

# Bloom

Hope...for the uprooted woman

## Are you content?



It's no wonder we struggle with discontentment from time to time. Social media shows us what we're missing out on and who seems to be having more fun. The TV flashes celebrities and ads to convince us that we need to own the latest phone, smell like Julia Roberts, furnish our homes like Brooke Shields, and vacation in an exotic tropical paradise.

But what about those times when your discontentment goes deeper? Life isn't turning out how you'd imagined. You either want to rewind — "If I could just go back to the way things were" — or fast-forward — "If I can just get past this" — to feel happy again. You're living *in* the past or living *for* the future.

**But are you living the present? Really living. What is God doing right now? Right here?** Don't know? Ask Him. And while you're asking, trust Him. Be patient for the answer. Some of God's greatest work is done while we wait.

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### Seeking contentment? This will help

**Abide.** (to dwell; to live or reside in a place). You don't have to follow a formula to spend time with Jesus. So many times people get so focused on the process of studying the Bible, they lose sight of the person of Jesus. Simply abide. Abide in God's word; read the Bible like it was written to you personally – because it was. Abide in prayer; talk to God like He's there with you – because He is. Abide in His promises; believe and trust His word – because He keeps a promise. Just abide in Him. I suggest you zero in on John 15:1-10 for a clear picture of what it means to abide in Jesus. He is the vine. You are the branch. Stay connected, and from Him will flow everything you need. In fact, go ahead and read the whole book of John.

**Be grateful.** A grateful heart brings you back to Jesus. Luke 17:11-17 tells us that only one of the ten lepers who were healed went back to thank Jesus. Being grateful for what you have, not only brings contentment, but teaches you a lot about God's grace. He has shown His "unmerited favor" on all of us in some way or another. Whether you have much, or little, it is sufficient. Don't miss the moment of thanking Him daily for His grace in your life.

Excerpt from Susan Miller's *After the Boxes are Unpacked*, updated edition. (To be released in April 2016.)

## Reality Check

Be present.

“But that’s the point,” you say. “I don’t like the ‘present.’ I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to be living this move (...this illness, ...this grief, ...this divorce, ...this \_\_\_\_).”

What were your expectations for this time in your life?

Stop. Don’t rush on to finish reading. Take a moment to answer that question.

Gerald May observed, “Expectations are premeditated resentments.” When life doesn’t meet our expectations, anxiety, bitterness, and discontent can take root. Ponder this by Ted Wueste:



Releasing expectations is essential if we’re going to move into all that God desires for us. Anxiety has a way of shrinking our hearts so that there is not room for God. Physically, we may even feel muscle tension or shortness of breath. As we release expectation, our hearts expand and are able to hold whatever is and however God is involved. ...We don’t do this by trying to control our anxiety and expectations but by ‘releasing’ them (‘casting all your anxieties’ [1 Peter 5:7]). We can do this because He cares about us. We can let go because He has plans and ways that are loving and gracious and wise and perfect.

Expectations are best discerned by looking at our anxieties. Spend a few minutes prayerfully asking, ‘What am I anxious about?’ Then, consider: what are the expectations underneath that anxiety? Once you’ve identified the expectation, release it as you simply pray: *Father, I know you care so I let go of my grip on this version of reality.* Meditate on 1 Peter 5:6,7 and repeat this exercise as you are able throughout the day.

Ted Wueste, *Prepare Him Room: Advent Reflections*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, October 2015.

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

## Celebrating the Mundane by Dina Matthews

Sometimes you hear the thing you don't want to hear when you'd really just rather be right. This was one of those days. Today I heard this during a sermon, "Learn to embrace the mundane."

You don't know this because you're not inside my train-wreck of a head, but that is JUST the problem for me right now. Some days (okay, most days) it feels to me like there's nothing BUT mundane in my world.

I mean, OTHER people get to go on vacations and plan nights out on the town and pay work crews to come clean the carpets and scrub the tile grout.

"Why not me, God," I want to scream. Okay, I HAVE screamed it. Rather repeatedly. To, or rather at, the Creator of the Universe. Yeah, I'm just that awesome.

But after my loud rants to my Savior, I always seem to get busy at other things instead of carving out a holy silence in which to listen for an answer. But recently the mundane felt too much to bear any longer. I realized I was jealous of my husband working out of town and my older children for having fun and making lives for themselves away from the daily pressures of our mentally ill third child.

I told you, I'm super awesome.

When I owned up to that horrible jealousy thing, I knew I had to hit my knees and get still, so I did. What God revealed to me over a few days' time started with a line in a book I'm reading that said we shouldn't underestimate the bravery and value of humble work that impresses no one but Jesus, especially when that work is costly to us personally.

It was as if God sat right across from me with his own cup of coffee and said, "Kid, that mundane life that you endure, that's holy work, and that's exactly what you have asked me to give you. All the hours you feel like you spend 'trapped' in the house with this complicated child I entrusted to you – those are sacred hours. Even the humility it requires to let the big kids go and giving them the freedom to be away and joyful, guilt free, is a precious service to Me. Rejoice in the work I've given to you and no one else."

Never before have I felt such an instantaneous conviction and freedom all at once. A mountain has been taken from my shoulders and moved simply by His Word. And He did this for me when I was busy being so awesome I was jealous of my own kids. THAT is true love.

From now on, each time I decline a social invitation, or see some smiley, perfect Instagram report of everyone else's life, I can say, "Thank you, God, for the holy work you've given me to do," and mean it.

Now I can celebrate the mundane because, for me, it is holy. Filled now with a peace provided by the Holy Spirit, joy is mine again.



Are you in the dark right now in your circumstances, or in your life with God? If so, then remain quiet. If you open your mouth in the dark, you will speak while in the wrong mood – darkness is the time to listen. Don't talk to other people about it; don't read books to find out the reason for the darkness; just listen and obey. If you talk to other people, you cannot hear what God is saying.

- Oswald Chambers



## EQUIP

In Matthew 5:3-11, Jesus gave us a **prescription for contentment** when he shared these nine ways that we are blessed. The Greek word for blessed in these verses is *makarios* and it means happy!

You're Blessed...

...when you're at the end of your rope.  
With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

You're Blessed...

...when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

You're Blessed...

...when you're content with who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourself the proud owner of everything that can't be bought.

You're Blessed...

...when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

You're Blessed...

...when you care. At the moment of being "care-full", you find yourself cared for.

You're Blessed...

... when you get your inside world—mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

You're Blessed...

... when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

You're Blessed...

... when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

Not only that—Count Yourselves Blessed...

...every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit Me. What this means is that the truth is too close for comfort and has made people uncomfortable.

(The Message)

Your favorite source for encouragement in times of life transition is . . . well . . . going through a transition! Watch for the 20th anniversary, updated edition of *After the Boxes are Unpacked* by Susan Miller.

Coming  
this spring!

### Some of what's NEW:

Letting go, starting over, and moving forward through EVERY life change  
Reaching out to the changing neighborhood  
The moving military family  
More stories, more scripture



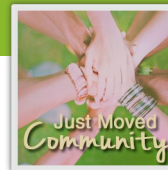
### JustMoved.org

- New articles every month
- Weekly Words of Encouragement emails
- Order *After the Boxes are Unpacked*, a must-have
- Just Moved Online Community
- 30 days of prayer for you
- Pin your location on the Just Moved map

### Join the Just Moved Community!

Joining is fast, easy, and FREE. Your information is never shared with any other organization and you can cancel at any time. Join today! Go to [just-moved.org/community-2/register-for-the-just-moved-community](http://just-moved.org/community-2/register-for-the-just-moved-community). Here's what you'll receive:

- A free copy of our e-guide "5 Things Every Newcomer Needs to Know".
- A personal welcome from a Just Moved Ministry volunteer.
- Prayer support from the Just Moved Prayer Team.
- 20% off a one-time purchase in the Just Moved Shop at JustMoved.org. (Excludes materials for use in a *Moving On After Moving In* study.)
- Opportunity to connect by email if there are other JMC members in your area.



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