

Bloom

Hope...for the uprooted woman

Cease striving

by Ann Kelley, Director of Marketing & Website at Just Moved

New year resolutions. Did you make any? It's reported that 40% of Americans will make a new year resolution and that only 8% will achieve it.

Goals are great and necessary, but when it comes to lasting change, change at the core of who you are, can a decision and dogged determination (both greatly influenced by how you feel in the moment) really make it happen? A determination to be happier, more content, a better parent or spouse, to love and obey God more; can lasting change – true transformation – be realized through your own efforts?

At the age of 16 I asked Christ to take over my life and the years to follow were full of the ups and downs that life offers. I married and had children and, throughout those years, my faith remained strong and sustained me. It was important to me to attend and serve in the church, take notes during sermons, and try my best to faithfully read my Bible and shoot prayers “up” to God.

This approach to my faith “worked” well – until deep crisis hit. My intellectual pursuit of God (and that's what it was) was not enough any more. I needed to *experience* Jesus as I lay in a puddle of tears, my heart ripped out.

The only way out was to empty myself and to be able to see myself and my world through God's eyes. I needed the transformation of my mind and heart (Rom. 12:2). I needed to be a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and it was almost a relief to realize I could not do this myself.

Counseling was helpful, but no amount of thinking right or doing right was going to bring about inner transformation. Only complete surrender, helplessness, and emptying of myself would allow God to do this work. I stopped giving God an agenda, a list of to-dos, outcomes that I wanted. I started spending time in silence, saying “yes” to God's presence, listening. This was not a new formula to get God to act. This was releasing my own plan and falling into the arms of God in complete trust (though wrapped in desperation).

It's been 2 ½ years since my world fell apart. The hardest years of my life. But I would not trade the deep, trusting relationship (and *it is* a relationship!) I have with God and the freedom I've discovered to embrace who I am. I will trust God to be whittling away my rough edges. My part is merely to stay close to Him and listen.

(Learn more about silent, listening prayer by reading *Basking in His Presence: A Call to the Prayer of Silence* by Bill Volkman)

Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
Romans 12:2



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New, easy way to bid from anywhere!



The temptation to fix it

Excerpt from *Resisting the Temptation to Moral Formation*
by Dr. John Coe, Director of the Institute for Spiritual Formation and Professor
of Philosophy and Spiritual Theology at Talbot School of Theology

To read in its entirety, go to <http://www.talbot.edu/sundoulos/winter-2011/second-feature/>

This...is addressed to the dedicated Christian...who is very serious about [her] spiritual life, who has a most sincere desire to grow and be used of God in service and ministry. ...These same dedicated persons often struggle with a secret and sometimes not-so-secret burden of guilt and shame that they are not as mature as they should be, that their lives often feel spiritually dry and withered, that the Christian life feels more like work than joy.



What I want to tell them and what they may not know is that they are in the grips of a great temptation. This **moral temptation is the attempt to deal with our spiritual failure, guilt and shame by means of spiritual efforts**, by attempting to perfect oneself in the power of the flesh or the self. ...It is the temptation to try to relieve a burden that Christ alone can relieve. To carry such a burden is an awful load to carry.

Instead, the Christian life is about Christ and less about our efforts. It is about what *He* has done, and about our life "in Christ". This is an obedience of abiding in the Vine and open to the Life of God living within. It is an obedience, but not one of moralism. It is more about participation in a new life than imitation of that life.

God's spirit is dwelling within you. You cannot search for what you already have. You cannot talk God into "coming" into you by longer and more urgent prayers. All you can do is become quieter, smaller, and less filled with your own self and its flurry of ideas and feelings.

—Richard Rohr

"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit [a relationship by faith], are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3)

How do you know whether you are susceptible to moral temptation?

Whenever...your first and abiding [continuing] response in conscience to guilt is "I will do better, I need to work on that," ...then you know you are trying to use obedience and your own efforts as the primary response to deal with sin, guilt and shame before God.

We seek to hide from our sin by being good, for it is too painful to see our sin.... As an antidote to this malady, we must come out of hiding in prayer and open deeply to the truth of our sins and how these have been imputed [removed and transferred] to Christ, that there is no *condemnation* for those in Christ (Rom. 8:1), so that we may open deeply to the Spirit applying forgiveness and love in our experience.

Speak, for your servant is listening

Raised in the church without knowing intimacy with God

As a child, Samuel was dedicated to the Lord by his mother and brought to Eli the priest to live for God. Samuel “grew up in the presence of the Lord,” grew “in favor with the Lord and with the people,” and “served the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:21, 26; 3:1), but “Samuel did not yet know the Lord.” Living under the supervision of Israel’s priest, Samuel surely knew how to be religious and practice the forms of religion, but he didn’t know the Lord. Perhaps Eli himself had never moved beyond form and function (you can’t teach what you don’t know).

“We can be very busy for God and still not know him,” writes Mark Buchanan. “Three times God calls Samuel, and three times he mistakes the voice for Eli’s. Eli tells Samuel the next time he hears the voice to respond, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening’ (1 Sam. 3:9).

“Samuel responds as Eli said. And God speaks, and speaks, and speaks. Thus begins Samuel’s intimacy with the Lord. All his finely wrought religious training is transposed into face-to-face encounter. All his theological studies are finally rendered as worship and prayer.”

- Mark Buchanan, from *The Rest of God; restoring your soul by restoring Sabbath*

The word “listening” in Latin is *obedire*.... That is where the word “obedience” comes from. Jesus is called the obedient one, that means the listener. The Latin word for *not* listening, being deaf, is *surdus*. If you are absolutely not listening, that is where the word “absurd” comes from. So it might be interesting to note that somebody who is not listening is leading an absurd life....

Now, to become a listener, one way to do it is to say, “How can I let the ‘Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want,’ enter in from my mind to my heart?”

Listening starts precisely when you move
from the mind
to the heart....

Surrendered

Judy Phillips’ story

My life was out of control!

That is, it was – and is – out of *my* control. Just where God wants me. Doesn’t scripture teach that He is the potter and we are the clay? (Isaiah 64:8) What could be more surrendered than a piece of clay? Many times He has to prod us out of our comfort zone to place us in a surrendered state.

Surrendered and helpless - out of control - God is then able to do with us as He pleases. We stop striving, stop fighting, stop resisting. We stop, rest and gaze upon Him. The perfect place for Him to work in our lives; for our good and His Glory.

I could have never gotten here if I had stayed in my comfortable house on the golf course in the mountains, with a successful business, surrounded by friends. A lot of the time I was unable to see Him for all the other stuff in my life. That has all been stripped away and now I see Him more clearly than ever before. I hear Him speaking to me, I see and feel his leading, I hunger for more of Him, I depend on Him alone. I can feel myself growing spiritually. I have cried out to God so often and just sat at His feet and told him of my loneliness, my fears and my confusion.

Thank you, Lord, for the discomfort of this physical move which you used to move me closer and closer to You.

Read Judy’s entire story at JustMoved.org

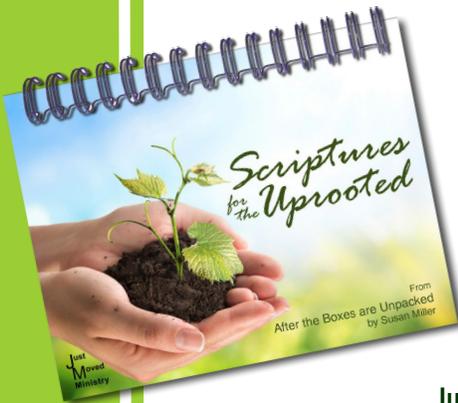
EMBRACE

EQUIP

We are thanking God for guiding and blessing this ministry for 20 years!

Our deep gratitude to all who have supported this ministry in prayer, volunteer hours, friendship, encouragement, and financial gifts. You are pillars of strength and stability!

The future holds much promise! We are trusting God and eager to continue forward with the work He's given us to do!



Scriptures for Every Life Event

This spiral-bound flip book features all the scriptures referenced in *After the Boxes are Unpacked*, plus many more that will encourage you or someone you know on a journey through life transition. A wonderful way to read and memorize scripture that will remind you of God's promises.

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Thursday, April 16, 2015 at Grayhawk Golf Club

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