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Soft Choices

Dr. T. D. Worthington

Are you living the dream? You know, the dream you had about the way things would be. If so, you know how great that feels...*until it doesn't*. One day, you began to notice that feeling of elation wasn't there anymore. Now, it feels like something is missing. You can't quite put your finger on it, but something is not as it should be. It is a nagging sense that something is amiss, perhaps an undetermined hunger for something unfound or lost along the way.

So, your pastor reminds you that you have *so* much to be thankful for. Your friends suggest taking up a hobby. Your therapist offers some antidepressants. Your spouse may suggest you just grow up. Truth is, you began to think that all those well-meaning folks had no idea of how you were really feeling, and you didn't have the words to explain it.

The symptoms are real enough. You may feel exhausted and overwhelmed no matter how much you rest. Your closest relationships

seem to drain you of energy rather than recharge you. Even your relationship with God is not as fresh and vibrant as it should be. It's almost like you are living out of alignment with who you really are, and you are not sure what happened, nor are you quite sure how to fix it.

Perhaps the reasons are physical. It could be you are dealing with the side effects of your medications. However, please do not discount the possibility that it could be because of a foolish decision you made somewhere along the way. I call them "*soft choices*." These are the choices you made with little prayer, little consideration of others, and little real thought of the consequences.

For the Christian, life is an intricate weave of fleeting opportunities. Every day of your life you come up against occasions to glorify the Lord through your decisions and actions. Some opportunities are vast and obvious, others small

and unassuming. Yet, all too often, we let these opportunities to avoid a foolish decision or to make a godly decision slip through our fingers, either because we are too afraid to seize them or simply because we don't recognize them for what they are. In this article, I would like to focus primarily on missed opportunities to do good.

Unfortunately, these missed opportunities can sometimes be once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. They will not come back again. Tomorrow will be too late. So one day, we look back, wishing we had taken that challenge, made that bold decision, or tried something new. Often, the real meaning of life is not found in the things we do but in the things we dare to do.

God-given opportunities are often God's way of prompting us to grow. They are heavenly invitations challenging us to step outside our comfort zones and embrace the unknown. Yet, for many, laziness, a fear of failure,

or lack of commitment hold them back, chaining them down to a life of regret and mediocrity.

My challenge for each of us is to be alert to God's voice. I know a thousand things are clamoring for your attention, but I assure you, God is still speaking to His children. He is still giving direction, imparting wisdom, and clarifying ways that you might glorify Christ while bringing fulfillment to your own life. I know you sometimes think God is giving you the silent treatment, but usually, the problem is that we are not alert to hear His voice.

The Bible mentions a man named Habakkuk. Although we don't know much about him, we are told about an occasion when he inquired of God and then stood alert, waiting for a reply.

“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.” Habakkuk 2:1

Habakkuk fully expected God to respond, so he stood waiting, watching, and listening for the Lord's answer. Apparently, he also accepted the fact that he may not like the answer, but he still wanted to hear it.

John 10:27 says, ***“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”*** God is always speaking to us, but we are often too busy to hear His voice. How can that be so when so much of our success in life depends upon having ears always in tune with His voice?

The Bible provides several examples of people who missed opportunities. Remember all the people who perished during Noah's time? They laughed and mocked his warnings, so they missed a chance to escape the flood.

On the hill of Golgotha, crucified with Jesus, were two thieves. Both stood at a crossroads. One took the opportunity to receive Christ, while the other chose to go the other way and refused salvation.

When we read the parable of the Good Samaritan, we see how the priest and the Levite each missed an opportunity, while the Samaritan, the most unlikely of the three, seized it.

Perhaps, just as with the priest and the Levite, part of the problem may be that opportunities from God often come disguised as difficulties, inconveniences, or risks. It certainly would have been an inconvenience and perhaps even a risk to stop on your journey to help a stranger.

And so it is with all of us. We must learn to shift our mindset and view life's challenges not as roadblocks but as detours to something greater. When we miss an opportunity, we are not just missing out on a moment—we are missing out on a potential transformation for our lives. Every day is a new chance, a new opportunity to become who we are truly meant to be.

Great men and women of accomplishment understood this very well. They knew a certain amount of difficulty was involved with every opportunity. Thomas Edison failed over and over again in pursuit of his inventions. A man once saw a barrel of discarded light bulbs in Edison's shop. When asked what they were, Edison told him those were experiments that didn't work. The man offered sympathy to the great inventor for his repeated failures. Edison replied, ***“I have not failed. I've just found 1,000 ways that won't work.”*** Edison was undoubtedly intelligent, but his success could also be attributed to his perseverance, his ability to see





failure as an opportunity to learn, and his willingness to take a risk.

Psalms 32:8: *“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”*

Did your mom and dad ever guide you with their eyes? One resource many parents don’t have today is “the look.” Without saying a word, “the look” told you in no uncertain terms that you better straighten up. Likewise, God has promised His guidance for His children, but there is a qualifier.

Psalm 25:9: *“The meek (the humble) will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.”*

Our Lord clearly reveals the type of people He chooses to lead. He leads the humble who have faith in Him and are willing to be led. However, He resists the proud who are determined to follow their own ways.

James 4:6: *“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”*

Psalm 18:25-27: *“With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward*

thou wilt shew thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.”

The Bible makes it clear that God cannot guide you if you are determined to guide yourself.

So, here is the challenge. If your world seems cloudy and perhaps a bit empty, or if you feel that life is not as fulfilling as it should be, it could be that you took the wrong road somewhere along the line. There was a pathway that God had for you, but you chose the other way. Or, you went the right way for a while but then made a soft choice and turned back when things got tough. It has been said that as life draws to a close, more people regret what they didn’t do as opposed to regretting what they actually did.

One day, it may very well hit you: a tidal wave of regret for all the opportunities you didn’t seize when you had the chance, the dreams you didn’t pursue, and the responsibility you were unwilling to accept. You may regret the spiritual gifts you didn’t use, the testimonies you didn’t share, the ministries you didn’t support, the good work you put on hold, and the prayers you didn’t offer. A lifetime of missed opportunities serves as a sobering reminder to live life fully while we have the chance.

In the end, perhaps these are the things that define us. These are the things that might have the most significant impact on the world and shape our destiny. Maybe, as in the case of the Good Samaritan, someone’s life may even hang in the balance – and all you have to do is say yes. Let us all rededicate ourselves to be in tune with the voice of God, even in the noise and chaos of life.

I have often noticed something in the hundreds of church services I have attended. There may be a dozen kids in the church nursery, but if a baby cries, that particular baby’s mother will often leave the service and rush to the nursery. Why did she respond? Because she was in tune with her baby’s cries. The same is true of the Lord. He is in tune to our cries just as we must be in tune with His voice. The more we hear the word of the Lord the more *we will be able* to hear the word of the Lord.

I want to see God at work, and I would like to know that I’m a part of it. Opportunities come our way daily to perform some deed or give a testimony that will glorify the Lord. Be alert for them! Who knows, but one of them could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to overcome your ho-hum life and become the person God created you to be. Often, it simply boils down to the choices you make.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry nearly fifty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.

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“Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.”

II Corinthians 9:11

This means we are enriched in every way to be generous in every way. We serve a faithful God. He is so good. We are never alone because He is always with us. Not only is He with us, but He provides us with our needs. Both our earthly and spiritual needs are satisfied through Christ. This is a marvelous thing we get to enjoy!

However, God doesn't simply bless us so that we can say we are a blessed people. There are two main reasons why God blesses us. We are blessed *because God loves us, and so we will be able to bless others.*



God's blessings come to us, but they should never stop with us. They come *to us* and then flow *through us*. In other words, blessings were never meant to be the end of our journey; instead, they are to be the resources used to help us reach the end of our journey.

God has richly blessed our churches and families here in America. Augustine once gave us this charge: *“Find out how much God has given you, and from it, take what you need; the remainder is needed by others.”* We must use God's resources for what they were intended: God's glory in the world. God's grace and mercy poured on us should create Christians who are devoted to blessing the world in God's name. Giving our leftovers was never the goal when God called us into His service. When you give to others, you let them see Christ in your words and actions. As God's people, we must never forget why God has blessed us so richly. Paul reminds us: *“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which*

are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

II Corinthians 1:4

A summary of Paul's exhortation may be found at **II Corinthians 9:11** *“Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness.”* As stated earlier, that simply means you are enriched in every way to be generous in every way. This is a sure mark of a child of God. What a thought. What a concept. What a responsibility. What a blessing it is to be a blessing to others. Our **Faith Partners** understand this concept clearly and have demonstrated it over and over again in their support of **GoMix Christian Radio**.

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Ice is Nice... Sometimes.

Most of us love the refreshment that a tall glass of iced tea can bring. However, ice covering one of our radio antennas can cause many problems. Although icing conditions varied across the region, the storm we had back on February 19th seriously affected several of our **GoMix** stations. Almost all of our facilities were either inoperable or operating at reduced power. Our technical staff worked around the clock to keep your local station on the air. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

As many of you are already aware, our **Spring Share-A-Thon** begins on **Monday, March 10th**. We are

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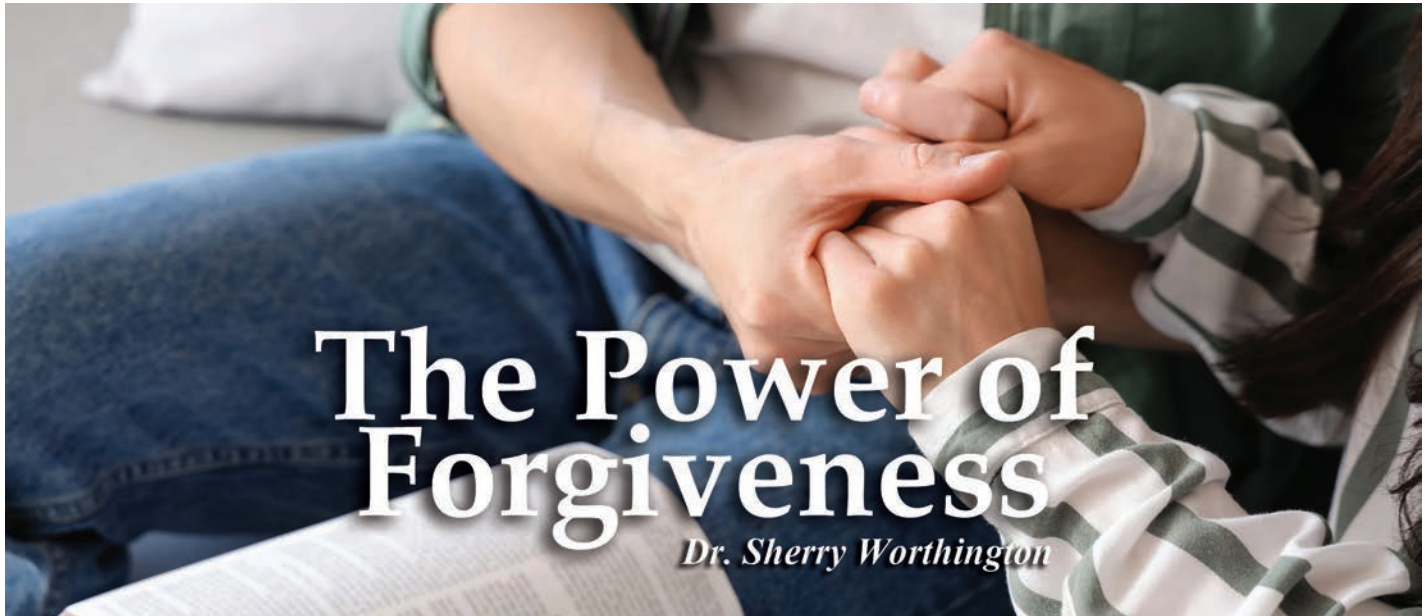
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The Power of Forgiveness

Dr. Sherry Worthington

People are always looking for purpose. They want to know why they are here. As Christians, we know we are here to worship and serve God and to fulfill His Will. How do we fulfill His Will? We let Christ live through us, and we seek to emulate the attributes of our Saviour. Satan loves to put roadblocks in our way as we seek to serve our Lord. **I Peter 5:8-9** speaks of the devil as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He will do everything he can to keep us defeated.

One of the quickest ways to stay defeated is to harbor hatred or unforgiveness in our lives. When unforgiveness festers, it grows into bitterness and becomes hatred. When we allow this sin into our lives, it prevents us from loving others with an unconditional love. We must learn to forgive others to show others Christ's love.

To completely forgive another person, it is essential to understand the lengths God went to to grant us forgiveness. God created man to worship Him and bring Him pleasure. When man sinned, God could have said, "*You are hopeless. I*

will need to start over." Instead, He had a plan for our redemption. Of course, man's sin did not take Him by surprise. God's Son stepped up and volunteered to be our redemption. Jesus had a choice in the decision. His love is boundless. I can only imagine the hurt we have caused our Heavenly Father over the years since He created the earth. I know how much I fail Him every day. Thinking about all of the sins of the world is overwhelming. Jesus paid for every bad thought, every lie, and every murder ever committed or ever will be committed on earth. Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, was to be the payment for our sins. He watched His Son be beaten and spit upon. God watched Him hang on a cruel cross in pain. He had to turn His back on Him when all past, present, and future sin was placed on Him. And with that in mind, He promises to forgive our sins and remember them no more. How can we reject His forgiveness?

We cannot earn God's forgiveness. He has been sinned against by the very humans He created. He loves us with an unsurmountable amount of love. But God cannot let us into

Heaven because He pities us or has compassion. We cannot spit into the face of God's precious gift. God's love is the entire reason for Christ's mission on earth and His redeeming work. We must be willing to ask Jesus to save us. It is the only way to obtain God's mercy. Our sins and our failures will sometimes make us feel unforgivable. God went to great lengths to be sure everyone willing to come to Him would be forgiven. We must remember that our forgiveness is not based on who we are but on God and the magnitude of who He is. As a lost person, the gift of salvation is here for the taking. We must sincerely ask Jesus to come into our lives and forgive our sins. We must also have a willing heart to change.

In **Luke 18**, two men were praying in the temple. Both men had come to offer sacrifices for their sins. One man was arrogant and wanted everyone to know how good he was. The other man, the publican, was humbled by the very thought of his sin. This man wanted God's forgiveness because he wanted fellowship with God. He was willing to bring his sins to the altar

and confess them to God. The first man thought he could come to God by his good works. The only way to become a Christian is through true repentance.

When we ask people to forgive us, they will look for some sign that we are sincere. We want to see repentance. Are they sorry enough? Have they suffered enough? It is not that way with the Gospel. He does not expect you to beg and plead for forgiveness. Our heavenly Father is just plain gracious and merciful. We have to ask with sincerity and truth.

Many times in the Christian walk, we feel we have blown it too far. God's forgiveness applies to us, too. No sin is so great that we cannot return to Him and renew our commitment to Christ. We do not become perfect upon salvation. As David committed sexual sins with Bathsheba and murder, God forgave Him. In **II Samuel 12**, Nathan confronts David with his sin, and David repents. God has forgiven Him, and He loves him dearly, but there are consequences for David's sin. David's child died, and his children suffered. David never had peace in his house, along with many spiritual struggles. God does not take away the consequences. We must live with them, but we can move on with our lives and have the comfort that we are forgiven and return to the fellowship we are intended to have with Christ. David's story brings great hope to us today that we are never unforgivable. The only unforgivable sin is rejecting God's gift of salvation.

One of the most difficult things to do is to forgive yourself. We are told to forgive others when they sin

against us. When we ask for God's forgiveness and ask Christ to save us, He forgives us, and that settles it. Unfortunately, even though we have been forgiven, we may choose to dwell on it. We carry the guilt and the shame of our actions. We make ourselves feel better by comparing ourselves to others, but when we get still at night, we will hear the voice telling us how wicked we are. If we have asked Christ to forgive us, the voice is not His. He has forgiven us for our sins past, present, and future. We have a powerful God, and His forgiveness knows no bounds. The



Bible teaches us in **Jeremiah 31:34** that God remembers our sins no more. Our Heavenly Father is not forgetful. He chooses not to bring up our sins to Himself or others. When our former sins come to mind, we can choose to dwell on them, or we can fill our minds with the thoughts of our awesome God who forgave us and thank him for it. We must remember, *"God's ability to forgive is greater than our ability to forget."*

In our world, we have been taught that sin deserves punishment, and it does. The idea that there should be no penalty is foreign to us. But payment was made. Jesus paid for our sins, and He settled it. God

does not look upon our guilt again. Jesus' blood was sufficient. When we remind ourselves of the past sins of our lives, we are saying that Christ's gift was insufficient. Although we are still accountable to earthly authorities, we are forgiven. If we sin, we can still lose rewards in Heaven at the judgment seat of Christ, but we are forgiven.

So, what are the privileges of forgiveness? First, when our sins are forgiven, we have joy unspeakable. Forgiveness sets us free to serve and worship our Lord. Secondly, we have access to God. It is awesome to think I have an audience with Almighty God any time, day or night. When everyone else deserts me, God is there. Next, the believer fears no hell. This fact alone should make us great soul winners. The closest thing to hell we will ever experience is the worst thing this world has to offer. But for the lost man, the closest thing to Heaven he will experience is this life on earth. And finally, the forgiven Christian is expecting Heaven. God's forgiveness gives us many great gifts, but Heaven is the greatest. We can only compare it to the greatest things we experience on this earth. Earthly happiness is but a small thing compared to what our Heavenly Father has in store for us.

Isn't it time to forgive so we can truly experience the joy of our salvation? If you haven't accepted His gift, please do so today!



Dr. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

Watch Your Step!

Dr. Glenn Mills



I often thank God that I had the privilege to grow up on a farm. I truly believe you experience things on a farm you just can't experience anywhere else. I learned a lot about life and nature at an early age. I loved being around animals and the wildlife that was plentiful in the many wooded areas around us. I learned a lot of valuable lessons with all the equipment, buildings, and livestock.

As a kid, I loved to go barefooted. Occasionally, I would step into chicken or cow manure. Then there were the tractors, plows, disks, and other machinery that could really cause harm if I didn't watch my step and pay attention. I can't tell you the times Daddy would say, "Son, put your mind in gear." Sadly, I only had one gear, and it was wide open. It's a wonder I am still alive! Life is full of opportunities that can bless us and dangers that can harm or even destroy us.

Lend me your imagination for a moment. Picture an open path in the woods leading to a stream. Now imagine there are landmines along the path. Who would dare walk that path? But if the mines were clearly marked with red flags, that would change things wouldn't it? That is what the Holy Spirit does in our lives. He reveals what we need to know. Satan is constantly placing mines (*sin and*

temptation) around us hoping to harm or even destroy us. However, God's Word and His Holy Spirit will lead us down the right path by helping us step in the right places. Our roads will not always be easy, nor the terrain level.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Psalm 23:4

Sometimes things are going to happen that we have no control over, so watch your step. Life is full of uncertainties; but God is not! God knows everything we will ever face, and He knows what we need to do, what we need to say, and even how we need to act. His plans and purposes are perfect if we follow and obey Him.

"As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him."

Psalm 18:30

God is not just watching over us sometimes, most times, or even at special times; God is with us ALL the time. He desires to lead us into an awesome life with Him.

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”

Psalm 37:23

To avoid those landmines, we need a greater awareness of His precious Holy Spirit. Not just in our time of prayer, praise, worship, Bible reading and study, or times of service; but at all times continually. Just as God’s Word tells us to be in a continual attitude of prayer, we must be awake and aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

John 16:13

The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth in every area of our lives, but will we make a conscience decision to commune and listen to the Holy Spirit all day, every day? He is a person with whom we can talk and listen to. We can ask Him questions.

We can share our thoughts, concerns, and ideas with Him. We can thank Him and love Him for His help, advice, direction, and guidance. However, we must stop referring to the Holy Spirit as “it”. “It” is what He does, not Who He is. He is the Spirit of the Father and Jesus! He is our Helper, Comforter, Teacher, Illuminator, and Friend.

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Galatians 5:16

If we stay aware daily of the presence of the Holy Spirit, we will have a fresh anointing for our mind, body, and spirit, along with knowing where to step on our journey with Him.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a long time supporter of GoMix Christian Radio and a full-time Evangelist with Glenn Mills Ministries. More information is available at www.glennmillsministries.com

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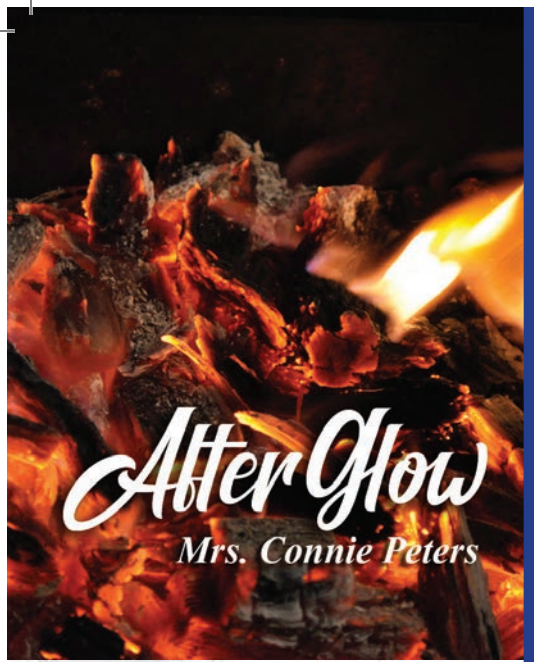
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What Is Taking So Long?

If you could only have one prayer answered, what would that prayer be? When that question popped in my head, I immediately knew the answer. It was something I had prayed about for many years. Over those years, I have seen small steps toward an answer. Those small steps have given me hope that a full answer is on its way, but I still wonder why God has not brought my prayer to a completely favorable conclusion yet. We often grow impatient, and if we dare to express our frustration to our Creator, we may ask, “*Why don’t You answer now?*”

We want to figure out why God is withholding what He has promised. We search for earthly answers, blaming ourselves, others, circumstances, negative influences, society, even God. Then doubting God leads to discouragement and disillusionment.

Or we may try to help Him accomplish what He has promised. When He seems to linger with His plan, like He did with Abraham in giving him a son or like He did with David in making him king, we try to engineer an answer to our prayers. We must remember that God’s thoughts are higher than ours, and His plan is superior to any plan we can conceive. We must not give in to the temptation to speed God’s plan along as Abraham and Sarah did. And like them, when we do that, we make a mess of God’s plan.

In his book, The Power of Love, Charles Stanley discusses the principle of relinquishment. He defines that principle not as passivity or resignation, but as “*letting go of a demanding spirit, quieting inner strife, and cancelling our own agenda.*” It all comes down to putting our trust in our loving Father Who wants and knows what is best. Even when we experience supposed silence in response to our prayers, we can trust that He is listening and that He is working on our behalf to bring us the most loving resolution to our prayers in His time. In those moments, He responds to us that we can trust His perfect love. Don’t lose hope that your most important prayer will be answered in His perfectly loving way.

The practice of relinquishment gives a whole new meaning to **Romans 8:25**. “*If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*” Ponder that!



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. She serves as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



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