

NEWSLETTER TO THE

Women of the Restoration

FROM THE RESTORATION WOMEN'S COUNCIL, CONFERENCE OF RESTORATION ELDERS

THEME: *“Wherefore he saith Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Ephesians 5:14*

Main Article

By Monica Rush

Ephesians 5:14 – *“Wherefore He saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”*

This scripture has so much meaning and comfort. I would like to focus on the last part: Christ shall give thee light. As many of you know, in the last part of 2024, I lost both of my parents. That hurt. A lot. I felt a lot of things: pain, grief, loss. It was a hard time, not because of a lack of faith, but because at times it was hard to know if I was grieving for my Mom, Dad, or both. I knew my parents were in heaven fulfilling whatever God had for them. That was not questioned. I missed my parents. I was building a better relationship with my mother, as hard as that was. I needed more time, or so I thought. Then there was my Daddy. I know he was suffering terribly, physically and I wouldn't want him to be on this side of the veil and suffer. One more hug. One more smile. One more I love you. I would have given so much for just one more. Some days all I could manage was to get out of bed, get dressed and just survive.

The light of Christ came in many ways; prayers, scripture, people, but that beautiful, life-giving light was always there. I hung onto it like the lifeline it was. Through time, prayers and hard work, I came out of my time of grief holding onto that bright light full and joy. Words fail to describe this light Christ gives us. It's there for everyone. Take hold and don't let go.

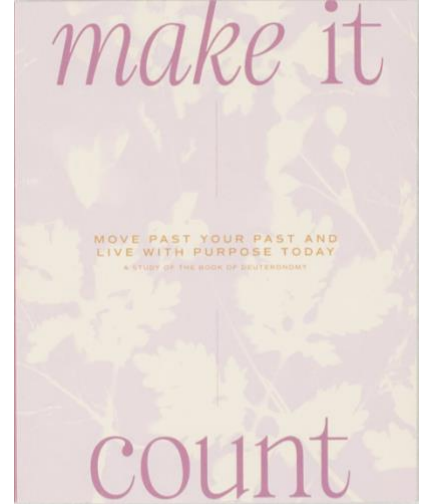
Book Report

Make It Count: A Study of the Book of Deuteronomy

by Proverbs 31 Ministries

Reviewed by Jamie Bendorf

This review is for more than just one book; it's for an entire group of study books put out by Proverbs 31 Ministries "First Five Ministries." My mom introduced me to these books a while ago and I have found them to be very helpful! I'm sure I am not alone when I mention how studying the Old Testament can be daunting and confusing! These books have been such a blessing in helping make sense of it. They are considered "First Five Study Guides" and are created to be used in conjunction with the First Five App (a free app you can download to your phone). However, I try to limit technology (and my time is more limited as a mother of three!) so I just use the book as a standalone study and find that sufficient. There are numerous First Five studies; I recommend those that specifically coincide with the books in the Bible, especially those focused on Old Testament books. These study books have helped me understand the reason behind many Old Testament scriptures by linking them with other scriptures and Israelite customs. So far, I have studied the books on Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, but there are many more on my list to buy and study! Each study is broken up into five sections each week for seven or eight weeks. Each section is around two pages long and includes references to read from the particular book you are studying, additional verses that tie in with that day's topic, and questions to answer. These are written in workbook form and provide a space for you to write your answers, though I prefer to answer them in my head, in a separate notebook, or even in the margins of my scriptures so in the future my children can use these to study.



Note: These study books are nondenominational and as such do not use the Inspired Version of the scriptures. Most of the time the verses line up the same, but there may be a couple verses that don't line up.

First Five Study Guides may be purchased at <https://www.p31bookstore.com/collections/first-5>.

SAVE the DATE!!!

Spring Gathering

April 18, 2026

Location: Downey Carriage House – 210 S. Old Hwy 71, Adrian, MO 64720

Time: 9:00 AM registration and tea/muffins

9:30 AM to 1 PM

More information to be shared!

Testimonies

I Will Serve You Today and Forever

by Sada Murekatete, Rwanda, Africa

In 1994, there was a genocide in our country! I, therefore, was among those who were supposed to die! One day, around 10 o'clock in the morning, the attack came to the house where we were hiding--there were so many people, carrying machetes, knives, and crowbars. We were hiding in a room.

The child who was with me looked out through the window and said, "It's over--we're going to die, here they come." I felt overwhelming fear. I knelt down and prayed, saying to God, "If you save me, I will serve You today and forever!". The moment I had finished praying like that, they immediately conferred among themselves about what had brought them here. They found it difficult to agree and said, "Let's go; We'll come back another day." During those times I encountered many difficult and traumatic (situations), but God was protecting me. As the genocide was drawing to a close, there were many, many gunshots across the country. People began fleeing, and especially the killers--they went into neighboring countries!

There were people we were hiding with, who had a relative who was a soldier! He was the one who had come to hide them where we were. He said he would take them away to safety. My mother begged for me to be allowed to go with them so I could also be saved. We left and got to the spot where the vehicle was parked. The soldier was taking the others, but he chased me away! He said, "You go--you're not going with us!" I was so deeply pained! But although it pained me, it was part of God's plan because when they reached the border, they told that soldier to leave his weapon and cross (the border). He refused, and they shot them. Only two survived. That soldier also died. Once again, God saved me.

Despite praying to God, truly I didn't understand what I was doing--it's very likely that the Holy Spirit was guiding me. Because I did not grow up in a family that believed in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. I thought I would serve God by trying to do good only, but I did not think that repenting of sins would come into it!





After the genocide had ended, I forgot all the other things God had done for me. Instead, I felt my whole heart filled with intense anger and deep pain so much, so that I believed there was no good person in the world, that no one would love me, and that no one would ever do anything kind for me. All this was because of the life I was going through during those times! I started attending boarding school, and that's where I began to hear about Jesus, but at first, I didn't pay much attention. Every Sunday we were taken to church, and I would sit way in the back because I thought, deep down, that even God wouldn't find me there. But gradually, as they sang, it touched my heart; as they taught, I felt as though they were speaking directly to me. Soon, I began to like it. And I also started learning how to worship.

I became thirsty to know more deeply! But everywhere I went, I felt unsatisfied with the teaching! Because I thought Christians must be extraordinary people doing incredible things! To me, everyone I knew was bad, only those who treated me kindly or treated others kindly I considered extraordinary! But anyone who treated badly I saw as a truly wicked person! I began to see that even Christians include people who are not good! I wandered through different churches for a long time but couldn't find where I belonged! Although things were like that, I learned many things that transformed my life and inner being!

In 2015, I was graciously led to meet servants of God- Elder Chris Capps and Elder Doug Smith. I would say they came at the perfect time, because I had been praying for days, asking God to show me the way. I didn't immediately understand their teaching, because I first needed to get to know them well-to know if they had truly been sent by God! At that time, everywhere we prayed, they used to say that it was from the USA where Satan's churches originate and are brought into Africa. I used the small booklets they had left written in Swahili, because that was what I could understand alongside the Bible verses, so that I could understand more deeply. I prayed a lot so that God could answer me even more. As I was praying, that word I had told God-'I will serve You'-returned to me. I remember it. Many years had passed, and I had forgotten it! I feel this is the path that God chose for me to serve it!

Note- Sada's husband, Nestor, is an Elder, and they have 4 children. Their family lovingly provides ministry, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rwanda.

Gatherings

2025 Women's Leader Luncheon

by Amy Burk

The 2025 Women Leaders Luncheon was held on October 4th at Missionary Restoration Branch. The day started with devotions and a hymn sing. Mary Prater was the speaker of the day and brought a message of hope. She said as women it's hard not to worry every day, but there are two days of the week we don't have to worry about because they are God's – that is yesterday and tomorrow. If we are not worrying about yesterday or tomorrow, then that only leaves today. When God's days are in the proper place our life has even greater perspective. Psalms 118:24 "This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." She left us with a question asking, "What has God called you to do today?"

The council presented special music and then the ladies had a time for sharing and fellowship over an early lunch. Discussion focused on what our role as women in the church was, what various branches were currently doing in their congregations and how we could improve participation. Many shared testimonies from their women's groups as well as ideas of different activities that could be used to engage the women and various opportunities they had to do service projects. It was nice to be able to have an open and honest discussion on how to continue our work towards the goal of becoming a part of God's kingdom.

2025 Fall Retreat – "I've Felt the Joy" – Eccl. 5:18-20

by Susie Adams

Answered prayers, whether big or small, will always put a smile on my face and fill my heart with so much JOY and gratitude! The Fall Women's Retreat held on the first weekend in September, had been on my heart and in my prayers for a few months. I signed up to attend and the first week of August, I was asked to lead the campfire. THAT was a first for me and agreeing to do that was completely outside of my comfort zone. I had been praying and asking God to show me how He would have me to serve, and then that request to serve as campfire lead was texted and I couldn't believe I was saying yes. I had never, ever led a campfire in my life. I prayed my way through it, and in the end, it all worked out. I focused on songs that would appeal to the women, and I prayed that even just one song might bring back some happy memories to some or all in attendance and it did!

The group of women who attended a retreat in Kenya, shared their wonderful experiences with us. I found it all so interesting and uplifting. They shared how their hosts would sing hymns with such energy and joy. I made some mental notes to always try to be full of joy whenever I sing our hymns, and that they would always remind me of God's love for us all. My heart was so full of loving joy by the end of our weekend together after several women had approached me on separate occasions to remind me of God's love for me and for us all. I shared with a few how I have struggled all my life to pray out loud in front of others because of some issues during my childhood. I've just never had the confidence after being told early on that my prayers would not be heard, nor would they matter. I just wanted to pray beautiful prayers like everyone else. I did my best to teach my children how to pray and always reminded them of God's everlasting love for them, but for me personally, it was all different. I continue to pray, asking God to please teach me, and to never give up on me. When I returned home after this retreat, I continued studying scriptures that had been a part of our focus at retreat. My prayers are still a work in progress.

A few weeks after retreat, a friend of mine invited me out to dinner. As always, Sandy prepared to offer a blessing over our food. She's very familiar of my insecurities! Before she said a word, she suddenly looked over at me and said, "You know, I think it's time! I feel the Lord is waiting for you to offer the blessing this time." Sandy

gave me a quick and loving nudge of encouragement and I went for it! I offered a prayer out loud as my dear friend reached over to hold my hand. When I finished, Sandy and I both had tears streaming down our faces, as we both were basking in a most beautiful Spirit that I crave daily. Sandy said it was probably about the most beautiful, sweet prayer she had ever heard. I felt like a little child, finally winning some approval that I had sought after for so many years.

My heart was full of Joy. I pray for that Joy to never leave me! I look forward to more retreats, where we, again, come together with love, understanding and beautiful Joy!



“Awake! Ye Saints of God”

Story Behind the Hymn – 1840 – Verses by Eliza R. Snow – Tune by John Hatton

*Awake! Ye Saints of God, awake!
Call on the Lord in mighty prayer,
That He will Zion’s bondage break,
And bring to naught the fowler’s snare.*

*He will regard His people’s cry,
The widow’s tear, the orphan’s moan;
The blood of those that slaughtered lie
Pleads not in vain before His throne.*

*Then let your souls be stayed on God;
A glorious scene is drawing nigh;
Though tempests gather like a flood,
The storm, though fierce, will soon pass by.*

*Awake to union and be one,
Or saith the Lord, “Ye are not mine!”
Yea, like the Father and the Son,
Let all the Saints in union join.*

This strong old Latter Day Saint hymn, “Awake! Ye Saints,” published in 1840, breathes of the time of persecution just preceding its publication and, no doubt, of the discouragement of many people who needed to be aroused by the call, “Awake! Ye saints of God, awake.” The sense of bondage, in not being able to live where they chose in this land proclaimed a land of liberty, had disheartened many; moreover, the fowler’s snare, for the time, had seemed effective in hindering the “Marvelous Work and a Wonder” started on earth in fulfillment of prophecy in these last days. But God’s purposes cannot be thwarted, and in this knowledge mighty prayers of faith can still ascend. At that time there were widows and orphans of men whose lives had been taken ruthlessly while defending their homes, from which they were driven.

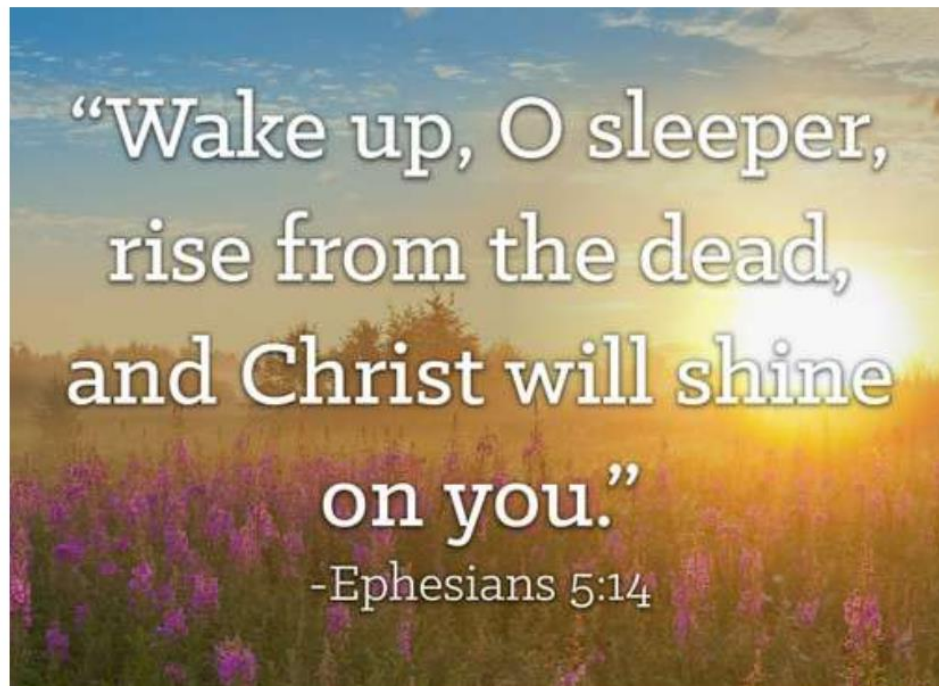
We wonder how such treatment could have been permitted, but there comes to mind the revelation to John on the Isle of Patmos, where he saw “under the altar the souls of those who were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held,” and these were told “that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were,

should be fulfilled.” History tells of many who would have joined them there, and the Church of the Latter Days has given its precious quota. We question, could we have held the faith through such persecution?

With the testimony of Jesus strong within us we trust we could have been as true as they. But can we endure in present conditions? The fowler’s snare may take other forms. There is yet – worst of all – the bondage of sin. The sleeping time may overtake us unprepared. Other storms may gather. There are widows and orphans to be cared for and the great work of God to be carried on. Can we awake to union and be one? How sorrowful is the state of God’s children when for lack of unity he must say to them, “Ye are not mine.” In the glorious scene that is drawing nigh, what gladness there will be for those of whom the Lord will say, “They shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels.”

The Tune

Little is known of John Hatton, author of the impressive music that fits so well with the earnestness of this hymn. He lived in Warrington, afterwards St. Helens, in England. Later he was a resident of Duke Street in the township of Windle. Of the several tunes he composed, Duke Street is the most popular. In stately measure it accompanies two of Isaac Watts’ hymns in the new Hymnal and three others, besides this one by E. R. Snow. No other tune in this collection is used so many times.



RESTORATION WOMEN'S COUNCIL
WINTER GATHERING

January 31, 2026

Hosted at Oak Grove Restoration Branch
1203 North Broadway Street, Oak Grove, MO 64075

8:30am Registration with muffins and tea

9:00am Welcome

Speaker – Sherrie Smith from Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Activity – Lisa Postlewait from Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Donations will be accepted for the lunch provided by Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Please RSVP by 1/24/2026 to Jennifer Schrunk
jenniferschrunk@yahoo.com or (816) 674-2172

Spring 2026 Women's Class Schedule at Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Be Renewed and Transformed into “Valiant Women”

Are you weary, discouraged and weighted down by the problems of life? Are you running around to the point of exhaustion, often feeling overwhelmed? Do you lack direction, joy, peace, courage, strength and hope in your daily life?

God wants us to live our lives with joy, peace, strength, courage and hope. He did not promise life would be easy, but He did promise to transform us into Eagles who fly high, soaring above the problems of life. He promised that when we grow weary, He will renew us and strengthen us. He promised to turn us into lively stones

Last spring in our classes we studied the “Valiant Women of the Scriptures”. We saw that in the midst of extreme crises they were renewed and were able to rise to the occasion and soar on eagle's wings and fulfill their destiny. Rahab a prostitute was transformed and is listed in the lineage of Christ. Esther, a young Jewish girl, rose to the occasion, became a queen and saved her people. Deborah became a judge and prophetess, who led her people into battle, and was called “A Mother in Israel”. The list goes on but we too are called to greatness.

When we are transformed and renewed in Christ a whole new world opens up to us. Transformation speaks of more than a superficial change. Transformation is a deep spiritual change that takes place within us. This change allows us to put the past behind us, let go of our burdens and go forward into a vibrant newness in Christ.

We can be “Valiant Women and Mothers in Israel” in our day and age, if we so chose. Together in these upcoming classes we will look at how we can become transformed, renewed and changed, going forward into new experiences with Christ. We are not bound by our past but promised new beginnings through His grace, love and mercy. We are promised joy, peace, courage, strength and hope in your daily life? Come and join with us and begin your journey of transformation.

Class Themes for Spring 2026

March 3rd = Transformation and Renewal through Repentance and the Working of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives

March 10th = Transformed and Renewed Through Claiming Our Identity in Christ. Remembering that we are, Children of God, Warriors, Ambassadors on the Earth and Much More

March 17th = Transformed and Renewed Through the Two Great Commandments of Love

March 24th = Transforming and Renewing Our Strength for the Journey through the Disciplines of Prayer, Fasting and Study

March 31st = Transforming and Renewing Our Hearts

April 7th = Transformed and Renewed by Knowledge

April 14th = Transformed and Renewed Through Obedience to God's Commandments

April 21st = Transforming and Renewing Your mind Grows Your Faith in God

April 28th = The Transformation and Renewing of our Bodies

May 5th = Transformed and Renewed Through Faith and Hope, Trusting in God and His Promises

May 12th = Transformed and Renewed Through Sacrifice and becoming Lively Stones for Christ

May 19th = Transformed and Renewed by Keeping the Hope and Vision of Zion and the Second Coming of Christ Alive

2025-26 Women's Council Members

Amy Burk amy.burk311@aol.com

Barb Capps cappsbarb@yahoo.com

Angela Downey 24zion@comcast.net

Monica Rush amwjdr4jesus@gmail.com

Jennifer Schrunk jenniferschrunk@yahoo.com

Michelle Turner smtturner3346@outlook.com

Find us on facebook



**Restoration
Women's Council**

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

