

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

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34

As I write, everything outside is ice-covered. The only signs of life in my garden are the icy remnants jutting up from the snow that remind me of the life deep beneath the icy exterior. Because I can see past the current lack of beauty to the potential within, I love my garden regardless.

In life, we all experience people whose icy exteriors and mean or hurtful behavior are not so lovable. Can you relate? I've known people who are just plain difficult and unkind. Who is that person in your life? Do you struggle with how you should treat them back? How *should* we treat these people — people who seem so unlovable? The answer may sound crazy and even impossible, but *with love*. God places such a high value

on love that He actually commands us to love one another. When asked what is the most important commandment, Jesus replied: *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your*

**Above all else,
God wants us to
LOVE...**

strength.' The second is this: *'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'* Mark 12:30-31 This shouldn't be surprising, as the Bible tells us that "God is love." He first loved us (just the way we are), and out of the love He pours out on us, He wants us to pour love onto others. What we cannot do by our

own means, we can do with God's love working *through* us. We can love the "unlovable" when we allow His love to flow through us like an empty vessel. In addition, I put on my "God-goggles" to see them as He does: beloved and hurting. Many people who are acting so unlovable are simply miserable and desperately in need of love. Lack of love can lead to angry and "icy" cold people. When we take this perspective, we can see into them a bit and respond with compassion, as our loving Father does.

So in this "month of love" and each day of the year, reach out in kindness, shine a warm ray of love on others, and pray for God to melt any icy exteriors. -WL

Happy Valentine's Day!

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momsinbloom.com

Founder/Editor: Wendy Lempner
wendy@momsinbloom.com
Co-Editor: Jenny Flakne

-Verses to Ponder About God and Love-

you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Nehemiah 9:17

the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. Psalm 32:10

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Ps 57:10

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:21

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Gal. 5:14

live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.
1 Peter 4:8



To Your Health: "Omega-3s For Heart-Health"

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

Fittingly so, the American Heart Association (A.H.A.) names February as "American Heart Month." So let's focus on omega-3 fatty acids which doctors have long recognized as contributing to heart health. For many years, the A. H. A. has recommended that people eat fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids at least twice a week, as eating one to two servings could reduce your risk of dying of a heart attack by a third or more. Fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, and to a lesser extent tuna, contain the most omega-3 fatty acids, but many types of seafood contain small amounts. Non-fish foods containing omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseed, flaxseed oil, walnuts, canola oil, soybeans, and soybean oil. Similar to supplements, the evidence of heart-healthy benefits from eating these foods isn't as strong as it is from eating fish. For more info. and details about avoiding possible mercury contamination with various fish sources, please visit: www.mayoclinic.com/health/omega-3/HB00087 -WL, RD, LD

Nourishment for the 'Soil': "Crazy Love" -dedicated to my precious daughter, Bryn- Moms Sharing Life Lessons From God...



Ever since I can remember, I have desired to be the mom of two: a boy and a girl. After the ultrasound revealed our beloved son, I was grateful to be halfway there with a healthy boy. Daddy's tears flowed, as he had received his sports player! During my second pregnancy, my desire for a daughter grew in intensity, and I spent much time walking under the Arizona sun and praying for God to grant me the desire of my heart. I truly felt He had already, but then anxiety would creep in and humble my confidence. I wanted to be open to His perfect plan. I prayed diligently to trust God's Sovereignty... His Will would be best — girl or boy. The much-anticipated ultrasound quickly confirmed my strong feelings of intuition... it was a girl! The floodgates burst open, gushing tears of gratefulness, and so much joy I thought I'd never be able to rein in my emotions. My love for our daughter grew with my swelling belly, and meeting her was breathtaking — I was in love! The

"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him."

1 John 4:9

more I learned about her sweet personality and spunky spirit, the more "crazy" in love I fell. One day as I gazed at this beautiful blessing before me, the nickname "Precious Life" came to mind, and stuck. I would always do whatever was necessary to protect her — my precious gift from God. God's love for us is kind of crazy, too. Because of His abounding love for us, He left perfect paradise to come down to a sin-filled earth in the form of a man, Jesus, to rescue us from the punishment our sins deserve. He suffered terribly even though He was perfect, Holy, and innocent — the very reasons why He could make this atoning sacrifice for us. He loves us because we're His — and *despite* our flaws; He created us to love us. Some might say He's crazy to love us. The Bible tells us He's crazy about us. He'd have to be to show us such grace. I have a hunch what His nickname for us is... "Precious Life." -WL
(I wrote this to submit for a Mother-Daughter Devotion book in 12-07.)



Kitchen Connection: "Pancakes That Show Your Love"

Heart-Shaped Pancakes—Wendy Lempner
It's become a Valentine's Day tradition in our home for me to make these. They are easy, fun, and even healthy!

1 cup buttermilk pancake mix
1 cup whole wheat pancake mix (I get both at Trader Joes)
1 cup milk (add a little more if batter is too thick)
2 eggs
About 3 Tbsp of strawberry spreadable fruit (or jelly)
Whipping cream and fresh, sliced strawberries, optional

Preheat griddle or pan over medium heat. Mix first five ingredients with a wire whisk in medium mixing bowl. When griddle/pan is ready, add a little butter and either pour batter into a heart shape and then form it with a spoon (like I do), or use a metal heart-shaped mold with a handle. Flip pancake when bubbly, and serve with whipped cream and fresh strawberries or maple syrup. Discover what your family likes the best!



Craft Corner: "Valentines' Day Candy Pots" ...A.K.A., "Candy in Bloom!" A Fun Craft Idea to Get Your Creative Juices Flowing...

Transform plain terra cotta clay pots into adorable Valentine candy pots. What a sweet treat for your child's teacher, grandparent, or even for mom! Minimal supplies are needed and the possibilities are endless.

What you'll need:

- * Terra cotta clay pots in various sizes
- * acrylic paints: pinks, reds, purples, white
- * Valentine stickers



- * paint brushes, one small and one medium
- * new pencil
- * household sponge
- * acrylic sealer spray, matte finish
- * lace, raffia, and/or ribbon (optional)

For directions and tips, log onto: http://crafts.kaboose.com/val_candypots.html -Idea from www.kaboose.com

Have fun creating!