

# *Heart to Heart*

Devotional Thoughts for Women

April 2015

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## **Bored by the Bible?**

What is your favorite book? Is it an adventure novel, a romance, or perhaps a classic work of literature that has withstood the test of time? Think about what makes the book so appealing to you. Perhaps you like the setting of the book and its vivid descriptions of beautiful scenery, or maybe it has a fascinating main character or an exciting plot line.

Our favorite books are ones that we like to read over and over. We practically have them memorized and have certain scenes in them that we never tire of reading and experiencing. They have become a familiar friend.

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time with Guinness World Records estimating that over 5 billion copies have been sold. Yet, of the millions of people that own a copy of this best-seller, how many would say it is their favorite book?

Why are so many people (even Christians) bored by the Bible? Perhaps they see it as a disjointed collection of writings that are put together without any seeming cohesion, or they try reading it like a novel and soon get overwhelmed by the growing cast of characters and events that seem to have nothing to do with each other and they get bogged down and lost. They can't make any sense of it as they read it and it soon goes by the wayside, doomed to sit on a shelf along with their other unread books.

What if we looked at the Bible differently? What if we understood that the Bible is one book made up of 66 chapters with one author – God. What if we realized that His book is telling one story: the story of redemption through His Son Jesus Christ. He weaves that consistent thread through each and every “chapter” of His book. He starts at the very beginning of time with the history of the world and mankind. Very early on, we read of the severing of man's relationship with God due to sin and the hope that God immediately holds out through the promise of a coming Savior. We see the continued efforts of Satan to thwart God's plan, his near

successes, and his ultimate failure. Along the way, we are introduced to some fascinating characters who went through some extraordinary experiences and teach us many things through their examples, both good and bad. They are numerous tiny threads that are interwoven in this story and they all have a connection to its ultimate theme. For example, when we read about foreign kings and nations who would fight against Israel, subject them to slavery, or take them captive, we need to realize that “*God rules in the kingdoms of men*” (Daniel 4:17) and is the One orchestrating all of these events according to His plan. We also see this as He uses foreign rulers and events to bring about a good result. God told Isaiah the prophet to write about Cyrus who would be used as God's instrument to orchestrate the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by the Jews after they returned from exile in Babylonian captivity. We are first introduced to King Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28 when the prophecy about him was made 150 years before he ascended to the Persian throne. We read about the fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of Ezra. When we connect the dots of the people and events in the Bible, it does make sense, and it is fascinating and compelling reading. It is amazing to see the hand of God in control of all things and the way He brings about His master plan.

If you want to develop a greater interest in the Bible, it will require a few things:

- **Attitude.** Have a proper attitude of reverence for its author, almighty God, and a profound appreciation for the words of salvation that are offered to us on its pages. It's the most important book we can ever read; we need to keep that in mind with an attitude of gratitude every time we open its pages.
- **Diligence.** Reading the Bible takes work – hard work. It is not “fast food” literature but a full course meal that takes time to chew on and digest. Reading it means studying it. When you read a word you don't understand, look it up right then. Check cross references to make connections. Do some research into people or events or cultural meanings that give you more background information and a deeper understanding of what you're reading. Look for life applications, both to the people it was written to at the time and to us today. Read the Bible to grow spiritually and to learn!

- **Atmosphere.** It's difficult to get much out of Bible reading when you're surrounded by TV, music, or other distractions. Find a quiet place and choose a quiet time for serious reading and study. Allow yourself to become 100% engaged and absorbed in your reading. Don't rush through it; give yourself plenty of time to reap the full benefits.
- **Frequency.** Bible reading isn't to be done when you finally have some free time with nothing else to do. The more you read it, the more familiar you become with it and the more skillful you will be in utilizing it. Let it become your familiar friend.

Bored by the Bible? The Bible is anything *but* boring. It is the greatest book of all time, written by the greatest author with the greatest message. Be excited by it and delve deeply into its pages. Be thankful for the privilege of holding such a treasure in your hands.

~Heather Pryor

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*"I rejoice at your word as one who finds great treasure."*

~Psalm 119:162

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**Ladies Bible Class – Saturday, April 18th at 9:00 a.m.** Please bring your Bible, book, and a breakfast item to share. We will be studying Lesson 2 of "Impossible".

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## **Answers to last month's quiz "Greetings"**

1. "Greet one another with a kiss of love." I Peter 5:14
2. "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:21
3. "Woe to you Pharisees ! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces." Luke 11:43
4. "Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, 'Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them.'" I Samuel 25:14
5. "But I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face . Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." III John 14

# RECIPE CORNER

*"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15*

Here's a tasty recipe to help use up the leftover Easter ham.

## SCALLOPED POTATOES WITH HAM

4 T. butter	1 tsp. black pepper
½ yellow onion, diced	2 lbs. potatoes, scrubbed clean
1/3 cup all-purpose flour	2 cups diced, cooked ham
2 cups milk	2 cups grated Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup half-n-half	chopped parsley (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Add the butter and onion to a large skillet over medium heat and saute' it until it's starting to soften, about 3-4 minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the onions and whisk them together. Continue cooking the mixture for 2 minutes, or until golden brown. Stir in the milk and half-n-half, whisking until thickened. Stir in the pepper, reduce the heat, and keep it warm. Slice the potatoes very thin using a mandoline or a very sharp knife. Butter a 2-quart baking dish, then add in half the sliced potatoes and half of the diced ham. Sprinkle on half of the cheese, then pour half of the sauce from the skillet over the cheese. Repeat in the same order. Sprinkle a little extra pepper on top if desired. Cover with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking for 15 to 20 minutes until cheese is golden brown and sauce is bubbling. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve.

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*"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."*

*~Psalm 119:7-10*