

# the garden

-a monthly newsletter for moms who desire to blossom in their roles of being a mom, wife, and woman-

“For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” Isaiah 61:11



## Sowing the ‘Seed of the Word’ in our Daily Lives...

Practical, Biblical Encouragement for Moms

It’s February and everyone knows that’s it’s the “month of love”. On the 14th, we’ll celebrate Valentines’ Day, which is the “official” day of the year to express our love to our loved ones. Retailers hope we do so with certain things... roses- the symbol of love, boxes of chocolate (make that *dark* chocolate ... see below), cards, and all sorts of red items with hearts on them. Who doesn’t enjoy receiving them, but I know sometimes I wonder how these certain things can truly express my love for those I love so dearly.

When thinking about what a true act of love looks like, I think of the special “love letters” my grandpa left my grandma, just before he died. These notes may not seem like typical love letters as we’ve come to know them,

but then my grandpa was not your typical kind of guy. He was one of the kindest and most loving and humorous men I’ve ever known. He



*“If we love each other, God lives in us, and His love has been brought to full expression through us.”*

1 John 4:12

made everyone feel genuinely special and loved. He and my grandma were an amazing couple that represented true love and companionship to me while I was growing up. They were “buddies” who owned and operated their own furniture store in a little town. They were the “hub” of

the town, with lots of friends who loved them and their warm and friendly ways. He was an integral part of my grandma’s life, so his premature death from cancer left a huge void in her (and our) life. Perhaps the sweetest and most loving thing I’ve seen someone do for another is what he did before he passed on. He went around the house and garage leaving notes of instruction for my grandma to find. He anticipated the things she wouldn’t know how to do, and made sure she wouldn’t be left on her own without a “guide” for the day-to-day of life. Now *that’s* love!

Do you realize that Someone has left YOU a guidebook... *for life*? God left us with a book that outlines every circumstance we could possibly encounter here on earth - and it

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e-newsletter of:



[www.momsinbloom.com](http://www.momsinbloom.com)

Founder/Editor: Wendy Lempner

[wendy@momsinbloom.com](mailto:wendy@momsinbloom.com)

Co-Editor: Jenny Flakne

[flakne1@aol.com](mailto:flakne1@aol.com)

Moms in Bloom strives to help equip moms to grow in the Lord & blossom where we’re planted. We believe that mothering is one of the most important jobs there is, and through support of each other, God’s Word and a relationship with Him, we can better fulfill that role... and enjoy the journey together!

We hope this e-newsletter is a blessing to you, & we desire to reach more moms with encouragement & hope. Please forward these on to moms you know, & they can receive them directly each month by emailing Wendy (above). Pass it on!



## This Month’s “Pick” ...Health Tip of the Month

To be all we need to be as moms, we need to take time for us/our bodies

If you’re a chocolate lover, I’ve got news you’ll really LOVE! Researchers continue to discover more health benefits of regularly eating dark chocolate! The cocoa in dark chocolate, like wine, tea, and many fruits and veggies contains healthful compounds called polyphenols, a class of antioxidants. The darker chocolates provide the most cocoa and antioxidants. It appears to lower blood pressure, reduce formation of plaque in arteries, inhibit formation of blood clots, improve insulin resistance, reduce blood cholesterol -lowering the bad and increasing the good, reduce the risks of cancer, and even improve the skin. Experts recommend savoring an ounce of dark chocolate with a minimum of 70% cocoa each day. Finally! Something exciting to add to our health regimen. The “catch” is that we must take into account it’s fat, sugar, and calories so our total daily amounts remain the same in order to maintain our weight. A good plan might be to choose dark chocolate as your “dessert” of choice, knowing that you’re actually doing something good for your health. Now that’s SWEET! -WL, R.D.

## Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in our Daily Lives ... cont'd from page 1

offers loving guidance and direction. Yes, this book is the Bible. God didn't leave us here to "muddle" through the tough times on our own. He made sure He left us with a trust-worthy "instruction manual" -His love letter to us that shows us the best path for us to take. I love the reassurance the verse in red gives us. God is with us, and His Word reveals His love for us by showing us the *best* ways to live.

A seed we plant in our garden is like the Word. Just as a tiny seed contains all the instructions for a plant to grow and blossom, God's Word contains the life-giving information and truths that we need to thrive and live victoriously. We can plant the seed of the Word in our heart and life by simply doing what we know we should: take some time daily to read God's love letter to us, the Bible. In America, we are so blessed to have the freedom to read it, and the availability to access the answers of how to face this challenging life. Sadly,

many struggle through life never cracking the cover to all the answers. Are you racing by those answers that rest on the bookcase as you rush by trying to "put out the fires" in your life? The Bible is not given to us so



*The Lord says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.'*

Psalms 32:8

we feel guilty when we see it, knowing that we should be reading it. It is a gift and resource that we've been given, out of love, so we can be equipped for life in a sin-filled and fallen world. When we read it, we find

that we are *not* alone -there's hope and a loving "Tour Guide".

How else are we supposed to be able to truly distinguish what is right from wrong? Unfortunately way too many people are turning to the secular popular opinion of "man", who is fallible and sinful, found in magazines and talk shows. Satan loves to try to deceive us into thinking that if it's on t.v. or in print, then it's got to be true and right. I hope you realize that's not the case. When we invest in learning who God is and the real truths of this life -from the One Who created it all, then along with the Holy Spirit Who lives in us, we have the knowledge we need to be victorious when facing life challenges. We can make the *best* decisions -big and small- when we look to God's plan for us. So, don't head down the pathway of your life without your "love letter" in hand and in your heart. Just follow The Leader! -WL



## Kitchen Connection ...Sharing Recipes Our Families Love

Got a recipe you're glad to have?? Don't keep it a secret... email it to Wendy at [wendy@momsinbloom.com](mailto:wendy@momsinbloom.com) !

**Double Thumbprint Heart Cookies** -from [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com)  
1/2 cup butter, softened                    1 egg  
1/4 cup granulated sugar                    1 tablespoon milk  
1/4 cup packed brown sugar                1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 teaspoon baking powder                 2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 to 1/3 cup cherry or seedless raspberry jam or preserves

1. Preheat oven to 375 degree F. In a large bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt. Beat until mixture is combined, scraping sides of bowl occas'y.

Beat in egg, milk, and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.

2. Shape dough into 3/4-inch balls. For each cookie on an ungreased or parchment paper-lined cookie sheet place 2 dough balls side by side with one side touching. Press thumbs into each ball to form an indentation in each. Press in center of each with thumb and taper bottom of cookie with fingers to form a heart shape. Repeat with remaining dough balls, leaving about 2 inches between cookies.

3. Bake for 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove from oven and transfer cookies to a wire rack. While warm, fill each indentation with jam or preserves (if necessary, snip any large pieces of fruit). Cool completely. Makes about 30 cookies.

## Craft Corner ...Seasonal Craft Idea: Valentines' Heart Candle Gift Idea... or For Your Home

### Make a Beautiful Heart Candle!

#### What You Need:

- White card stock
- Scissors
- Craft wire
- Beads (optional)
- Large candle
- Pink patterned papers

**Instructions:** 1. Cut strips of different pink patterned papers and adhere them to same-size strips of white card stock.



Set a special atmosphere at the dinner table for your family, and enjoy the glow of this home-decorated heart candle.

2. Die-cut, punch, or freehand-cut two sizes of hearts from the patterned papers. Poke tiny holes in some of the hearts to allow wire to be threaded through them.  
3. Join the hearts by running wire through the holes and also by wrapping the wire around the hearts, measuring the candle circumference as you go. If you wish, slide beads onto the wire as you twist and bend it into curls and loops.

This & more found at [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com) (Better Homes & Gardens)



## Nourishment for the 'Soil' ...Sharing the Fruit of God's Work in our Lives

*"the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Luke 8:15*

A few months ago I felt led by the Holy Spirit to contact an old friend to see if I had done something to offend her. Whenever I bumped into her, she acted very strange and distant. I emailed her to ask for her phone number and to see if I needed to seek her forgiveness. Her response was harsh and shocking. She had a list of offenses from eight years ago that were extremely unlike me. The strange thing is that I didn't remember anything that she listed. My husband didn't remember, either. So I prayed that weekend that God would restore my memory. My flesh cried out that I didn't do the things she said I did. My flesh came up with all kinds of reasons why my friend was remembering a different time. However, the Holy Spirit was so merciful to me and kept reassuring me that my reputation is not in myself but in Him. That I am a new creation and yes, I could have done those things. But I could also hear the pain in my old friend and I still had love in my heart for her. I wanted more

*"If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God."*

Matthew 5:23-24 (The Message)

than anything to free her from the baggage of my sins so many years ago. So regardless of my memory, I contacted her and sought her forgiveness for everything. She was finally free from pain and bitterness that she had been carrying with her for too long. I sought her forgiveness for things that I didn't remember doing. And it didn't matter at all because reconciliation is what the Lord wants for believers. What I learned from this situation is that I could not have done any of this if the Holy Spirit hadn't done it for me. This has given me so much more faithful reliance on the Holy Spirit and patience for other believers. Instead of trying to change people, I now see the power of praying for the Spirit to touch their lives. We can't and God doesn't want us to do things in our own strength. He wants us to need Him and believe He can do it through us. Don't be afraid to seek forgiveness, it's God's desire for us. You will have nothing to lose, except perhaps a little pride (a good thing), and everything to gain. God bless you! -Kim Green, AZ

## Babes in Bloom ...Moms Aren't the Only Ones Blooming!

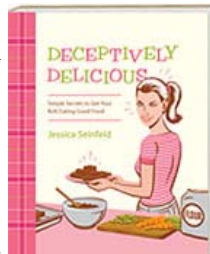
Moms share fun things to do, parenting tips, funny things they said, teachable moments, etc.



### Get Your Kids to Eat their Veggies... in Foods that are "Deceptively Delicious"!

Trying to get our children to eat their vegetables can be such a frustrating struggle. But now there's help, with a new cookbook/manual by Jessica Seinfeld, that might just change that for you.

Jessica was featured on Oprah, and I was very impressed with her ideas and how she was getting the word out how we as moms can boost the nutritional value of the foods our children eat. The foundation of her recipes is to making purees out of vegetables and then putting them into foods. She creatively gets cauliflower in maca



roni and cheese and spinach into brownies. Amazingly her recipes are so good, the kids will never know! They're eating those veggies without a struggle, and enjoying it as well. On Oprah, the audience tried her chocolate chip cookies with whole chickpeas in them. They couldn't believe it, and raved about their taste!

She also shares tips on making healthy snacks and improving store-bought foods, as well as advice on creating a positive environment around the kitchen table. This may not change the way they "eat their veggies", but rest assured, they will be eating veggies! For more info, log onto: [www.deceptivelydelicious.com](http://www.deceptivelydelicious.com) -WL



## Calling on God ...the Powerful Prayer of a Woman, Wife, Mother

Don't miss the opportunity to connect with God daily. Tap into His power in your lives!

### For yourself:

Lord, this month as we celebrate "love" with Valentines' Day, help me ponder the Source of love. The Bible tells me that "God is love." (1 John 4:16). I want to feel Your love everyday by getting closer to You and knowing You more. Please help me to spend time with You daily in Your Word -even if only a few minutes. Help me focus on You. Amen.

### For your husband (if applicable):

Lord, Thank You for my husband and our marriage. This time of year causes me to think about our relationship. At first it was very exciting. As the years go on our relationship changes and matures. Things may not seem as "exciting" as they did at first, but help us see the growth and experiences we've had together as exciting. Help us embrace each season of our love, and help it grow more each year. Amen.

### For your child/children:

Lord, My children are so precious to me. I truly want to do the best job of being a mother that I can. Help me be a vessel through which You shine through me onto them. Help them get to know You by the model of love that I show them as they grow up. And may that unconditional love build their confidence in who they are... because of You. And may that confidence carry them through their life. Amen.

## How Does Your Garden Grow?... Have a Garden? Share it & Your Story Here!

What does your garden or flowers mean to you and your family?

-Mary Gallagher, Milford, Ohio



The ivy clinging to my trees is a vivid reminder of the destructiveness of sin. Former owners planted beds of ivy to lend a touch of softness to the property. Ivy is an aggressive vine that left untamed will cover anything in its path and eventually strangle the life from plants and trees. I could not miss the spiritual analogy before my eyes as I surveyed the damage on the property: Sin is like a creeping vine that begins as a tantalizing accent to one's life but knows no boundaries. I try to cut the ivy before it climbs high on the trees but even the new tendrils cling tightly and each vine takes effort to remove. Many trees were not protected from the ivy and are now completely wrapped in thick vines firmly cant measures including axes and chainsaws. Some- aged leaving it vulnerable to disease and insects. Sin intriguing tendrils soon become twisted and embedded were designed by God to be. Created in His image, we we allow sin to establish roots, it will anchor deep in the tree completing distorting its true image, sin will lives. Eventually the ivy weakens the tree so that it The damage of sin is great, tearing away at the foundation of our beliefs, ripping away the protection of God's grace in our lives. I will continue to fight the ivy in my yard and employ some severe tactics to eradicate it-one book even suggests a blowtorch! God also advocates strong tactics when dealing with sin: He says in Matthew 18 that if your hand causes you to sin you should cut it off and throw it away. Jesus knows the destruction sin will cause if we allow it to flourish. He uses this strong language to paint a picture we won't forget. My goal is to remove as much of the offensive ivy from my yard as I can, but I will leave some to serve as a daily reminder of the consequences of rampant sin and the goodness of God's grace as He removes the vines of sin in my life.



embedded in the trunk. Removal of these requires signifi- times it is too late: the tree's trunk is irreversibly dam- can envelope our lives if we do nothing to stop it. The strongholds. Sin damages us and seeks to destroy who we are beautiful like the stately oaks and graceful willows. If the soil of our lives and, as the ivy aggressively takes over taint and distort the beauty Christ desires to bring to our falls over in a storm or dies from complete strangulation.



## Family Traditions... Fun, Seasonal Ways to Teach our Children about God

Share your family's traditions that create memories and pass down important values here.

### "Heart to Heart"

A fun family tradition we have in the Lempner household is to surprise our children on the morning of a special day like their birthday or the first day of school with a decorated "sign" on their door. I found the idea pictured on the Better Homes & Gardens website ([www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com)). I love how festive it looks, and pretty simple to do. How fun for the kids to wake up and see this beautiful heart garland strewn across the head of their bed! What a wonderful symbol of our love for them. I love that it's home/handmade, as those gifts always mean more since they show a sacrifice of our time to make them. It's an act of love.



**Instructions:** Make a garland of hearts cut from fabric scraps layered and attached with iron-on adhesive. Punch small holes in the sides of the hearts and tie them together with ribbon. Or, I think you could use scrapbooking/cardstock paper, as there are so many beautiful patterns to choose from. Then to take this gift a step further, I think what I'll do is write qualities I love about them on the hearts, as well as some "simple" Bible verses about God's love. -Verses they can easily put to memory. They'll feel my and God's love for them and carry with them forever the truth about how precious and loved they are. Some verses on God's love: John 3:16, 1 John 3:1, Romans 5:5, Psalms 136:1 -WL



## The Harvest... "Unconditional Love"

Sharing the Fruit of What We've Sown

My husband and I want to be sure to impress upon our children our unconditional and undying love for them. We want them to grow up knowing they can count on our love and support. -No matter what, and that they can come to us with any problem or concern. We know that with all the social pressures and issues they'll face growing up, understanding we're "on their side" will help carry them through. Often at bedtime, we snuggle with them and tell them how much we love them "...more than all the trees and grains of sand in the world...". We go back and forth, each time adding more things. This makes our love tangible. I treasure what my daughter adds onto the end of how much she loves me: "... and all over the place!" That about sums it up. -WL

## A "Tip" For You...

Share a Tip that Makes Life Easier!



### Change Purses in Seconds!

Do you ever come across a helpful piece of information that makes a lot of sense and makes a part of your life a whole lot easier? I love tips like that! Here's a tip I got years ago, that I only recently fully applied. I'm hooked! You know what a pain it can be to change purses so it matches your outfit? You have to take out ALL the STUFF piece by piece, then transfer it. And if you're too hasty, sure enough you'll leave behind the one thing you need when you're out! Easy fix: simply find a few little "pouches" to put similar items in, like one for cosmetics, one for band aids, tissues, and hand sanitizer, etc. Then all you have to do it move those pouches between purses. Victory! -WL