

# The Distaff

*"She stretches out her hands to the distaff..."*

Proverbs 31:19

Spring 2014

## *The Treasures Of The Trial*

by Pam Hardy

I have a friend named Margie, a dear sister in Christ, who has been battling cancer now for several years. She has epitomized faith, hope, courage, perseverance, and selflessness in the face of life-threatening circumstances. "Trusting God" is not just a phrase; it is belief in action. And my friend's actions have borne testimony to her beliefs in an extraordinary way.

As I have observed her journey through this trial, I have been amazed, encouraged, challenged, and yes, genuinely shamed at times as I have compared her praising to my complaining! In the midst of it all, and probably unbeknownst to her, she has taught (and continues to teach) me some very profound and convicting lessons. These are valuable lessons that we frequently miss or, sadly, simply choose to ignore; these are foundational truths that are too often blown away in the relentless whirlwind of our lives. When our circumstances are basically under control... when the status quo is undisturbed...when our own resources seem to be adequate for the need...our natural tendency is to coast along on our own strength instead of the Lord's. But when the day of trial comes, it strips us back down to the basics and reveals

who we really are. Proverbs says that "if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small." (Prov. 24:10) It doesn't become small at the time of the trial; it was small all along and the trial simply revealed it. On the other hand, as I have watched my friend, it has become overwhelmingly apparent that her strength was *not* small and this has been confirmed again and again by her godly response to her suffering.

In the past decade, Keith and Kristen Getty have enriched believers all over the world with their "modern-day hymns." One of my favorites is "Jesus Draw Me Ever Nearer" and in particular, the third verse:

*Let the treasures of the trial  
Form within me as I go  
And at the end of this long passage  
Let me leave them at Your throne.*

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Recently while singing this song I thought of my friend and all the "treasures of the trial" that she is discovering and sweetly imparting to all those around her. Here are just a few of the lessons I am learning from her:

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Margie with her husband Clay Miller and three children Zac, Rebekah and Jadon. He is pastor of San Tan Bible Church in Gilbert, AZ and a TMS alum. The beginning of Margie's story is on [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)



1. To treasure our suffering as a gift  
How often do we truly view our suffering as a "gift" from the Lord? Too often our "default setting" is to complain and bemoan our afflictions instead of seeing them as Paul did in 2 Cor. 12:7-10 where he literally said he "took pleasure" in his suffering. Only when we genuinely see our trials in this way can we praise Him and not complain! Only when we believe with all our hearts that this is absolutely the best thing for us - something we would have chosen as best - can we actually rejoice in our circumstances. Even in the grip of pain and discomfort, my friend is full of nothing but humble praise and gratitude every time I hear from her. More than once she has thanked the Lord for "entrusting" her with this incredible trial and for allowing her to represent Him in the midst of it. How we need to learn from her perspective!

2. To treasure the everyday blessings  
We have been so overwhelmingly graced by God with temporal blessings in this life that we often begin to take them for granted, unintentionally operating as if we actually deserved them. The joy of a smile or a hug from someone we love; the provision of a bed to sleep in and a roof over our heads; the beauty of a flower or a mountain or a sunrise or a song; the unspeakable privilege of being given another day to live...as we are reminded in Lamentations 3:22-23, the simple mercies of each new day are incalculable. Our inclination is to receive all these things without pausing to acknowledge the divine Source...without even thinking to breathe a heavenward "thank you" to the great Giver of all things. Pain and loneliness and suffering sharpen our focus and bring a new appreciation of the countless blessings that are showered on our lives. Even the ability to serve and minister to others is an incredible privilege. My friend once told me she was praising the Lord that she had enough strength that day to join her husband in counseling a troubled couple in their church! As pastors' wives, do we thank God for such opportunities? Do we express gratitude to Him for the energy to minister to others? Do we serve the Lord with gladness? Or do we get weary and begin to see other people as obligatory burdens that we must bear? The Lord used her comment (unknown to her, I'm sure) to make me examine my own heart and repent of some attitudes that had drifted from what I knew they should be.

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### 3. To treasure what is eternal

As the things of earth lose their luster in the face of trials and pain, our hearts are driven more and more to the eternal. There are only a handful of things in this world that are eternal - God, His Word, and people. These alone will endure forever...so it is a wise person who chooses to pour his life into what will last rather than what will fade away. The wonderful old hymn "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" contains the familiar phrase "and the things of earth will grow strangely dim..." Along with fixing our gaze on Christ, the gift of suffering is another very effective way for God to "dim" the things of this earth for His children. My friend is always focused on spiritual things: how this pain is strengthening and proving her faith; how she is filled with more joy than she ever could have been if God had never entrusted her with this trial! She is constantly encouraging me and thanking me and asking how she can pray for me - when her needs are far more pressing. Surely she has set her mind on things above and not on things below! (Col. 3:1-2) She treasures people and is regularly verbalizing to them how much they mean to her. Even in the midst of her pain, she seldom misses a Sunday at her church and the chance to fellowship with her church family. She stores up her energy during the week just to make sure she can be there on Sunday. It is the highlight of her week! As pastors'

wives, do we treasure people like this? Or do we grow frustrated and discouraged with those around us? My sweet friend has been a reminder to me that we should delight in being with other believers and cherish them as precious souls given to us by God.

### 4. To treasure Christ most of all

Suffering turns our thoughts not only to what is eternal versus temporal but much more specifically to our relationship with the Great Eternal One – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Getty song, noted above, refers to "waking in Your likeness" and "loving You even more" – which brings us back to the ultimate goal of not just suffering but our entire lives – and that is to know and love and glorify our Lord Jesus. We must never forget that when all is said and done, it's not about us at all. As Psalm 145 so beautifully reminds us, it's all about Him. My friend is always talking about Christ! She talks about how near He is to her and how she trusts Him fully because He has been her help. As she deals with her own pain and suffering, she tells me she is reminded of Christ's pain and suffering and death and how it purchased her salvation. She exalts Him as the One who so generously provides for all her needs in good times and bad. She has continued to manifest unrelenting joy and hope in the face of great suffering because she knows her Savior and treasures Him more than anything else.

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Suffering is a painful and yet exquisite tool in the Hand of the Potter. It mercifully reminds us of what counts at the end of the day and afterward we wonder how we could have spent so much time on the things that don't matter! What a loving Lord we have to send us these reminders and to keep us on the path to true joy instead of allowing us to waste our days in search of a fleeting

"happiness" that will never satisfy. It has been such a privilege to know and observe my sweet friend as she has bravely navigated these stormy waters. And it has shown me that perhaps one of God's greatest mercies to His children is the giving of special people who truly teach us the nuts and bolts of how to suffer to the glory of God. How would I have responded to this trial if I had been in her place? How would you? May we listen and heed and learn these lessons well, that we too will be steadfast and faithful when our own time of testing comes.◆



Pam on the left, with Margie. Taken two years ago.

Pam Hardy is the wife of Pastor Carey Hardy, of Twin City Bible Church in Winston-Salem, NC. He is a TMS alum and formerly served on the pastoral staff of Grace Community Church. The Hardy's have four children.



### General Session Schedule

Wednesday, March 5

7:00 p.m. – Mark Dever

Thursday, March 6

7:00 p.m. – Albert Mohler

Friday, March 7

7:00 p.m. – John MacArthur



Seating is available in the J Building. Parking will only be available in the north and west lots. Please note that the Worship Center is reserved for registered guests (with name tags) only. Childcare (birth–pre-K) will be available.

If you are unable to join us on campus for the evening sessions, you can access the sessions online at [shepherdsconference.org](http://shepherdsconference.org)

# *My Path to Memorizing Scripture*

Testimony-Review by Louise Essex

I became a Christian in high school and later while in college attended a Bible-teaching church. One of the first ladies I met at church handed me a Navigators' packet of Bible verses and told me I needed to memorize them. I did so and that began my love for memorizing Scripture. My memorizing journey has continued over the years. Although my desire to memorize did not waver, I was often inconsistent and experienced two common frustrations: 1) getting into the habit of memorizing for awhile and then drifting away, and 2) not remembering what I had memorized in order to have it ready to use when needed.

To my great delight in 2012, I heard author Janet Pope speak on the radio. I immediately ordered her book *His Word in My Heart: Memorizing Scripture for a Closer Walk with God*. I was enthralled as she relayed her own journey, because I had also experienced a closer walk with the Lord through memorizing His Word. Even better was that she had the answers to my frustrations:

1) How to keep the habit. As soon as a memorizing goal has been met, whether it's been one verse or a whole chapter or book, Janet Pope warns that one DOES NOT WAIT to begin something new, because that is how the habit of memorizing is continued. Don't stop! If you stop, you will

likely experience the difficulty of getting back on track all over again. I can definitely attest to that! I was usually not ready with a new goal so I would have lapses in between goals, thus never fully making memorizing a habit. I also know now that the stopping and starting over repeatedly is what contributed to me thinking that I just could not memorize.

*"By far, the keystone in memorizing is reviewing."*

2) How to remember what's been memorized. Review, review, review! Everyone knows the importance of review. Have you ever worked on verses for weeks, are convinced that you know them well, but even a few weeks later you seem to have forgotten them? That can be SO discouraging that you may again quit trying, convinced that you just don't have a good memory. However, all you really need is a plan for reviewing. Janet Pope states, "By far, the keystone in memorizing is reviewing." Yes, it is possible to retain the Bible verses you've memorized!

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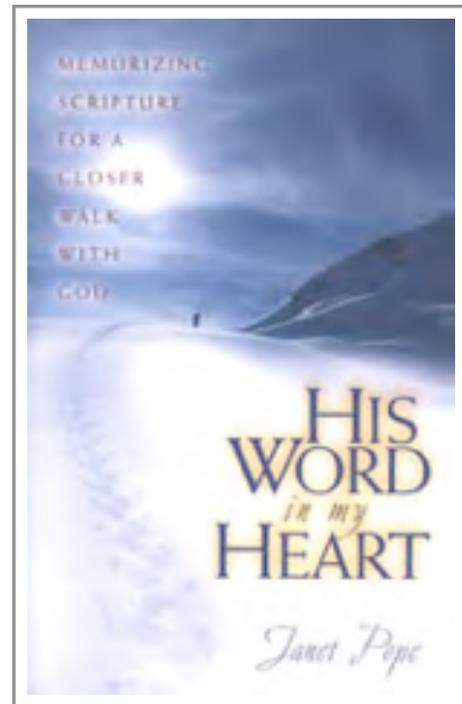


Here's how: Once you have completed a verse, a chapter or a book, pick a certain day of the week on which you will review it. Review it on that same day of the week every week. At the end of a year, you'll have reviewed it 52 times.

That process will move it from short-term memory to long-term memory so that you will never forget it (this is the same principle which leads you to never forget your address or phone number). You'll then be amazed at how God will bring portions of His Word to your mind right when you need it, for yourself, or for someone else. That's it, ladies!! This is the CHIEF tip of all tips! This is the keystone to retaining what you have memorized!

In applying this technique, I have organized all of the Scripture I have previously memorized into seven sections and review one section each day. This allows me to review all sections weekly so that I will retain all that I have been working to memorize.

Be encouraged! Janet Pope reminds us that the reward is in the process, not the finish line. Even IF you forget what you've memorized, the time spent was not wasted because during the process you were thinking and meditating on the very words of God. Your soul was being nourished and that time was deepening your walk with the Lord.



*His Word in My Heart* is a must read for one who desires to drive biblical truths deeper into her life. It is packed with a plethora of very helpful benefits, examples, and tips; I cannot overstate the value of this book. The best benefit is as you learn to consistently memorize God's Word, you will experience a closer walk with God. ♦

Louise Essex serves as a SemWives table leader and is the wife of Dr. Keith Essex, Associate Professor of Bible Exposition, Associate Director of D. Min. Studies at TMS.

Pope, Janet. [\*His Word in My Heart: Memorizing Scripture for a Closer Walk with God\*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013, 176 pp.

You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

**Deuteronomy 11:18**

# *A Sweet and Bitter Providence*

*by John Piper*

Reviewed by Carmela Daugereau, wife of TMS student Josh Daugereau

When our new mission asked us to move down to Sicily my heart was broken. I loved our ministry in the north of Italy and I loved my friends and church. After seeking God's direction we decided to move. We packed our whole house, that I still think was the best house we have ever had, left friends and a ministry that we knew and loved and took off on a two day moving journey. Once in Sicily we struggled finding a place to live; in a couple weeks Josh was leaving to go to the States for three months; and then while at a nice Sunday church potluck we were frightened by the noise of a car crashing into another car. That other car was ours! In only a few weeks I found myself house-less, car-less, away from our known ministry and friends, my husband was leaving, and I needed to move back with my parents in central Italy while waiting for his return. I felt like Job. I had only two things that I cared for left and I was afraid the Lord would take even those away as He had the rest.



That same year a new book was released by John Piper, *A Sweet and Bitter Providence*, which my husband managed to get for me. The book follows the story of Naomi and tells how when her husband and her children died she was bitter. The Lord had taken from her everything. The family left their home because of a famine, went to a foreign land and there both her husband and sons died. It seemed like circumstances were so bad for Naomi, and if we would stop there it would seem as if it was one of the worst stories in history. Yet the story has a twist and a lesson for us to learn.

God had a wonderful plan, but His plan included sorrows. We all know the rest of the story ... Ruth followed Naomi and helped her provide food for the two of them and then she married Boaz. Ruth's son, Naomi's grandson, was to become an ancestor of King David and ultimately an ancestor of the great King Jesus Christ. Naomi would have never imagined that, because in her mind her life was done.

In our lives we may be going through a storm and we may feel like we have lost everything; but the thing that we need to remember is that God has a perfect plan and that sometimes His plan includes sorrows.

We need to remember that nothing happens by accident, but that in all things God has perfect control. God orchestrates all things for the good of those who love Him.

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John Piper says: "When we believe in the sovereignty of God and that He loves to work mightily for those who trust Him, it gives a freedom and a courage that isn't abandoned in hard times."

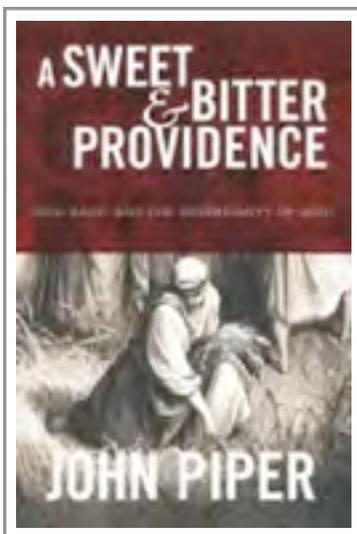
I was greatly encouraged after reading this book, as I was reminded to trust the Almighty God who sovereignly cares for me. I want to encourage you also to have this book on your book shelf. It's very easy to read and yet very deep. Let's take courage in knowing that God doesn't forget us but is planning for our best! ♦

Carmela Daugerea is the wife of TMS student, Josh Daugerea. They have three children and Josh is in the Masters of Divinity program at TMS.

[\*A Sweet and Bitter Providence\*](#). John Piper. Crossway, 2010. Inter-Varsity, 2010. 169 pages.

As I read *A Sweet and Bitter Providence* I was challenged and convicted in my understanding of God's sovereignty in all of life's circumstances.  
~Carrie Ring, wife of TMS student Creighton Ring

Carrie previously reviewed this book in [The Distaff November 2010 issue](#).



*My life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colors  
He worketh steadily.  
Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow  
And I in foolish pride,  
forget that He seeth the upper,  
And I the under side.  
Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttle ceases to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why.  
The dark threads are as needful  
In the weaver's skillful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver,  
In the pattern He has planned.  
- Author Unknown*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

## Recipes

### Honey-Baked Chicken

Contributed by Stacy Nesbella, wife of TMS student, John Nesbella

#### Ingredients:

3-4 lbs. chicken breasts, cut thin  
1 stick (½ cup) of butter  
½ cup honey  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. curry powder  
2 Tbsp. yellow mustard



#### Directions:

Place chicken in a greased baking dish big enough to hold all the chicken. (I like to line mine with foil for easier cleanup.) Melt the butter and add it to the rest of the ingredients in a small bowl. Mix well and pour over the chicken.

Bake at 425°F for 30-45 min. or until chicken is no longer pink in the middle and juices are clear. Baste the chicken every 15 minutes.

Optional Method: You can also fry the chicken in a skillet and make the sauce on the stove. Bring the sauce to a boil and let it boil gently for two minutes and pour over the chicken.

This goes great with rice, or is great with any side dish you decide to make with it.

Note: This recipe does NOT do well in the crockpot.

### Mary Somerville's California Cookies or Bars

1 cup brown sugar

2 cups flour

1 cup granulated sugar

½ tsp. salt

1 cup butter (I use 1 stick of butter and ½ cup oil)

2 ½ cups oats

2 eggs beaten

1 12 oz pkg chocolate chips (I use 1 cup)

1 tsp. soda

1 ½ cups chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)

Cream together the sugars and butter. Then mix all other ingredients together.

For bars place in 9X15 buttered pan and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until slightly brown on top. Cut while still warm. If you make into cookies, bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes.

\*Mary is a SemWives table leader and is the wife of former pastor Dr. Bob Somerville, who is currently Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling at The Master's College.

# Wise Words for Wise Women

## Biblical Submission

"God sovereignly ordained authority in the home, so there would not be chaos but harmony. The biblically submissive role is how God chose for the wife to glorify Him. He also intended to protect the wife and the children through the husband's leadership."

"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23)."

~Martha Peace *Becoming A Titus 2 Women*

## Humility

"Only absolute humility can generate absolute love. It is the nature of love to be selfless, giving. Christ's love and His humility are inseparable. He could not have been so consumed with a passion for serving others if He had been primarily concerned with Himself."

~John MacArthur "The Humility of Love"



### Contributing to The Distaff

SemWives and TMS Alumni wives, we need your contributions!

There are so many ways that we can serve each other--

by sharing an encouraging testimony, an easy recipe, a few wise words...

You can also contribute a book review or provide some helpful hints.

Please sign up with your table leaders or contact Karitza Gladden at

[tmsdistaff@gmail.com](mailto:tmsdistaff@gmail.com).

The Distaff Layout Editor: Karitza Gladden, wife of TMS student Doron Gladden

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TMS Seminary Wives Disclaimer:

**While we recommend many different resources for your consideration, we also encourage you, the reader, to be like the Bereans who could receive a message with eagerness and then examine the message against the truth of Scripture. (Acts 17:11)**

All Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

### PICTURE CREDITS

Page 1, 7: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images>

Page 6:

<http://southernfood.about.com/od/bakedchicken/r/Honey-Baked-Chicken-Breasts.htm>