

The Heart of a Woman Inc.

NOVEMBER 2004

Formerly known as 'WOMAN TO WOMAN'



The Gift of God's Love

in marriage .. in relationships .. in confident expectation

The Heart of a Woman Inc.



Where it all began.

In early 2000 I had the privilege of heading up the Women's Ministry at our local Assembly. Our programs included a weekly Bible Study and four Ladies Afternoon Programs a year. At these we invited guest speakers, enjoyed a time of singing, a small and easy craft and afternoon tea: except at the Christmas break-up. At that time we always catered for a Christmas Dinner and charged a small fee. This not only covered our costs, but also usually enabled us to hand approximately \$200-\$300 over to a chosen Missionary family.

It began to concern me that many of us were very interested in what the guest speaker had to say, but probably tended to go home and forget the bulk of it. So I approached the Elders and asked them if we could formulate a Ladies Newsletter, in which the speaker could have the ability to summarise what she spoke about as a small devotion. It was suggested that this also could be used to hand out to our families, friends and neighbours. Permission was given and we began by printing up 50. The original newsletter was fairly simple, 8 pages of quotes, poems, the devotion and recipes. This soon grew to 100 in number and so did the pages as women took up the challenge of handing me items for print.

In October 2002 it was evident that the Lord was leading us to fellowship at a different church. By now we were printing approximately 200 and a few other Assemblies were receiving it. As I had been doing all the work on the magazine I needed to approach our previous Elders at the old home church to see if they objected to my continuing. There was no problem, as they said it

would probably come to an end if I didn't. Therefore Ewan and I felt the Lord's leading to open it up so that women from any church or fellowship could share in receiving it. It was here that the format was changed slightly and more ladies were added to the writing list. The numbers rose dramatically to just over 550 in number, in May 2003.

It has always been a deep desire of mine to assist ladies to learn of the depth and wisdom of our salvation. I have sorrowed over the problems found in some churches and began to see that this may be the Lord's leading to touch lives. It has been delightful to see how the Lord has guided this ministry and given items to some of our writers, sometimes years prior to when they were needed. We still look for ladies who enjoy writing.

Gradually I was becoming more and more aware of the need for others to join me in a team. I was convicted that we worship and serve a God of diversity and as such, others needed to be involved. If it was truly His ministry, then it was wrong for it to be a one-woman band. And so I began to pray for others to join me in the work. Now here it is in November 2004, and once again the Lord has gone before and prepared His ministry in the way He has chosen. Our magazine has grown quickly to our last printing of 1200 and more still are being ordered.

We now have an Editorial Team, a new name change and a totally new look. "The Heart of a Woman" is now an incorporated body as "a not for profit organization."



Our team includes **Karen Gaston**, who has been a much-needed member with incredible skills to assist with the Layout and

Design. Karen comes to us with a wide range of experiences including business skills and motherhood, she and Greg, her husband also spent a time as Missionaries in the Philippines and each of these training fields have all been used to prepare her for this time.



Annette Lawson spent time working with OM and her experiences, as a businesswoman and wife to David, have also been her preparation.

We have a new member, who prefers to remain as a silent writer. She is a young woman who is extremely skilled in editing and I am sure she will be a blessing to us as well as bringing fresh delight to all our young readers.



As for myself, **Wendy Davie**, I am the oldest of the crew at this time, I am a Mother and Grandmother. I have been writing now for many years

- Bible Studies, stories and poems. Many years ago I completed the Emmaus Certificate Correspondence Course. I love to study God's Word and minister at ladies' programs whenever I am able. Ewan and I have lots of extended families and have enjoyed the delight of God bringing those He wants us to love as family into our lives.

So far our main writers are **Liz Lennox, Melissa Walmsley, Barbara Holmes, Annette Lawson, and myself with others joining in as silent writers.**



Liz has a special gift of teaching and writing and she and her husband Jeff, have three children and run a building business.



Melissa will be bringing us a regular segment of "Moments with Melissa". Lyndon, her husband, is a teacher and Melissa has been taken through the school of hard knocks through ill health. We know God has something special for her to share with each one of us.

Barbara's special gift is in poetry and we enjoy the pleasure of seeing how God has led her thoughts in order that her poems fit so beautifully into the themes planned ahead.

As others share their testimonies, poems or short pieces, we pray that God willing, they will continue to have a desire to remain with us and send items in. We do thank all those who have taken a part in the magazine, both in the past and present. We are always on the lookout for new writers and encourage those who would like to share in this ministry to contact us for further details.

Please pray for us as a team. We are very aware that it is the Lord's ministry and His words. There are many times when we sit down together with only a theme and no idea of what

to write—but the Lord Who is gracious, owns both "The Heart of a Woman" and each one of us, and so always seems to direct our thoughts.

Each one of us would have to concur that we never thought it possible that we would be taking part in such an exciting ministry as we are now. Our Almighty God has supplied us with those to support financially, prayerfully, and with encouragement. To you all we wish to say thank you. May God bless you as you continue to seek to serve Him so faithfully.

To Him we give all the thanks and glory.

Wendy Davie

Editor-In-Chief.

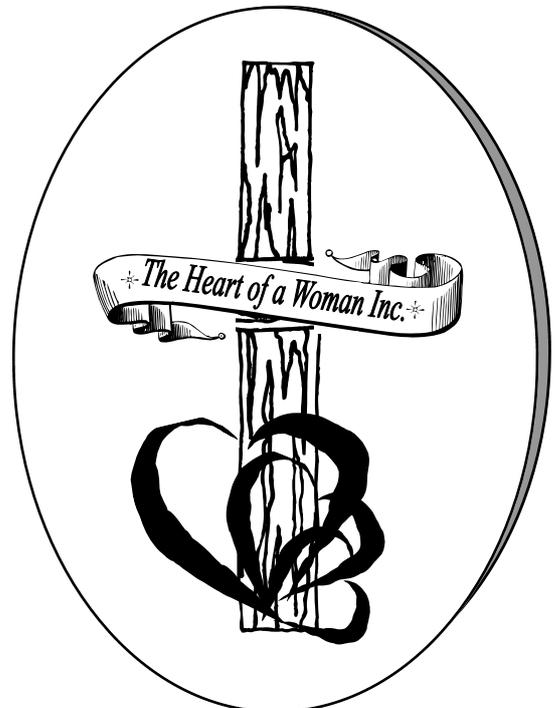
Introducing our logo...

The Cross: Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Redeemer is central to our ministry and this is shown by the cross being our logo's central figure. It is timber in design showing that it is the simplicity of the cross of Christ that brings about healing to our lives.

The three hearts intertwined: are symbolic of the three sides of a woman – body, soul and spirit. It is only as we come to the foot of the cross and confess our sins that His blood washes us and brings about true healing to all aspects of our lives. This is why the hearts are coloured red and placed at the foot.

The cross bar of the cross: is in the form of "Our Banner". It is mainly through our magazine that we endeavour to strengthen and encourage each other as women in the faith.

The shaded circle: surrounding this tells of our sisterhood and how united we can stand firm, assist and encourage each other not only to look to Him who has redeemed us, but also aid each other in living our lives to His glory in all we do. The shading shows that it is an ever-widening circle and we are constantly reaching out to all those who desire to be touched by His presence.



ABN: 40 676 905 244

Inside this Issue:

5. *The Old Chiming Clock—a poem*
5. *The Gift of Love in Marriage—Eve*
9. *Recipes ... to tempt your tastebuds*
10. *Trash & Treasure*
12. *A Personal Testimony*
14. *In Confident Expectation*
15. *Moments With Melissa*
16. *Highlights of the Book of Ruth*
17. *Ruth*
18. *Bathsheba*
20. *He knew Their Ways and Led Them On (a true story)*
22. *Esther—Inner Beauty & Calling*
26. *Marriage Comparisons—Past & Present*
28. *Examples of Good Attitude*
30. *The Wedding Guests*

From the Editor's Desk:

Welcome to "The Heart of a Woman" – it's a new era for each of us and our prayer is that you, the reader, will receive great blessing as you take time out to enjoy our new magazine.

What better place could we start with our very first issue of "The Heart of a Woman", than with "God's Gift of Love"! Not only are we blessed with the complete and finished work of His salvation through His Son's death, burial and resurrection, but also we are abundantly blessed with His Gift of Love in 'Our Marriages', in 'Confident Expectation' as we wait to discover His plans for us, and also in all 'Our Relationships'.

Was "Eve" the dreadful woman that she has often been made out to be? Read on and find out the very heart of this woman. We have two testimonies and a true story - I'm sure you will find them hard to pass by. Liz explains how God blessed "Ruth" abundantly. She was a woman of Moab, without hope, yet she finds herself being used mightily by God, simply because of His Great Love. How many times have you heard that "Bathsheba" was a morally low, adulterous woman? Annette helps us discover the real truth, and why and how God's Gift of Love helped her to forgive and delight in her husband David, who had wronged her so terribly.

The story of "Esther's Inner Beauty and Calling" is thought provoking to all of us. We are sure you will find the "Marriage Comparisons of Past and Present" will bring new light on our confused beliefs. And so we come to the end, seeing how our marriages are symbolic of Jesus Christ and His bride – the Church. How important we are as women! Loved more than we can imagine, we too as God's children will delight to be part of "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb". Be sure to discover what it is and what a hope we have to look forward to. May God bless you as you read.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Wendy Davie

Editor-In-Chief.

The Old Chiming Clock

By Wendy Davie

The "Old Chiming Clock" sat on the mantelpiece,
its features rather worn.

The years of comfort it had brought
to our family so terribly torn.

A wedding present it had been,
to our parents both long since gone.

But still its chime and looks continue
to touch the hearts of all who belonged.

No matter whose life was lived in that house,
each knew and loved its song.

I don't remember how polished it had been,
for as I grew it aged.

I only remember the comfort it brought
as it faithfully chimed each day.

I do remember its song so sweet,
for every fifteen minutes it would chime,

Notifying all who cared to hear,
the value of lost time!

It always seemed to look the same;
its notes never did seem to change

But then we'd become accustomed to its ways,
which now seem rather strange!

I'm sure the maker of that clock
would look in horror too!

Its features worn,
the shine has dulled and its face no longer new.

He'd cringe to hear it chime off key

I know he'd shake his head and say – "I'll have to see!

What has caused this dreadful mess to my job—
once so perfect and good?

I shaped and polished and
carefully moulded each little piece of wood.

Its timing piece was so bright and clean,
Each striker the length that it should have been!

The song—when new was oh so sweet,

It didn't stop and start;

... yes you could listen to each tick and tock -

For it was faithful in its beat."

He opened the back and scratched his head,
as he looked inside.

It could clearly be heard as he said,

"Why what has happened here? – I see

Its not the same as it should be!

A piece inside this old clock has broken

And sadly it's been fixed just as a token!

A shortened striker has changed the song.

It's covered in dust and the shine's all gone!"

His heart felt saddened as he remembered the past

"The Old Chiming Clock"

and his loving work— which didn't last.

Me thinks my life is a little like that clock,

God made me perfect without a single scratch

—oh what a shock!

For my song - 'twas one of worship

of the true and living God;

The singing heart once a strong live vine,

had changed into a dry old rod!

For sin crept in and dulled my senses,

till I didn't even know,

That something terrible was wrong

and I had no ability to grow.

To be ready for Him to use each day

To share "His Gift of Love" His way,

With my family and friends

and all who'd draw near

Yes – it's only my Maker who can see so clear!

"Lord please let me see how I have failed:

don't let me continue to sit and wail -

Out the sick and sad song of a sin marred life!

But cleanse me and help me

to be free from all strife!

Take away the blindness of the heart,

That seems to convince me

that I'm holy and set apart.

When really my life shows my striker is short

And I know, with the dust of sin that covers my life...

I'll be caught!

Unless I can learn to rest in
Your Love

To have Your peace – yes
and the heart of a dove

To be constantly cleansed
by the Blood of Your Son.

You're my Maker, my
Creator – and I know
you've already won!!"



The Gift of His Love in Marriage

~ Eve ~



By Wendy Davie

Just like the old chiming clock, Adam and Eve found that through sin their lives had changed. Before the fall they were **equal in every way**, made in the image of God, perfect in all details. They were able to walk and talk with The Almighty, as there were no barriers between themselves or between themselves and the Father God. They were both gifted; that is, they could think, plan, remember, appreciate beauty, establish priorities, distinguish right from wrong, make decisions and carry them out. They **both** had dominion over all the animal kingdom and God blessed them **both** and said, **“Behold you are both very good.”**

The Garden of Eden where they lived was absolutely beautiful. It fulfilled all their needs and was perfect in every way. They were in fact captivated by what they saw for it was all new and refreshing. The air they breathed was pure and unspoiled. The water they drank was clear and sparkling. All the animals lived harmoniously with each other. Best of all, their marriage, which had been ordained by God, was perfect. Their fellowship with each other and with God was a daily joy. Yes, they had everything they could possibly desire.

That is, until Eve found herself tempted by Satan. John 8:44 says, *“he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning”*. It was Satan who spoke through the serpent to Eve. It was his tempting that deceived Eve and brought about Adam’s sin and not only the fall of man, but also a dreadful change. How did he do this?

Well - **He caused her to doubt**

God’s word. He aroused her desire for the fruit of the only tree that God had said not to eat. It was then that she failed to notice that God’s word had been twisted. It was then that she also began to misquote God’s Word, by adding “not even touch”. She listened, answered, and desired. Satan increased his boldness and came straight out by accusing God of telling lies. He portrayed God as someone who wanted to subdue man and so curtail his happiness, since He had the power to do so. She had been deceived and decided to disobey. She gave to Adam and he chose to disobey God and so be with his wife in sin.

The changes were immediate. They **both** knew the difference between good and evil. They saw their own wretchedness and nakedness before a holy and righteous God, and each other. They tried, by their own abilities, to cover their emptiness and sins. They heard God as usual and decided to hide from Him in order to cover their shame.

They shunned His presence and recognized fear in their hearts at the thought of it. They passed the buck, blaming each other, the serpent and even God, who gave the woman to Adam. *“I simply reacted to the cause, it wasn’t my fault!”* They died spiritually, and set in motion the beginning of physical death. They passed on to all humans - the sin nature. And so in Adam we all died spiritually. *“Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death as the result of sin, so death spread to all men, (no one being able to stop it or escape its power) because all men sinned.”* (Romans 5:12 Amp). Using a little imagination

I’m sure we can all hear them blaming each other and the constant friction that would have remained with them throughout the years.

What was God’s reaction? His love and grace were always there for them, but for the serpent there was a curse. It was to forever slither on its belly. – (Genesis. 3:14). In this way it is a perpetual reminder to mankind that it was the instrument used by Satan in the fall. He also placed a curse upon Satan. All men would serve him now, for they had no choice. The curse from God therefore, was of great importance.

Satan must have been further frustrated when God pronounced that the man would rule over the woman, and her desire would be to the man. Women would not be able to control men as easily as Satan had desired. The only other curse was to be on the earth or ground, but this would be a blessing in the long run to man, for he would have to work hard to achieve his food and daily needs. They would not come so easily, for from this time on he would need to learn to lean upon the Lord in all things.

In Genesis 3:15 we discover God’s great gift of love for God says, *“And I will put enmity (hatred) between you and the woman, (Israel) and between your seed (anti-christ) and her seed (Christ); He shall bruise you on the head, (cause a death blow to you and your power) and you will bruise Him on the heel. (cause great and temporary suffering.)* NASB. (Words in brackets are given for further understanding.) In this verse, God told of the Messiah to come through the seed of the woman. This Messiah would bring about a

crushing blow to Satan, whilst Satan would only cause a temporary discomfort to the Messiah. In 4 BC this was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, God's Son and in particular 33 years later when at His death and resurrection, Satan and death were completely defeated.

But in the meantime, God continued to show His love, for His next move was to kill a beast, and clothe them. In doing so He revealed to them that the sacrifice of an animal as a substitute was the only way to cover their sins. Hebrews 9:22 says, *"(In fact), under the Law almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins."* (Amp) So then this is what Jesus Christ did for us, He became our substitute – shedding His blood and taking the punishment that was rightfully ours.

We must understand that we are born with a sin nature. It was the *"lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"*, (1 John 2:16) which was Eve's downfall. This was also the way Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness and this is the way he attacks us. Not just in our own lives, but also in our marriages and relationships.

Eve must have grieved over her sin a great deal. She remembered the joy of the Garden of Eden, the closeness she had with Adam. Now he blamed her and there was a rift between them. She remembered how God lovingly walked and talked with them. Now she struggled to even pray to Him, and could have no hope of seeing Him face to face. She remembered the peace and love that permeated the whole of life. Now there was trouble and strife all around her.

How her heart broke to hear of her sons fighting and then to actually have Cain kill Abel was just too much. The guilt racked her whole being. If only she could have had more sense! What shame she felt. This is something that each one of us would have to admit we have felt at some time in our lives.

Only God has the ability to look on the inside of us. He knows us and He knows how we fail Him. Remember in Genesis 3:15, God told her that her offspring would have the victory over Satan? Each time a male child was born she named him saying, *"I have gotten me (the) man from the Lord"*, and each time she became aware that this was not the One she waited for.

What sin did to Eve was to change her desires. They changed from wanting to serve and love God to wanting to impress men. From a very early age in a girl's life, she is aware of the boys and men around her. She wants to please them and so dresses to attract them and shows great attention when they are talking with her. She thinks mainly of being married with children and not much else. Because of her desire to please, many find themselves in dreadful situations.

If you are young and not yet married, be aware of these desires and endeavour always to dress in a godly manner – learn to wait upon the Lord for the man He has already planned for you; for anything less will not bring blessing and you will miss out on the "gift of His love in your marriage". When we are married most of us would have to say we begin well, desiring to bless our husbands, but then that old sin nature steps in and we start asking – **"but what about me, what about my feelings and my needs?"** It is this attitude that stops us from knowing the **"gift of His love in our marriages"**, for it is when

this attitude overcomes us that we automatically step outside of God's will.

What sin did to Adam was to change his desires. He no longer wanted to walk and talk to God. Instead, Adam doesn't find it so easy to submit to Him anymore, for he has taken on the authority for himself. He rules, as if he were God, with an iron fist. Those of us who have lovely gentle caring husbands can be very thankful, for there are many who do not, but are abused both verbally, emotionally and sometimes physically. Many women are not encouraged to use the God given gifts they have, for it seems to be an affront to the male ego. And as the years progress this appears to worsen. This is not always outside the Church, for sadly many Christian homes face the same difficulty.

If you find yourself in this situation then "God's gift of love" will always be there for you as you seek to obey Him and to love your husband (without a word of objection, but much prayer for strength and guidance). Endeavour always not to react with a rebellious nature for this will only worsen the situation.

Pray constantly for your husband that he too, may know how to love his wife, as Christ Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Understand that no woman was or is meant to be abused and if your life is in danger please seek guidance and help. For encouragement and peace of mind read through the sections of Scripture where Jesus lifted women up and encouraged them to learn and grow in Him.

Eve continued to wait in faith for the coming Messiah, who would reunite them with their God and return them to their rightful place. She felt

(Continued on page 8)

The Gift of His Love in Marriage [continued]

(Continued from page 7)

shame, but she also had faith in her God. She realized that she must get

on with living and the only way to do that was to try to forgive herself, forget the past and start anew. She would believe God from here on in and would lean upon Him during the trials of each day. This is what we too must do.

Yes, each one of us has made mistakes, but we can be assured that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient to not only cover our sins, but to also clean up our consciences before God. His "gift of love" will always be there for us and it is in our marriages that we are able to pass on the "gift of love" to those we love day after day. By simply trusting in Him not only do we receive, but we are given the power also to give.



I ASKED GOD

I asked God to take away my pain.

God said, No.

It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.

God said, No.

Her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.

God said, No.

Patience is a by-product of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness.

God said, No.

I give you blessings. Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain.

God said, No.

Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.

God said, No.

You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life.

God said, No.

I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things.

I ask God to help me LOVE others, as much as he loves me.

God said... Ahhhh, finally you have the idea.

— Author Unknown



WRITERS Needed

We're looking for **CHRISTIAN WOMEN** to be on our panel of writers.

- Personal Testimonies
- Poems
- Stories
- Subject Articles
- Bible Teaching

As women there are so many challenges we face in our day-to-day lives. How about putting pen to paper and using your experiences to encourage others?

If you desire to be involved in this way please contact us for further details.

The Heart of a Woman Inc.

PO Box 6099 Bundaberg Q. 4670

Tel. 07 4151 2154

Email: heartofawoman@optusnet.com.au



Can
You
Help?

We're seeking the assistance of a **MEDICAL EDITOR.**

As women there are so many day to day issues in our lives that have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on our health.

We are looking to address these 'life' issues from both medical and Christian perspectives.

If you desire to be involved in this way please contact us for further details.

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RECIPES ... TO TEMPT YOUR TASTE BUDS ...

MUD CAKE

Melt:	Add to:
250g butter	1 1/2 cups Plain Flour
200g chocolate	1/2 cup SR Flour
2 1/2 cups white sugar	1/4 cup cocoa
1 1/4 cup hot water	2 eggs
3 heaped teaspoons coffee	

Combine and bake in moderate oven (180 deg) until centre springs back when touched.

Thanks Catherine Davie

SAUSAGE CREOLE

600g thin Pork Sausages
1 pkt Continental Thick Vegetable Soup
2oz margarine
1 cup Tomato Sauce
1 teaspoon Paprika
1 litre Water
1 Onion cut into rings
1 Capsicum (diced)
2 Carrots (cut into straws)

Remove skin from sausages; cut into 1 inch pieces.

Cover sausages with cold water and bring to boil for 10mins.

Drain & rinse under hot running water.

Prepare vegetables and sauté 3mins.

Combine soup mix, tomato sauce, paprika and water and mix well.

Combine sausage pieces, sauce mix and vegetables.

Bring to boil and simmer 20mins.

Thanks Shirley Elliot

BEAN & APPLE SALAD

1 x 730g three or four Bean Mix
4 sticks celery finely chopped
6 shallots finely chopped
2 red apples (skin on) finely chopped
2 tablespoons Parsley Flakes (dried)
1/2 cup French Dressing
2 teaspoons French Mustard

Drain beans well and rinse under cold running water.

Place in a bowl and add celery, shallots, parsley and apple.

Shake French Dressing with mustard in a glass jar with lid on or use Tupperware shaker and pour over mixture.

A little extra dressing may be added if desired.

Thanks to this contributor

CORNSTARCH FINGER PAINT

1/4 cup cornstarch
2 cups cold water
Food colouring

Mix ingredients in saucepan.

Boil until mixture thickens

Cool and pour into several lidded containers.

Add a couple of drops of different food colouring to each container.

(Can also be used with a brush)

Have you got a favourite recipe to share?

Please post or email to us at the address on the back page.



TRASH . . .

As a little girl, I remember wanting to get married and have children when I grew up. How many of us didn't play "brides"? To be honest, that dream continued for quite a while! Whether it was what I saw in my parents' marriage ... for some of you it may have been an example of how **not** to do it. Whatever the reason, I believe that God places in us the desire to be loved by one person – loving us with our faults, loving us despite our faults, loving us for what they see in us.

That is a pretty big ask of any man and sometimes we women tend to expect our husband to meet all our needs. Logic tells us that this cannot be because our husband is also human. Indeed, the only One who can meet all our needs is the Lord Jesus Christ as we invite Him into our lives to establish a moment-by-moment close personal relationship with Him.

To fast-forward, God brought a wonderful Christian man into my life years later and we married when I was 39. I am thankful for the strong Christian teaching I received in this area because I was committed to either marrying the man God brought into my life (not knowing if and when

that might be) ... or not marrying at all (a good thing if that is God's will for me). I wasn't prepared to marry the wrong man and perhaps regret it for the rest of my life.

Since our marriage David and I have been invited to be part of a Newlyweds Research Project undertaken by the School of Applied Psychology of Griffith University. Each year we are contacted to participate.

I'd like to share with you some of the initial results of that research. The initial results indicate some of the risk factors that indicate a problem may develop in the future. They are:

- * people who do not receive marriage education;
- * people whose parents divorced;
- * people who form stepfamilies with their marriage;
- * second marriages without children;
- * people who do not attend religious services;
- * people who get married at a young age;

- * people who choose to live together before getting married; and people who do not know each other for long before they get married.

Looking further, I find that a book called "Fighting for your Marriage" (HJ Markman, SM Stanley and SL Blumberg in www.familyfirst.net) lists the following factors additional to those above:

- * having a personality tendency to react strongly or defensively to problems and disappointments in life;
- * experiencing financial hardship; and having different religious backgrounds.

To me, the interesting thing about these two secular articles is that the so-called "risk factors" indicated reinforce God's guidelines for daily living, honouring God with my body (I Corinthians 6:12-20) and being equally yoked.

did you know ...

When the children of Israel had committed a sin, they were instructed to take their lamb to the priest at the temple. It had to be the first-born and it was to be perfect in every way. They would then place their hand on the head of the animal and say something like this, "I have sinned against God for I have committed...!" He would then take a knife and slit the throat of the lamb. The priest held a golden container under its throat to collect the blood. He would dip his finger into the blood and then onto the tip of the Israelite's right ear, right thumb and right toe, thus signifying that this animal had taken the place of the Israelite in death and his sin was forgiven. When the Lord shed His blood for you and me, because He was the perfect Son of God who came in the flesh, we no longer have to sacrifice an animal every time we sin. The Scriptures tell us that His sacrifice was enough once and for all.

... and treasure

By Annette Lawson

And looking further still, I found an interesting article on how to “Trash Your Marriage in Eight Easy Steps” by Sue Bohlin (www.probe.org). You can trash your marriage (and any other relationship in life) by:

1. Being selfish.
2. Picking at each other.
3. Letting the Kids be more important.
4. Showing disrespect.
5. Refusing to meet Emotional Needs.
6. Treating your friends better than your Spouse.
7. Being his mother.
8. Blowing up when you're Angry.



In keeping with that wonderful verse of Proverbs 14:1 (CEV), *A woman's family is held together by her wisdom, but it can be destroyed by her foolishness*, each one of us can treasure our husband and strengthen our marriage by:

1. Fighting selfishness by developing a servant heart. Act in your husband's best interests and do at least one unselfish deed for him each day.
2. Not picking; instead being gracious and concentrating on the many positive attributes of your husband.
3. Keeping your marriage at the centre of your family ... having a regular date night and times away. Remember, the best thing you can do for your children is to love their father!
4. Respecting your spouse by being kind and treating him courteously. Be positive to other people about him.
5. Finding out your husband's emotional needs. *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman and *His Needs, Her Needs* by Willard Harley are a great help in this area.
6. Treating your husband as well or better than you treat your friends. Encourage and affirm him.
7. Treating your (adult) husband with due respect.

Expressing your anger wisely and constructively. If necessary, cool down before speaking. Only go to bed when the matter has been dealt with (Ephesians 4: 26 in *The Message: And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.*

Ladies, don't trash your marriage; **treasure** it instead!

did you know ...

During the time that the Lord was on earth, if a person was caught in a crime he would be taken to Court and after judgement, a parchment was written up and placed over the door of his cell. It may read something like this – “..... was found poking her tongue out at a Roman Centurion. She is sentenced to two weeks in jail, to be completed in full”. When this woman was released, they would print across this parchment “It is finished” and sign it with their ring. Remember what the Lord Himself said on the cross - “**It is finished**” and in fact He called it out with a loud voice. “**It is finished.**” For each and every person who agrees with God that they are born with a sin nature that separates them from God, and believes with all their heart that Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice for them, they too can feel completely forgiven. They like Eve can recognize that they have made mistakes, but can continue on in faith knowing that God loves them and has forgiven all.

A Personal Testimony

~ Name withheld by request

 Growing up as one of the so-called “Baby Boomers” had both its benefits and downfalls. We were certainly thinking more for ourselves and yet there was still the security of the respectful years of our parents’ era. Most parents during that time had a belief in God. Many or most sent their children to Sunday School. If you did come from a family such as mine, then you more than likely also were encouraged to say grace and you all knew the “Lord’s prayer”.

In fact, simply because we did these things and because we went to Church, I like most others, was brought up in a “Christian family”. Having been baptised as a child, I was therefore classed as a Christian and basic truths of the Scriptures were taught to me. There was a God who created all things. He sent His Son to die for all men’s sins – after all Australia in the 40’s & 50’s was still viewed as a Christian nation. I did not understand it all, but I believed it and I had a love for going to Church and other programs within the Church body, such as Sunday School, Youth Group (the girls were separated from the boys at that time), and of course, choir which was my favourite. I must admit I joined the choir before I could read, possibly this was because Mum was always there; but I could hold a tune from a very young age and remembered many of the hymns off by heart.

I could not say I always enjoyed my childhood, but my faith in God who made me was a very strong influence on my life. From the age of about five when my mother told me that God made my skin to keep all my organs inside and safe, that was enough and that kept me at peace throughout my growing years.

When someone died, I knew without

any doubt that they had gone to live with God in Heaven. I had never learnt anything of evolution, so there was no confusion for me because of its teaching. Fear of displeasing God had not yet begun to affect me; certainly not until my teens anyway and then I quickly put it aside because I was more concerned about displeasing my peers or my family members. Fear of family or friends catching me doing something foolish, usually protected me from the drug scene or total rebellion, but my determination to do things my way often led me into some very tight scrapes. I now know that God always had His hand upon me and so often feel ashamed of my behaviour.

“I donned long skirts and a large apron and pretended I was a pioneer lady. It was a lovely game...”

In the mid sixties I went nursing. In a new town and new Church, working shift work and having no friends, I began sharing my very young and simple faith with my work mates. They soon tired of this and so organized for me to go out on a blind date; that date was my future husband. This caused such an upset within the Church circle and such bitterness within my heart, that when we eventually married and moved to Sydney, work commitments and finding it hard to find a Church where we felt comfortable, all helped in bringing us to the point of simply not going to Church. Over the years life got busier, and when the children eventually came along, if it had not been for their faithful grandmother, they would not have gone to Sunday School. She felt it so important that they too were taught the basics of the Christian faith and her prayers for us never stopped. My husband and I were

always good friends, but the first 10 years of our married life were not always the happiest.

You see, even though we both had asked Jesus to come into our hearts, we never really did anymore about it. We did not ask God’s opinion about our lives, and the financial strain and loneliness we both suffered due to my husband working away, were always constant points of friction. It was getting to the stage that when we were together, we simply argued about anything and everything.

I could not keep the house clean or the washing and ironing up to date – my heart just was not in it and this also caused friction. Twice I told him I was leaving; this usually brought us both to our senses and things calmed down. Then to my shock and horror the third time when I tried it, he snapped - “no I will,” and proceeded to pack his bag. This frightened me a great deal; when I’d said I was leaving I had never meant it as a permanent thing. I only wanted to get away from all my so-called problems for a time and when I calmed down, then I would return, for I knew I loved him and could not bear to part from either him or the children. But when he said he was going, I knew he meant it and the consequences of this action were too much to bear. I never threatened to do so again and it took some talking to get him to stay.

We decided it was necessary for me to travel with him for a time and so my parents once again came to the rescue and willingly looked after the children for 12 months or more with us coming and going between trips. I learnt to drive trucks and we once again built our friendship. The arguments stopped due to my newfound escapism, but the financial strain was to remain and

eventually all we had worked so hard for was lost.

Of course much of this stretched over a number of years and most of it I would not dream of sharing with others, but there came a day when we deemed it necessary to move in the middle of the night. By this time I now knew I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

An uncle and aunt allowed us to live on their property; we had no running water and no electricity. I donned long skirts and a large apron and pretended I was a pioneer lady. It was a lovely game and brought me peace during that time. I actually taught myself how to cook jams and preserves, sew by hand and bake bread. Our washing was done in a copper and I grew potatoes and other vegetables and enjoyed having chooks to tend.

My husband began working for wages and gradually with a regular income we began to get back onto our feet. During this time, I decided to begin reading. This in itself was a minor miracle, as I had only been known to read about four books in my life.

My husband had tea chests of books and I went searching for a suitable one. Prising the lid off box number 1, my Bible was the first book to take my attention. Still new due to lack of use, it had been a present to me from my bridesmaid long before we married and my pioneer game drove me to be tempted to read some of it. After searching some more I eventually went back to it and decided I might do just that.

Beginning at Genesis with my coffee, cigarettes and Bible, I would sit each day from the time the children went to school and read until 2.30 pm. By the time they were walking down the hill, I was at the woodheap chopping wood and singing hymns.

Up until this time I had been writing to my parents very frequently and of

course, once my reading began in earnest this went by the way. Mum wrote to me about how one night she could not sleep and spent the night praying and worrying about us. God spoke to her heart and led her to Matthew 6:33, which says, "*But seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be given unto you*". God told her that was what I was doing and that she must not worry.

It was just the week prior to this that I had decided that the laws the Jews had to obey and that seemed to please God most were impossible for me to obey; His Holy Spirit convicted me that I could never please Him. I had also started to read some of the New Testament and for the first time in my life I realized that Jesus Christ's death on the cross was specifically for me, not just for all mankind. I would not automatically go to Heaven when I died; it did not matter what I did, I could not earn this right.

Looking back now, I would have to say that my knowledge of the Scriptures was only "A Sunday School" book knowledge. I had never learnt to have a living relationship with my God, nor did it occur to me that He cared about my day-to-day problems.

I now know that true commitment is made up of three components – "Intellect, Emotions and the Will". I had previously as a child committed both my "Intellect and Emotions", but it was when I was 30 that at last the Lord showed me I must commit my "Will" to Him also. It was this action that brought about true healing and a definite change in my life.

Over a period of three months God taught me of His gift of love in Jesus Christ. He taught me of His gift of love in my husband. He taught me of His gift of love in our children. And he taught me His gift of love in marriage. I remember a time when I did something very silly (spending too much money I think it was,) I knew I would have to tell my husband, but was so scared to do so that it nearly made me sick. I prayed

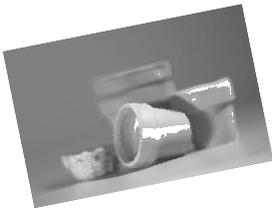
all day and when he came home, with God's courage and strength, I managed to open up crying constantly between words. I do not remember what he said, but I remember the feeling of grace and love he gave me.

This was just one of the times God used to reveal to me His gift of love in my marriage. These months passed quickly as I read and studied His Word; we had both come back to our faith in God and our children had also decided for themselves to ask Jesus into their hearts.

Our financial troubles had not gone away, but the peace of God led us through the trials involved in fixing these problems. Our friendship for each other grew into a deep abiding love. From my perspective anyway, I now knew why I had been born, I was very content in being a woman and mother and began to be able not only to accomplish my housework, but also delight in doing it.

God guided me as I trained our children and supported my husband. Now many years down the track we watch and pray as our children face their personal trials of faith and obedience. We delight in sharing our basic simple faith in God with our grandchildren and hope that we too can always be there, as my parents were, to assist whenever we can. God has given us this gift of love and now we too want to pass it on.





In Confident Expectation

~ Name withheld by request

I groaned, and slumped down on the couch next to Mum.

"It's no good," I sighed loudly. "I'm nearly 20, and I still haven't found the right guy!"

My Mum grinned at my melodramatics. "Nearly 20...wow, time really is running out."

I was not appeased. "I'm serious! What guy will ever want me? I'm not pretty, I'm too shy, and I'm not that 'great' at anything." The little whirlpool of self-pity that I had created for myself grew in strength and sucked me further in, as I reached a crescendo with a mournful wail. "I'll never find a husband!"

Mum gently turned my face toward hers. "Honey, I don't think it's so much a question of 'the right guy' as 'what exactly are you looking for?'"

As far as I can tell, we live in a society engineered for couples; tandem bicycles, for example, extra-wide cinema seating, two-for-one deals at McDonald's all scream at me "You need a mate - soon!" Now, though, I can't help but disagree. It's not so much that I disbelieve in the idea of marriage – for God himself said of Adam "It is not right for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him" (Genesis 2:18). I simply believe that, for some of us, our perceptions of Godly courting, love and marriage have become skewed. Like the Israelites and their calf of gold (Exodus 32), we have made for

ourselves an idol out of something that God so thoughtfully created for us. We worship the idea of romance and marriage more than we desire to know God!

Yes, it can be difficult to wait on God's timing, especially when we are confronted with messages from the media, society and sometimes (unintentionally) other Christians which tell us that being left waiting makes us life's "losers"; even if we are not exactly at our prime, let alone *past* it! But, is it possible to survive the difficulties, even *enjoy* the state of singleness?

God has wonderful plans for each of us. He created us, before even the moment of conception, for a specific purpose, and we can be comforted in knowing that God's plans for us are "for good and not for disaster, to give [us] a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). How often, though, do we try and snatch God's perfect plans away from him, and try and conform them to our own designs? The truth is, God's choice for our potential partner, and timing for when the actual "partnering" should occur, are infinitely more wonderful than anything that we could ever design. God is the perfect matchmaker! – So why compromise? Why settle for a person *not* in God's perfect plans for us just because we can't abide to wait? Why not leave the pen in the hand of the master author, and allow Him to write your love story!

What are you looking for in life? Is marriage a priority, placed before all other things? God wants us to seek Him first (Luke 12:31), and trust in Him for all we need. I'm not sure if this is possible if we spend our time worrying about how our lives should pan out;

besides, how can we expect to honour God first, as part of a couple, if we do not prioritise knowing Him better when we are romantically unattached? What better time to get to know God better than when we only owe to Him our love and attention.

God tells us in His Word that marriage is a wonderful thing; however, He also tells us that being unmarried is of equal blessing (1 Corinthians 7:35). Some people God does not intend to be married (Matthew 19:10-12). We do not need to let this cause us to think that we are in any way inferior or unblessed! God Himself promises to help us (Matthew 19:11). We can rest assured that whatever happens, God is in control, causing "everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purposes for them" (Romans 8:28).

I do not profess to be some kind of "love expert", an all-knowing guru in the field of romance. Nor can I honestly say that I am as patient, or as trusting in God's timing, as I would like to be. What I do know is this – I am not single, or unattached or alone (especially with the Lord by my side!). Instead, I am simply waiting in **confident expectation** for God to bring His plans for me into perfect fruition.



Moments With Melissa

Gift of God's Love in Friendships

Since moving to Bowen a little over a year ago God has blessed me with His gift of love in friendships. I have several close friends here that are full on for God and someone especially close who is truly a kindred spirit.

We study the Bible together, we pray together, we talk about our experiences with God together, we carry each others burdens and are there for each other in good and bad times. God has changed me so much over the past four years since I have had Arthritis and I am just truly grateful that He has surrounded me with friends that are so understanding. When I think of friends and the gift of God's love, I think of David and Jonathan. I love David's life and the fact that he was a man truly after God's own heart. In 1 Samuel 18:1-4 it tells how Jonathan and David became friends.

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

David and Jonathan shared a friendship that was unique. Because of Jonathan's great love for David, - "he loved him (David) as himself" - he was spared from Saul's hand yet again. (Read about it in 1 Samuel 20.) Since both of these men had a claim to the throne of Israel they should have been bitter rivals, but instead of competing with one another, David and Jonathan were constantly trying to show each other their friendship through acts of kindness.

In 1 Samuel 18:1, it appears that David had spoken with Saul at length and as he explained his actions of faith in the Lord, Jonathon's love and loyalty grew for David. This deep love that Jonathan had for David prompted him to make a covenant with David that symbolises the giving of himself to him. Jonathan and David were of one spirit, they loved each other as they loved themselves and Jonathan honoured David above himself and continued to be faithful to him no matter what the circumstances.

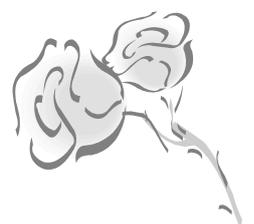
This example of true loyalty and love is very hard to find in the world today where people are out to get as much for themselves as possible.

Ultimately, when we look for an example of true friendship and love, this verse comes to mind:

" This is how we know what love is:

Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. "

1 John 3:16.



How Ruth was sought, taught and bought!

Life is a test

- * God sends a famine, which drives Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion into the country of Moab.
- * Whilst there - Elimelech dies.
- * They remain for ten years and during this time Naomi's sons both marry and then die, leaving the three widowed women to fend for themselves.
- * Naomi, depressed and embittered towards God and life, decides to return to Bethlehem, where her husband still owns land. She tells her daughters-in-law what she is about to do.
- * They begin to go with her, but she tells them to return to their families, as she has no sons left who can marry them and give them rest.
- * Mahlon's wife, Orpah decides to do that, kisses them goodbye and leaves the scene.
- * Ruth, on the other hand, could not bring herself to part with Naomi and begs her to let her remain and go with her. She states that she is willing to go where Naomi goes, live with her and take her people on as her own even to the point, that if Naomi was to die, she wanted to die there too. But also she declares that Naomi's God would become Ruth's God as well.
- * Naomi agrees and they head out.

Life is a trust

- * Naomi and Ruth arrive home and even though her friends and neighbours are pleased to see them, she tells them not to call her Naomi but instead "Bitter".
- * Ruth asks permission from her mother-in-law to go out and glean from the paddocks. (This is picking up what is left over after harvesting.)
- * She finds herself gleaning from Boaz's farm. He is a close relative, but she is unaware of this.
- * He recognizes her and knows her for her good behaviour and therefore gives her extra food and all the protections she needs.
- * Both she and Naomi rejoice when she returns home with the news and food. Naomi informs her who Boaz is and then encourages her to keep going there. For the first time in a long time, Naomi begins to see the hand of the Lord working in their lives and praises Him for His love and care.

Life is a temporary assignment

- * After some time Naomi, encouraged and strengthened in her faith, decides that Ruth and Boaz are right for each other. She tells Ruth to meet him at the threshing floor: "wait until they had all eaten and drunk their fill and had laid down to sleep, then lay at Boaz's feet and use the tail end of his blanket to cover yourself." (This was not an improper thing to do, because it was a traditional way of a woman asking her next of kin to marry her and take care of her.)
- * She obeys her mother-in-law and during the night Boaz realizes that someone is there and when he requested who it was, she tells him and clearly asks him to marry her and take over her husband's property, as he is her kinsman or next of kin.
- * He agrees to ask the one who is nearer in relationship and if he will not do this then Boaz himself will do so. He gives her extra food, commends her on her purity and advises her to leave before it becomes light so that her reputation is not spoiled.
- * The next day when he asks the one who should be helping her out if he will and he refuses, Boaz declares that he will do so.
- * They marry, and have a son whom they call Obed. He was the grandfather of King David and therefore an ancestor of our Lord.



ruth

By Liz Lennox

In the dark and troubled days of Israel's judges, the book of Ruth shines like a beacon, beckoning us to appraise the providence and provision of God towards His people. The book also explores God's marvelous grace as He grafts Ruth, a needy Moabite widow into His own people – on the way providing her with food and shelter, a new husband and a child. Themes of redemption and kinship are woven into the narrative, reminding us of our own kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on our behalf. The book of Ruth can be analysed on many levels, but our purpose here is to look in particular at its teaching on relationships, specifically the relationship between Ruth and Boaz.

Much is made of physical beauty and its attraction in relationship. The book of Ruth dispels the myth that this forms the only basis for a true and lasting love. It is true that Boaz first notices Ruth gleaning in his field at the barley harvest and is immediately attracted to and interested in her. It is also true that when Ruth goes to the threshing floor, Naomi wisely counsels her daughter-in-law to wash and perfume herself, dressing her best in preparation. Chapter 2, however makes it clear that it is Ruth's reputation that most impresses Boaz. He has already heard her story and knows her character, wasting no time in praising her for these qualities on first meeting her! He makes mention of her love and loyalty for Naomi and the way she had shown initiative and proven her diligence and hard work in providing for them both, adjusting herself in the process to a new culture and a new people. Then he blesses her for her newfound faith and trust in God. (Ch 2 v 12).

Boaz is a man of means. He has fields and crops and servants. More importantly, he is a man of integrity, well respected by his servants. A kind and generous man, he extends the hand of grace – providing for and protecting Ruth from the start. But it is Ruth's humble and respectful response to Boaz's offer that makes him even more expansive in his generosity. He is gracious, she is grateful! This relationship is first based on mutual respect and admiration for each other's qualities and on the giving and receiving of love in action.

As the story unfolds, other qualities of these two central characters come to light. We see Ruth's willingness to listen and follow the wise and loving advice of her mother-in-law and courage as she goes to the threshing floor to place herself at Boaz's mercy. We also see her patience in waiting – trusting and expectant to see how things would be worked out once she had done her part. She doesn't rush ahead to work things out her own way. Ruth continues to show deference and respect towards Boaz throughout, earning his additional praise for her noble character, her kindness and her self-control as she places her trust in God and in Boaz rather than "running after younger men, whether rich or poor" (Ch 3 v 10). Boaz is now clearly in love with Ruth, promising to do all she asks but wisely leaving room for God's will in the matter, "as surely as the Lord lives I will do it." He protects her reputation, ("don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor") and further extends his generosity in providing her with a substantial amount of grain to take home, his pledge of more to come.

Chapter 4 brings this exciting love story to a very satisfactory conclusion. Boaz shows that he is a man of swift and decisive action, losing no time in his resolve to settle the matter. Further, he shows wisdom in the way he presents his

“Boaz is a man of means.

He has fields and crops and servants.”

case to the city elders, logically, factually and (seemingly!) without emotion. He trusts God and his trust is vindicated as the way is cleared for him to marry Ruth and redeem her first husband Mahon's family property rights. In the process he also ensures Mahon's name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records, in accordance with God's laws. I believe Boaz had a clear sense of fairness and justice in the whole situation – but also that he loved Ruth and wanted to protect and provide for her. True love is proved by its actions (1 John 3 v 18). True love comes from God (1 John 4 v 7). Boaz deservedly receives

a blessing from the elders, praising and invoking his further renown and integrity and for future fruitfulness. This fruitfulness sees the birth of Obed, the grandfather of David, Israel's most famous king and a man after God's own heart.

The book concludes on a note of triumph as God is rightfully given glory for all that has happened and prospectively praised for all that's to come.

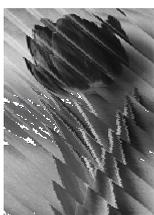
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ruth (continued)

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Truly He is the God over all, from everlasting to everlasting. Able and willing (as Boaz was) to redeem His people, powerful and wise to engineer good from bad: joy from sadness, laughter from tears, dejection to triumph! The story of Ruth and Boaz brings two people of noble character together. They displayed mutual respect, humility and unselfishness throughout their courtship. They deserved each other! May we model their example, humbly giving ourselves to each other, deferring to and seeking ways to please each other. This is God's recipe for fulfilment and rich satisfaction in all our relationships and as such in the whole of life. For truly, life is relationship and abundant life is right relationship, first with God and then with others.



Bathsheba Bathsheba

By Annette Lawson

 We know Bathsheba as the woman who committed adultery with King David, became pregnant and later became the mother of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. There is, however, much more to the story than that.

Bathsheba was married to Uriah, a Hittite, one of David's officers. Uriah ranked as one of David's "mighty men" (2 Samuel 23:39).

2 Samuel 11 tells us that King David stayed in Jerusalem, when kings go to war. For some reason David was not leading his army in fighting the Ammonite army. Instead his army was led by his commander Joab.

There is some discussion that David was growing old and stayed at home because of his frailty. However, 2 Samuel 12:26 tells us that Joab later on sent a messenger to David saying, "have attacked Rabbah (the capital of Ammon) and captured the fortress guarding the city water supply. Call the rest of the army together. Then

surround the city, and capture it yourself. If you don't, everyone will remember that I captured the city". David was, therefore, active enough to lead his men. So it seems David was not where he should have been.

Late one afternoon, David got up from a nap and was walking around on the flat roof of his palace. A beautiful young woman was down below in her courtyard, bathing as her religion required. David happened to see her.

David "happened" to see her bathing. That in itself was not sinful. But David chose not to leave it there. He sent a messenger to find out who the *beautiful young woman* was. The servant told David that she was *Bathsheba ... and she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.*

Now what did David do? This lady was the wife of one of his top men. He sent some messengers to bring Bathsheba to his palace. Remember that David is the king and she had no choice in the matter as it seemed that

David did not issue an invitation, but rather a command. Why else would he have sent more than one messenger? She was brought to the palace and raped by King David who afterwards sent her away. She returned home and life continued ... until King David received a two word message, "I'm pregnant".

This news immediately catapulted King David into action. He sent for Uriah to ostensibly enquire about the war and sent him home so that he would go to sleep with his wife and, hopefully, this would cover over his sin. Uriah, evidently an upright man, did not go home to his wife but slept outside the palace gate with his men.

David's spies told him about this and he asks Uriah the reason that he didn't go home. Uriah's reply was to the effect that "*while our commander Joab and his officers and troops are camping out ... do you really think I would go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? I swear by your life that I would not!*"



He Knew Their Ways and Led Them On

This is a true story, but the names have been changed for the sake of privacy.

By Wendy Davie

Elizabeth and Joe had been married for many years. They had a number of children, who as they grew were extremely lively. Their temperaments tended to be intense and strong minded, so the house was never really quiet. Joe was a hard worker, but found it difficult to understand the role of a husband and father.

He had never really been able to leave his parents' home in spirit, and so spent time talking with them about his day's troubles before he came home to his wife. By then he didn't need to talk, and the noise within the home didn't open many opportunities. It was because of this, that their marriage lacked the healthy conversation that was needed. They struggled for money as he was not a good businessman and Elizabeth being the faithful wife and mother, just plugged on. When there was a need for her to work, she quickly went out and found a job. Of course this meant that if her housework was to be done, then it was often still being done late at night.

Many times her children would come out of their bedrooms at night, to find their mother sitting at the sewing machine, or cooking cakes and biscuits or ironing – yes she worked day and night and never complained about her lot. On the other hand, as they had simply grown apart in their marriage, Joe was never to be found. He often went out to meetings or straight to the pub to have a few drinks with his mates. He never realized just how many drinks he had had or how the time had flown.

His escape had become his life and he had mistakenly believed that this was where God had placed him. Yes, he did believe in God and that God cared about what he was to do in his life. But he did not go so far as to believe that a personal walk with the Lord was something that was needed. So prayer to him was repeating the Lord's prayer, or Psalm 23 which was his favourite, saying grace and the basic "Lord bless and keep my family" at night.

On the other hand, as they had simply grown apart in their marriage, Joe was never to be found.

Now the years had gone and the children had all left home. If it had not been for Elizabeth's work, she would have felt terribly lonely for Joe's habits continued long after the children had gone their separate ways. Elizabeth still saw the good in her husband and supported him as much as she could, but if it had not been for her faith in God, there were many times when she would have been lost in total despair.

Like the time he came home and expressed the fact that he felt he loved another woman. How her heart broke, but a friendship had remained with them over the years and she, being the true friend, sat down with him and talked as a friend about his feelings.

By doing so and praying constantly, Joe was able to see that the reason he felt he loved this other woman was simply because he worked with her. They thought alike and had many conversations about the ideals he held to. It was not true love, but rather companionship that he sought.

If he had spent time with Elizabeth in the same way, he would have discovered that she also believed as he did and they too could have had these same conversations. Elizabeth was able to quietly thank God for the wisdom He gave her and the still quiet heart that did not slip into a panic mode. The pain remained for some time, but eventually Joe was able to turn away from his fleshly desires and turn his heart back to his darling wife. He did love her, but there were lots of things that they really needed to address.

Often other troubles arose, but as before Elizabeth prayed constantly. You see, she did believe in a personal walk with her Lord and she had practised for many years the art of talking to Him about the troubles and joys of the day. It was due to this that she knew without any doubt the gift of love He had given her. It permeated her life and brought her peace. It wasn't their marriage with all its constant arguments that brought the peace, but the presence of God guiding and directing her path.

Elizabeth knew only too well, that she too made many mistakes, the sins were not only her husband's, for she

constantly reacted the wrong way and tried to teach him when it wasn't her place. But she also knew why she had been led to meet and marry Joe and she took on as part of her ministry, not only the housework and work and looking after the family, but a constancy in prayer for the whole of her family. She felt this especially for her husband and usually at times when she least expected it, God would show her how he was dealing with Joe and teaching him the way of life he was truly meant to live.

Therefore as their golden years came upon them, a true and loving companionship became a part of their life. Joe truly respected her and the work she did within the Church and the help she gave her neighbours. When it neared the time of his death, Elizabeth and their daughter were sitting in the

hospital room watching his struggles.

A Salvation Army lady entered the room and quietly handed them both a piece of paper. Elizabeth looked at hers and noted that it was Joe's favourite hymn. At this, his daughter got up and sang it to him. She also quoted Psalm 23 and they both thrilled to see that from then on Joe ceased his struggles to live and looked for that city in Heaven which is built without hands; his eternal home.

Later he quietly slipped into the presence of the Lord and Elizabeth knew the gift of love as her Lord came beside her and became a husband to her. She sorrowed at the loss of Joe, but she also knew that he was with his Lord and no longer had to fight for life.

God's comfort and strength continued to see her through.

Yes, there were times of loneliness and sadness, but she always knew the presence of the Lord and longed to also be in His presence when the time was right. That time came ten years later when she quietly passed over in her sleep.

Now it was time for their children to know that special gift of love and comfort that comes from God when ones parents pass away. How gracious is our God.

A Personal Testimony

Name withheld upon request

My husband and I had just celebrated 25 years of a wonderful marriage when the Lord chose to take him to be with Him. He was only 46 and had been my soul mate and friend through those 25 years.

I recall feeling a sense of fear and panic at the thought of facing the future as a widow and the probability it could be for a long period of time: I being relatively young when this happened.

The first few weeks found me moving in what seemed a clouded, unreal world and this is where my family and friends proved a great comfort and support to me. I felt at that stage, I would never feel any better; that I would never get over losing someone so close to me; someone with whom I had shared so many joys and sorrows.

I came to realize I needed to face reality and pick up the pieces and go on, and the wonderful assurance that the Lord was with me at all times to comfort, strengthen and keep me gave me the will to "get up and go." It didn't happen overnight. It was a gradual process.

It was frightening to realize I had to make important decisions on my own - until I remembered the Lord said, "*He would never leave me nor forsake me*". I felt the assurance of His presence with me and His love and understanding in all situations where I had to make decisions.

It is now 28 years since the Lord called my loved one home and the loneliness still returns at times; especially when I go places where there are mostly couples together, but I thank God that in His wisdom He took my husband to be with Him, for to be with the Lord is far better and for me to know he is with the One he loves and the One we both loved and served together.





Esther

Inner Beauty and Calling

By Wendy Davie

In 486-465 BC, Ahasuerus the King reigned over 127 provinces reaching from India to Ethiopia. This area was called Persia and Media. He was a powerful and very rich, proud King who decided to show all his richness and power by throwing a national party. Now this party ran for 180 days and his guests were from the nobility, princes of all the provinces belonging to him. When this was accomplished he then commanded a seven-day feast open to all the common people both great and small. They feasted in the beautifully decorated palace at Shushan. They ate the best of food and drank merrily from golden cups all different one from the other.

On the seventh day, he commanded his wife Queen Vashti, who had been holding her own private feast among the women, to come and show her beauty to his guests. She was to be fully dressed in her royal garments and crown. After all, his pride and power encouraged him to reveal all he possessed, and she was one of these possessions.

But Vashti, a determined and self-willed woman, refused what he had deemed a reasonable request. Now he had been drinking for some time and her refusal was too much to bear, so he became enraged and he vowed to punish her for humiliating him so greatly. He asked his counsellors what should be done and Memucan reminded him that she had not just done wrong to the King, but being a woman of her position, she had set a

bad example to all women and therefore had hurt all men and the countries of Persia and Media as well. Therefore he suggested she be removed and another more respectful Queen be found to take her place.

This pleased the King greatly and letters were sent into all the country to notify all of what had taken place and the punishment Vashti received. Thus they hoped to stem the possible tide of disrespect among the women and retain their positions of rulers in their own households.

“After all, his pride and power encouraged him to reveal all he possessed, and she was one of these possessions.”

Now when the King sobered he remembered what had happened and began grieving after Vashti, so the counsellors suggested fair young virgins be brought in and prepared that he should make his choice. Amongst the number gathered was Esther the adopted daughter of Mordecai the Jew. She was really his cousin, but during the captivity many years before both her parents were killed.

She was an obedient daughter to him and her gentleness was visible to all. Possibly it was these attributes that pleased “The Keeper of the Women”, for he showed her great kindness and he quickly gave her all the ointments needed, the clothes of

her station and seven maidens to help her in all her needs. He then removed her to the best place within the house where she could prepare in comfort.

Now Esther had not revealed to anyone that she was a Jewess, as Mordecai thought it best to remain silent concerning this matter in order to keep her safe. He remained close and every day he asked after her welfare and what was to become of her.

Twelve months passed according to the regulations of the women and then the King asked that they be brought one by one before him. They were allowed to request whatever they deemed necessary for the visit and at nighttime they were taken into the King. By the morning of course, they had become one of his many concubines and so were moved to a different house. From then on they could only visit the King when he called for them by name.

When Esther’s turn came, she requested nothing other than what “The Keeper of Women” advised and all saw her inner beauty and were enthralled by it. The King also loved her above all the virgins and quickly set about making her Queen. He set the royal crown upon her head, and made her Queen instead of Vashti.

Another feast was prepared to introduce her to the princes and the servants and as a gift to the people in celebration he released them from their taxes in all the provinces and

gave gifts according to his wealth to all. From this time on Mordecai sat in the King's gate, so that he could still have contact with his daughter.

While there, he overheard a plot to kill the King, and he informed Esther—who informed the King in Mordecai's name. It was inquired into and discovered to be true and those involved were hanged. All this was written in the King's diary.

Some time later the King decided to promote a man called Haman, who was known to hate all Jews with a vengeance, to a place above all the princes. He too was a very proud man and demanded that all who were in the King's gate bow down to him in worship. He truly must have been a cunning man for he had also obtained the King's authority for this. Mordecai, being a Jew and a faithful follower of the only true God, refused to do so. This made Haman extremely mad, and he set in motion, with the help of his family and friends, a way of destroying all Jews, and then went to the King to get his seal of approval on all his ghastly deeds.

Not only did the King agree, but also he gave him money to fulfil the murderous plot of killing all Jews, whether they were adults or children, men or women. On a certain day they were all to be killed and their land and possessions confiscated. The King placed his own ring on Haman's finger indicating his authority to carry it out. As Haman had told the King they refused to obey his commands, this was an affront to the proud King and so he did all he could to bring it to pass. Letters were sent throughout the whole province in order that all Jews would be destroyed. Afterwards both Haman and the King had a drink to seal their agreement, but the city was perplexed.

Mordecai heard of what had

happened and immediately tore his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes and went out into the centre of the city, and cried with a loud voice and a bitter cry. He also came to the King's gate in this manner knowing full well, that this was something which was not allowed. Esther's maids and her chamberlains quickly came and told her.

“Not only did the King agree, but also he gave him money to fulfil the murderous plot of killing all Jews, whether they were adults or children, men or women.”

The Queen was terribly grieved and sent clothes for him, but he would not put them on. So she sent a trusted servant out to find out what was wrong with him and the message of what had happened – the exact sum of money paid, and a copy of the writing of the decree was given to him to return to Esther so that she could be fully informed.

She carefully weighed up her position and sent a message back reporting to Mordecai that she knew she should go to the King, but it was well known that if she did without being called first, it could mean her death. Mordecai said to the servant “go back to Queen Esther and say, “Do you think that you alone will escape, anymore than any other Jew, even though you are the Queen and live in the King's palace. If you hold your peace now at a time like this, then relief and deliverance will come to them from another place, but you and your father's house shall be destroyed. **Besides how do you know whether you were placed there as Queen for this very purpose or not, consider this my daughter.”**

When this report came back to her she sat thinking for some time and

then suddenly decided. “Go back to Mordecai” she said, “and ask him to gather all the Jews in Shushan. Fast for me, don't eat or drink for three days, and nights; I and my maidens will also do the same, and then I will go in to see the King – If I perish, I perish”.

On the third day she dressed in her royal apparel and went to visit the King. He asked her to enter and she humbly touched his golden sceptre. “What do you want?” He asked. “I would like you and Haman to come to a feast which I have prepared for you today” was her quiet reply.

He agreed and sent for Haman to also come quickly. When they had finished eating and drinking the King wanted to know what was wrong, but she asked them to come again the next day and she would tell all her concerns. Haman was overjoyed and rushed home to boast to his wife and family, but as he passed the gate and saw Mordecai again refusing to bow before him, his mood changed and instead he went home disgruntled. They advised him to build gallows in preparation to hang Mordecai on and then speak to the King the next day and get his permission to carry it out.

That night it just so happened that during the night the King was unable to sleep and he called for his diary so that he could read to pass the time. When he came upon the section that mentioned where Mordecai had warned him of a death plot he sat up suddenly and he asked his servants, “What honour and dignity has been bestowed upon this man for his faithful service?”

“None”, they replied.

By this time the morning had come and Haman waited in the court of the King's house. So he was called in to the King and the King asked him “What

(Continued on page 24)



Esther (continued)

(Continued from page 23)

should I do for the man who the King delights to honour?" Now Haman thought it was himself that was to be honoured – after all who else could it be! So he answered by saying, "For the man who you wish to delight to honour – Let the royal apparel which you wear, and let the horse that you ride be prepared. Then also let the King's crown be set aside in preparation and call for the noble princes that they may array the man, set him on your horseback dressed and crowned as a king and let them walk before him throughout the city proclaiming 'this is the man whom the King delights to honour!'"

"What a good idea" said the King, "now I want you to go and do all this for Mordecai".

Haman went out feeling very dejected, but he could not do any less than obey the King. So he dressed Mordecai and crowned him and placed him on the King's horse and walked before him pronouncing that he was the man the King wished to honour. Afterwards, Mordecai simply returned to the King's gate, but Haman hastened to his house and family for he was very depressed, so much so that

he had covered his head. He told Zeresh, his wife, what had happened she answered, "Unfortunately if Mordecai is the seed of the Jews and you have already begun to fall before him, then you will not win, but will completely fall and possibly lose your life."

While they were talking with him, the King's chamberlains came to bring him to the feast that Esther had prepared for both him and the King.

When they had finished eating and drinking, once again the King asked what he could do for his lovely wife for he was determined to give her whatever she asked. So she said to him "If I have truly pleased you, then please save both my life and the lives of my people, for we have been sold and are about to be destroyed. I may have held my tongue, but then your enemy could not have compensated for the loss brought to my King!"

Shocked, the King asked. "Who has done such a thing, what a presumption he has!" Queen Esther quietly replied, "Your enemy is this wicked Haman!" Naturally Haman became very afraid of both the King and Queen. The King

was so wild, he stormed out into the garden to think. When he turned around, there was Haman begging the Queen for her help to save his life, so much so that he had fallen upon the couch where the Queen was seated. Furious, he returned and yelled at Haman "What, would you also force my Queen in front of me in our house?" The servants of the King grabbed him and covered his head and then they told the King of the gallows that Haman had built to hang Mordecai on. The King fiercely said, "Hang him on them instead!!"

From that day on the King's ring was set upon Mordecai's hand and he was given the place which Haman had previously held. With the wisdom of Mordecai, the King sent out letters ordering all Jews to fight back. With this knowledge, those who hated the Jews grew fearful of them and were unable to withstand their power. The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honour and the city of Shushan rejoiced and were glad. Mordecai grew greater and greater; he was next in charge to the King and all respected him for he sought the welfare of his people and always spoke peace unto all his seed.



HANDY HINTS

CUPBOARD SMELLS

Use a soap wrapper: Don't throw away the wrapper after removing a bar of soap. Place it inside your shoe cabinet or shoe box. It's a cheap way of filling the air with a nice smell.

SCRATCHED FURNITURE

If your polished furniture has small scratches: Try rubbing them with a shelled walnut. You'll see the scratches just disappear!

SMELLY SHOES

Are your shoes smelly? Here's a solution. Put some tea leaves into a pair of stockings and stuff each into a shoe. Leave for a day or two and the smell just vanishes!

CLEAN MIRRORS

Use air-freshener to clean mirrors: It does a good job and better still, leaves a lovely smell to the shine.

did you know ...

Did you know that when a King gave his ring or seal to someone it basically said that he gave His own authority to the one who was given it to wear?

“In whom you also trusted, after you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of salvation; In whom also after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV)

Did you realize that you are where God has placed you and you are there for His will and purpose?

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them” Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

Did you know that Haman is symbolic of the flesh (nature of sin in our lives) and that the flesh hates God and our Lord Jesus Christ?

“So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:8 (KJV)

“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would” Galatians 5:17 (NKJV)

Did you know that just as the Jews were sold to be destroyed by the wicked Haman—we too before Christ have been sold unto sin?

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 (KJV)

Did you know that when you accept Christ Jesus into your heart and life to be Lord of your life—that you receive abundant joy, just as the Jews did when they were saved by the courage of Mordecai and his adopted daughter Queen Esther?

“Whom, having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” 1 Peter 1:8 (NKJV)

Disappointment ...

When I'm disappointed with my spot in life, I stop and think about little Jamie Scott. Jamie was trying out for a part in a school play. His mother told me that he'd set his heart on being in it, though she feared he would not be chosen.

On the day the parts were awarded, I went with her to collect him after school. Jamie rushed up to her, eyes shining with pride and excitement.

“Guess what Mum,” he shouted, and then said those words that will remain a lesson to me: “I've been chosen to clap and cheer.”



Marriage Comparisons

As in modern life, so it was in the past.

There were many variations concerning weddings,
but these usually came about depending on your station in life.
But we can point out some general facts based on the study of the Bible.

In the time of Christ

- From the time children were very young, their parents prepared well in advance and chose their husbands and wives for them. It was the children's responsibility to submit to the authority of the parents and accept their choice.
- A betrothal or engagement was a legal binding document and only a legitimate excuse, such as infidelity, allowed a paper of divorce to be written by a Rabbi. Betrothals sometimes lasted for many years.
- Weddings were always paid for and organized by the groom's parents. He was seen as the more important person in the occasion. The Scriptures speak of a man going out to collect his wife.
- Prior to the wedding, and whilst the groom was building their home, it was expected that the bride would go and live with her future parents-in-law for a time. This enabled her to learn how to look after her husband in the manner he was accustomed to.
- A dowry was paid by the wife's parents and many times that was used to buy things she would need to use within the home or her trousseau, whilst other needs were given as gifts.
- The actual ceremony lasted seven days of feasting and customary rites. Firstly the bridal possession went to the groom's home for the consummation of the nuptials. Her gifts were usually carried along before her. The possession wound through the streets during the night, moving slowly and was preceded by musicians and dancers and sometimes by those performing wild feats of horsemanship. The bride herself sometimes arrived riding an animal, or being carried in a sedan chair, and sometimes on foot, but she was always covered by a colourful canopy. She dressed gaily, but her hair always hung loosely, flowing about her. She was accompanied by both men and women—her friends and family and particularly her maidens-in-waiting. When she arrived there, his family would welcome her with songs and censers of burning incense and conduct her into the best room in the house which was always beautifully decorated as the bridal chamber.
- The groom was never there during this time. He purposely stayed away and spent the time with relatives feasting and celebrating as well. When he did go to his home, also as a great procession, it could be anywhere between 11 pm and midnight. Flaming torches were held aloft. People crowded on balconies waiting and watching to see when he would come. He was the centre of attention and so often it could be heard people whispering "Look! There he is!" As the procession approached the house the pace would quicken and a cry of shrill joy would be raised with louder voices. "He is coming, he is coming!" Just prior to his arrival the bride's maidens-in-waiting would come out to meet him with their torches also held high. Once the bride and groom were together they were seated under a brilliantly decorated canopy. From this time on the doors were promptly closed and no-one else was allowed in.



Past & Present

At the present time

- Men and women make their own selections when it comes to life-long partners.
- Engagements can be long or short and it is not a legal binding document. They are often broken and a person can sometimes be known to be engaged a number of times.
- Now the bride's parents are expected to pay and organize the wedding. The bride is seen as the more important and central person. (E.g. As a cake decorator I cannot count the number of times a bride has said to me, "After all it's my wedding!" Therefore it seems to me that the whole perspective has completely changed.)
- There are many now who choose to live together before getting married and if they had to live with their parents-in-law, may feel they would go stark raving mad.
- Often months of preparations are involved and the extravagance is sometimes overwhelming.
- The bride is always dressed in white, wearing a veil which covers her face until the announcement, "You may now kiss your bride". The front section of the veil is now lifted and from then on she is visible to all.

- Instead of the groom coming to collect his bride, now the bride meets him at the wedding ceremony.
- The celebrations usually only last a few hours, whilst the service is usually upwards to an hour, depending on what is involved.



What have we lost

The Scriptures teach us that the Church is the bride of Christ. One day there will be a marriage supper of the Lamb. The Lamb is Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for the Church. Jesus as our Groom will come for us one day and it is our responsibility to be ready and waiting. **Many have lost the ability to keep their focus on our Lord as the central and most important person in their lives.**

For those who would like to study this further and see how the parables that Jesus taught fit in with the history of marriage during His life on earth, you can read Matthew Chapters 22 and 25.

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife, see that she reverence her husband."

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NKJV)

Examples of Good Attitude

~ Eve ~



Because of the fall we need to remember that the relationship between both men and women has been distorted. We cannot simply dismiss this distortion, for the fall should constantly remind us that we need to work on our marriages. We need to be committed until death – God will give us the strength and guidance to accomplish this.

Eve made mistakes, but learnt from them. She confessed her sin and forgave herself even as God had forgiven her. But just as this was the case for her, it is also for us. We, like Eve, need to be constantly aware that mistakes often bring consequences that remain with us for years to come. We need to face our responsibilities for our own actions and try not to blame others.

Even though her timing was wrong, she waited in faith for God's promise to be fulfilled and in the meantime she loved and served God in obedience by being more of a support to her husband and a blessing to her children.

~ Sarah ~



(The story of Sarah can be found in Genesis chapters 11-18; Hebrews 11:11 and 1 Peter 3:6) Both Sarah and her husband Abraham focused their hearts on being faithful to God. But because Sarah was barren this was not easy and although she made some bad choices throughout the years, both she and her husband remain very good examples of the mutual submission that God calls for in our marriages.

From her we learn that God's timetable is not the same as ours, but in His time His desires for us will come to pass. She also teaches us that God never gives us promises He does not intend to keep and so we must continue to wait upon Him. We also see through her life, that God does not normally interfere when we make those bad choices, but allows us to live with the consequences and so learn from them.

Her story illustrates the importance of commitment, of respect for our husbands and the great need to work on building a relationship that will withstand all pressures and trials that will come upon us. Note that she delights in her husband so much, that she calls him her "lord" with a little "I".

~ Ruth ~



Her mother-in-law shows us how easily we can evangelise. She loved Ruth and lived a life of faith, thus allowing God to do the convicting in Ruth's soul. She also shows us how to be good mother in laws, – showing without doubt that she loved her daughters-in-law above her own welfare. She was willing to give advice, but allowed Ruth the right to make her own decisions.

When we may feel unworthy, we can remember that God loves us and knows what special place He has for us within His Church. Ruth reminds us that a good character is important. Note that it was this, not her appearance, that Boaz delighted in.

~ Bathsheba ~



We can see through her life that God's gift of love (or grace) can and does heal the most severe of wounds. There is no need to allow bitterness to control us, for we can trust in the Living God to bring about total forgiveness in our own hearts and in the hearts of those we love.

She shows us courage and grace that is needed when we may lose a child. That there is a special gift of love to those who suffer in this way and the loss of a child should not cause us therefore to lose hope and faith either in the future or in our God.

It is also through the life of both David and Bathsheba we learn that unless we take responsibility for our sins and hurtful actions, confess them not only to God but to those we have hurt and determine to change and become as God wants us to be, then we make it hard for those who have been wounded by our foolishness to forgive. When we do, God's gift of love is always there and through prayer and dependence upon Him we too can forgive even the worst of painful hurts.

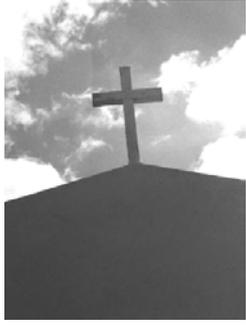
~ Esther ~



Through Esther we learn that God has placed each one of us, just where He wants us, even though we may not at the time be aware of His reasons, His purposes are all-important and will bring glory to Him if we choose to obey Him in a godly manner. We also learn that if we choose not to obey, then God will bring about His purposes through another and we will miss out on the blessing we could have received.

She showed wisdom and patience especially in dealing with a difficult husband. She remained within the centre of God's will for her whilst doing so, and used every God-given gift to help out in each situation. We too have this right and should always endeavour to do so.

Esther was a model adult daughter; she carefully weighed her ability to make her free choice, but continued to show great respect to her adopted father.



What is submission?

The world would have us believe that submission is being “under the thumb” and made to do what we do not really want to do. But the truth is that submission is a powerful tool. It is the very thing that enabled Christ Jesus to redeem all who would turn to Him for salvation – remember that He thought it all joy to submit to the Father’s will and die on the cross for you and me. Therefore submission is something that we ourselves delight to do and choose to do. It is done in order to bless our husbands and to honour our God.

How can we receive the gift of love in: our marriages, in confident expectation & our relationships?

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming (on those who are disobedient). You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Colossians 3:5-10 and 12-17 (NIV)

Did you know that the book of Ruth is read yearly by the Jews as part of their worship?

It happens at the Feast of the First-fruits. They connect it with their harvest, but we understand it to fit in with the resurrection of our Lord.

How interesting when we understand that Boaz was Ruth’s Kinsman-Redeemer, which of course the Lord Jesus Christ is to us.

Did you know that the book of Esther is read yearly by the Jews as a part of their worship?

During the months of March/April and just before the Passover they celebrate their feast of Purim.

This was a feast that Mordecai originally started as a constant reminder that at this time of year the Jews were saved as a dispersed nation.

During this time they celebrate with feasting and gift giving just as we do at Christmas. *How interesting!*

The Wedding Guests

based on Matthew 22:1-14

By Wendy Davie



Jesus tells of a King so true
And the preparations for His Son's
marriage too;
He sent His servants one by one
To call all those invited to come, please
come.

Alas! They all refused His call,
In spite of the servant's second visit to them all.

They told them of the luscious food prepared,
But lightly the guests showed they just didn't care!

One a farmer said, "I have work to do,"

Another, the shopkeeper, had goods too few!

So he went to buy his needs so rare,

Whilst some showed they simply just didn't care!

One declared he'd married a wife,

To leave her now would cause such a terrible strife!!

Then some beat the servants and some they slew

So sad to hear what these guests could do.

The King was righteously angry when He heard of their ways,

So He sent armies to war and to destroy all their displays

Of slothful, careless and murderous lives,

The armies burnt up their city, despite all their cries.

When they returned the King said again
The wedding is ready, but it's very plain –
To see those I'd invited to come before
Were not worthy of my love, now that was for sure.
So go out again – travel far and wide
In the highways and byways make sure you strive
To call all the poor and in fact all you can find
To help celebrate my Son's wedding for that would be kind.

So they obeyed and returned not a few

Both good and bad – all wanted a pew,

But when the King came to join them at the wedding feast

He discovered a man dressed more like the beast.

"Friend," He said to this hapless guest,

"Where are your garments of the very best?"

The man was silent, for he couldn't explain

The truth he knew was ever so plain.

"Servants," cried the King, "take him away –

Bind his hands and his feet and cast him astray –

To the depths of outer darkness in the pit beneath
For truly there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

"There are many I've called, but many won't come!
Few are chosen," said Jesus, "and all those I've won!"

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He said to me, "Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." And He said unto me, "These are the true sayings of God".

Revelation 19:7-9 (NKJV)

You are invited—Will you be there?

Women

By the time the Lord made woman, he was into His sixth day of working overtime.

An angel appeared and said, "Why are you spending so much time on this one?"

And the Lord answered, "Have you seen My spec sheet on her?"

She has to be completely washable, but not plastic, have over 200 movable parts. All replaceable, able to run on diet coke and leftovers, have a lap that can hold four children at one time, have a kiss that can cure anything from a scraped knee to a broken heart — and she will do everything with only two hands."

The angel was astounded at the requirements.

"Only two hands!? No way! And that's just the standard model? That's too much work for one day. Wait until tomorrow to finish."

"But I won't," the Lord protested. "I am so close to finishing this creation that is so close to MY own heart. She already heals herself when she is sick AND can work 18 hour days."

The angel moved closer and touched the woman. "But you have made her so soft, Lord."

"She is soft," the Lord agreed, "but I have also made her tough. You have no idea what she can endure or accomplish."

"Will she be able to think?" asked the angel.

The Lord replied, "Not only will she be able to think, she will be able to reason and negotiate."

The angel then noticed something, and reaching out, touched the woman's cheek. "Oops, it looks like you have a leak in this model. I told you that you were trying to put too much into this one."

"That's not a leak," the Lord corrected, "that's a tear!"

"What's the tear for?" the angel asked.

The Lord said, "The tear is her way of expressing her joy, her sorrow, her pain, her disappointment, her love, her loneliness, her grief, and her pride".

The angel was impressed. "You are a genius, Lord. You thought of everything! Woman is truly amazing."

And she is!

Women have strengths that amaze me.

They bear hardships, and they carry burdens,
but they hold happiness, love and joy.

They smile when they want to scream.

They sing when they want to cry.

They cry when they are happy
and laugh when they are nervous.

They fight for what they believe in.

They stand up to injustice.

They don't take "no" for an answer
when they believe there is a better solution.

They go without so their family can have.

They go to the doctor with a frightened friend.

They love unconditionally.

They cry when their children excel
and cheer when their friends get awards.

They are happy when they hear about a birth or a wedding.

Their hearts break when a friend dies.

They grieve at the loss of a family member,
yet they are strong when they think there is no strength left.

They know that a hug and a kiss can help to heal a broken
heart.

Women come in all sizes, in all colours, and shapes.

They'll drive, fly, walk, run, or e-mail you
to show how much they care about you.

The heart of a woman is what makes the world keep turning!

They bring joy and hope.

They have compassion and ideals.

They give moral support to their family and friends.

Women have vital things to say and everything to give.

However, if there's one flaw in women, it is that they tend to
forget their worth.

— Author Unknown



About Us:

This magazine is published quarterly and provided FREE of charge to our readers.

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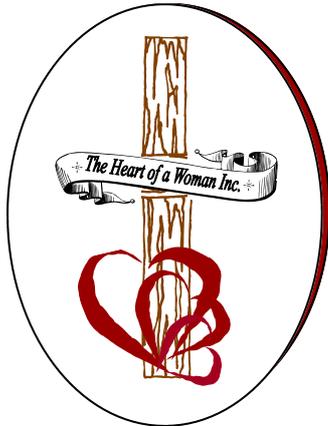
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Printers: Gary & Carol May
"Coral Coast Printers", Bundaberg

Please contact us if you have any articles of interest for inclusion in this magazine or you wish to be involved in it's production and/or distribution.



Support for the production & distribution of 'The Heart of a Woman' comes from our readers. Thank You.

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Our Vision:

To share God's truth and encourage each other in our Christian faith.

What we believe:

- The Bible is the inspired Word of God. We seek to follow its doctrine.
- In the trinity of the Godhead.
- Christ, Himself as our sinless Lord.
- Filled with all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, indeed, being God come in the flesh.
- The personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit.
- The creation and fall of man.
- Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
- The need for all to be born again in Him.
- That we were created in Christ unto good works.
- The resurrection of the body.
- The judgement of both the living and the dead
- The eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.
- That Satan is real and so is hell.
- That Jesus Christ will return as He has promised.

This magazine has been given to you by:

If you feel the need for personal contact with any queries concerning your spiritual life, or burdens you bear, please feel free to either contact the church above or write to us at 'The Heart of a Woman Inc.'