

stories of those who are so much like me.

For example, one of my favorites is the story of Mary and Martha. I don't really know why that story is one of my MOST favorite stories. Perhaps it is because far too often I am more like Martha than Mary, distracted and missing the point... doing it myself instead of trusting those who are ready to serve.. .and coming to Jesus mad that I am the "only" one busy doing the work???!! I always need a fresh look at my spirit. Nothing digs that deep like Scripture!

As I read this passage from Exodus, my heart skipped a beat... my stomach knotted up... my tears flooded. Yes. God could just have well written "Cindy" instead of Moses. Could your name fit there too? Could you use a pep talk about delegating? Here is a quickie...

Why Delegate???

Why delegate? Let me summarize the passage....

1. What you are doing is NOT good!
2. You'll wear out!
3. This is TOO much for you!
4. You will not be able to perform THIS by yourself!

My dear sister, do you know how powerful your calling is? Being addicted to the call of ministry is not wrong. (Remember 1 Corinthians 15: 16??? One of my personal favorites!) But, trying to do every little thing YOURSELF is not good (My toes are now extremely bruised and getting more so by the second!!).

No matter how difficult it is to delegate tasks to those around you, it is SO worth it. First, others learn to help out instead of "take, take, take." Secondly, others are enabled to use those gifts that are pent up within them (God has surrounded us with people who are PERFECT for helping us out...the key is releasing the anointing that is pent up within them to do those tasks that are distracting us from the main thing and burdening us so we are closer and closer to burnout.)! Finally, WE are enabled to accomplish our calling and have abundant fruit in all of the areas of our life that God has intended for us to produce a great harvest.

Need a cleaner house? Delegate! Need help documenting learning? Delegate! Want someone to help with planning and teaching lessons? Delegate (to your children, of course!)! Feel like you are delegating a lot already, delegate MORE! Delegating is the key to endurance, anointing, and focus!

Where Do I Begin???

So, are you like me? Have no idea where to begin delegating? My beloved, glean from this precious passage. There are two keys for finding how you should delegate...

1. Listen to counsel.
2. KNOW God will be with you helping you along the way.

One thing I noticed in this passage was that this situation was not brought to a climax with a burning bush. Moses' father-in-law was the vessel God used to direct Moses and give Moses counsel. In fact, he gave Moses not only a look into the situation from an outsider's point of view, but also very specific help to remedy a very big problem.

I seem to go through seasons of my life where things grow and grow and grow until all seems to be closing in on me. It is at that time that I have a very difficult time knowing what I am really supposed to do to remedy the situation and bring relief. Instead of just delegating, far too often, I find even more creative ways to manage holding on to all that has to be accomplished. Oh, don't think I am talking about ministry here...I have even struggled with the maturity of my children as they have grown older and ready to take over different responsibilities that are "just fun!" for them!

Want an example? Elisabeth was wanting to begin to cook and manage our family meals. It took me six months to swallow my pride enough to let "another woman" take over my kitchen. (Is this a SOUTHERN thing???) Now, I want for you to know that this is PAINFULLY honest!) I experienced everything from insult to denial! Now, you may laugh...but, it is so very hard for me to let someone else do what I COULD do myself (Feel my pain???)

Now as I look back, I giggle. I would have missed a very big treat. There is something heavenly when a mother sits to a meal that is provided COMPLETELY for her by her little children. Not to mention, I am seeing Elisabeth completely fulfilled as she USES those gifts and talents that are about to explode within her. There is nothing comparable to ministering to others who really need your help.

Elisabeth just delights in creating and providing for all of us. This ONE thing enables her to use all of her spiritual gifts (service and encouraging) AND prepares her for the call of womanhood that is already knocking at the door of her heart.

The choice before me was to either continue struggling to do it all and miss MY relationship with God and my family OR train my help so I could delegate smaller (yet often overwhelming) tasks to those who needed to learn and practice service inside the

home???

I have another example, that is PAINFULLY recent. In fact, this example has taken place as I have been preparing this issue of *Time For Tea* (A fact that you may need to know if any of you are wondering IF I have all of this down...Oh, the answer is NO! I don't have this down...I am STILL learning this one!). I kept noticing that this issue was having ODD delays. Now, I know that I just had to learn another very valuable lesson before this article could be birthed.

This past year our ministry has continued the pace of FAST growth that began several years ago. Actually, we have had tremendous growth in all areas of ministry. The last year God has been teaching me lesson upon lesson about delegating. Just as I think I have another lesson learned, there is another one on the horizon!

Not long after that day on the sailboat, Harold shared that he felt that I was too busy with menial things to do the things that ONLY I could do. He felt that I was getting tired and weary because I was trying to do too much by myself. He felt that I was actually "stealing away" the blessings from those around me who God had anointed to help me so I could go forward in the things our ministry needed that only I could do.

Of course, I was resistant because I felt that he did not understand WHY I continued to do so much myself. Well, before you begin laughing because you KNOW where this is going, let me tell you WHY (Not that it seems to help...sounds like an excuse as I type away here!). I wanted for those picking up the torch to have a strong commitment to *excellence* and *passion* for what would be delegated to them. Oh, and I could not decide for months WHO to delegate to and WHAT on earth to delegate???

Smiling yet?

Who? What?

Go back to that Scripture in Exodus for a moment...read verses 17-27.

This passage has the perfect description of those eligible for those duties that you may be needing to delegate to others (Warning! This gets good!)

Those Who Are Able...

1. **Able...**Who is ABLE to do what needs to be done?? Two-year-olds can fold clothes. Want to be sure YOUR two-year-old is not "developmentally delayed" in this area? Are they ABLE to pull things out of the cabinets... toy chest...your mother-in-law's

purse??? Then, they are quite able to be a little "helper." This is not limited to delegating to our children, it also includes areas that we need help in order to endure.

Go back to Martha and Mary...I know, I know. You are thinking, "*Cindy DO NOT pick on her!*" Sure, Martha was preparing and serving JESUS! I think that any decent homemaker can feel for her. But, my dear sisters, she is more like us than we see at the surface. Yes, like us, she had servants who could have helped her so she could have been sitting beside Mary at the feet of Jesus. Whereas, I would assume that Mary was content to share the load with the servants...rest in their abilities...and allow them to be blessed to minister to Jesus while allowing her to be filled up by sitting at His feet, Martha opted to do it all HERSELF, HER way. She chose to do things that could have probably been done a little easier and given others a blessing to be a part of the ministry to Christ, while leaving time for her to sit at the feet of Jesus.

I have to let you know that right now I am CHEWING on this...but, if we are very bone-deep honest, we have to admit that there are times that we go the HARD way when we could opt for the EASY way. We choose to DO instead of BE. We choose to LABOR instead of REST. We limit ourselves AND those God has placed around us (who ARE anointed for those little things) instead of swallowing our pride and "standards" that are simply unreasonable. We muddle around doing it all ourselves, when the key to endurance, anointing, and focus is learning to delegate to those who are ABLE!

What is the result? I am finding in all areas of my life that those (who God is placing in my life to minister to me in each of the tasks that were loading me down) people are all better than I could ever be at each of the things they are doing to relieve me. God has given them a special anointing to come alongside of me and help in this calling. Just as I am called to do my part in this ministry, likewise God has raised up others who are called into this ministry. If I hold on so tightly to all of those "jobs," I am actually stealing from them the blessings of being in the center of God's will for their life. In addition, I have to tell you that now I am having more time to do what I am truly called to do AND more energy to endure for the entire journey.

Now, you may be thinking that I am only talking to those in ministry here...but, this magazine is written to godly women who are stepping up to the entire call of womanhood. So many of us are frustrated...tired...weary... aggravated...and getting close to having deep anger and resentment because those we love are not "helping" us within our home. We throw our fits...

...slam those cabinet doors
...LOUDLY put up those dishes

and wonder WHY our family just does not SEE our needs and help us out a bit! My beloved, my heart goes out to you because this is ME just as much as it is you.

God has placed those who are able right around us. We have to accept their help. We have to look deep within them to see who they are. We have to ask God for wisdom to help us know what they are able to do and how much of it to delegate to them so they can endure, use their anointing, and keep their focus on what God is doing to prepare them for their calling.

Where do we begin? Look at those little things. Find the person who has that enthusiasm and passion for doing that little thing. Let them go! Some of the most gruesome chores are a BLAST for a toddler. Hate walking up and down those stairs carrying laundry?? Make it a game for that toddler you need to keep busy. Have a ten-year-old who is just too big to do some of that "baby-stuff" and yet you are still overworked to the point you never rest? Give them a big job that will not only help you with your day-to-day responsibilities, but will also use their gifts and talents and help to prepare them for their call. You will be able to endure AND have more anointing and focus!

Those Who Fear God And Are Trustworthy...

2. God-fearing Men of Truth (Trustworthy)... This is a key phrase found in this Exodus passage. At the end of my first year of homeschooling, I went through a long season of studying education, renewing my mind about what an education based on God's Word really looked like, and setting up our homeschool based entirely on the Word of God. As I was praying through our goals and objectives, the Lord gave me a verse that has truly been a measuring stick to keep us on our course the whole journey. (See how SPECIFIC God is in His answers to our heart-cries!) 1 Timothy 1:5 (NASV) says, "**The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.**"

Think about this for a moment in connection with this passage from Exodus... Help is not true help unless it is of the Lord. If what you are doing is of God, and I sincerely pray that it is, those that surround you must have the same passion for the call. They must be prepared for ministry to know God enough to fear Him and to have godly character which is necessary to be a valuable part instead of a hindrance to ministering to others.

In our homes, we will never get anything accomplished unless we all pitch in to work together for the Lord. Our motive cannot be "to get" for ourselves... to get money... to

be noticed... to please others... to get credit... or to do so others "owe" us. We, and those within our home, must DO because we have LOVE from a pure heart. Then, what we do turns into ministry to others. Yes, all that we do... whether it is cleaning the toilets, washing the dishes, doing the laundry, praying for those in need, making a meal for someone going through a tough time, taking tea to a shut-in, or going on the road to teach to other women about godly womanhood...all must be done from a heart full to overflowing with love and pure from any poor or selfish motives.

We have seen ramifications in all areas of our life from this one qualification for those who help. In our home, we have found that attitudes are not the result of raging hormones or crisis situations...they are a result of walking in the flesh, AKA: needing to grow in godly character. The best solution to this struggle is going back to the Word to test our motives. In our ministry, we have run across those that were truly very little help. In fact, in our day and time it is far more difficult to find those who truly understand and honor the Lord with all of their lives, especially when it is soooo easy to justify actions (even when they are dead-wrong) and so easy to get off track with poor motives.

When I first saw this description of the Moses' helpers, I knew exactly what the root cause of my struggles had been in the past... I needed to know that God has much to say about WHO we delegate to. He wants for us to be sure to delegate only to those who truly fear Him and live faithfully as real, sincere, truthful Christians. This eliminates all excuses for unfaithfulness. This also creates a high standard for those that are to be your helpers. Afraid you will never find help? Ask the Lord Who is faithful to supply all of your needs! Hey! He is doing the same thing for me right now!

Those Who Hate Covetousness...

3. Hate Covetousness... This is another goody. It really follows the same line of thought as the last point. In fact, the same verse from 1 Timothy could deepen this thought too.

Actually, I have found that if our hearts are pure and sincere, then we naturally hate covetousness and have a good conscience.

Covetousness is wanting what another has. This goes back to the beginning as we see a perfect example of the strife and fruit of wanting what God does not intend to be ours. Oh, I am not talking about Adam and Eve...go further back than that. Think of God, the Perfect Delegator. He found those who were able, those who feared Him, those who He could trust...but, oops...there was one that coveted His position. He thought HE could do it better. He began to reason in his mind that God was not capable... God was too slow...

God could not possibly see things as he saw things... God "had" to be holding out on him and hindering him from being all he could be... God was not giving him all HE deserves. Then, bam! You know what happened! Satan and all he deceived fell from heaven as shooting stars!

We each have a garden to tend and care for. It is sooooo easy to look at the garden of someone who has not got it together and want to "fix" it. Of course, in the meantime our gardens are not being tended, weeded, nurtured. New things are not planted in our garden. Fruit never comes.

BUT! This is not the only allurements that our enemy sets before our eyes. He also tempts us as HE was tempted. This is something that anyone must be aware of while they are delegating. We must constantly watch those "helping" us to ensure they do not fall to the snare of covetousness.

Yes, so often humans have no vision for what God is doing in their lives. We, like satan, look at all the glimmer and pizzazz of those "gardens" that are bearing fruit of all kinds. While that CAN be inspiring for most of us, there are those that have a hard time looking back to the plow...the little bitty seeds in their hands...and the wilderness that is called, "MY GARDEN."

What happens? Covetousness! Covetousness that distracts...leads astray...causes strife and jealousy...and delays that awesome plan of God in their life!

Beware of this sin in those you choose to delegate to. (!!!!!!! Especially if you have a ministry!!!!!!) We constantly watch for this in our children. We let them know that ALL jobs big and small are necessary for God to use our family as a light to our culture. We let them know that ALL giftings are of the same value to our Lord regardless of the value humans place on the gifts. (Romans 12: 3-8) We also teach them that NOTHING is equal or same in our family any more than it is in the body of Christ. In fact, we have dealt with much sibling rivalry by reminding our children that we are all parts of a BODY. We are not all mouths (what a mess!)...or hands...or heads...or feet...or hearts...on and on. If we do not fill our place, the rest of the BODY is hindered from being a glory to the Father.

This principle is the same in ministry. There is nothing any more pitiful than those who really have a heart for ministry copying or coveting the ministry of others. Want a sure-fire way to create confusion, distress and pain in a home, church, ministry, or among ministries??? Let one person begin to covet another's gifting, area of helps, or ministry.

This is not a problem that is limited to our culture. In fact, I love how Paul addressed

this in 1 Corinthians 12: 1-31. Look at the following verses from this passage...

1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.
4. Now THERE ARE DIVERSITIES of gifts, but the same Spirit.
5. And THERE ARE DIFFERENCES of administrations, but the same Lord.
6. And THERE ARE DIVERSITIES of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
- ...31. But COVET EARNESTLY the best gifts: and yet show I a more excellent way.

I love that Paul begins this chapter with, "I would not have you ignorant" Truly covetousness is ignorance. It is not seeing what IS there! It is not treasuring what we DO have. It is not developing the gifts that are so needed in the body—home, church, or ministry.

I see SO much of this. Not just with my children...but also among Christians. Often, I wish I could shout from the roof-tops this exact message that Paul gives in this passage...

**THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS!
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF ADMINSTRATIONS!
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPERATIONS!**

BUT! What is that more excellent way? See chapter 13...LOVE! The more excellent way is not found in usurping authority of others... copying in the flesh the gifts of others... setting up a ministry the way another person, with great success, sets up their ministry... teaching a Sunday School class that someone else teaches... working a job that another makes look so EASY... writing books/teaching workshops like another person... selling the same books as another company... no, none of these things are the more excellent way.

The more excellent way is finding the place or position that God has called us to, which should enable us to use our gifts to their fullest potential to LOVE others, to bring others to Christ, and to bring God glory.

I see this in our ministry more than ever now as we are bringing on more employees to fill their place in this "body" we call Rushton Family Ministries. Before we began hiring employees, we took a serious look at WHO each of us (in our family) were, what OUR gifts were, and how WE were to use our gifts in our ministry. Each member of our family has their specific role/job description (whichever way you would like to look at it).

During each and every interview, I am more interested in finding the person CALLED to be a part of our ministry for this season than merely finding employees or

representatives. I have specifically asked each person what their spiritual gifts were... what they feel God calling them to do as THEIR calling...and how working with US will bring them closer to that call.

Why do I ask these questions??? Well, I believe that anyone doing anything for God (That includes all of us seeking to be a godly wife, mother, homeschooling teacher, or Titus two mentor) are going to come to a place that we find ourselves in deep need of help to keep us from burning out and getting weary doing the job at hand. I also believe that God has the perfect "helper" to help us be the best steward of our time.

Delegating may include buying the best appliances to make preparing wholesome meals less of a chore...it may mean getting a housekeeper once a week so you can take the afternoon off for a good nap OR an afternoon at the park with your children...it may mean eating out so you have a special day of rest on Sunday...it may mean getting an answering machine to take calls while you teach your children... it may mean getting those little ones busy helping you to clean so you can have time and energy to give your husband your entire focus (and a sweet spirit) when he comes in from work...

Have I got you yet? Ok, if you are a hard case (as I often tend to be) and you have no idea what you need to delegate OR who you need to delegate to...let's stop right now to ask the Lord to begin showing you those areas that you are carrying on YOUR shoulders... those areas that are YOUR burden, not His... those areas that you need to surrender at the foot of the cross today (Those that the grace has run out because there is no anointing, and there is no anointing because YOU are not supposed to be doing it!) so He can bring forth those who are perfect for the job and perfectly anointed for that load!

Seek Him. You will find that perfect "helper." You will once again find that double dose of endurance, anointing, and focus!

Perfect For The Size Of The Load...

4. Perfect for the Size of the Load... Yes, this is where it gets good! Want some help? Look honestly at your life. What is hindering you from all that God has in store for you? If you had one (well, some of us may need to have MORE than one!) request before God and that request could take away anything in your life that distracts you from the MAIN thing...what would it (they) be? Wait! Keep that in mind! Maybe you have so much on your list that you don't know where to begin. In fact, there are probably some of you who would want to shift your CALL to someone else! Don't go that far! Or... maybe you still have no clue of what the ONE thing is that only YOU can do! Ask God for that now! Maybe you have known all along what God has called you to do; but that

precious calling is buried down underneath all the briars and weeds of life that keep it snuffed out and unable to get any room to grow.

Can you see why it is vital to be seeking the Lord completely?? This is where we have to HEAR God and KNOW what He calls us and only us to do. Other things can all be delegated to others who are perfect for that specific load.

Want a specific picture of this? I KNOW that I KNOW that I KNOW that only I can be Harold's helpmeet...the mother of my children...the teacher of my children...the keeper of my home... and the spiritual mother of my spiritual children. I can certainly become unbalanced with any one of these areas when I let the "little things" take over my life.

I envision myself being like Moses, here in Exodus 18. I can see ALL of those around me with their hand on their hips and heads shaking "No, no, no, dear, dear Cindy." (Some of you KNOW who you are...but, this article is FOR YOU TOO!!) "The thing that you are doing is not good..." Gasp! I want to be good! "You will surely wear out both yourself and this people with you..." DO WHAT? ME? MOI? As in CINDY RUSHTON...super woman... mighty vessel...and all of those names God calls me??? Wear OUT????? "For this is TOO HEAVY for you..." No way! Not ME! "You are NOT ABLE to perform it by yourself." But! What ever happened to "I can do ALL THINGS through Christ Jesus???" Ummm, er...not able by myself, huh???

Wondering why you are reading an article on a topic of such struggle by an obvious woman work-a-holic, who obviously does not have this down? Because you and I are JUST ALIKE!

We are going to be limited until we place this area on the altar. We will constantly battle with weariness... our anointing will be waiting in the wings... and our focus will be blurred up close AND far away!

Delegate! Let others help you bear the load! They will enable you to be excellent at all that you do. I can also promise you that those fears that they will not be able to handle the strain OR that they will not do as "good" as you can do yourself, yes all those fears are going to be burnt up by truth! In fact, you will realize as you delegate to those qualified for the call, that they will be better than you could ever be. PLUS! You will be free to FOCUS on your call.

What Do I DO???

So, what is left for you? This is SO good! As you delegate, you will be enabled to

do that high calling that ONLY YOU can do! Look at the rest of Exodus... Moses was still left with MUCH to do, but all that was left were those things that ONLY he could do...

1. He stood before God for the people to get God's Law and God's Word to teach them.

2. He listened to the situations that his people were struggling with... he took those concerns to God and got God's word, and direction for them!

3. He taught them God's laws and statutes.

4. He showed them the way they were supposed to walk and the work they were supposed to do.

5. He chose the help (he even disciplined and mentored their next leader)!

6. He taught them how to worship God!

7. He led them to the promised land!

What are we to do? Much the same. Our greatest calling is to do the hard stuff! Far too often, those little things distract us from seeing and doing the true call that is ultimately the most fulfilling and the EASIEST!

Beloved, let's surrender those areas to our Lord, Who can provide all of the help we will ever need to accomplish our calling. Let's sit at the feet of our sweet Jesus. Let's be those teachers of good things. Let's lead on to the Promised Land!

Teatime Thoughts... Dessert for the Soul

By Janet Birkey

Don't you love pretty teacups? Whether you collect them or just like to look at them in shops, many of us see such simple beauty in tiny little teacups.

Mama and I had "tea" often when I was growing up. We used this time to talk. Sometimes the conversation was not too deep. Sometimes it was very deep. Sometimes it was filled with so much laughter that we could hardly drink our tea. No, our Tea-time wasn't stuffy or formal, but no matter what else it was, it was meaningful.

As an adult, I have a few pretty teacups. Not too many, but I like what I have. I have one that belongs to my China collection (all 6 pieces of it...HA!). It's obviously meant for "tea for one", but it makes me think of planning to marry my husband and all the things that went along with that time in my life.

I have a couple of Depression-era Teacups. They are a lovely green glass with a raised pattern on them. I have some little saucers to match--enough for tea and cookies! I didn't grow up with these, but Mama saw them and thought of me, so she bought them.

The last few Teacups I have were given to me a few weeks ago by Mama. They are a white China with a dainty yellow floral pattern and a silver stripe on them.

Why go into my collection... which is almost a non-collection... of Teacups? I guess because they are more than just pieces of China and glass. They remind me to take time for that part of me that God made differently than He made my husband; the part that is feminine and likes pretty things. I need to keep this in mind more often. I believe that one of the things that God desires for me to bring to my home is a spirit of beauty. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in the circumstances of everyday life that I forget to revel in God's beauty and I do not display that trait.

We often think that it takes lots of time and lots of money to make things beautiful in our home. Don't allow satan to feed that lie to you. It doesn't take much to do a mini face-lift on an area and it can do so much. Most of us work within a very limited budget, so we must rely on the Father of Creativity to show us how use the things that we have in a new way. Today I was able to do just that when I took a linen clothe (garage sale find) and put it cross ways on a coffee table in my bedroom. On top of that, I put my (old) silver tea set wedding gift from parents) and a silk flower arrangement that I had in the

house. I then put two of those little Teacups and a scented candle there. What a simple, lovely still-life that gave a little more romance to my bedroom, and a lift to my soul. Guess what I did after that? I sat down to have my Bible reading in this new, scented, lovely area. It nourished my soul in many ways. I just love it when God shows me new ways to use what I have.

Will I have a Tea party at my new table area? Maybe. Maybe not, but the accouterments are there and what they symbolize can be great to our imaginations and senses, for they symbolize refreshment and most of all, they symbolize that "Mama cares".

Why not pull out those teacups and saucers, some fancy cookies and put on a praise music CD in the background? Imagine what God can do through one Mother willing to have tea-time with her children. It takes so little, but can yield such great results. Hint: Ladies, don't forget your little men...they need that special time with Mom, too!

Well, I gotta run brew some hot water. Now, where did I put those cookies?

Father,

Our lives are so busy that we often leave out making room for the beautiful and nourishing things that mean so much. Little things that mean a lot. Please help us to hunger so that we will feast at your table...a table set with the dishes of love...of mercy...of grace...and where there is the knowledge that You, our Father, cares. With Joy, Janet

*Janet is a wife to one, a homeschooling mother of two, and a gal who usually can't find it after she finally gets it together! Bonded already? We plan to have MANY more articles by Janet here in **Time for Tea**. Until then, peek in at her website for other great articles! You can find her at <http://members.truepath.com/jbirkey/dta.html>*

Tired From The Journey??? Sit DOWN!

By Betty Dickerson

You all have got to know a little bit of MY story behind this article and how it came to be part of this issue! Betty was at our conference in Miami. She and I INSTANTLY knew each other in the whole crowd. It was almost like what you picture heaven to be like...JUST KNOWING each other and rejoicing that God brings us together.

She wrote me a long letter letting me know what God was doing in her life. I sat at my computer weeping in praise and compassion... praising God for His work in her life...and lifting her before the Lord for TODAY. As I read her letter to me, I was going through a REALLY ROUGH day...her letter ministered sooooo much encouragement to me that I wrote her to let her know how much God used her note in MY LIFE!

Well, that was only a glimmer of the blessings Betty poured into my life. As she wrote me back, she wanted to encourage me MORE with this article that she had just finished for her own church newsletter! (I had NO clue she was a writer! BUT NOW!) I won't share what this article did for me as I snuggled up in the great big arms of my Jesus and cried my way through it...I will let you read it and KNOW how God ministered to me through it! Sooo, pull out your Bible again...you are in for a treat...well, steak, not just dessert!!!

This month in my Bible reading and then in Sunday school, I came across the most precious verse. I've probably read it many times before but it's never spoken to me as it does now. The verse is John 4:6 ***"Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well."*** Where is the spiritual depth in that verse? There's plenty if you just look at it. Here the God of the universe, in human form, was tired and had to sit down. He was also hungry and had sent his disciples to go get some food.

Is this where you are today? Are you tired from the journey and hungry for some nourishment? Are you ever like my Stephen who fights rest with every ounce of strength he has until he finally collapses? I found that so interesting, and irritating at times, to watch Alyssa and Stephen as babies. They would fuss, whine, scream, cry out of exhaustion, and even cry in their cribs. The more they would fuss and cry, the more I knew they needed the rest. Within a few minutes they were out cold. The more tired they were, the more emotional and hard to handle they were. It didn't take me long to figure this out and to not let them get to this point too often. We are so like that at times; we fight the rest we need.

When Jesus was tired, he sat down!! He simplified. He delegated. He ministered. That's what is so wonderful about John 4. Jesus always did the things that were on God's heart, the things that had eternal value. Sometimes these things may not seem so valuable to us, but God is in the habit of using and working through simple things to accomplish greatness for His Kingdom.

It was at this same well, and at this same time that the Samaritan woman would come to draw her water. Jesus knew she would be there and that she needed Him. Tired as He was, He waited for her expectantly. He offered her living water to quench the thirst of her soul. She was so moved she ran to tell the whole village, who had previously despised and judged her, the Good News of Jesus.

In His exhaustion, Jesus took the time to minister to someone along the way. He didn't miss that opportunity, and it refreshed HIM! Notice when the disciples got back from the town with their food, Jesus told them He had food to eat that they knew nothing about. There is nothing that gives you more energy and refreshes your soul more than ministering to a thirsty, receptive heart. It's better than a Cuban coffee or a can of Coke!

This week, I was feeling pretty tired. I decided to change my expectations for the day and prayed that God would help me focus on those things that were important to Him. Well, my day was filled with intense child training, but I also had many opportunities to share about faith, what Jesus is like, loving each other, trusting God, handling anger and I felt like the children and I really connected. They were receptive! I don't usually share as much as I did yesterday, but I've never prayed what I did yesterday. God is teaching me to share with the children what He is teaching me. I looked around for so long for the perfect Bible storybook or devotion book. We do use one, but God has put it on my heart to also share what I'm learning from my Bible reading. Yesterday we used the verse Matthew 18:20 ***"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*** That's a profound verse for families. I shared with the children that when we hold hands and pray together about the things that are on our hearts that Jesus joins us in the prayer. Alyssa's eyes opened wide and she looked at the empty seat next to her. *"You mean Jesus is in this room praying with us?"* We looked at the verse again and had to agree that He does join us. Maybe we should set the table for Him! It really changed the way we looked at prayer and praying together.

I hope that sharing in this way will keep God's Word fresh for both the children and me. We need to look for warning signs of getting too tired or worn out or even too unaffected by God's Word. After Jeff finished reading a chapter of ***Little House on the Prairie***, Jeff asked Stephen what the chapter was about since Stephen had been working on a puzzle the whole time. Stephen, without looking up or hesitating said, ***"GOD!"*** He knew that that would probably be a good answer for any question, but it didn't work!

If you are feeling tired or run down, maybe you should try to simplify. Pray that God would show you the things that are truly important to Him and make those things the first on your list. Sit down and open your eyes to the spiritual needs around you and let

God work through you. Being tired can be a blessing if it causes us to re-examine what we are doing and seek God. He can do amazing things with a tired soul!!

I AM: Everything We Will EVER Need!

By Cindy Rushton

Who is God to you? Who is God for you? I mean, not the big guy in the sky that sits back until you do something wrong, then zaps you. I mean, Who is God? Do you KNOW Him? Are you intimate with Him? Is He your BEST friend? Is He the Lover of your soul? Do you crave to just it in His presence?

For the last few years, I have been collecting verses that teach me more about the names of God and books that lead me through studies on the names of God. The study has been phenomenal! I am ever amazed that this study has ministered to the depths of my soul. On those days that I am overwhelmed by the demands of life, I am comforted by the gentle touch of God as He shows me that He is there and He cares about all of the details enough to take care of them (and ME!). On those days when I have been lonely and in need of a friend, I have found Him to be not only a Friend, but the perfect Friend...not only a Father, but the perfect Father...not only a Mother, but the perfect Mother...not only a Husband, but the perfect Husband...my All-in-All. Available for me anytime that I need Him.

As I have been making new plans for this New Year before me and getting together our schedule for the whole year, I have been praying about my focus in my relationship with God for this year. The one thing that I really want to *know* and *experience* in greater depths this year is to KNOW God greater than ever before and to bask continually in His Presence. This brings me to this new column.

A few years ago God gave me a message to share with homeschooling mothers, Christian wives, and support group leaders from the book of Exodus. I loved that message. It's power and relevance for today's homeschooling mother, for every woman who wants to live an abundant Christian life, and for every person walking in the demands of leadership still astound me! One of my favorite points that God taught to me through the preparation was that HE was I AM: everything, I mean EVERYTHING, we will EVER need. I have dwelt on that truth for years now. It has given me the peace, confidence, vision, passion, and determination that I need on those tough days, long days, good days, and sometimes very rough days.

As I introduce this column (in which I plan to dig into the names of God and what they mean for us today), I want to share with you this issue about WHY we need to know the names of God and what practical difference His names can make in our lives today.

So, hold on tight...imagine us together in a study...today we will see what is in a name!

What's In A Name???

Remember Exodus 3? Let's go back in time...

Our journey takes us to the back side of a desert. Yes. In the "boonies." Who do we find but MOSES!

Our dear friend Moses is on the backside of a desert, both physically and spiritually. (Been in that "place?") He knows deep in his heart that God has a tremendous call on his life. From birth, God has set him aside for a great calling...protected his life from very real danger...and prepared him perfectly for the call.

Moses knows the call. His calling, like that heart beat of ours, is that ONE thing that burns in his heart. As he looks back over his life, he knows that he was really perfect for the call. In fact, he was perfectly prepared for the call. Yet in his early years, Moses, like so many of us, stepped out in his flesh to do the call that could only be done by the power and anointing of God.

Back to the present. You know the story. Moses was a man that God would use greatly. He grieved in his heart as he saw those heavy burdens his people faced on a daily basis. His heart ached for them. If that was not enough to get him busy stepping up to the call, then he saw one of the Egyptians beating a Hebrew slave. This is one thing I loved about Moses—his blood boiled over the pain of those he was called to serve and minister to. Been there, done that! Messed up? Of course! Enough to make the murder that Moses committed, look nice!

You have got it! He took "delivering" the people from their affliction to new heights. He "delivered" them PERMANENTLY from this fellow. Yes, he killed him and buried him in the sand! Talk about "fleshing out!"

As soon as the word got around, you can imagine the situation that Moses found himself in. A man God called the "deliverer" that messed up big. So big that he was now a murderer! How could he ever be used by God?

Been there? Oh, I have never "murdered" anyone physically. But, honey! Watch out for my wicked little mouth! I have killed the spirits of many in my pursuit for "good stuff." And, like Moses...found myself running for safety in my spiritual desert regardless of the painful solitude, confusion, frustration, or void in my life that I would have to face as a result of running away from the situation!

So, here we find Moses. (Going back in time again??) Called. Prepared perfectly. Yet, seemingly all for naught. Can you feel his pain. Can you see his heartache? There is nothing like blowing it. Much less, blowing it on something as big as being the deliverer of the children of Israel!

But! This is not the end of the story! On just a regular day. On the back side of nowhere, a bush goes up in flames...but it is not being consumed (explain that to your mother-in-law!). Then, all of the sudden, you hear the voice of God. You know it is HIM. He gives that History lesson that you have heard all of your life...only now, He wants to make Himself REAL to you. It is not Abraham now. It is not Isaac now. It is not Jacob now. It is YOU (who else is here in that desert?) that He is showing Himself to. I AM is wanting to show Himself as ALL you will ever need for ANY situation in your life.

I AM Who I AM...For Moses, this meant something! Our English translation takes out much of the fullness of this passage. Let's look at the depth of WHO God is so we can understand the magnitude of what was done at the burning bush AND what is about to take place in the rest of this book! More than likely, this will meet you RIGHT where you are!

Why? Why Study The Names of God???

- ♥ **So we will know where to run!** Running in circles? Tired yet? Take a look at Proverbs 18:10 in the Amplified Bible...*"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the [consistently] righteous man [upright and in right standing with God] runs into it and is safe, high [above evil] and strong."* We need to know the names of God because then we will know where to run! HE is where we will find safety! HE is where we will find security! HE is where we will find strength! HE is where we will find comfort, compassion, mercy! HE is where we will find ALL that we need for any situation we face! Get to know the names of God, so you will know where to run.
- ♥ **So we will get to KNOW Him!** Think for just a minute. We cannot really KNOW others without knowing ABOUT one another. Think about names. A person's character is in their name. Likewise, we can not know God without knowing ABOUT Him. His character is revealed in His names. Each name reveals a different perspective of our relationship with Him. In fact, most of the compound names of God were revealed to us through a crisis situation or incident in the life of a person in Scripture. They denote WHO He is for the one in crisis! In fact, those precious names give us HOPE in the midst of our crisis situations and our most trying trials. The names of God help us to KNOW Him more deeply! Think about it...it is IN THE CRISIS that we can see OUR character the most vividly! THE REAL character!

Who Am I Right In The Midst of Trials???

A woman of hope or despair???

A woman of endurance or a quitter???

A woman who comforts and encourages OR hurts others and pities SELF???

A woman crushed or fired up for God???

A woman who cracks or pours forth???

In our crisis, we see a glimpse of who we really are. BUT, that is not all. It is when we are right smack dab in the middle of our crisis that we can see more of WHO God is! Just as my TRUE character is seen in the midst of the trials and crisis situations, SO is God's character seen in the midst of the trials and crisis situations!

It is in our crisis that we can learn more about His character...His heart...His will... His word. In the toughest crisis, we can draw near to Him and never be pushed away to face our situations alone. We can snuggle up as the storm rages without fretting because we can enter His presence (with praise, adoration, worship!). In the worst of the worst situation, we can get to KNOW Him!

His greatest desire is to reveal Himself to us so we can run to Him at any time...so we can really KNOW Him...so we can know His power...so we can know His heart...so we can know His character...so we can encounter His glory! The entire theme of Scripture is that God wants relationship with us! It is revealed in His names of relationship that are revealed in the Bible.

- ♥ **So we can know His ways!** We must know HIS ways and LEARN them and live a life that is abundant and pleasing before Him! (Exodus 33: 13) God reveals His ways completely in His Word. All we have to do is dig! In addition, God wants for us to know His ways so we can bring Him glory. *Glory is a correct estimate of or a correct opinion of.* We want to live in such a way that our lives give others a correct estimate of God; to live our lives in such a way that others have a correct opinion of God.
- ♥ **So we can pray successfully...** A few years ago (Well, a little more than a few now!) I did a study through a book called *Discipleship Journal*. It was the first place that I ever heard about the names of God. The primary focus of that book was using how to develop a devoted prayer life, especially praying and praising God with His names and character. The following came from that book...

"The Bible is not only the story of God's plan of redemption, it is a record of the prayer fellowship of men and women with their God. They walked with God in their daily experiences. Each Bible pray-er had a specific type of prayer life. Each was created different, lived different circumstances, and faced different problems. Each viewed God from a different perspective and therefore prayed differently. Most likely the great

men and women of prayer in Bible times did not consciously pursue a unique path or purposely intend to be different. They simply followed God. The result was a contribution to the stream of God's history unlike any other. God was able to meet their special needs as they walked their individual path. A survey of the prayers of the Bible reveal three very important aspects of Bible Pray-ers:

- ⇒ *Each pray-er had a special prayer identity (how he related to God).*
- ⇒ *Each pray-er had a particular prayer activity.*
- ⇒ *Each pray-er saw God in a special way (as seen in God's activity, name, or title)"*

Have a need? There is a name of God for YOUR NEED! God wants for us to know HIM deeper and deeper. He is the God for our situation. He is our personal God. He is the One to run to in all situations we face! He is the One to trust with all of the details! Have a need? Ask God to introduce Himself to you as the God for YOUR NEED!

- ♥ **So we will have an unshakeable foundation!** We CAN know God intimately! It is through His Word that we get to know Him. As we get to KNOW Him, we will have abundant strength for all of our situations. We will have a firm foundation when all else around us is falling apart. He will become more intimate...more real! Get to know His names! Get to know His name for YOUR situation! He will answer your heart cry to Him! He will bring you hope IN THE MIDST of your struggle! You will become a woman of praise and adoration. You will become a virtuous woman, one who wages war through the Word.
- ♥ **So, we may wage warfare!** Yes. The name of God is your key to being a victor in any battle you face. Praise IS warfare! Praise His NAME. As you enter into praise of the name of God, you tear down your enemy's banners (lies, myths) and raise up the LORD, your Banner—your truth, your source of real answers! Praise is where you find deliverance and bring glory to God (Psalm 50:15). Praise is where you find security, protection, and provision (Psalm 20). Praise is where the battle is won!

You Can Trust In His Name!

In Isaiah 50: 10 we read, "***Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God.***" Where is your trust? In what or whom are you relying? My dear friend, put your trust in the name of God. Put your worries, your burdens, your work at His feet. Come to Him. Put your confidence in Him! You won't burn out...get weary...or be disappointed!

Want An Audio Teaching On This Topic???

THE GREAT I AM: Everything We Will Ever Need: A Study Through the Names of

God...NEW! Do you just want to **KNOW** God? Do you sometimes wonder why things happen the way they do...Why God allows bad things to happen to good people...Where is He when bad things happen? This set was recorded **JUST** for you! This is probably Cindy's most favorite topic as she shares about her *Greatest Love* in life...the love of her God! In this set, Cindy shares names of God and what they mean **TO** us and **FOR** us in all of the situations we may face in life. Don't miss this one...you will want to listen to this on those dark days **AND** you will find that this is the set that you will want to use to introduce others to your **AWESOME** God!! (Teaching Notes Available **SOON!**) \$10.00

Letters We Love!

Cindy,

I hope that you are doing well! I was so disappointed that I couldn't come to the conference in Athens. We were doing an outreach in Callaway Gardens at the Master's Ski tournament. It was wonderful though!! In the middle of the Christian concert a couple walked up to the lead singer and said that they wanted to get on their knees right then and there in front of hundreds of people to ask Christ to be their Lord and Savior!! God is so GOOD! Then, I had hoped to be able to see you at the Chattanooga conference, but I was yet again unable to attend. I do so love it when I get to hear you share your encouragement. Your smile always brightens my day.

I want to find out how to get the Marine book that your son wrote. My 15 ds loves the Marines and has requested this book for his birthday so please let me know.

Andrew (my 15 ds) has many educational challenges to overcome. It is even more difficult for him because our next youngest, John(11), does so much better at these things. They are really on the same level educationally but Andrew has to work so hard and John doesn't. I am hoping that Matthew's (I love that name. I have a Matthew too!!) book will encourage him to be more creative in his education and he will begin to appreciate the gifts he does have instead of looking at John's and comparing. The reason I tell you this is that I am hoping that you might have some suggestions I could use to help Andrew especially in Science.

He is working on high school credits but he can not handle high school science books. I tried to get some books from the library and work that way, but my knowledge is so limited and he didn't understand them either. My latest idea is I have the Rod and Staff books. He is going to make a Science notebook. I told him that I want him to draw, take notes, diagram, anything that will help him get something out of this book and make the notebook "his" creation. Then we could discuss the questions together (he can't seem to answer them on his own). I would like to have your thoughts on this idea and any other insights or suggestions that you might have.

I have come to the conclusion that he won't get the kind of an education that I think he should in high school, but that God has a plan for him and an education created just for him. Now if I can just figure out exactly how to do it :) and how to write on a transcript!!

Thanks, and God bless. :)

Hi!

I sure missed you this year too! Actually, both of those bookings were changed for us too. PRAYERFULLY, this year we will be able to cross paths! Take a look at the schedule included in this issue AND stay updated with any NEW bookings or changes through our website (Which is NEW! Check out <http://www.cindyrushton.com>). We will probably be close to you several times this year!

Matthew's books are certainly a delight to behold. I think that they are special because they are a REAL LIVE example of what time, patience, encouragement, and a simple approach to Language Arts can yield in the life of a reluctant writer. I want to encourage you to *go at your son's pace and follow your son's interests*. You will never regret it.

We all seem to have that natural weakness to compare ourselves to one another...that is why Jesus addressed this problem over and over in His ministry and all throughout the Word of God. Daily we have to renew our minds and hearts to the vision that God has for each of us! This is the key to freedom...the key to abundant life...the key to fulfilling our individual call before God.

One of our greatest callings as mothers is to instill in our children a vision for their unique calling. This begins when they are little. Looking at each of them as completely unique...completely individual. Encouraging them to use their special gifts and talents, that no one else in the family (or in the whole wide world) can do like they can do. Tailoring their education just for them. Following God in each step that we take.

I can almost feel the struggle that your son must be going through. I don't think it is so much an education issue as an issue of your son really needing to know WHO HE IS and WHERE TO BEGIN learning things that he loves. We all want to know that we are great at something. We all want to know that we are important to those around us. I saw this struggle with my daughter, even though she was younger than her brother. It seemed to matter very little that we loved her JUST like she was...that WE knew she was a vital part of our family...and that we were not comparing her to her brother in the least. She did not have a breakthrough until we kept encouraging, encouraging, encouraging...sharing the vision that God had for her...encouraging some more...SPEAKING the blessings over her...praying...encouraging (did I say ENCOURAGING??)...and verbally telling her what her part in our family really was.

Very little that we do in life matters as much as the blessing we get from our parents. So many in our culture struggle as a result of anger that they do not have "approval" or "purpose" or "meaning" to their lives. Blessing our children gives ALL of this. Blessing means that we let them know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that they are precious to us...that they are an integral part of our lives and what we do for God...and that they are incredibly special to God.

Why do I say that this is more important than writing, notebooking, science, or even preparing transcripts for college? My reason is that until we have their heart, we will never get them to do their work from the heart. Until we instill in them a passion for seeking out God's plan for their lives and living it out *today*, we will never see them with a passion for learning so they are ready for their call. Until their minds are "single" in their focus on what "they" are to do, they will chase the delights of others, copy others, compare accomplishments, and forfeit that which God wants to give them and only them.

We see the majority of people (yes, I am talking about adults here) today doing exactly the same thing. We are conditioned from our own education and the society that

we live in to blend in, to not rock the boat, and to follow others.

Bless your dear child by letting him know how precious he is to you and how important he is to your home. Look for ways to praise and edify him. Continue discipling him and teaching him what God wants for his life. Let him know that God has a plan that is special for him. Speak this over him over and over. Introduce him to a wide variety of studies. You may want to do this in your read aloud time or as you plan field trips or your family vacation. You never know which study will seize him and never let him go. That study will become part of his life purpose!

You were concerned with Science. Science, as all other subjects is VERY EASY to teach when you implement a good mixture of great literature, real life, and real people. Don't stop teaching this way as he gets older. If it works when they are little and it is working for YOU to learn as an adult, don't substitute something artificial just because they are in grades 8-12. They deserve the same rich education regardless of their age. You will accomplish more by sticking to a real, living, simplified approach to education than you could accomplish trying to teach to get credits for graduation.

So, getting to the record-keeping end of this...can a real, living, simplified approach to education get you into college? Get a job? Can it be documented? What would a transcript look like? First of all, this approach has been around since the beginning of time. Anything that is based completely on the Word of God *will* work. When we are completely obedient to God, we can be assured that He will prepare us PERFECTLY, guard our steps, and help to give us the wisdom that we need each step of the way.

I have several resources that have *really* helped me to have peace during these years. They seem to answer questions as they arise each step of my way. I think these would help you too. We have just recently added Barb Shelton's books to our stock of items that we are making available to all of you. Barb has taught her children with the same approach as we are using in our home. She is that mentor that has taken steps just ahead of me. Her books and tapes are great to give the why and how of setting up your high school for YOUR child, teaching and learning with a lifestyle of learning, and documenting all learning professionally.

Here are some of our favorites...

Recommended Resources Written By Barb Shelton (and available through Rushton Family Ministries)...

Senior High: A Home-Designed Form+U+la by Barb Shelton...This is the PERFECT book for helping you think through your child's high school education. Are you facing the high school years with a bit of fear? Intimidation? Not sure how you can REALLY document the learning in your home so it is presented professionally for College Entrance or your child's job resume? This book will offer the help you need. If you are wanting to capture your child's education on paper so you can RELAX during the High School years, this is one book that is a must! \$28.95
The Homeschool Guide-a-log for Real Life Home Education by Barb Shelton...Although this book was not written as a BOOK (it was actually supposed to be Barb's CATALOG! hehe), it is probably my FAVORITE book by Barb Shelton! Whether you are beginning your journey as a homeschooler and have NO idea where to begin...you
