Here's how you can help, understand, and pray for me and other empty-nesters:

- **We want others to join us in prayer for our children as they launch into their adult lives.
- **We need to connect with other ladies in friendship and service. Invite someone who is a new empty-nester to join you.
- **We feel out of touch with children and teens now that our own have moved on; it's hard to know how to pray for the kids at church and school.
- **It would have helped me to talk with a mother who had gone through this and hear her say that it would be all right. I can now say that it is great to have

adult children and in-law children. Yet the time of transition is usually awkward.

Several Scriptures have become meaningful to me:

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12, 13).

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you” (Jeremiah 29:11, 12).

Two pieces of advice helped us. One was from Dr. David Jeremiah. He encouraged parents to keep the whole bridge of communication open with their children as they go through adolescence and the early adult years. Don't check out or even feel satisfied with going “half way.” Be willing to do more than your share to keep in touch, take initiative, offer help, and assure them of your prayers.

Elizabeth George encourages parents to keep parenting until their children are in their mid-twenties. As they launch, they will need support a little longer than the previous generation.

After the initial shock wore off, my husband and I have enjoyed the time with just the two of us. It is even more fun than the days before children. Our children were and are encouraged to see us move on and do well with the seasons of life.



“I am newly married.”



Single life was fun, very independent, and free. Married life changes so many aspects of my personality and use of “free time.” Just having another person whose schedule is affected so intimately by my own has been an adjustment. I cannot just go to my friend’s house and help out, spend an hour chatting, or run to the mall for a few hours on a whim. After the work day, I need to prepare a healthy dinner for the two of us. I have to be careful to balance time shared with my husband and occasions spent with others.

What I love about my life is the carefree time with my husband and friends. My spouse and I love to be together. We also like to invite our friends over for dinner and games. We can enjoy a quiet (or loud) evening without consideration for the time, children, or any other serious responsibility. When we go out anywhere, we only have to bring ourselves! When I pack lunches, I am packing only for my husband and me (which takes enough thought as it is). When we want to travel or visit friends and family, we only buy two plane tickets and bring two bags (or one). We can pick up and go anytime. Life with just two is certainly fun—and a growing time as a couple of individuals learning to live together.

What concerns me most is my vulnerability to selfishness and reclusion. I am an outgoing, friendly person. But when it is up to me to reach out to others, I must confess a tendency to be lazy. Life with just two can also be selfish and somewhat lonely. Do I want people to call and ask me to go out? Sure I do, but most of my friends are either in the same situation as I or have the responsibilities of being mom and dad. Ultimately, we all struggle, but each in our own manner. We are all blessed, but in such different ways.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 is a good reminder for me that this is a time for which to be thankful, just as the other seasons in life. “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven...”



“When we begin to truly understand the boundless measure of love God has for us, our hearts are stirred to share the overflow with others. Love is our highest calling—the most convincing evidence of His life within us and the sweetest essence of His character that we can bring into the world.”



“It’s a beautiful picture to paint in our minds...a friend who has stumbled along life’s path looks up to find the hand of a friend reaching out to help them. There is a comfort God gives through friendship—a peaceful assurance that He never wants us to feel alone on our journey home.”



“It’s a privilege to be a grandma.”



Being a grandmother is a special blessing. I believe it’s also a ministry and a responsibility. I am challenged as I read 2 Timothy 1:5. Lois, Timothy’s grandmother, had a faith that she modeled for her grandson. Verse 5 states that Timothy also developed that same faith. My greatest desire is that I would model a faith worthy to be copied by my grandchildren and that they would also experience that faith. I believe building a solid relationship with them is crucial if we want to influence them for the Lord.

Building trust starts when children are young. As a Grandma, I have found that this involves spending time with them, listening to them, and reaching out to them. When miles are between us, it means traveling to be with them, phone calls, and even sending books that I’ve

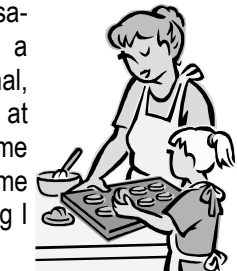


As my grandchildren grow older, I ask their opinion and seek their input (like when I’m stuck trying to figure out modern technology!). This helps build bridges and deepen the relationship. I often clip magazine or newspaper pictures and articles of interest to them. They love

receiving mail, and it makes for good conversation. I recently found and sent a picture of the world’s tallest snowwoman built in Maine, 122 feet high! I encourage our children to share prayer needs of their families with me. On occasion, they have given me a specific list of requests for each grandchild. Each one has unique struggles and challenges on which they are working. Colossians 1:9-14 is an excellent passage to use as a model for praying for grandchildren. We are challenged to ask God to help them be spiritually wise, pleasing Him in the way they live. We can pray that they would be full of God’s power and be strong to face life’s struggles, full of the joy of the Lord, and always grateful for the blessings they have in Christ Jesus.

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I try to take advantage of teachable moments and spontaneous opportunities to share God’s goodness. Pointing to His wonderful creation, rehearsing answers to prayer I’ve seen answered, and sharing my salvation story can unfold naturally as we take a walk in the woods, enjoy a picnic lunch, or visit the local park together. Meaningful conversations can take place while we make a snowman, mend a favorite stuffed animal, or pick them up from school for a “date” at McDonald’s. It sometimes surprises me when a grandchild will mention some small thing we did together or something I said years ago.



I appreciate and praise God for the opportunity to influence and minister to my grandchildren “in the ways of righteousness.” This is a privilege Proverbs 16:31 says gray-haired people have!