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# THE LIFE-GIVING WOMAN

SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

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Happy September!

August was full for us. I traveled to Oregon for a writer's retreat for five days, and we went to the beach Labor Day weekend. Our vacation was cut five days short due to Hurricane Dorian, and while it was disappointing for everyone, threads of God's faithfulness were woven throughout, and so we are thankful.

It's still 90° here in east Tennessee, but as I write today, I'm wearing a cozy green sweater. It feels like fall in our house, and maybe if I will fall to come, it will. I wonder what the weather is like where you are? There are women from 9 countries reading this! So surely, someone has a foot of snow on the ground, somewhere.

I've been praying about this newsletter since my last one. I want you to look forward to opening it each month, so I want to say only what is of value. I always love to hear from you, so don't hesitate to respond to this email with comments or questions. It was so fun to get to know some of you last month!

## **The Need**

I titled my newsletter *The Life-Giving Woman* because I want us as Christian women to know who we are in Christ *and so live* out who we are made to be. I want us to know Jesus.

It's alarming to scan the horizon of Christianity and see confusion and compromise. But what's even more disturbing is to see the effects on the next generation. As women, we must take responsibility for our own spiritual lives -- to know Jesus -- and to speak of Him to the next generation.

I want to see Jesus exalted, but too often, we muddy the waters with *ourselves*. We don't know how to *know* Jesus. And so, subtle compromises creep in and we get easily

confused about what matters, what's true, etc. The counterfeits out there are undiscernible to us.

But also, so many of us are broken, but never tend to the wounded places. Often times, it's because we're unaware we're even broken in the first place. Other things take up space in our lives, crowding out what might be room for solitude and silence—the place where we come face to face with our Lord and what's in us. TV, maybe, becomes a numbing agent and not only are we unaware of what's beneath the surface, but we're slowly desensitized to things the Lord hates. Our conscience becomes seared little bit by little bit, allowing the compromise and confusion to seep in.

It's not that He can't minister through us when we're broken. He most certainly can and does. But how much more, how much more *depth* to our ministry would there be if we willingly consider our hearts before the Lord, inviting Him into every crack and crevice, into all the corners? How many more places can we lead others when we have gone first in some hard stuff?

I'm not gonna lie, this is a hard road to walk down—intentionally opening your heart up to the Lord and letting Him do deep heart work, in the same vein that David did in Psalm 51 and 139.

But sisters, in order to truly be life-givers, ones who purposefully and intentionally lead others to Jesus, we have to face the reality first that by (sinful) nature, we are life-takers. We must be intentional in our personal growth in the Lord in order to grow into the beautiful life-giving women He designed us to be.

We must be tenacious, daring, willing to go with God, not only to Africa (He may call some of us there!), but into hidden seasons and places of life where He can meet with us. Where we touch His heart and *know* Him. Where we know *Him*.

We shouldn't be content with just getting saved and going to church. Those are two important aspects to life in Christ, but *we have to keep on going* deeper with Him.

### **The Reality**

The fact of the matter is that women have been life-takers since the fall because of sin. All of us. Me, you, your mom, my mom, your daughters, and all four of mine. The default of our depraved state will involve a desire to rule over our husbands, and I believe men in general (Genesis 3:16).

Some of us are tempted to control anything and everything we can. Apart from God, our hearts will be set on death. Our speech, our body language, our sexual choices, our financial choices and more, will all reflect this reality.

This sounds drastic, but we see it clearly in our culture, don't we?

I bet that if you and I both took some time to peel back a layer, maybe step outside of ourselves for a day, we'd see how prone we are to be life-takers. I'll be the first to raise my hand and say that I am **so** prone to it.

But there's hope for us! After God gave the promise of the gospel (Gen. 3:15c), He also gave Adam the opportunity to step back into his God-given role as a head and leader, to re-name his wife (Gen. 3:20).

He named her Eve, which means *life-giver*. What Satan intended to steal and destroy, God redeemed. And so, Eve was given an opportunity to step back into her God-given role, too.

I marvel when I think of who God, the King of the Universe, called you and I to be. He has given us an invitation to be co-heirs with Christ, to *bring forth life*. Yes, He gave women the capacity to bring forth life from their wombs, but He doesn't allow every woman to give life in that way.

This is profound. A woman is no less a woman—a life-giver—if she cannot have babies for one reason or another. God wired *every part of her being* to give life. Birthing babies is *just one* opportunity among myriads to live out her call to image God!

To be a life-giver is to be a nurturer, a helper, a defender, an encourager, a comforter, an equipper, a teacher, a comforter (and more!). Not one of these roles is insignificant when we look at it with Kingdom eyes. If we want people to have *eternal life* ultimately, then every single part of our role as a life-giver is necessary and important. And beautiful.

So you should hear also that it's not enough to simply birth babies. Each one of us is called to lead others to Jesus. Whether it's an unbeliever, a believing friend who is struggling, or our children—we are to be women who help others get to Jesus.

But I believe that it will take a lifetime for us to walk increasingly in this role. I mean, it may just be me, but I get impatient with my kids. I am not always kind or gentle toward my husband. I don't always love preparing another meal for my always-hungry children.

I'm not always a life-giving woman.

But slowly, each day that I purposefully walk with the Lord, each day that I lay down my life and take His up, I receive more life. And, I'm increasingly able to make a way for those around me to go to deeper places in Jesus.

You'll hear me beat the same drum repeatedly, but in order to give life, we must die. A hundred-thousand times over. We must be rid of ourselves and full of Jesus.

Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work"

(John 4:34). The will of God was for Jesus to die on the cross, taking on the sin of the world, so that we might have life.

We are not anyone's savior, but we are to model the life of Jesus. I keep a picture in my mind of a woman laying down, face first, so that others in her life can walk across her to get to Jesus. It's an inadequate picture, but it conveys a point: a life-giver gives all that she has so others can know Christ. She cooks, she listens, she counsels, she chauffeurs, she pays the bills, she goes without.

It's uncomfortable, painful, we're unseen, and mistreated at times. But, it's also full of joy because we love Jesus most of all, and want others to know Him. Like Jesus, for the joy set before us, we die so that they might live (Heb. 12:2).

The moment we stand up, we become a stumbling block. We "stand up" for example, when we push to be appreciated, or when we insist on our way, or we're rude.

### **Deep Heart Work**

So here's the thing. In order to be life-giving women (I promise I will stop overusing the phrase soon), we have to *be knowing* Him. We have to *be receiving* life from the Lord.

It may be an awkward way to say it, but I can't think of a better way to articulate what I want to say. If you're married, you don't just visit your husband once a month. You see and talk to him daily. You cultivate relationship by talking through conflict, asking each other questions, doing the little things of life together. You set aside your preferences for his. You are daily knowing each other, it's an active relationship.

And it's not so different with the Lord.

He is the "with us" God. When He gave us a new heart, He put the Holy Spirit in us, so He goes with us wherever we go. We can cultivate our relationship with God in the shower. (Ha! I bet you weren't expecting those to be my next words.) How extremely awkward and inappropriate would it be to do that with any other person, save a husband?! But it's not awkward or inappropriate to talk to the Lord or sing to Him in the shower. When you do, you are growing in Him.

In order to give life, we must be rooted, tethered to, Life Himself. This is really what being a life-giving woman is all about. Knowing God, faithfully loving Him and then leading others to that Life.

Cleaning up our outward behavior may lend to a more pleasant person to be around, temporarily, but the same life-taking heart is there and it will seep out eventually.

We need to do deep heart work.

Through this newsletter, I hope to stir up an affection for Jesus in your heart. I hope to

encourage you to lean into Him a little more. To invite Him into what may feel like scary places. Because sister, every single time you do, you are actually making a way for someone else to know Jesus.

Listen to what Paul said about his ministry—“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything, for the sake of the elect, that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:8-10).

Paul endured imprisonment for the sake of others. We may never have a similar life story to Paul, but we can, in the same vein, open every part of our heart to God. Not only for our heart to be whole in God, but for the sake of every single person around us.

### **So where do we go from here?**

Well, I want to hear from you. What questions do you have about this reality of ours, as life-givers? Where are you struggling? Do you feel like you *know* God? **Hit reply** and we can continue the conversation. Next month we'll go a little deeper...

### **As promised, a few favorites...**

- [Journeywomen Podcast – Episode 93 – Living in Light of Redemption with Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth](#). I'm a podcast junkie. I love to learn, and honestly? I'm spurred on by brothers and sisters in Christ when they give voice to what God has put in their heart to share. So, it's extremely hard to narrow it down to *just one* episode to recommend to you. This episode of Journeywomen is a little over a month old, but it is an absolute must-listen. I hope you'll be especially encouraged by the relational dynamics that take place between Hunter and Nancy—it's a beautiful picture of discipleship.
- [Age of Opportunity – A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul Tripp](#) – I have *\*always\** looked forward to the teen years. In college and shortly after we were married, the Lord put families into our life that gave us vision for how amazing relationships with teenagers could be. This book is super helpful and practical—but fair warning that he goes straight for *your* heart! (this is an Amazon affiliate link)
- [Most Growth Will Be Slow Growth by Scott Hubbard](#) – “Some of us consider leaving the road to heaven not mainly because we are tempted by the world, nor because we are tried by suffering, but because we are just plain *tired*. Tired of daily self-denial. Tired of taking two steps forward and one step back. Tired of walking on a road that feels endless, toward a city we cannot see.”

Until October...love,

Kelly

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