

S.I.L.L.Y. (Sisters In the Lord with Lots of Young'uns)

January 2009

“Her children arise up and call her blessed....” Proverbs 31:28

“I can tell you something that will never be a waste of time: ascribing to God His measureless worth. Oddly, the most freeing thing we can ever do is to abdicate the throne of our own miniature kingdoms. Our status is infinitely higher as a servant in God's kingdom than a ruler in our's.”
from Esther

Next Month:

It's February, and that means Valentines! Send me all your suggestions for romancing our husbands and showing our kids and other family members how much we love them. Special recipes, candle light, flowers, chocolate.....the possibilities are endless. (As long as you send them in, that is!)

I Am Resolved No Longer To Linger.....

*Charmed by the world's delight;
Things that are higher,
Things that are nobler,
These have allured my sight.*

New Year's resolutions. How many lists of them have I made over the years....only to be broken, given up on in a matter of weeks? They roll through my mind like an accusing matinee sign, large and red and blinking, all the expectations I've placed on myself that I can never measure up to. The only resolution I'm going to make this year is to linger no longer, staring up at that sign.

The trouble with resolutions is that they all start with the word “I”. “I resolve..... to stop over-eating and lose ten pounds. I resolve...to be more organized and keep my house neat at all times. I resolve....to never lose my temper with my husband or kids again.” I am human, I will fail,

I sin. The very nature of making a resolution sets us up for failure. It is putting my trust in ME, to accomplish an improvement in MYSELF that I CHOOSE as a worthy goal. There isn't much room in that for humbly begging the Lord to transform me into His image.

I love sweeping reform. Nothing would make me happier than to awake tomorrow morning and suddenly be able to attain perfection in my appetites, my attitude, my speech and my home environment. With all my goals accomplished, I could then....stand around and pat myself on the back while feeling sorry for all the pathetic souls who just can't get it together? Hmmmm. I wonder why God doesn't do that for me?

Instead, He seems to expect me to go through this laborious and often painful process He calls “refining.” Just when I think I've got one thing figured out, another ugly part of my nature rears its head and I am humbled again. “I resolve...” rings of pride in self. When I am busy making lists of how to improve myself, even though I'm finding fault, I'm still focused on ME.

Wouldn't it be much better instead to hold up before my eyes, as often as possible, the image of God? To study His word, and engrave it on my heart? To spend a few moments, whenever I have them, in silent praise, allowing His Spirit to fill me?

I recently read the story of “The Ugly Duckling” to my children. As I think of that little story, I often feel like the main character. Every time I catch the faintest glimpse of God's perfection, I feel my own inadequacy sharply. I'm clumsy and complaining, I hear the sharpness of my own voice, see the unattractiveness of my body, know myself to be shallow and foolish. Then I ask God, like the duckling, “Why am I so ugly?” I can only hope and pray that at the end of the story of my life, when I get to that crystal sea, Jesus will tell me to look down and see my reflection in the water. And I will be surprised to find that I have grown into something beautiful, the image of my Saviour.

*I am resolved to go to the Saviour,
Leaving my sin and strife;
He is the true One, He is the just One,
He hath the words of life!
I will hasten to Him,
Hasten so glad and free;
Jesus, Greatest, Highest, I will come to thee!*

Prayer Requests:

We'll post these new every month. If you would like one to stay on the list, please re-submit it each month, with updated information if possible.

* For our missionary families, as they serve the Lord in New Mexico, Kenya and Haiti.

* For the leadership in our country, let's remember, all authority comes from God.

* For Timothy, newborn son of Kevin and Kara Lorenz, who has had surgery to attach his small and large intestines, and for the family as they face these challenges. Timothy is home and doing well, but needs to gain weight.

* For Rhoda Martin, that work would pick up locally for her husband, so he doesn't have to be gone on so many long trips. They have four children age 3 yrs to 4 mos.

* For this newsletter, that it would be used of God to help sisters who are raising young children

* I'm sure there are many others. Send them in!

SEEK YE FIRST

Submitted by Sister Michelle Miller

There is an area in my life that far too often I allow Satan to use as a stronghold. It is that of Stealing My Joy. It seems that from day to day the stress of not being able to accomplish it all leaves me feeling discouraged and frustrated. I look around me and it would appear (as Satan would have it) that others are able to handle it, even juggling more activities than I. So what is my problem?

One morning during devotions, with this thought heavy on my heart, I asked the Lord for a verse of comfort while flipping through the scriptures. No particular verse jumped out at me at that time. However, later on in the day I was in my suburban running an errand to the farm when a radio preacher's voice grabbed my attention. I'm not even sure who he was, but he was talking about day to day worry and he quoted Matthew 6:33. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." I knew immediately that was my verse. He also commented on verse 34, saying that we should not borrow worry or trouble from tomorrow because tomorrow has enough worry of its own. God gives us grace day by day. The message to me was clear. The Lord was saying, "Michele, your problem is that you are not seeking Me and My Righteousness first in your life. You are focusing on the temporal. I have promised you that if you seek Me *first*, all these things that you worry about will be given to you, but you have to put your trust in Me. Trust Me and the peace that you long for will fill your soul." This verse along with others that have been revealed to me have been a great help.

I am also presently involved in a small group bible study. We are studying out of a book called *Living Above Worry and Stress*. A verse from my lesson this week really spoke to me. Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save, He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." (NIV) Having the Lord quiet my heart and rejoice over me with singing was a new thought that brought me great comfort. Now through out the day when stress hits I remember "Seek ye first....." I still have days when frustrations mount but I am claiming Gods promise and with his help I can overcome!

One last thought that I read in a book several years ago. It was so good that it has stuck with me. (I just need to put it into practice daily). It was by Nancy Leigh Demoss. From *Lies Women Believe*. She said, "There is time in every day to do what the Lord has called you to do. Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance to discern what needs done and what should be let go."

Grandmas Fill Gaps

Mail-order Grandmas!

For those of you who are forced to have a “long-distance relationship” with your grandchildren, here are some tips:

- *Mail post-cards on a regular basis.
- *For the tech-savvy, matching web-cams for you and your grandchildren will allow you to see each other anytime! You can use this as an opportunity to read books to them, tell stories, etc. (If you don't want to go that route, record yourself reading books or telling stories and mail the tapes).
- *Mail magazines or catalogs that would interest your grandchildren.
- *Email or text your older grandchildren. They'll appreciate the effort it takes for you to learn a new skill.
- *Send small gifts like dress-up clothes or shoes purchased at a thrift store for little girls, matchbox cars for little boys, favorite snacks for older kids.
- *Pray for them, and let them know you pray for them!
- *Create a small scrapbook of you, your home, your pets, your church, things you like to do, etc. Give it to your grandchildren as a gift. It will help your grandchildren to know you and feel connected to your daily life.
- *During a visit, teach your grandchild to do something. From learning to tie their shoes to making fudge, to knitting, to pounding a nail, every time the child uses that skill, they will think of the time you spent together, and value that skill you taught them. Make sure you get a picture of the two of you doing that special activity together!

From the Mouths of Babes

This cute (and instructional) story was submitted by Sister Rhoda Martin.

One day as I was at the gas station filling up our van, our three year old daughter, Rachel, said “Hey! You're Naughty! You're supposed to use only CASH!” She was talking to the man across from us who was using his credit card to pay at the pump. She continued to scold him, saying “Card is bad, You'se can only use cash! Naughty!” Thankfully, she was in the van, talking to him through the window glass, but at least she's learning!

Tips Appreciated

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Sent in by Sister Missy Martin

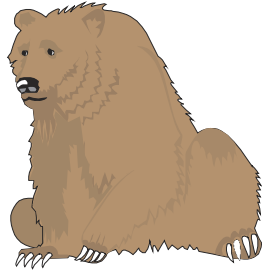
I started a nightly routine of telling my children stories about "When I was a little girl..." The children just love hearing all the camping and cabin adventures along with my favorite Christmas and birthday gifts, tradition and the list goes on! Some nights daddy tells his adventures and other nights we ask the children to tell us stories about themselves that they want to tell their children someday. (That is my favorite part! You find out what things really stick in your child's mind.)

I haven't run out of stories yet because my children beg me to do repeats of their favorites.

A little tip: Make a rule that there is only one story a night or this can be a really good way for them to prolong the bedtime routine along with needing just one more drink and etc...

Kids Korner:

Cheap Entertainment for a Creative Child



~suggestion from Michelle Miller~

I have a daughter who is always cutting, pasting, gluing or painting. She can entertain herself for hours with very little. She has lots of creativity.

Something that we discovered that has created hours of cheap fun is colored duct tape. Go to your Wal-Mart or Home Depot and pick up several colors of duct tape. It lasts forever and the possibilities are endless. There's the ever famous "duct tape wallets." (That's how we got started). She has moved on to purses, pictures and her favorite, duct tape dolls with duct tape clothing to dress them with!

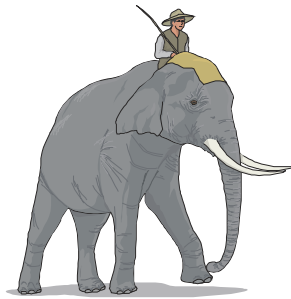
I would add that Duck Tape actually has a website with suggestions and a story contest for those who have found creative uses for Duck tape. It's www.ducktapesavestheday.com

KIDDIE KLASSICS:

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See Inside Your Body is an Usborne Flap Book that my daughter received for Christmas. She can't put it down! I am impressed by the detailed pictures which make things simple for children to understand. She has picked up an amazing volume of information in such a short time! This engaging book gives you an opportunity to show your children how they are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

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A Tip for Moms of Toddlers

I know you are all aware that you probably should be writing down all the cute little things that your toddlers are saying but in all the business it's easy to allow it to slip by the way side. You tend to think you will remember butit would seem that our memory fades with time .

When my children were babies I bought a special notebook for each of them. This was for the sole purpose of keeping track of their cute sayings or actions. I didn't have time to run for the note book every time one of them said or did something that made us laugh. But I did try to scribble it down on a piece of paper and eventually it would land in the note book.

Now my kids are ages 9 and 11. One of their favorite things to do is pull out those note books and read about the funny things they did or said as babies and toddlers. Sometimes we laugh till we cry. The memories are priceless and most of them I would never have remembered had they not been written down. The best thing of all is it's free! The only cost involved is the price of your notebook! ~Michelle Miller

It'll All come Out In the Wash

Recently I was talking with a woman at church who has raised 3 boys and was complaining to her about the grass stains my boys inevitably wear home on their dress pants. She told me to try LAVA soap on the stains and it really does help get them out. Get the stain wet and lather on the bar of soap, then launder as usual.

Also, I've discovered that plain 'ole white vinegar works great as a fabric softener and no, my laundry does not smell like pickles! Vinegar does not leave that slimy build-up on towels and clothes that fabric softener can and it also helps clean the hard water deposits out of the washing machine. Plus, it's much cheaper, so you can spend that extra money you saved on a bag of Dove chocolates or a sweet card for your hubby!

~Kirsten Wertz

Worth Reading:

She Bringeth Her Food from Afar

I was hoping to have more “healthy” recipes for this issue, since many start on diets this month!

Something that has improved our diet in recent months is a bread machine I picked up at a garage sale. It is easy to use, and we have been eating fresh whole wheat bread instead of the processed kind from the store!

Since no one sent me healthy recipes, I’m going to just give you one from Rhoda Martin that sounds delicious and not diet-friendly!

Mini Chocolate Chip Cheesecakes

2 -8 oz. packs cream cheese

½ cup sugar

2 T. flour

2 eggs

dash of vanilla

vanilla wafer cookies

chocolate chips

Line 14-17 muffin cups with paper liners, then place one vanilla wafer in the bottom of each. Top with 1 tablespoon of chocolate chips. Mix the other ingredients until well-blended and smooth, then pour into muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 350 degrees until set, 15-17 minutes. Remove from oven, then garnish with a few chocolate chips.

Cool and Enjoy!

“Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off.” (Psalm 138:6)

“But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10).

“The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.” (Proverbs 17:3)

The Fatherless is a novel about a young boy whose bruised and bitter heart just wants a daddy's love. As we follow his story, we see how our lives entwine with those around us and how we have the opportunity to minister grace and healing to them. We also see that the love of our heavenly Father is inexhaustible, rich and sufficient. I was challenged to see behind the facade many of the people I meet on a regular basis wear and to love them with the love God has shown me. The characters are engaging and the story draws you in.

Okay, this is a shameless plug for my sister, Erin (Jamison) Inman's new novel, but I'm not the only one who thinks it's a great book! You can get it on Amazon by searching under Erin Inman. I highly recommend it, and not just because she's my sister. ~Kirsten Wertz

–I would add, Yes, it is a great book, and not just because she’s my sister-in-law! ~Bonny Jamison

I know December was a busy month for all of you, I really do. Thank you to everyone who sent me wonderful things, but I really need to hear from the rest of you! Please don't think you are not a writer, or you don't have anything to say. Just share what's on your heart, it will be an encouragement to me and to others. This issue was very hard for me to get out, and as I sit here typing this at one o'clock in the morning, I confess to feeling a bit discouraged. I am flying to Washington in about six hours, but I wanted this to go out (pretty much) on time. Writing and editing this newsletter is something that I know God has put on my heart, but it is a big commitment. Pray for me, and write down all those things I know you're out there thinking!

~Trying not to whine,
Sister Bonny

