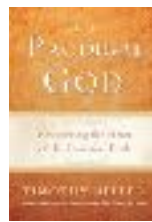


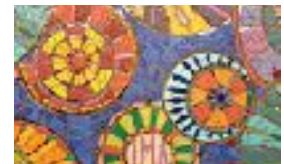
**THE WOMEN'S
RETREAT IS
COMING
SOON. DATE
TO BE
ANNOUNCED**



**BIBLE STUDIES
BEGIN**



BOOK OF THE MONTH



**WOMEN/MOSAIC IN
RELATIONSHIPS
VIVAMUS NEC NUNC**

GRACE BIBLE WOMEN NEWSLETTER

“Tis the season”

By Tinna Hood

December “Tis the season” of lights. If it were up to me, I would leave twinkling Christmas lights up year-round. The bright flickering, the ever changing, and the warm glowing ones somehow brings calmness and peace to my soul.

But if you think about it “Tis the season” carries on into January.

“Tis the season” encompasses taking down those Christmas lights, putting your house back in order, paying off those credit cards, and embarking on your new year’s resolutions, again!

Then there’s that insurance deductible starting all over again. Kids starting back to school, homework and activities back to full throttle.

Tax season, making that commitment to hit the gym, promising yourself you will do better this year working out, dieting and taking care of your self.

cont’d on pg.4



Keelie Ferguson

In the Spring of 2006, at a prayer retreat in Tioga, TX, I received a clear message from God’s Word. I wasn’t expecting it. I didn’t even want to be there. I was afraid of praying, definitely did not love the idea of a prayer retreat. But I was on the planning team for the retreat! I guess it would have been weird if I didn’t go...

At this point in my life I had been wondering why I did not ever hear from God or understand the Bible, why I was not able to pray (or even remember to pray for that matter) and why my whole life as a Christian felt like a sham. I had publicly professed to be a believer at the age of 9 and then again at 13. The vibrant Christian experience I had always assumed would emerge as I reached adulthood had not. At 25 years old, having secured all the things

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the world told me I needed: an education, a job, a husband, a child, a house, nice things, supportive family, even plenty of church involvement...I felt empty, confused and trapped.

So at the retreat, when we were told to pray silently (was so happy about this), but to hold nothing back and to be as honest with God as possible, after a few deep breaths and consideration this is what I said to Him:

This can't be all there is to Christianity, God. If it is, then I'm done... Are you even real? Just because you say you are, how do I know it's true? If you are, show me how to have a relationship with you. I can't sustain it, I have tried for so long and I am tired. I don't know how. You will have to do it. If you truly want a relationship with me, you do it, Lord. You do it.

I will never forget that prayer. A tiny seed of faith planted in the midst of a million doubts: this was the unfiltered truth of where I was. God already knew exactly where I was, but now I knew, as well.

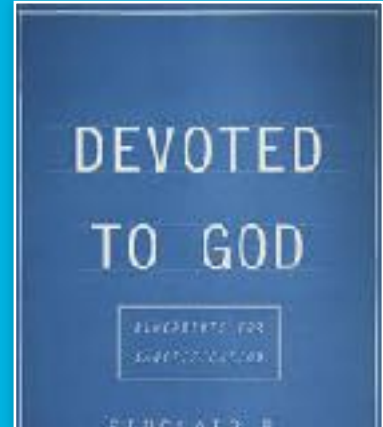
The clear message I received that day came after I wrote out this prayer. At this time we were told to read the Bible on our own, wherever the Spirit led us. I chose a passage that had impacted my life several years earlier. I hadn't had much interaction with my Bible other than that particular encounter and I was wondering if I might meet God there, once again. The passage was from John Chapter 8. In this chapter there are people called Pharisees challenging the authenticity and authority of Jesus, which is essentially what I had done in my prayer. It took my breath away and hair stood on the back of my neck as I read the words of the Pharisees to Jesus:

"Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." John 8:13

"Where is your father?" John 8:19

"Who are you?" John 8:25

Spring Bible studies begin

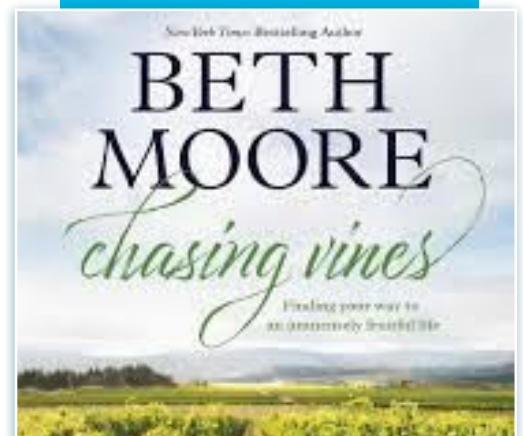


There are 2 study times this year for "DEVOTED TO GO."

MONDAY MORNINGS -
contact Tinna Hood
903-815-4055 at 704.n. 8th
street, Gunter

WEDNESDAY MORNINGS
MORNING-9:30 contact
Nancy Nevil-469-401-3614

AND..... ON MONDAY
NIGHTS STARTING ON
FEBRUARY 17 AT 6:30 PM
WE WILL GO THROUGH
BETH MOORE'S NEWEST
STUDY. 215 PRESTON
GLEN, GUNTER



How can you say that we shall be set free?" John 8:33b

Jesus said to them, (and to me)

"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." John 8:42-47

The life saving and life giving message I received that day was not a very cheerful one. But it was a necessary one. At my very core I was living for Satan. It was his voice that I was used to hearing and obeying. He was my father. If this sounds dramatic, that's because it is. The truth is that I needed a lot more than just to get better at being a Christian. I needed a way to get to my true Father. I needed to be a completely different person. I needed a miracle.

At this realization, the significance of the Gospel, which I had been hearing my entire life, finally began to make sense. It wasn't until I understood the depths of my sin (servant of satan!!!!) that I could see why Jesus matters so infinitely much--our need is met fully and finally in Christ alone! His sinless life, sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection from the grave have made it possible for everyone to "switch fathers". Jesus is the way to a relationship with the Father. If we recognize our great need for this Lord and Savior, believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths, we will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

Once the gospel took root in my heart, it was no longer a chore to spend time with the Lord. The Spirit began to teach me, put people in my path to disciple me. The words on the pages of the Bible made sense for the first time! What joy! I knew that the Lord truly was listening to my prayers and so that became a more natural practice for me, as well. I could not help but tell other people about what God had done in my life. I also gained the courage and desire to make choices for my life that reflected what God wanted, rather than what the world said I should do. All of these things changes were and continue to be the result of understanding God's grace for me, a grace which exists apart from my works or behavior.

The past 15 years of my life have not been the easiest but they have been the sweetest. I continue to battle sins such as gluttony and fear of man, but I battle with the strength of the Lord, not my own. And there has been victory in battle! I'm not as exhausted from trying to be good, rather I'm resting on the righteousness of Christ as my own. Glory be to Him, I can hear my Father's voice! He is mine and I am His.

This is my testimony: God was bigger than my doubts. He heard my cry. He showed me the truth about myself--I am nothing. And then the truth about Himself--He is everything.

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31, 32

Keelie is married to Justin. They are raising three kiddos Jonah (14), Glory (11) and Molly (3) in Gunter where they grew up together and were high school sweethearts. Keelie has been a member of Grace Bible since 2005 and recently began a part-time position as Worship Leader for Grace Bible. She enjoys reading, nature, deep conversations and strong coffee.



Cont'd from page 1

Tis the Season, by Tinna Hood

There are so many more things I could list but you get the picture, we all live the cycle.

It also brings back disappointment or pain which we thought we had hidden or had under control, be it something personal or issues with family or friends. We put out the sign in December that says “Jesus is the reason for the season.” But somehow our hearts land in the aftereffects of the of the season we tried to create. We share conversations of disbelief that time passes so fast and we find ourselves exhausted and in the same place as last year!

Several years ago, while standing in the checkout line at the grocery store, I heard a lady a couple of baskets ahead of me comment to the checker,

“You know if those Christians would just leave Christmas alone there would be a lot less trouble with the Christmas holiday!” So many thoughts ran through my mind as I stood there, fenced in by other people, just like me with our baskets of food, toys, wrapping paper, anxiously and impatiently needing to purchase the things that we cherish and believe make our holiday season perfect.

The first thing I wanted to shout out to that lady as she pushed her basket towards the door was: “HELLO, MA’AM HAS NO ONE EVER TOLD YOU THE CHRISTMAS STORY? Can you not see the word “Christ” in Christmas? Can I get your address so I can come over and explain the true meaning of Christmas?”. But I did none of these, I waited my turn to check out and sadly walked to my car and prayed that someday God would save her and she would recognize the truth!

This experience comes to mind every year when I do my last-minute shopping. Particularly this year, contemplating the possibility of this season of life being so different than last year makes me want to shout out again “Don’t you know the Christmas story?”

Interestingly, here is a part of the Christmas story that we seldom ponder during this season. It’s in Luke 1:46-55. It’s the song that Mary sang after the angel told this 15-year-old that she would be the mother of Jesus. As young as she was and as shocking as the news was, she still responded with humble faith. She proclaims who God is. She celebrates and praises God with her heart, mind and voice to state what she humbly believes. Her words magnify the Lord, and proclaim that He is in control of everything and she understands she is not. Her life and her future were going to change dramatically and she rejoices in God her savior. Although Mary could not have known all that was ahead of her she did not give into fear. Instead she wrote a song of praise for the generations.

This celebration is shocking if you take time to think about Mary’s life and the culture in which she lived. She was poor and betrothed to Joseph who was also poor. This marriage was her only option for survival. It’s intriguing how life changes and life challenges tend to always involve pain and fear. Scott Mcknight highlights these details about Mary’s culture at the time of her heavenly news –

Where she lives and her community would have been coming to Mary’s mind, after all she was human. ‘My community will ostracize my son’, and

they did! He will be called illegitimate and Josephs' reputation would be jeopardized. He also would be legally bound to divorce Mary and she would be left stranded and accused of adultery. She would then be excommunicate or stoned. No woman alive during this time could avoid thinking about these consequences. She must have wondered if there was not a better way. Nevertheless, she began to carry her cross before her baby was even born. The difference for Mary in this season of her life is she chose to live her life from the right comparison. She did not compare herself to others. She populated her thoughts with so much about God's glory that she forgets about herself. She began to obsess about how extraordinary and great God is and yet he sees her (v.48). We begin 2020 where worldly flickering lights can blind us from the things to come. But if our souls magnify the Lord and we keep our eyes on Jesus, forgetting about ourselves We begin 2020 where worldly flickering lights can blind us from the things to come. But if our souls magnify the Lord and we keep our eyes on Jesus, forgetting about ourselves a little more, then our spirit can rejoice in God our savior, and we can sing like Mary and know that He is looking on the humble estate of his servant. Now that is light to my soul!

Only Jesus,
Tinna

WOMEN.....IN



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JANUARY 6, 2020

WOMEN'S PROGRESSIVE DINNER 2019

JERRY AND CINDY SCHULERS
LIMO SERVICE
CAROLLING WITH FRIENDS

CAROLLING WITH FRIENDS



**HOT CIDER, COFFEE,
MARY GAGE COOKIES
TO TAKE HOME AND
HOMEMADE
DESSERTS.....**



**JESUS IS THE
REASON.**

THE MAIN COURSE TEAM
AND TEACHING FROM
DEVOTED TO GOD.



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