

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

Over the years, I've discovered an important key to being content with life... thankfulness. There's nothing that cuts through feelings of discontentment for me more than to stop and "count my blessings" for all the things I DO have... all given to me by God.

Our society urges us to always seek more "things". After all, we deserve it don't we?! At least that's what retailers want us to think. Well, what we do in the process, I've found, is overlook ALL the MANY things we currently have... all the things that we take for granted. Especially the "basic" things of survival that many parents in other countries, and even here in the U.S. would give their life for in order to be able to provide for their family... food to nourish, clean water free of deadly pathogens, a roof that keeps the family dry and walls that keep them warm & comfortable despite the elements, and clothes & shoes to cover their bodies/feet. When I'm feeling that I'm somehow "lacking" something, this sobers me up to the reality of my situation. I'm very blessed, because I do have

the essentials of life... and so much more. I bet the same goes for you. This time of year, especially with Thanksgiving fast approaching, we hopefully all take some time to ponder all there is for which to be thankful. Sure, there are things that aren't perfect in our lives! But when

"Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."
2 Corinthians 9:10-11

we really look around us, there is SO much to be thankful for! For instance, if you are reading this newsletter, you must be able to see... and that's an amazing blessing right there! Our eye sight is precious to us... another thing we can take for granted. And of course, as Christians, we have received the most valuable gift of all from Jesus... eternal

salvation. That's better than the cure for cancer! And this gives us real reason to be thankful! It's out of our sincere gratitude toward God's grace that saves us from eternal punishment in hell that we deserve because of our sins, that we have an innate desire to "give back" to God by being His "hands and feet" and giving to others. We can give to God and others with our time, talents, and our treasure / money. Each one is a gift, and a way we can give thanks to God. I've discovered 2 Corinthians 9:6 to be so true... *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."* God loves a cheerful giver who wants to give... not out of obligation, but out of a truly thankful heart. And He blesses us when we give generously.

I'd like to take a few moments to touch on a specific area of giving... the topic of money, as I've felt led to do so for awhile. I've struggled a bit, wondering if I was really supposed to write on this, as it can be a "touchy" topic. But I feel that God wants me to, so here we go! Continued on pg 2...

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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 and 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

-Here's reason to go "wild" for walnuts!... Walnuts are SO much more than a tasty treat, they are a true "superfood". Some homemade nut breads are perfect in this cooler fall weather! Just 1.5 oz. fulfills the daily requirement of essential omega-3 fatty acids, which helps fight diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, and clinical depression. Those are the "big hitters" in regards to health problems we face in the U.S. So pass the walnuts please! They also reduce inflammation, cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, and insulin resistance; and they even help with weight management and bone health, while providing key nutrients like fiber, protein, vitamins, minerals, and other antioxidants. What a mouth-full! Basically, we all should be eating more walnuts... daily! Eat them in trail mix, toss on salads, blend in smoothies, bake in breads, etc. For more ideas: www.walnuts.org.

Enjoy better health! -Wendy Lempner, R.D.

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

First off, rest assured... I have nothing personally to gain by bringing up this topic. This is between you and God, but I don't want to withhold important information from you by not sharing this. I don't want you to miss out on any of the blessings God has planned for you! I'm sure you don't want to either. Therefore, I would like to humbly share a bit of what I've learned about money and trusting God... for you & for God's glory. I'd like to share how I've seen what the Bible tells us to be true regarding giving financially. I've heard amazing testimonies from others, and personally experienced God provide in awesome ways by stepping out in faith and obedience to God and tithing (that's 10% of all gross income)- what God calls us to do. I've seen God provide for all our needs when I didn't think it would be possible.

When I stopped working when our son arrived, "the numbers" without my income put us in the "red" (yes, I had graphed it all out!). But by faith, we continued to tithe after I quit, at the same level, and God quickly made up for my income through my husband's new job! We also saw God provide when my husband was



"Everything we have has come from You, and we give You only what You first gave us!"

1 Chronicles 29:14 NLT

laid off later on. It ended up being a blessing, and now he works from home as a very busy website designer. God's always been faithful to us as we've faithfully given back to Him, what He first gave to us (see verse above). And look at this verse... this one's really great: ***"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me on this,"***

says the Lord Almighty,' and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it!" Malachi 3:10 In my faith walk, I've learned that there is no One as trustworthy as God. Really. If you've never taken the extra measure of faith to step out of your comfort zone & regularly give financially, specifically with a tithe, I encourage you to "test [Him] on this!". The real issue is not the money, but about trusting God & our relationship with Him. God uses our money to grow our faith in Him... & in the process fund ministries & take care of those in need. Is God tugging on you with this? He sure was years ago with me! I tried to ignore it... really hard! But I'm so glad we did start tithing, as it's only given us many blessings to count each day (not just material things either!). So if you never have before, step out in faith... out of thanksgiving, & give as God directs us. Invest in your relationship with God and eternity... and count those blessings!

Be blessed, & Happy Thanksgiving! -WL
(For Biblical info. on money & how to get out of debt, read "The ABC's of Financial Success" by Barry L. Cameron.)



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 !

Muesli Breakfast Cereal -Joyce Nunn's Kitchen (Landen, OH)

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
¾ cup milk
½ to 1 Tbsp sugar
¼ cup walnuts or pecans, toasted
1 pear, cored and cut into ¼-inch dice*
½ cup seedless red grapes, halved

* you can substitute an apple, or your favorite fruit

In a small bowl, stir together oats, milk, and sugar. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour and up to overnight.

In a small skillet, toast nuts over med. heat, tossing occasionally, until lightly browned, 4 - 6 min. Cool to room temp. Stir nuts, and fruit into oat mixture. Sprinkle on some cinnamon (optional). Serves 2

Sweet Potato Casserole -Cindy Bradbury's Kitchen (Loveland, OH)

4 cups mashed sweet potatoes 1/2 tsp salt
1 cup sugar 1/3 stick melted butter
2 eggs 1 tsp vanilla
1/2 cup milk
Mix all above ingredients until fluffy and pour into sprayed dish.

Topping:

1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup flour
1/3 cup melted butter
1 cup chopped pecans
Mix topping ingredients and sprinkle over the potato mixture.
Bake at 350 for 35 minutes. ENJOY..

Craft Corner ...Seasonal Craft Ideas: "Tree of Thanks"

This craft is fun, easy, and inexpensive!

Supplies:

Brown grocery bags
Scissors
Construction paper: red, orange, yellow
Crayons or markers
Masking tape
Glue stick (optional)

Directions:

-Cut out a tree trunk from the grocery bags with plenty of branches, then tape it to the wall with masking tape.



Here's a fun craft that will also help your child/children realize all their blessings and cultivate a thankful spirit within them!

-Cut out leaves in different colors and shapes.
-Have the children name things they are thankful for and have them write them on the leaves or write it for them.
-Have the children stick their leaves all over the tree of thanks with the masking tape rolled in balls or with a glue stick until it is bright with colorful leaves and full of "thankfulness".
-Remind them that all good things in our life come from God who loves us more than we can ever imagine! Have fun!



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

Years ago, a speaker was talking about how important it is to cultivate a thankful heart within not only us, but our children. I knew that I wanted my children to be thankful for all God has given us (including Himself!), so we began doing something daily to help us remember to have thankful hearts. We began naming things we are thankful for each night at prayer time before bed. It's been a wonderful way to stop and count our blessings... literally and regularly. With all our kids often have these days... I want to help teach them to have grateful hearts that appreciate everything they're given, and to help them realize that it's all from God. With Christmas right around the corner, gift "wish lists" are now forming... either in the minds of our little ones, or actually on paper! There's nothing wrong with that... maybe yours is forming too. :) When my children were getting older, I decided that it was time for them to get excited about giving to others as well. So we started making a homemade craft to give. It was a win-win situation... the kids had fun making a craft (something about the real meaning of Christmas: check out Hobby Lobby!), and they were thinking of others when they made each one... naming who each one was for. Then, on Christmas, they could

"...And when we take Your gifts to those who need them, they will break out in thanksgiving to God." 2 Corinthians 9:10-

participate in gift-giving with their special gifts. It's been a joy to witness the growing excitement and fun the children have each year working hard on their special gifts, & giving them with anticipation. We've also gotten involved with a couple programs that you may know of, that reach out to others in need, in Jesus' name. "Operation Christmas Child" is an

amazing opportunity to not only help children in need feel loved and cared for, & hear the gospel, but it's also a great way to get our children involved with doing something wonderful for someone they don't even know! It's simple, fun, & can literally change a life!

Just fill a shoebox with things a boy or girl would enjoy, wrap it, & drop it off at a local drop-off with a \$7 donation for shipping costs. For all the info. you need, visit www.samaritanspurse.org. Collection week is Nov. 12-19. The drop-off site for the Maineville area is Fellowship Baptist Church on Rt. 22-3; M-R: 10-7, F: 10-5, Sat. 10-3, & Sun. 12-3. Contact person: Shawn@683-7643. The other is "Angel Tree Christmas", & it connects parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts. You can purchase and deliver (if you want) gifts and the gospel to children in the name of their prisoner-parent. Look for this at church/in your community. More details at www.angeltree.org. -WL

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.



Up for some humor?? Here's something from the mouth of a "babe". Think about Thanksgiving dinner!

A mother invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mom answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?" :)

This year, let's bring our humor to this challenging meal!

The best gift we can give our children is to teach them about God. Those everyday lessons will go with them throughout their lives for them to draw upon & apply. Memorizing some, what I call "life verses", will equip them with what they need most in life... Biblical Truths, which will guide us no matter what we may face in life. Make it fun with little prizes or special praise, but most importantly, make the verses "real" to them with examples & simple explanations. You don't have to be a Bible scholar... I'm not! Why not start, or continue with this beautiful verse...

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever." 1 Chronicles 16:34

List together all the good things God gives us... the tangible and intangible ones... **it's all because of His LOVE for us!** -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, You are so awesome! I can visually see your glory outside now, as the trees display Your workmanship and color! I so desire to be truly thankful for all You give me. There are so many blessings in my life. Help me show you my grateful heart through my life and how I give back to You and to others. For when I do, You promise abundant blessing. I want all You have for me and my life. Help me have a giving spirit! Amen.

For your husband (if applicable):

Lord, thank You so much for giving me my husband. Help us to carve out some time together on a regular basis, so we can continue to strengthen our relationship. Help show me ways that I can give him what he needs in a selfless way. His needs can be so overlooked amongst all the many obvious needs of our children, and other responsibilities in life. A strong and healthy marriage is one of the best gifts we, as parents, can give to our children. Help us to work through any areas that are weak in our marriage, and to both truly desire to work together as loving life partners. Amen.

For your child/children:

Lord, thank You for the reminder that November brings with it... to stop and take time to ponder all we have to be thankful for, and to look around at all the good things in our lives. I desire to do all I can, with Your help, to cultivate a strong sense of gratitude and thankfulness within my children. Lord, I can talk about these things with them, but only You can really work in their precious little hearts to shape them into people that will find You in all the blessings of their lives. Please help them find You in all the good things You give them. 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?

Before I became enamored with gardening, I was always rushing from one thing to the next, and I had a hard time sitting still, even to relax with my family and watch a movie. Once I planted a garden, however, that all changed. Being outside and able to enjoy the colors, breezes, fragrance and peace of the garden was like a tranquilizer, it soothed me to such an extent that I found it hard to get up and get something done! Now, our family's favorite time is in the garden, just relaxing and taking it all in. Gardening has replaced my former passion for interior decorating. Though a piece of beautiful furniture is nice, it doesn't do what a garden does. It can't change color (at least not into desirable ones!), it doesn't smell good and attract beautiful butterflies, it doesn't constantly change and leave you excited for the next transformation. In short, it isn't alive. If a day goes by and I don't get outside to enjoy my garden, if only for a few minutes, then I feel the day is missing something important. Why such a passion for gardening? I think it's simply because a garden, and nature itself, contains the essence of Who God is. He is peace. He is beauty. I am drawn to my garden because the author of nature has left His undeniable imprint upon it. -Amy Davis, Morrow, OH



November's Feature Garden: Amy Davis'



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.

"Pass the Candy Corn" -Melanie Heitzman

This is a fun Thanksgiving tradition! It will help the *whole* family focus on what we're really celebrating... thankfulness!

When everyone sits down to the thanksgiving feast, take a few moments to pass a bowl of candy corn around the table for each one there to take a few pieces. Allow them to choose how many they want. Then when everyone has theirs, go around the table and name something you are thankful for... one for each piece of candy corn. The more the better! Then you might want to wrap it up when everyone is done by saying something about all the blessings God gives us and how we should remember that today and everyday. The Lord is so good to us, and ALL we have is from Him! **Thanks be to God!!**

"Thanksgiving Trail Mix" -Sharon Palmeter

Here's a fun & meaningful activity... & snack to make with your child/children...

Candy Corn: represents kernels of corn that pilgrims placed on their plates at Thanksgiving to remind them of their times of hunger and thankfulness for times of plenty.

Bugles: represents cornucopia horn of plenty

Sunflower Seeds: represents seeds of faith

Raisins: represents fruit of the spirit

Chex cereal: represents our attitude-check your attitude of Thanksgiving

Pretzel: represents arms folded in prayer

M&M's: represents thankfulness for sweet daily blessings

The Harvest... Share the Fruit of What You've Sown

What "praises" do you have? What fruit do you see in the lives of your children? Encourage others!



The Two Coins

One summer Sunday morning I was driving my boys to church and my oldest son asked if we could turn around. When I asked why he answered, "I want to get my allowance and give it all to God." I WAS SHOCKED! My son was saving his allowance, doing extra jobs for money and building things to sell at our yard sale (as well as managing a refreshment stand)! He was intent on getting a new video game system and game he really wanted. A couple of weeks earlier his uncle had offered him the system and game for free. Then as he saved for another toy, that one was given to him for free as well by another

"God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others." 2 Corinthians 9:8

relative. Well, I did turn around that morning, but I also wanted to get a better idea of my son's motives before he gave up all his savings. "How much allowance do you want to give?" I asked. "All of it!" he replied calmly. "Why?" I asked. "Because I got the things I wanted already and I keep thinking about the story of that woman with the two coins (Luke 21:1-4) and I always thought that was something I'd like to do. Plus I'll

just get more." My brain scrambled to think of an answer. "Wow," was all I could say, "I'm so proud of you." The faith of my son blew me away. His young heart was content with what he already had, and he knew it was good to give. He trusted that there would be enough for whatever he wanted next, or that he was OK to wait a while for it. Sometimes I learn these great life lessons from my children. I hope to take this lesson of faith, trust, generosity and contentment with me far into the future.

-Anna Sklar, Canada (Creator of "Mom's Moments" e-newsletter. Check it out & subscribe at www.momsmoments.ca)