

Bloom

A Ministry of Just Moved
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Hope...for the uprooted woman

Take care

by Ann Kelley

This will be your last issue of *Bloom* unless you respond with the enclosed reply card, email, or call!



My 80-year-old mother-in-law passed away peacefully just 2 weeks ago. By the time her cancer was discovered it was too advanced to be arrested and reversed. As a single woman, she couldn't live alone. There was no question that she would come to live with me and my husband - her son.

The tender moments with her far outweighed the demands of many doctor appointments, chemo, accommodating her ever-changing needs as her body weakened, and the eventual physical pain she endured despite our every effort to stay ahead of it.

The months that she was with us were not without our own stress and fatigue. Our losing battle to manage her pain became overwhelming at times. Twice during this time, I became quite sick. But our experience is far too common.

According to a study conducted by AARP, more than 34 million unpaid caregivers provide care to someone age 18 and older who is ill or has a disability. The National Alliance for Caregiving reports that caregivers have difficulty finding time for themselves, managing emotional and physical stress, and balancing work and family responsibilities. Half of caregivers said their health had gotten worse due to caregiving, that they didn't have time to take care of themselves or were too tired to do so, and 67% reported that they didn't go to the doctor because they put their family's needs first.

Caregiving is only one of many circumstances when we're tempted to dismiss our needs for the sake of others. As women, our first response in times of transition or crisis is often to meet the needs of our children, husband or other family members and to ignore our own mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional health.

This issue of *Bloom* is all about the importance of self-care. Self-care is not selfish. It is all about taking care of physical health, managing and reducing stress, honoring emotional and spiritual needs, nurturing relationships, and finding balance. Emily Wierenga writes about

caring for her ailing mother in *Today's Christian Woman*, "A woman's love is endless, but her energy is not. It's easy to want to care for others, while forgetting that we, ourselves, have needs. ... we tend toward a messiah-complex—the belief that we can save the world if we try hard enough."

Together, let's make a commitment to care for ourselves. Jesus himself went away alone to pray and find refreshment and he exhorted us to, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

Just Moved Ministry is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization. If you've been encouraged by this ministry, please consider a financial gift. Your donation of any amount will allow us to continue to lead a mobile world to Jesus Christ.

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The woman as the well

By Dina Matthews

Often, I feel like the town well. Everyone and their brothers, sisters and cousins are lining up in front of me to fill their buckets. They want to get what they need from me and go on their merry way having their needs satisfied. I was offering myself up again and again without stopping to refresh me. Did that make me a martyr? Nope. It made me a dried up, empty pit with nothing left to give but dust and frustration. Ever been there?



Recently I was invited to look at a familiar scripture in a new way, and it has radically changed my thinking. A man is asking Jesus which is the greatest of all the commandments, and He replies,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)

Maybe I'm a dolt – okay, probably – but I had always heard just two parts to that deal. Love God and love your neighbor. Are you with me? Do you see it? There are THREE parts!

Love God first and with all you've got • Love your neighbor • Love YOURSELF

For a well to be useful to anyone, it has to be continually refreshed. If you are in the habit, as I was, of not refilling your soul, you can dry up. An empty well has nothing to offer of any value. On the other hand, if you lean more toward self-indulgence without serving or sacrificing for others, you can become stagnant. A stagnant well becomes brackish and poisoned, and like an empty one has nothing of value to offer. To be who God made you to be, you have to both pour into others **and** renew yourself daily!

Tipping The Scales

Striving for a balanced life? Here are just a few warning signs that you may be pouring out too much of yourself – or perhaps not enough:

Running On Empty

- No time for Bible study, there's work to be done!
- Promises to pray for others that don't get kept
- Bitter feelings about others or about what you are doing
- Easily upset by almost anything



Overstuffed

- No time for Bible study, there are personal appointments to keep!
- Persistent feeling like there's something missing or lacking
- Easily upset by people getting in your way, holding you up

Don'ts for Emotional Fitness

- **Don't ignore it!** Ignoring the warning signs will not make them go away any more than ignoring a gas tank that says 'empty' will allow the car to continue to run.
- **Don't excuse it!** Many of us make excuses for our emotional pain rather than looking at the problem that's causing it.
- **Don't decorate it!** Many times we decorate our pain with a pretty house, pretty clothes, and prestigious positions.
- **Don't cover it up!** Many of us cover up with accomplishments and excessive busyness.
- **Don't pretend it's not there!** Many of us have no idea why we're feeling pain because we pretend that everything is okay.
- **Don't postpone dealing with it!** Don't postpone dealing with your warning signs, or they will deal with you.

Sheri Rose Shepherd from *Fit for Excellence*



Finding your balance

God tells us that in order to live a balanced life we must love Him, practice good self-care and pour ourselves into others. If you're thinking that balance is only for circus performers and people besides you who have their stuff together, then think again. Start with these three steps:

1. Receiving

Some of us are not great at receiving, but like it or not, you must begin the practice of letting God in to your daily life and letting other people bless you with what they can bring to your life. Jesus gratefully let others take care of his needs for food and shelter.

2. Attending

Listen to your emotions and what your body is telling you. Oh, you know what's screaming at you and when. Pay attention to it. Take care of it. It is not self-indulgent. Jesus slept and ate when he needed to, and always prayed about everything.

3. Giving

You can joyfully give to others out of your own fullness when you have taken care of yourself and spent time with God daily. Jesus preached, healed and counseled multitudes, but every time he grew tired he would refresh himself through private time with God.



EMBRACE

Unpacking my heart Ruth Noman in Arizona

As an immigrant, I know what it means to be uprooted. I also know that, with each of our three moves, I have placed my family's interests before mine. While my husband and children each got "unpacked", I placed "me" up on the shelf, in the closet, or even in storage. The grief over losses from each move stayed packed away and stored in the deep recesses of my heart in the hopes they would disappear. My greatest loss was leaving behind the shrub that I planted to honor my mother after her death. I was devastated to leave it behind. Once again, my focus went to my family and my grief went "up on the shelf." The *Moving On After Moving In* study helped me realize that I was clinging to my Mom's death all these years instead of cherishing her memory. Now, I am learning to cling to God's promises through His Word. He has been with me every step of the way and I can trust Him to unpack my heart.



All the scripture from *After the Boxes are Unpacked* in our **Scripture Flip**

Save \$3 when you buy the book and flip as a gift set! Our Scripture Flip is smartly organized into 3 sections to provide women with encouragement as they learn to **Let Go, Start Over, and Move Ahead** after a move. These scriptures will bring God's hope, comfort, and encouragement during a time of transition in your life or in the life of someone you care about.

A wonderful way to read and memorize scriptures that will remind you of God's promises.

To order, use the enclosed reply card, call 480.991.5268 (credit card order), or go to <http://justmovedshop.com/collections/all>

Operation Hope for uprooted military families

A big THANK YOU to those who have given to our project to donate the *Moving On After Moving In* study to military chapels in the U.S. and around the world!

Air Force, Army, Marine, and Navy chapels have signed on to offer the study as a way to reach out to and ease the transition of their newcomers! The requests keep coming in and your financial support allows us to respond quickly by sending the complete study (DVD series, facilitator's guide, workbooks, and books) and offer one-on-one support to study leaders.

To donate, use the enclosed reply card, call us at 480.991.5268, or go to www.JustMoved.org/support-us/donate.

