

Planning Our Way

We are now several weeks into 2008--a new year; new dreams; new goals. As 2007 was winding down, I couldn't help but reflect on the past year and contemplate what the new one would bring. On my drive home from work one evening, I was talking to God and asking Him what we were going to accomplish in the new year. I had some wonderful ideas to present to Him. A new year--a new beginning. It was time to get down to work. Right?

God speaks to us in so many ways. Yes, I've heard that still, small voice. Those are precious moments. And He's led me so many times through His scripture, to His answers for my questions. But on this particular night, He must have known He had His work cut out for Him.

I turned the radio on and the preacher was talking about "wait." I don't wait--I'm a full steam ahead kind of person. I dismissed it. Later on that night I opened my Bible and it seemed to automatically part at Psalm 40:

- 1. I waited patiently for the LORD;
and He inclined unto me,
and heard my cry.*
- 2. He also brought me up out of an horrible pit,
out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a rock,
and established my goings.*
- 3. He has put a new song in my mouth,
even praise unto our God:
many shall see it, and fear,
and shall trust in the LORD.*

Wait? Was God trying to tell me something? Wait, with the word patiently in the same sentence, seems a bit odd to me. I like to claim that I'm patient; but, I know deep-down in my heart that I'm not.

There are patient people in this impatient world of ours. I'm not one of them. They don't seem to get aggravated in traffic or with stoplights that stay red **FOREVER**. And yes, I realize, waiting is inevitable. Patience, in the waiting process, takes practice though! We live in a fast-paced, fast-food, instant-gratification world. Many of us would rather do without than wait in line.

Throughout scripture we find people waiting for God to do His will--in His time. Sarah and Abraham waited twenty-five years for their promised child. Did they wait patiently? No. They tried to solve their wants and needs in their own way. But, ultimately, they waited.

The Israelites wandered in the desert forty years before entering the Promised Land. Did they wait patiently? No. But, ultimately, they waited.

Could waiting patiently be a spiritual discipline? God called His people of the past to be a waiting people. Is He calling His people today to that same discipline? Is He calling me to that spiritual discipline? Not only to wait--but to wait "patiently"?

The Psalmist seemed to have learned how to wait patiently. His tone doesn't reflect frustration, or anger,

or sadness; in fact, it sounds hopeful. When the Psalmist waited patiently on God, God did the work. God came to him. God heard his cry. And ultimately, God responded in tangible ways.

God is working on His timetable; with His plan; and on His schedule. The situations of life we experience can cause us stress and impatience. All too often, we try to rush a resolution instead of crying to God and allowing Him to respond.

There is a story I love about a farmer and his wife. The wife was a jump-to-it-now person and the husband was a slow, deliberate, measure twice—cut once, kind of person. One night they were awakened by a commotion in the chicken coop. The wife sprang out of bed, ran to the chicken coop, and found the cause of the racket - a large black snake. She acted immediately. She slammed her bare foot down on its head. But now, what was she to do? She had an angry black snake trapped underfoot. And so she stood until her husband finally arrived a good fifteen minutes later, fully dressed, down to the pocket watch in his overalls. “Well,” he said cheerfully to his disheveled and enraged wife, “if I’d known you had him, I wouldn’t have hurried so.”

Some of us are in such a hurry to get answers for our problems and concerns that we are not willing or interested in waiting on God to work on our behalf. Are we the farmer’s wife, treating God like the farmer? The Psalmist knew that waiting patiently allows God to work. Let’s review verse 3 of Psalms 40 once more, **“He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.”** Waiting patiently allows God to put a new song in our mouths. And, how can we not be changed when we take the time to notice God working in our lives? But, we have a choice to make. We can wait patiently on the Lord and witness His working, or we can be so busy and stressed that we miss out on the realization that the Creator of the Universe is intimately interested in our situation. **We can have a new song of praise—we can trust in His provision;** or, we can trust in ourselves and our own abilities.

Waiting patiently is a learned skill that comes from a living relationship with God. The Psalmist knew that anyone could wait, but it takes a godly man, or woman, to **wait patiently and sing a new song of praise to Him in the midst of our troubles.** He reminds us that to wait on God offers us something unique and new. It offers us the realization that God cares for His creation, including imperfect, needy creatures who think that they have to “do.” God just wants us to take the time, wait patiently, and allow Him to become so real and alive in our lives that we begin to automatically, without a conscience thought, **“wait patiently for the Lord”** to guide our every step, in every situation of our lives—for the rest of our lives!

Sincerely in His service,
Sister Mary Pedigo
and your BTLM family!

“Here is the patience of the saints:

here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. What an awesome thought to begin our new year with. To fervently pray for the mind of Christ to fully be replicated in us! That we become the patient, loving, faithful Christians God has called us to be. Let go of, and recognize, those obstacles/character traits that are keeping us from fully reflecting the **love of God** to those around us. Begin to see others as a “soul” for the Kingdom! Realizing that we cannot truly love others as brothers, and sisters, in Christ, if we are busy judging and condemning them by our narrow perspective of who, and what, we believe them to be. Rather, in patient faith through fervent prayer, **love others** as Jesus did. Show others the way of salvation **in love**—without **“love”** everything else availeth nothing (Read I Corinthians chapter 13.) Then watch God do the rest; convicting hearts and guiding your every step!

FOCUSING YOUR EFFORTS!

In our last update, we were very explicit with our needs for the ministry. And for a few, you prayerfully focused your efforts on ways to help in the cause of God here at BTLM. For this, **we are truly grateful!** We can't thank those of you who stepped up-to-the plate (as-it-were) enough for your help—for your allowing God to use you to sustain this ministry! **MUCH of our financial burden has been lifted as pertaining to the school property!** Praise God! May our Lord continue to richly bless each and everyone of you!

Currently, we are still facing ministry debt with a strong desire to do more evangelistic work for the Lord this year. To travel/hold meetings is a costly endeavor which will put more pressure and strain on our finances. We tell you this not to discourage, no, **but to encourage and inform** you of our needs! The Lord is showing us (even though we are still timid in this area) that we must let His people know the needs and give them an opportunity to do their part in supplying the needs. At the same time, we have been re-examining our responsibilities as good stewards as well. We have made the decision to cut staff hours as-much-as we possibly can. At the same time, some of us have been praying that God would send persons with leadership capabilities, possessing a burden for souls, to our church/ministry—He has been answering! Case in point is Sister Mary who wrote our opening article for this newsletter! She is quickly becoming a vital part of our family. And we praise God for her and the several others He has recently been directing our way! With a concerted effort of more volunteer workers, this will indeed reduce some of our financial pressures.

At the time many of you may be receiving this newsletter, Pastor Kenny, with some

of his family, will be ministering 3. near Knoxville, TN (February 22-24). Then following in March (the 11th-30th), he, and his wife, will be on a mission trip to San Salvador, in the country of El Salvador, to conduct an evangelic series there. We are extremely grateful to be accompanied with Sister Sharna Welty, a BTLM supporter. She will be assisting with the meetings as the Lord directs.

First, and foremost, be in diligent prayer for the salvation of souls during these meetings! Pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon each speaker; each assistant; and each one who attends. Claim Psalms 34:7 with us, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” ***Secondly***, speak with the Lord and ask Him what you can do together to financially support these worthy endeavors. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things”? **Romans 8:31-32.**

Presently, just a little over \$300.00 has come in to finance the El Salvador trip. We are expecting the total cost to run somewhere between \$3,000.00-\$4,000.00.

Locally, this summer we would like, and are checking into, a series of meetings to be held in a location near our ministry. Just this week, Sister Kelly has been researching possible sights in a nearby town called Carterville, IL. Several weeks ago, Sister Debbie did the same for the area of Herrin, IL. A decision will be made soon. We covet your prayers and financial sponsorship for this set of meetings as well.

***May our Lord, and Saviour,
bless each and everyone as we work together in His name!***

Ephesians 6:12-18

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

PRAYER REQUESTS

—Ron/Marilyn’s personal list of family/friends, from TN.

—Charles’/Sharna’s son/father, from WY.

—Marietta, from PA, prays that her broken arm will heal well and that the Lord will see her through an upcoming foot surgery. She also requests prayer for her husband’s sister, Vera, who is suffering from bladder cancer and cancer in her leg. And please pray for her son Seven and a friend, Dewey.

—Again, pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the meetings in El Salvador and Southern Illinois. Also, pray that needed funds will come in for these meetings.

—Pray for the local BTLM family. We are growing! And with growth comes new experiences and knowledge. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s control over all hearts, lives, and decisions!

—Pray for the health and Spiritual wellbeing of the Keeling family, from KY.

—Pray for Mary, in MO.

—Pray for Kay and Jacob and the many decisions that are being made in their lives. Pray that the Lord will provide a country home for them.

Emergency Numbers:

- When in sorrow: **John 14.**
- If you want to be fruitful: **John 15.**
- When you have sinned: **Psalms 51.**
- When you worry: **Matthew 6:19-34.**
- When God seems far away:
Psalm 139.
- When your faith needs stirring:
Hebrews: 11.
- When you are lonely and fearful:
Psalm 23.
- When you grow bitter and critical:
I Corinthians 13.
- When you feel down and out:
Romans 8:31-39.
- When you want peace and rest:
Matthew 11:25-30.
- When you leave home for labor or travel: **Psalm 121.**
- When your prayers grow narrow or selfish: **Psalm 67.**
- When you want courage for a task:
Joshua 1.
- How to get along with fellow men:
Romans 12.
- If your pocketbook is empty:
Psalm 37.
- If people seem unkind: **John 15.**
- If you find the world growing small,
and yourself great: **Psalm 19.**

Emergency numbers may be dialed direct.

No operator assistance is necessary.

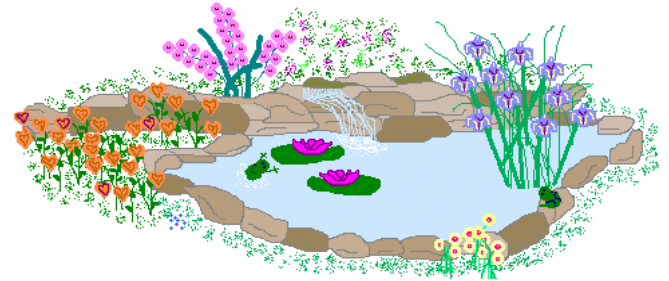
All lines are open to Heaven 24 hours a day!

Feed your faith, and doubt will starve to death!!!

*—Thanks Roland Frederick
for sending in this needed information!*

Want a year-round garden? If so, here's how to plant it:

—First: You come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses...



—Plant three rows of peas:

1. Peace of mind.
2. Peace of heart.
3. Peace of soul.



—Plant four rows of squash:

1. Squash gossip.
2. Squash indifference.
3. Squash grumbling.
4. Squash selfishness.



—Plant four rows of lettuce:

1. Lettuce be faithful.
2. Lettuce be kind.
3. Lettuce be patient.
4. Lettuce really love one another.



—No garden is without turnips:

1. Turnip for meetings.
2. Turnip for service.
3. Turnip to help one another.



—To conclude our garden, we must have thyme:



1. Thyme for each other.
2. Thyme for family.
3. Thyme for friends.

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There will be much fruit in your garden because you “reap what you sow.” (Thanks Michael/JoJean for sending this in!)

“Though no one can go back in time and make a brand-new start, anyone can start now and make a brand new-ending”!

—Anonymous

What an encouraging thought! One that should give hope to everyone who ponders and accepts it as the truth. We have no power to go back in time; to make changes to decisions we made that were wrong; that hurt ourselves, and perhaps those whom we love. Paul so amply says it well in Philippians 3:13-14, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those thing which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

In an e-mail recently received at BTLM, a member sent an attachment of the following (original author uncertain):

“There is a story I love about a man who was slowly losing his memory. Concerned, he went to his doctor. Upon examination, the doctor said that an operation on his brain might reverse his condition and restore his memory. But the surgery would be so dangerous and delicate that nerve damage could possibly occur causing total blindness. ‘Which would you rather have,’ asked the surgeon, ‘your sight or your memory?’ The man thought long and hard about his choices and finally decided, ‘My sight; because, I would rather see where I am going than remember where I have been.’

“The apostle Paul speaks of the same choice in his writings to the Philippians. He chose to move beyond his past, with both its successes and its shames, and keep his eyes on the goal of life with Jesus Christ.

“To me, that’s the mark of true Christian maturity and a goal we all should strive for. Yes, we all have pasts, and we don’t want to forget those successes and failures, but God doesn’t want us to live in the past. We can thank Him for our past successes. And thankfully, we can ask His forgiveness for our past failures and trust that those sins are buried in the deepest sea.

“We have a choice to make—pressing forward or looking back. What do you choose? To see—or to remember”?