

The Keeper of the Home...

The following are a few things that I have collected through the years to remind me of the preciousness of being a *Keeper of my Home*. Ready for a checklist? Let's do it together...

- ✓ **Appreciates her family!** Looks at what God says are our GIFTS and BLESSINGS! Our greatest gifts and blessings are our family! It is so easy to take for granted those that we love the most. How are you guarding your heart to assure that you keep an appreciation for your family?

How are you communicating your appreciation of your loved ones TO THEM???

- ✓ **Appreciate your home!** Our husbands love contentment! Be content in your home. Don't fuss about what is NOT done, what you DON'T have, etc. Be appreciative of what he IS providing for you! Have you listed lately all of the sweet things your husband has provided for you? Make a list below AND share it with him (Gently of course, you don't want him to have a heart attack!)



An idea for you: Why not continue this list in your Mommy Journal and remind him on a regular basis???

- ✓ **Be fulfilled in your role!** Learn why God designed you. Learn what God wants for you and only you to do. Enjoy God's best! Let your family catch what you are. Use praise, joy, and enthusiasm to let them catch God from you! It will be your greatest ministry! Are you satisfied in your life now? Why or why not?

Enlarge The Place of Your Tent!

Pour all into YOUR home. But HOW??? Here are some tips...

1. **Make your home a place to get away and rest!** Take a look at Mark 6: 31. Even Jesus needed time to get away and get rest. How much more do our husbands? Our children? Yes! We all need a place to get away from the pressures and the hectic pace of the world. Our family needs a place of rest that is a haven from the world!! Is your home a haven? What can you do to make it more so?

2. **Let your home be a shelter from the storms of life!** Make your home a place where those you love are protected from the winds of doctrine, which blow to and fro! Protect from the rains of sorrow and discouragement, which would beat us down! Protect from the snow of apathy, which would freeze us from continuing in joyful service! Protect from the heat, which would easily tire us or cause us to fall away! Are you setting guard over your family so that your home is a shelter? Why? Why not?

How can you better provide shelter for those you love?

3. **Welcome others in your home.** Are you truly hospitable? Is your home inviting? Is your home comfortable?

What are some practical ways you can make your home a place of hospitality?

4. **Take TIME to plan...** Keep lists. Organize and record your menu/schedules that work/ chore charts. Be PREPARED so you can enjoy ministering through hospitality. What are some ways that you can better organize your home? What can help you attain that gentle and quiet spirit in the midst of your most harried day?

5. **Develop a Schedule JUST right for your family...** Don't be pressed to keep up with others OR to impress others. Adapt to your husband and his schedule. Go the pace of your children. Cut out anything that hinders your family from stepping up to the call before them. Anything that does not work toward God's purpose for your family. Are there things that need to be changed in order to have a slower pace?

What hindrances need to go for you to be a great *Keeper of your Home*?

6. **See Homemaking as "unto the Lord."** Run your home as you would for Jesus! It is you know?!? Get a head start on the day! (Straighten the night before!) Utilize your help! (Your children may not do it perfect, but it is training!!) Start your day with God! (Get up earlier (I get up 2 hours earlier) so you can have some time alone with God in the Word and in Prayer! Limit your time spent on nonessentials! (We usually spend about 1 hour a day on house cleaning...everybody does their part and we move on to school and fun...we have a clutter drill in the afternoon and before bed.) Go room to room getting organized bit by bit!

Lessons daily stress of doing it all! Lessons stress of a major clean out! What are you doing to make keeping your home smooth?

What are some things that you want to do to make things smoother now?

7. **Keep learning so you will be a better (and happier) wife!** Yes! It is legal! You can keep learning new things your entire life! AND you can even have FUN learning! Why not pick up something new that will help you to better manage and provide for your family? What are some things that you would like to learn?

What about sewing? Herbs? Gardening? Nutrition? Crafts? Baking? Soapmaking? Writing? Keep learning! It WILL help you become a better Keeper of Your Home!

8. **Minister IN and THROUGH Your Home!** As a conclusion to this section, read the following quote...

"We should be able to serve the Lord just as joyfully cleaning house as preparing dinner for a king, for all of our work is beautiful to the Lord when it is done in the right attitude and unto Him. To believe that because something sounds "big" to us, that it is also big to God, is a trap our pride may set for us, when in fact, the opposite may be true. What may seem important to us, may be very unimportant to God. He may not always call us to "big" things. He might lead us to spend time ministering to an elderly friend when it might be our initial tendency to think that our time would be better spent sharing our testimony on a broader scale, or ministering to a greater number of people. But that may not be so. It is far more important that we are FAITHFUL in the task He has given, rather than doing something we see as great. It was told of Florence Nightingale that she 'saw little distinction between the secular tasks of visiting the sick and the spiritual duties attendant upon church activities. Into each she carried the Spirit of Christ. She was a servant to those in need, whether that need was spiritual or physical.' As we follow God's call, our service becomes beautiful in His eyes...Don't look at positions according to man's eyes, ask God to help you see things through His."

Jennifer Lamp, *His Chosen Bride*

Hospitality...

WHY Hospitality? Oh! There are so many reasons! Yes! It is so fulfilling as a woman. Men Love It! It says "I am proud of what you are providing me with!" Men need to be successful at providing!! It builds memories for a lifetime with our children. And, of course, it shares the REAL you with others!!

Quick Hospitality How-to's:

- ♥ **Don't wait until things are perfect!** This has been a snag for me in the past (and still today on many occasions!). Have you ever waited for that elusive time when the house would be clean... you could provide a more elaborate meal... or have a bigger house? Did it ever happen? What are your excuses?

I am comforted by the wisdom of Emilie Barnes. She writes the following in her book *Welcome Home...*

"You don't need elaborate preparations to share that kind of hospitality. You certainly don't need a special room just for guests. Hospitality can thrive in the simplest of settings and the humblest circumstances. It's a matter of opening your life to others, giving them the best you have to offer, but never allowing the preparations to substitute for an open-armed welcome."

People don't really notice what you think they would notice! They don't usually see what you don't have--old furniture? Paper cups? You don't even have to have a house!! You can reach out from a camper! or while building a house! People really look for YOUR SPIRIT! That they are not an inconvenience! That they are loved! That you love your home and serving in it! That you take time and energy and effort for them! That they matter!!

- ♥ **Be Genuine!** It is ok to be YOU! How can you be yourself as you open your home to others?

Think of times that you were welcomed into the home of others...what sticks out about the time?

- ♥ **Live within your means!** Be simple and sweet!! What are some creative ways that you can

offer hospitality on a limited budget?

- ♥ **Be Creative!** Add YOUR touch! Enjoy Womanhood! MAKE your home, YOUR home! What are the little things that you do that make hospitality special to those that you entertain?

- ♥ **Don't compare or compete!** Want a snare that will cost you more than you can imagine? Comparison! Competition! Been snared? How can you guard your heart to stay away?

- ♥ **Be yourself!** Kinda sounds funny when people would be coming to YOUR home to see YOU and YOUR family! But, I think this needs to be said. Be yourself! Whether it is the your best girl-friend...your inlaws... your husband's boss... KNOW that you are truly a treasure to get to know. Be yourself! Then, hospitality will be easy!

- ♥ **Make others welcome!** This has been a snare for me in the past. I used to put SOOOOO much into preparing to be hospitable that by the time our guests would arrive, I was so exhausted that I had little to offer. If that was not enough, I worked so hard on making my

home perfect that I did not want anyone to TOUCH anything! 😊 How about you? Been there? I decided that there were several things I could do to make others feel more welcome. First, I could plan simpler menus that required less last minute preparations so I could be more available and relaxed at the last minute. Second, I could relax my standards of what I thought a clean house should be. Third, I could focus more on spiritual preparation than the homemaking. What about you? What do you do to make others feel more welcome in your home?

- ♥ **Share hospitality through tea or homemade muffins or cookies!** This is an even simpler preparation for you, the simplest of menus and it only takes a few minutes to throw together goodies for a simple cup of tea and a quick snack. Do you have other quick ideas for hospitality? Jot them down below...
- ♥ **Remember special touches!** I think that this is probably the one thing that makes offering hospitality the *MOST* fun! It is the little things along the way that make a real difference. What are some of the little touches you have used to minister hospitality to others?

Hindrances to BEING a Keeper AT Home...

Oh, beloved, are you seeing how very vital you are within your home? No one else can fill your role, only you! As a result, you are going to find a battle waging for your attention that you intend to give to your home.

I know...are you thinking "BATTLE???" What a strange description..." and wondering if I have lost my mind? No, my dear friend. There is a real battle waging against your commitment to your home. It hits with very real hindrances all along the way. Take a look at a few to see if the battle has been waging on YOUR homefront...

TOO MUCH GOING...

Is this a hindrance for you? Let's get a little personal. Do you go so much (even for good things) that you sometimes find that you cannot truly enjoy your home? When was the last time you had TIME to leisurely relax and enjoy your home?

Can you spend one entire week at home without feeling as though you are not getting to do all you need to do? Are all those activities truly God's will? Would all those same activities go on just as well without you? Does your husband feel that they are God's will?

Slow down to enjoy your home. Let your husband set your schedule. If satan can't stop you, then his next tactic is to get you so BUSY tending other people's gardens that you can't tend yours effectively! THEN you have failed at YOUR call! IF we have vision, our enemy KNOWS how to steal it...he uses the bait of pride, busyness, fear, envy! WE MUST SEEK TO BE KEEPERS AT HOME FIRST TO FULFILL OUR BIBLICAL ROLES!

HOUSE TO HOUSE...

Take a look at 1 Timothy 5:13. Hummm...meddling now? Describe from this passage the dangers of going from "house to house."

One other passage...Look at 2 Thessalonians 3: 11-13. What is God's view of the person who is too busy to do the work they are called to do?

How are we to live?

Be VERY careful...too much socialization (EVEN GOOD SOCIALIZATION) can lead you astray!

TOO MUCH TELEPHONE...

OK, you stay at home; but, you still can't get time to do all that you must for your family. Have that ministry of the TELEPHONE?? You may proudly be innocent of over-extension outside of your home. In fact, going house to house may not be an issue for you. But beware, beware! Telephones can be distracters EVEN for the godly homemaker!

They distract from our family! They encourage gossip! (I don't know if you are just BETTER than me, but I find that on the phone I say more than I ever would if I were eye-to-eye!!) The calls are hard to cut short! They will steal our days! And after the call, it takes still more time after the call rehashing problems in my mind and trying to SOLVE them! Relate? Need help too? What are some things you have done to tame the phone monster? List below!

Need a little help? Use a timer. Set a VERY short limit and STICK TO IT! Use an answering machine. Don't let a ringing phone interrupt your time with your family. Instead, schedule in time to visit those you love for a cup of tea. (Of course, beware of that...remember the last section??) Maybe you could also save time on the phone while encouraging your children to begin a letter/card writing ministry for those you just want to minister to. Not only will you have more time and be better able to discipline yourself, but you will also encourage your children toward real life ministry!

EMAIL!

Although I LOVE email, I have to be the very first to admit that it CAN steal away those precious

moments with your family! How have you seen email become a hindrance to your role in your home?

What are you currently doing to tame the monster?

Guard your home from the email monster! Place limits! Limit the time spent working on email each day. Limit the forums you are on to only those that you really need at this time. Limit all chit-chat that is unproductive!

BOOKS/MAGAZINES...

Another tricky area that the enemy uses to battle our attention, therefore our influence in our homes is with books and magazines. As an author, you can imagine how hard this section is to write! But that is NOTHING compared to my addiction to books myself. I love books. I love booklets. I love magazines. I love newsletters. You can imagine that when you simply are addicted to print in ANY form, that this is an area that your enemy will eventually hit! Does he? Oh, yes! And...I am not the only one!

Watch YOUR garden! Why not swap books for THE Book? Get so saturated in the Word that He can teach you truth/wisdom/His Plan/His Way. Take time to meditate on the WORD OF GOD—to really apply what you are learning. Watch anything that takes place of time with God and your family. Be VERY careful not to commit spiritual adultery! Live don't just read OR write about it! Thinking over your reading material. What have you been reading?

How does it encourage you in your walk with God and your ministry within your family?

Are there some changes that God is putting on your heart in this area? Write them down in a list of goals...

TV!

Hummm...soaps? Talk Shows? Yep. These are also hindrances that the enemy uses along the way. These are a perfect example of 2 Thess. 3: 11-14; 1 Timothy 5:13. Do you agree? How do you think they qualify as a modern day examples of these verses?

I hate to be the one who always has to write the tough stuff. However, I have to let you know the dangers that you and I face as we commit to become the *Godly Keepers of our Home* that God wants for us to be. So, with that said, if TV is an area that is vying for your attention let's get serious about what it really is. Think about the programs you watch. Do they qualify as godly? Do they match up to Philippians 4:8? How?

Have high standards! Guard against those programs that merely wage battle for you and your family by wasting time, leading to depression. They risk leading YOU astray!

BUSY...

Take a look at Proverbs 29:18. This is not something you get ONCE and for all! You will have to constantly check your garden! You will have to constantly make sure you have time with God, time with your husband, time with your children, time within your home, time to minister to those within your sphere of influence, and time left so you can take care of yourself!

The Bible says that there are works set from the foundation of the world. Be faithful in YOUR works...YOUR garden! Don't be distracted by your neighbor's garden whether it is overgrown with weeds that you think you are PERFECTLY qualified to get rid of OR so beautiful that you want IT! Don't feel guilty about letting all else go!

Do ALL you can to preserve that home atmosphere from ALL distractions that would keep you from being the godly *keeper OF the home* and *keeper AT home* that God desires for you to be!

Spiritual Mothering... The Call to Mentoring, Mothering and Ministry!

Could you tell that I had a hard time arriving at a title for the role of the Titus 2 Woman? Mentoring...Mothering...Ministry...whatever your preferred title, it is all the same. It is plain and simple. Yet profound and priceless. The value of pouring forth into the life of another. The value of sitting at the feet of a godly woman to be filled up!

When I consider how God has worked in my life through the years to provide the mentoring, mothering, and ministry that only comes from relationships between women, I see that I have been so very blessed. I would never have JUST known how to be a godly wife, mother, or teacher without the investment of those God called to step up to the call as a Titus Two Teacher to me.

What do I mean by this? Well, that is what this section is for. You may be entering the ranks of Godly women and have no idea where to begin. You may already be a wife...a mother, but you have been struggling along because you have no idea what it really looks like to be a godly wife and mother.

Now, you may find yourself with a few years under your belt, but you certainly do not feel that you qualify under the Titus Two passage as a mentor, spiritual mother, or a minister...you are STILL young! Hehe!

I want to encourage you that wherever you are, this is an important chapter for you. God understands where we are today more than you can imagine. Just think of our society...

- ♥ divorce (often SEVERAL divorces in each family)
- ♥ school from daylight till dark~then, for many daycare after that
- ♥ most families live across the country from their extended families

Oh that is not all. Even in the most Christ-centered families, there are few moments as family...

- ♥ few family traditions
- ♥ few family rituals
- ♥ very little relaying of family stories, family history
- ♥ very few moments together for EVEN meals, family days...

The families that remain are seldom untouched by dysfunction. There is a tremendous need for women to step up to the call of ministering woman-to-woman as mentors and spiritual mothers! Ready for the call?

God's Plan ALL Along!

Yes! God's plan all along is for women to step up to the call as mentors, mothers, ministers within their sphere of influence. Not too sure? Let's take a look at what the Bible says about this awesome plan...

Dress and Keep Our Garden...

Take a look at Genesis 2: 7-15. I am clipping in the passage with special emphasis on a few words. Looking at this clip, note below the sphere of influence and the role within that sphere of influence...

7: And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8: And the LORD God planted A GARDEN eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9: And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of THE GARDEN, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10: And a river went out of Eden to water THE GARDEN; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11: The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12: And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13: And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14: And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

*15: And the LORD God took the man, and put him into THE GARDEN of Eden *TO DRESS IT and TO KEEP IT.**

What did you find in the passage was the assigned "sphere of influence?"

What did you find was the assignment in the "sphere of influence?"

From the beginning, God has only given families a garden...their OWN garden. Many seek to minister to the whole world to the detriment of their assigned sphere of influence. At this time, there WAS *a whole world* there that God could have assigned Adam to dress and keep. Why do you think God assigned Adam and Eve to dress and keep just "a garden?"

I have more verses to help you! Hold on! Just note in your mind that God's plan was tend *your garden!*

Enlarge Our Tent...

Turn to Isaiah 54: 1-4. Does this verse help you? Why do you think that the focus should be within the home first?

How does this impact the WORLD?

Does this excite you as much as it does me? I love this passage! It offers the first sound plan for building a ministry that REALLY makes a difference in the lives of others!

All begins first in our homes as we minister to our husbands and our precious children! But that is not all... God has called us to BE...BECOME Spiritual mothers/mentors to others! Isaiah 54 gives the plan for how to do that too!

Go back to the passage...How do we mother, mentor, minister to others?

Is that not good? We enlarge our TENT! We strengthen the foundation of our homes! THEN! We open the windows to the insides of our homes, to our REAL LIFE, for others to peek in! Talk about power! Talk about real influence! Talk about real answers in the midst of a world that desperately needs them! Yes! Beloved, GOD has an awesome plan for women to minister to others! BE ready! God WILL enlarge your tent!

And...YES! The Call Goes ON Today!

The call to woman-to-woman ministry was not just back in the Old Testament, it continued in to the New Testament and on to us today! Let's now look at some passages in the New Testament for you today!

First, look at **Titus 2: 3-5**...List what is to be taught?

Who is to teach?

What are the qualifications?

Do you see yourself as ready for the call? Reaching for the call?

Now, look at another passage. Look up **1 Timothy 5: 3-10**, asking yourself the same questions...

List what is to be taught?

Who is to teach?

What are the qualifications?

Do you see yourself as ready for the call? Reaching for the call?

The Godly woman... reaches out in hospitality, washes the feet of the saints, ministers to the needy.

What does this look like? What about a Biblical PICTURE of how the godly woman is to minister, mentor, mother those who come into her sphere of influence? Sure! The rest of this section we will look at one of the most beautiful stories in the Bible. One that shows us up-close how awesome relationships can be between women. Stick with me!

Mary and Elisabeth...

God has a beautiful picture of mentoring in Scripture as we look at the story of Mary and Elisabeth... let's dig in and find His plan for mentoring...

DO NOTE! This section is written a little, well, A LOT different. I include the passage and my notes all throughout the passage. More than any section in the study, I want for this to be written as though you and I are sitting down one-on-one gleaning from the Scripture together. So, join me!

Turn to Luke 1: 5-25

5: There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6: And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord BLAMELESS.

God looks for mentors who are righteous, holy, walking in ALL of the commandments and ways of the Lord... BLAMELESS! No other would have anything to offer. Now, you may be making MANY excuses trying to encourage God to skip over you, but I hate to break it to you, HE WANTS YOU TOO! What are some of your excuses?

Do you know deep down that God really wants to use you too?

He did not say PERFECT in this passage, He simply looks for those who are willing to be set apart for His purposes, those who are willing to accept HIS righteousness that is given as a free gift to all of those who place their faith in Jesus Christ. At the point of salvation, that point where one believes in the name of Jesus Christ, repents of those heavy sins, and accepts the free gift of salvation, we all become "blameless" as our dear Elisabeth was in this passage. (Romans 8) Hallelujah!

7: And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was BARREN,

Perhaps there is NOTHING that can bring a greater love for children like barrenness and infertility. Just think of the years that Elisabeth must have grieved over the loss of her dreams. Those months that passed by with birth announcements from her friends. The emptiness of her aching arms. Each month ending with more heartache for this woman of God who so desperately wanted to have her own children to love and nurture for the Lord. Have you experienced barrenness? What are some of

the things that have made this time of your life more difficult?

Elisabeth may have been barren for a very long and painful time, but there was a lot more going on. In her barrenness, she was being prepared perfectly to become Mary's mentor. Why do I say so? Remember Titus 2? The godly mentor was instructed to teach the younger women to LOVE children and motherhood. I have heard it said that there are those who learn how to love children by having children...whereas there are those who learn how to love children through the pain of barrenness. This is exactly what happened in the life of Elisabeth.

She was prepared PERFECTLY to mentor Mary, the mother of Jesus. The greatest lesson that Elisabeth could ever teach Mary was to LOVE children and LOVE BEARING children! She HAD to know, really KNOW, that babies don't JUST come haphazardly. They are all gifts from God! What perfect preparation for her role as a spiritual mother to a young girl who needed more than anything affirmation from a godly mentor.

God still uses those that experience a less than perfect life. Do you find yourself feeling more like your experiences qualify you for a permanent mentee state, so much so that you are not sure you would ever have anything to offer others?

Beloved, KNOW that your life, your gifts, your abilities, your wisdom, all that you are going through is preparing you day by day just perfectly for that relationship that will help others.

...and they both were now well stricken in years.

8: And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9: According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10: And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11: And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12: And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13: But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14: And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15: For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16: And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17: And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18: And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife

well stricken in years.

19: And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20: And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21: And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22: And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

NOTE here too that your mentors MUST be women who have SEEN and HEARD God. If not, they have NOTHING to offer to you. To really teach and disciple you, they must have VISION, CLEAR VISION!

As a mentor, there is really no other greater preparation for you in the dormant years before God places you as a woman of influence in the life of others than for you to seek God...find Him...and SEE and HEAR Him.

23: And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24: And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25: Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Take a break here. Let's sum it up so far...

WE ALL Have a Ministry...

Yes... every one of us! It is not always in a package that is a one-size-fits-all. In fact, there is no one else with a ministry like you. Does that word sound just a little too big for you?

Actually, the word ministry is probably the most MISUNDERSTOOD word. It does not mean having a touring schedule. It does not require a radio program or a tape ministry. Look up the word ministry. Record your definition below...

Ministry plain and simply means servanthood. Serving others. All of us are called to a ministry of servanthood. We have many spheres of ministry as a servant in: our marriage...our children...a teacher...a homemaker...a public teacher. Yes, we each have a ministry RIGHT where we are!

God Prepares Mentors HIS Way.

Elisabeth Elliott once wrote about how the mentor can be best prepared. Her words are right on

key...

"If anyone thinks she is qualified and would make a great spiritual mentor, then I'd say she is not qualified. Each of us should be directed primarily toward God—doing what He says, living the way He describes Christian life, and trusting that God, in His own way, in His sovereign plan and working in our lives, will bring the older woman and younger woman into contact with each other when He sees the need for that. Daily we should be saying to Him, "I am yours, Lord. Show me what I can do for You Today."

If you need a mentor, know that God is preparing your mentor PERFECTLY to be used in your life. You cannot recruit your own. You cannot make it happen. Each mentor must be prepared specifically for the areas that she is to minister to the mentee. THAT takes time! PLUS! If that is not enough, the mentee has a need to be prepared so she can learn the most. Think about some biblical mentoring relationships. List a few that come to mind...

How did God prepare the mentor?

How did God prepare the mentee?

What was the "pulpit?" How did the mentor teach the mentee?

What qualities are needed for a great mentoring relationship?

What should we look for in the mentor?

How should a mentee prepare for the relationship?

Preparing for Mentoring...

Let's continue to look at the awesome mentoring relationship between Mary and Elisabeth. Let's continue with Luke 1: 26-38...

*26: And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
27: To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
28: And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
29: And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.
30: And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
31: And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS.
32: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:
33: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.
34: Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
35: And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.
36: And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.
37: For with God nothing shall be impossible.
38: And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*

Isn't this beautiful? I know that there are many lessons that we could glean from this passage, but let's look at this passage from the angle of mentoring.

Here we see GOD working in the life of a young woman and, boy, IS He working! In this passage, we meet Mary as she receives her calling, surrenders to that incredible calling, and begins on her path of obedience.

In the last few verses above, we find that not only does Mary have an incredible calling, but also she was not left alone. God led her directly to a mentor that He was prepared just to mentor her. He leads us as well. All we must do is ask God to direct us to those we are to learn from or to teach! He is always faithful!

God Prepares You...

Do you sense your need to learn...be encouraged...be nourished...be nurtured?

What are the circumstances of your life? Do you feel a need for a godly mentor?

Note that in this situation, BEFORE the Mary was instructed to go to Elisabeth, she first had to KNOW God's vision and call on her life. She had to learn to have FAITH in God, not her mentor. She had to know His voice and faithfully obey Him. It is so easy to jump into relationships with humans that place a burden upon them. They are only human. They cannot meet the deepest needs that we have.

In fact, I have seen time and time again that I have looked for others to meet my needs, whether mentors, my husband, my children, or my parents. Each time, there has been a vacuum in my life. Why? Weren't THEY godly enough? Of course not! Well, I am not saying that they were not godly enough, but there is no human GODLY ENOUGH to be GOD! Only God can bring that soul satisfaction that we need the most!

I have also seen time and time again when others have expected ME to meet their needs. What a heavy weight! SCARY! I am ever amazed that at those times I am bound from being of any help at all! I have asked God time and time again (as though I forget the answer OR as though He might just change it for one circumstance eventually!) why I am unable to help at those times. He reminds me every single time that ONLY HE can meet the deepest needs. NOTHING or NOONE can help a person that refuses to go to HIM. In fact, like it or not, without seeking God one is destined for disappointment and disillusion.

So, BEFORE we can truly reap the blessings of a great mentoring relationship, we have to have time at the feet of Jesus. We have to seek HIM. We have to get to KNOW our vision and our calling. We have to develop a deep and abiding FAITH in Him—not your mentor OR husband OR child! We have to know His Voice and be obedient to what He says!

As You Mentor...

Just as important as the mentee hearing God, I think it is JUST as vital for the mentor to also seek God for His will to know when He is leading you to invest time and energy in a person...it won't be