

NEWSLETTER TO THE



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

THEME: *“For when that which is new is come, the old is ready to be put away.”*

Matthew 9:21

A New Thing, A New Heart, A New Spirit

By Monica Rush

It has been a rough year for me and my family. We watched my parents quickly decline in health. When my mom went to meet her Savior in September, we wondered if my dad would join her soon or if he would continue working for the Lord here on earth. He didn't. He joined my mother and his Savior the day after Christmas. They are no longer hurting. They are together. For those left behind, it is so hard and hurts

so much. I kept hearing about “self-care” and how necessary it is for your well-being. “Self-care” by the world's definition is taking time and care for yourself. In my own experience, however, after I finish relaxing and recharging, the pain, hurt and tears of the world are there, waiting.



As I was thinking this concept over, I realized how self-centered this seemed to be and how I want to keep my focus on Christ. Then Psalms 51:10 came to mind, especially the part about renewing a right spirit within me. Then Psalms 100 (one of my favorites) came flooding in about singing, thanksgiving, and praising. Through God's influence I found my own formula for “self-care”

that keeps me focused on Christ and keeps me strong no matter what comes my way. Every day I do three things: pick hymns to sing, give prayers of thanksgiving and praise, and then read scriptures. This is my daily devotion self-care regiment. It brings me joy, peace, comfort and strength. The most important part of all of this is my focus stays on Christ. Try it.

With love, your sister in Christ, Monica.

*“Create in me a clean heart, o God;
and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalms 51:10*

Book Report

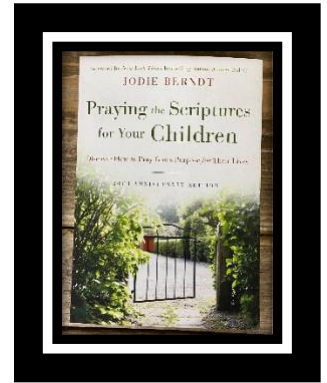
Praying the Scriptures for Your Children

by Jodie Berndt

Reviewed by Jamie Bendorf

Before I begin this review, please know that if you do not have children in your home anymore but are still interested in the concept of using scriptures in your prayers, Jodie Berndt has other books that may apply to you such as Praying the Scriptures for your...teenager/ adult children/ marriage/ life. While I have not read these, I can assume they are as recommendation-worthy as one above.

My sister gifted me this book before we had our first child and it has been such a blessing to me. I read it and liked the topic, but it hasn't been until recently as my children are getting older that I have thought to bring in more of its ideas into my prayer life. If you are like me, you may find your prayers leaning towards "vain repetitions" or find yourself with deep desires but unsure how to voice them. This is where the book has been very helpful. Through true life experiences told in an easy-to-read way, Jodie introduced me to the idea of how to pray for my children using the scriptures. She breaks the book up into five parts: praying for your child's faith, character, safety, relationships, and future. Each of these five parts is broken up into more specific chapters. After each chapter, she includes a couple pages of scriptural examples and how to adapt them to use in prayers for your children. As I have begun using scripture verses in my prayers, I appreciate the depth and meaning it has brought to my prayer life. This book has given me a more direct vision of how to pray for my children specifically, it has helped me become more familiar with scripture, and has reminded me of God's promises. I highly recommend for parents or anyone seeking to deepen their prayer life!



Women's Spring Study Class Schedule

Tuesday mornings at 10am (March 4-May 20)

Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Class presentation: 10:00am

Prayer groups: Following class

Please join us at the church as we study together! (Classes will also be live-streamed. Please watch the OGRB Website and Restoration Women's Facebook page for class notes and links.)

March

March 4: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning the People in Central America*

Teacher: Pat Chadwick

March 11: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning Faith*

Teacher: Sylvia Powell

March 18: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning Love*

Teacher: April Smith

March 25: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning Temptation*

Teacher: Debbie Norman

April

April 1: *The Words of Jesus to Us, The Gentiles*

Teacher: Pat Chadwick

April 8: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning Our Hearts*

Teacher: Barb Capps

April 15: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning The Kingdom of Heaven*

Teacher: (to be announced)

April 22: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning His Promises*

Teacher: Sheila Schrunk

April 29: *The Words of Jesus Calling Us to Follow Him*

Teacher: Anita Brotherton

May

May 6: *The Words of Jesus: Concerning His Second Coming*

Teacher: Pat Chadwick

May 13: *The Words of Jesus Call Us unto Prayer*

Teacher: Connie Smith

May 20: *The Words of Jesus: Call Us to Actively Seek Him*

Teacher: Susan Freeze



Spring 2025 Women's Classes

by Pat Chadwick

The theme for the spring women's classes is "The Words of Jesus". The first class was on March 4, 2025. Classes are held at the Oak Grove Restoration Branch. I want to encourage all in the area to come and join with us in person. It is an uplifting, spirit-filled morning of learning, fellowship, and prayer. We have a prayer group after the class for those who wish to participate. It has been very successful with some amazing answers to our prayers. There are two priesthood members on site for administrations, if needed.

I believe it will be an exciting spring session. Weekly teachers will be announced later. For those who are not able to attend in person, we will still be live-streaming the classes. Please be praying for this outreach as it goes forth to the world.

"There is something very special that happens when we physically come together as sisters in Christ to Study and Pray in one accord. We have found that when we come together in this manner, there is a sweet spirit of enlightenment, hope, uplift and encouragement that attends. So it is that we sincerely invite you to come and join with us for the full experience of the morning and partake of this good Spirit."

Welcome New Council Members!



My name is Amy Burk. My husband and I are members at the Lexington Restoration Branch. We recently gathered in from Nebraska where we attended the Council Bluffs Restoration Branch. For the 20+ years we were there I was blessed to serve in various roles from Sunday School teacher to Women's Leader and have had the pleasure of working as staff at many youths camps and retreats as our girls were growing up. We have two children, Aly and Molly, and are expecting our first grandchild in May. My hobbies include reading, gardening and anything to do with the outdoors. I am very excited to be a part of the Restoration Women's Council this year and serve in whatever capacity is needed. I pray that the Lord will use me to help further His work and the coming of Zion!

Hola mis hermanas por el amar de Jesucristo (Hello my sisters through the love of Jesus Christ). I'm so happy to greet you as a new member of the Restoration Women's Council.

I grew up in a family where my parents were active in the Restoration Gospel and raised my siblings and I to love the Lord. I was baptized when I was eight years old, and I am currently a member of the Living Hope Restoration Branch. I love God's people and have a heart to serve them whenever I can.

I've worked as a social worker for the State of Missouri for eleven years with foster and adoption families. I enjoy helping the "Found and Woven" Ministry, which was formally known as "If Not for Grace." and through this ministry I'm able to serve post-abortive women through God's message of forgiveness.

In my personal time, I enjoy reading and am trying to learn Spanish. I love my nieces, nephews, family and friends; and appreciate so much the time I get to spend with them.

When the opportunity presents itself, I enjoy sharing with others the beautiful message of Grace and Redemption which our Lord and Savior has for all. He is such a Good God, and His promise of Zion will be! I pray that each of us can endure and be there for that Glorious Day!



Testimonies

Piano Blessings

By Barb Capps

The Lord truly blessed me at the Women's Council Winter Gathering at Outreach Restoration Branch. We were ready to begin the time for all of our sisters to fill out their Prayer Card requests. During this time someone plays quiet meditation music while one of the Council members reads scripture verses. At the very last moment, our pianist was unable to play because her grandson had fallen asleep in her arms as she was rocking him. A pianist was needed at that very moment so I volunteered. I sat down on the piano bench and realized I had not brought my piano glasses, which I always need to see the music. I offered an earnest prayer that I would be able to see the hymnal without difficulty. When I opened the hymnal, I could see the notes perfectly! No blurriness at all! I am so grateful the Lord heard my petition and blessed my ability to meet the need at a moment's notice.

My Conversion Testimony

by Amy Burk

People often ask me if I have a testimony about the Book of Mormon or the Restored Church. I never felt I had a specific testimony to share or that I could really pinpoint my conversion to a specific time or event, nor did I feel I needed a concrete testimony. When I learned more about the church and read the Book of Mormon, they both made perfect sense and so I believed them to be true. However, because so many church members have had vibrant visions or dreams about the Book of Mormon or wonderful testimonies about the church I began questioning why I didn't have anything that seemed that significant. After being a part of the church for some years, I decided the best thing to do about it was to pray, and as promised, the Lord gave me an answer.

To tell my testimony really requires me giving some background information about myself first. I was not raised in the church, but I was raised being exposed to the bible. Both of my grandmothers were devoted Christians. They often read bible stories to me, took me to vacation bible school in the summer and even said prayers with me when I stayed the night with them. I was raised as a Catholic and so I attended CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) classes throughout grade school. I remember as young as 7 or 8 years old specifically praying and asking that I would know God. Often my prayers were pleas that God would let me know he was real and would reveal himself to me. At the time I thought this was a lack of faith on my part because why if I knew there was a God would I have to pray to know he was real? I didn't make any connection to James 1:5 *"If any of you lack faith, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* You see, I was not ever encouraged to read the scriptures, I did not have my own bible, nor did I see anyone other than a priest open and read from one. Our own family copy sat as a centerpiece on top of our record player. Growing up I always enjoyed going to church (even though it was usually only on holidays that we attended mass) but I always went expecting something to change me, to draw me closer to God. I felt something, but never knew quite what to do with it.

As time went on, I would continue saying that same prayer over and over again throughout my high school and college age years. Even though I was trying to find God, at the same time I felt so distant from him. I attended a Lutheran college and made it a point to attend mass weekly (usually on Saturday evening). While in college I really began seeking. I knew there was something more meaningful to be found, but just didn't know how to find it. I took a religion class thinking maybe I'd find what I was searching for. Being exposed to so many other religions, I couldn't believe all the differences. I had heard the phrase *"God is the same, yesterday, today and forever"* so I knew there had to be only one truth. What I couldn't find the answer to was "what was the truth?". This was probably the most depressing time of my life. I was definitely "living in the world" and I didn't feel like I was getting a response from God about anything. However, it was only a short while later that I would come to realize God was with me, giving me this testimony all along the way.

Just a few years after college, I met Brian who later became my husband. Brian was a member of the church. I willingly went to church with him despite the concern expressed by my friends and family about it being a cult. He willingly took me to church despite the concerns expressed by his family that I wasn't a church member. Within the first few services I attended with him I knew there was something different. It wasn't just the way services were held, or what was said from the pulpit, but it was the people and their commitment to it that intrigued me. I agreed to go through the Go Ye and Teach Slides with the priesthood. First impressions are usually most important and I can remember the first thing those priesthood said to me in those initial meetings. They told me they were going to share God's word NOT their own. They told me to feel free to ask any questions, but not to just believe what they said unless it could be verified with scripture. This was new to me. I was never encouraged in all my life to read the bible myself. In my own CCD classes, we were given handouts to use. In most churches I had been exposed to, I rarely even saw people bring a bible to services, instead they had monthly liturgical or missal books printed for you to use, and exact

responses for you to repeat. As we went through the slides the priesthood also stated that **God reveals himself through his written word and that he is a living and personable God who still speaks today**. I don't think they even realized the impact those words had on me, but I felt the Lord had sent them to tell me just that. First, they wanted me to ask and seek for myself. They wanted me to be converted not by them, but by the Holy Spirit. Second, they wanted me to develop a relationship with God and take ownership of it, not just rely on the priesthood or the church to do it for me.

Growing up I would have never questioned a priest or hierarchy in the church. To know **the member is the most important role you can have** and to share your testimony was eye opening. When they told me that we **can still speak to God today and he will answer us** intrigued me. This was nowhere near a possibility from anyone else I had come in contact with before about church. I sat in many services just in awe of the people that shared ways the Lord had touched them or used them to show His hand in their lives. It was exactly what I wanted, what I was searching for and what I knew I needed in my life. The more I listened, learned, read, and prayed the stronger connection I felt to God and the more relevant his church was to me. I didn't need any other evidence than just that - knowing that I could find all truth in his word and trust that truth to make anything possible. The Lord himself tells us in Matthew 5:3 *"Blessed are they who shall believe on me; and again, more blessed are they who shall believe on your words when you shall testify that you have seen me and that I am."* I definitely feel like the "more blessed" being referenced here.

My testimony of the Book of Mormon itself was also very simple. I listened as the priesthood explained the background of the book and that nothing in it contradicted the bible, but instead was added testimony of another people that Christ had appeared to. This only increased my faith and made even more relevant my question of desiring God to reveal himself personally. He had already done it for so many others, why couldn't or wouldn't he do it for me? I took the challenge of reading the Book of Mormon in its entirety. In my mind I couldn't justify not reading it. On one hand if I found that I thought it wasn't true, what would it have hurt. On the other hand, if I found that it was true and hadn't read it I would have missed a great opportunity. I also took Moroni 10:4-5 to heart in that it tell us *"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."* That prayer was answered and shortly after those initial meetings with the priesthood I asked to be baptized. I remember I wanted to do it the following weekend which was Memorial Day weekend. Several people tried to encourage me to wait. They had valid thoughts that since it was such short notice and being a holiday weekend people might have other plans and not be able to attend. I felt like this was my first real test of God and my response was that I couldn't and wouldn't wait. To me, waiting meant two things. One, I would have possibly changed my mind altogether and might not have even been baptized. I knew I would have to live my life drastically different and that can be a scary thing especially when it goes against everything you've ever known. And two, I realized it had already changed my life and if I waited I would be denying God altogether. I was more afraid of offending God than anything else.

That's my testimony. It's not miraculous or extravagant, it's simply the gift of faith. God blessed me as a young child with things that would lead me on the path to fully discovering him, learning to ask of him and expecting an answer, waiting patiently, then learning to trust him when he responds. My testimony may not be very remarkable to many, but to me it is was life changing, powerful and continues to be a blessing in my life. We are told in Alma 17:35 that *"by small and simple things, are great things brought to pass."* This gift of faith has continued to lend itself to even greater testimonies of His hand in my life. Although I believe my conversion was a single decision I made, my testimony comes from a lifetime of events that allowed my faith to be nurtured enough to accept the truth for what it is – the truth, the whole truth (including the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants), and nothing but the truth. John 8:32 states it best - *"and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"* and Mosiah 3:10-11 *"and under this head ye are made*

free; and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given, whereby salvation cometh, therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God, that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.”

I was 25 years old when I was baptized into the church. Now, almost 25 years later, there is not a single time I’ve regretted that decision. This is not to say I haven’t faltered, I haven’t felt insignificant or that I have had the perfect life, but I know God is there, he is real, he is my rock, my hope and my salvation and he continuously makes that known to me through each and every circumstance I face. The joy I have from this unexplainable, but my desire is to witness of him and that goodness so others can experience that as well. *“These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”* John 15:11

Gatherings

2025 Winter Gathering

by Tiffany Burkart

Though it was a cold Saturday morning on February 8, the Women’s Council Winter Gathering offered a warm respite inside Outreach Restoration Branch. After some tea and yummy breads, we were greeted upstairs with Angela Goff’s beautiful and inviting piano music. Michelle Turner, Cheryl Reed, Jane Gaughran, and Barb Capps all contributed to our morning greetings and devotion. We were then blessed with the sweet voices of Patty, Gracie, Harmony, Liberty, and Mercy Stephenson.

Sheila Schrunk showed us that “God Will Do a New Thing and Make a Way”. She taught us Christ is our mediator, the light of the world, and our way and salvation (Galatian 3, II Nephi 13, Doctrine & Covenants 65). She also shared profound testimonies of God’s love and power from Francis Harper’s and Judith Hawley’s books. Sister Schrunk summarized the urgency of our preparation with a thought-provoking question, “What if Jesus were to come this Easter?”

Aubree Wilson then shared of “God’s desire to Make All Things New” in our lives. She encouraged us to seek the Holy Spirit to reveal what needs to be made new in our own lives (Romans 8, Alma 5). She expanded how we often use the Holy Spirit like a SWAT team — only calling on it when things are tough instead of it being a part of our normal, everyday. Sister Wilson shared her powerful testimony of how the Lord sought her out, even though she might not have been seeking Him at that time. With many mothers and grandmothers earnestly praying for their loved ones, her testimony of God saving her from a life of darkness was a special comfort. She also encouraged us to share our own testimonies and stand as witnesses (Mosiah 9-11). Sister Wilson prompted us with the question, “What burden or sin or person am I struggling to hand over to God?”

Monica Rush fostered the love we have for our neighbor with Prayer Cards and devotion. Finally, Karen Parker closed us with prayer before the delicious luncheon, desserts, and sweet fellowship. Many sisters expressed how much they appreciated the gathering and are looking forward to the next!

Save the Date

April 26, 2025

Spring Gathering at Lexington Restoration Branch

I Will Do a New Thing – Making a New Heart and New Spirit
Ezekiel 18:31; D&C 11:4a-5b; Alma 3:46

September 6-7, 2025

Fall Retreat at Odessa Hills Campground

We Will Make a New Covenant and Be God’s People
Hebrews 8:6-13; D&C 85:18b; Jacob 2:50-51, 56

RESTORATION WOMEN'S COUNCIL
SPRING GATHERING
APRIL 26, 2025

***1 Will Do a New Thing:
A New Heart and New Spirit***

8:30 Registration with Tea

9:00 Welcome

Speaker - Brandy Schoff from Cameron Restoration Branch

Dramatic Presentation - Hinds' Feet on High Places

Hosted by Church of Jesus Christ Lexington Restoration Branch
802 S RT-13 Business, Lexington, MO 64067

RSVP by April 20th to Jennifer Schrunk
jenniferschrunk@yahoo.com or 816-674-2172

Please let her know if you have any dietary restrictions.

Donations will be accepted for lunch prepared by the branch.

Ezekiel 18:31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn ye, and live.

D&C 11: 4a - 5b Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care. Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words, therefore, give heed with our might, and then you are called. Amen.

Alma 3: 46 And now behold, I say unto you my brethren, If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, Can ye feel so now?

2024-25 Women's Council Members

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

