

# the garden

-A monthly newsletter for moms who desire to blossom into all God created them to be-



## Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in Our Daily Lives Practical, Biblical Encouragement for Moms

*I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow.* Isaiah 1:18

We are sitting on the cusp of a new year—a year full of possibilities, goals, and hopes. The idea of a fresh start is exciting! To begin the new year, I always love to get organized and “clean house.” I clean out files, break in my new calendar, de-clutter, and incorporate gifts into the household. It’s a great time to “re-group” and start with a fresh clean slate. The deep cleaning I do reminds me of a time I did some in my bathroom. I was vacuuming the rugs when a corner pulled up. What it revealed was shocking. I discovered that the vinyl under the rug was much whiter than the vinyl exposed to daily wear. The contrast was striking and embarrassing! As I got out the cleaner to scrub the floor, I knew there was something to

learn from this. As I scrubbed to restore the white masked by the dingy brown, God showed me how we can become stained with sin and the bad choices we make, and become desensitized; unaware of its presence—right before us. We can become so com-



fortable in doing something that is wrong, that we overlook it. It made me examine myself and ask God to bring to light anything in my life that does not please Him. It’s important to routinely peel back the “veil” of our conscious, step back and ask Him to show us areas we need to work on. He’ll

help us “clean house.” Our bleach can’t begin to clean what God’s forgiveness and mercy can—completely. I love what Isaiah 1:18 says above. God wipes away those sins in us that are like scarlet and leaves us as white and pure as snow. This time of year, we know how it looks as the “flaws” outside are cleansed by the newly fallen snow. How the snow clings to every branch, rooftop, and edge. Everything—big and small, leaving a breathtakingly clean and almost magical world that we savor before it’s touched by mankind and flawed again. Fortunately, God is always there to clean up our messes and make us clean again. He’s a God of second chances, and His mercies are new *each* morning! Cont’d pg. 2...

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### Supplement to Devotional:



Psalm 103:2-13

*Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*



## Here's To Your Health: "Jump into Exercise in 2009!"

To be all we need to be as moms, we need healthy bodies.

Exercise is one of the best ways to gain more natural energy, achieve greater self confidence, look better, and be healthier. NOW is the perfect time to continue or start an exercise program. In 2009, let's commit ourselves to forming a habit of regular exercise. When we get in the habit and simply DO IT, we'll feel better and good about our bodies and health, and have more energy to take on daily demands. Decide what you enjoy doing: walking, aerobics, swimming, going to the gym, etc. For a firm commitment, schedule the days you'll exercise on your calendar—aim for at least three days a week. Now just do it! Put on your shoes and appropriate clothes, and get moving! Enjoy how great it feels to lower your risk of developing deadly diseases, while increasing the quality of your life. Step up! -WL, RD, LD



As a mom, I bet there are things you'd like to do better. Being a mom is so challenging. We often feel guilty for our actions... things we do *and don't do*. With so many expectations (many unrealistic) placed upon us by others and ourselves, we're practically set up to feel like a failure. Fortunately that's *not* how God sees us. He's so much more merciful on us than we are. When we inevitably mess up, He just wants us to humbly seek forgiveness, which He freely gives to believers who are truly sorry, and then do our best to do better. The Bible tells us that He then *forgets* our sins. So stop beating yourself up and please know that God doesn't condemn you, He convicts you. There's a big difference. Trying to deceive you that you are a failure is Satan's mission. He

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:12

wants to destroy you and your family. It's harsh but true. God, on the other hand is our friend and our soft place to fall. He'll convict us to work on areas of our life and He'll help us do it. So when you see a blanket of freshly fallen snow this winter, be reminded of God's gift of forgiveness and fresh starts. We all need them. God knows we're not perfect. Why try to hide our flaws? Instead, fall into His loving arms to find rest from condemnation and guilt by talking to Him about it. A fresh start can be ours each day of the year. So start your new year out right... "clean house" in more ways than one, and be grateful for the forgiveness and hope we have in Jesus! [Have a blessed 2009.](#) -WL (Be sure to listen to "East to West" by Casting Crowns. The lyrics are incredible!)



**Kitchen Connection: "Warm Soup"**  
Got a recipe you love? Share it here!

**Chicken & Vegetable Bow Tie Soup**– Heather Hoerst  
1 stalk celery, thinly chopped  
1/2 tsp. house seasoning (1 cup salt, 1/4 cup black pepper, 1/4 cup garlic powder, 3 Tbsp. onion powder)  
1/2 tsp. rosemary  
1 tsp. parsley  
1 tsp. minced onion (dried)  
3 (14.5 oz) cans chicken broth  
2 cups water  
1 (1 lb) package of frozen vegetables (I like the broccoli & carrot mixture, but you can use whatever your family likes)  
2 cups cubed cooked chicken  
1 cup uncooked bow tie pasta (farfalle or other)  
Add all ingredients into crock-pot (except the pasta). Cook on low for 6-8 hours, adding the pasta the last hour. Served hot from the oven, Pillsbury Grands Refrigerated Flaky Biscuits are a perfect accompaniment to this chicken noodle soup.

**Your Tip "Pick": "Crock Pot Meals!"**  
Everyday tips to simplify life...



There are three words that sound like nails on a chalkboard to me at 5:30 p.m. on days I'm not prepared: "What's for dinner?" I bet you can relate! I dislike hearing those words when I'm not sure of the answer *so much* that I strive to be prepared so I can boldly proclaim the answer. My top two ways to be on the "offense" at dinnertime are to: 1. Write out a meal plan for the week and plan my grocery list for those meals, and 2. Make crock pot meals!! I love the freedom I feel when I've planned for and prepared dinner before lunch. I also really enjoy smelling "what's cooking", and best of all knowing that when 6:00 p.m. inevitably comes, all I need to do is grab my ladle, dish up dinner, and call out those three words that are music to all of our ears: "Dinner is ready!" Bon appetite. -WL



**Craft Corner: "Learning With Lapbooks"**

Looking for a fun and creative tool to supplement your child's learning? Here it is!

Lapbooks are mini-books you can make with your child using manila file folders, folded a special way. You can then fill them with information, pictures, diagrams, etc. on a topic they are learning about. After making a variety of mini-books about a larger topic, all the books are put together in a large folder, called a lapbook, because it covers your lap. My children LOVE making them! We even made one for the girl in Haiti we sponsor, and we keep her letters in it. To help you get started: [www.squidoo.com/lapbooking](http://www.squidoo.com/lapbooking). -WL



Make learning extra fun!

Also, check out: [lapbooklessons.ning.com/](http://lapbooklessons.ning.com/)

If you like lapbooks, this is a great site! They have Bible-based themes and a new American Girl theme that looks fun. You just sign up for free as a member and then to access the printouts, you sign in with their password which is also free. You have to enter the Lappass info which is: username: LapbookLessons and password: John316. The access page for that is <http://lapbooklessons.ning.com/page2> -Kim Green, AZ

Happy Lapbooking!!