

Flourish in the Ordinary Season

Spying God in the Ordinary

When my kids were little one of the games we would play is *I Spy*. "I spy with my little eye, something _____." I would name a color and then the kids would look around for things that specific color and try to guess what object I was spying. In order to play the game, they had to take the time to look around and observe what was around them.

God promises to be with us no matter where we go or what we go through, but finding God is often like playing *I Spy*. Sometimes I think it is easier to see God in the big events—whether good or bad. But most of our life is in the ordinary—the routine, the daily grind—and we need to spy God in the ordinary, little things of life. Not all God does is in the great, big and drastic ways. Elijah learned this when he experienced God in the quiet and ordinary.

Elijah was a prophet of God. In 1 Kings 17 we see Elijah taken care of by ravens, who were provided by God. In chapter 18 & 19 we see Elijah was able to stand up against 450 prophets of Baal. He made them look foolish by proving their god wasn't real, and then slew them. Afterwards he prayed to God and asked for it to rain, after it hadn't for several years. The clouds burst open and rain poured down. After all this, he was afraid of Queen Jezebel and what she would do to him, so he fled and held a pity party for himself (1 Kings 19:4-8).

God was going to teach Elijah an important lesson. God needed Elijah to realize that He was present and active in the big events, but He is just as involved in the small, almost insignificant events as well. In v. 11 God tells Elijah to go out and stand on the mountain **for the Lord is about to pass by**. Elijah goes out and experiences a great wind, and then a mighty earthquake and then a fire, and **after the fire came a gentle whisper** (v. 12).

We would almost expect God to be in the big and the loud. But surprisingly the Lord was in the whisper—something small. It is important to remember that God doesn't always do things in a big way.

What is seeking God in the ordinary? It could be something such as waking up a little early, ready to go before the alarm so your morning isn't as rushed as usual, receiving an encouraging word through text or e-mail, or better yet, someone called you out of the blue to offer a word to uplift your spirits, not getting stuck in traffic, being told "I love you". These are little, ordinary things, but all can be evidences of God. Flourish today by looking for God—being aware of His love, His presence and working in the little things of life. May this be your prayer today:

"Dear God, help us to see Your extraordinary plan even in the middle of our most ordinary days. Where You are is holy ground and You are always with us." (Holley Gerth, *You're Made for a God-Sized Dream*)



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Flourishing in Relationships: Conversation Starters

We were made for community. We make connections with others through talking. Often, we get stuck in a rut even in our conversations by talking about the same old thing, asking shallow questions and giving easy answers. Gather with some friends, over coffee or hot cocoa, and spend some time in conversation.

- ◆ October 1 is World Smile Day. What makes you smile? What do you do to make others smile?
- ◆ October 14 is National Dessert Day. What is your favorite dessert? What is your favorite thing to bake?
- ◆ What's your favorite thing about Autumn?
- ◆ What was your favorite Halloween costume as a child? Why? If you could dress up now, what would you dress up as?
- ◆ What is something new you've learned lately? Something exciting that has occurred? One change that is happening in your life?
- ◆ What has God been teaching you lately?
- ◆ What verse has really meant something to you lately and why?

"Joy comes to us in ordinary moments. We risk missing out on joy when we get too busy chasing down the extraordinary." Brenè Brown, Daring Greatly

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you flourish in the ordinary season:

<https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *What Are You Wearing?* Based on Colossians 3:12-17

Devotional: *The Ordinary Season* focused on Romans 12:1

Craft Idea: *Ordinary Truth Affirmation Cards*

Flourishing Story: Captain Jessica Stevens shares her story of flourishing in the ordinary

Flourishing in Prayer: Prayer Idea

A key to flourishing in every moment of our daily lives is by staying connected to God. Prayer is the way we connect with Him. Here is a prayer idea for you to connect with God this month.

Leafing it to God. Autumn is the season of change. The days get shorter, the weather becomes cooler, and depending on where you live, you start to see the foliage change color—from vibrant green, to yellows, red, orange and brown. As the season progresses, the leaves begin to fall from the tree as winter is coming closer. Fall foliage is a great visual to help us in our prayer time. 1 Peter 5:7 challenges us to ***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*** God loves us and doesn't want us to carry the weight of our worries. Just as the trees lose their leaves in the fall, God wants us to let go of them and leaf (leave) them with Him.

Collect real leaves, or use fake leaves (you can even cut leaves out of paper) if you wish. Throughout the month when a worry or concern comes to your mind, write it on the leaf, giving the concern to God. The leaves can be displayed for the month, as a reminder to not take the concern back. At the end of the month, get rid of the leaves, praising God for the way He carried those concerns, and thank Him for the way He has answered your prayers.





Take the 31-Day Proverbs Challenge!

Flourishing in the Word

The best way to flourish in ordinary days is to be in the Word each and every day. This month we will be reading all 31 chapters of Proverbs in 31 days. Simply read the chapter that correlates with the day of the month.

The Study Bible for Women says this: “Proverbs applies godly wisdom to many aspects of everyday life. Throughout the book, *wisdom* (a lifestyle of obeying the Lord) is set in contrast to *folly* (a lifestyle away from the Lord’s commands and priorities.)”

Each day as you read the chapter, choose just one wisdom nugget to apply to your ordinary daily life. For an extra challenge, journal about the verse you are going to apply each day this month. It would be fun to go back and read how you lived out Proverbs.

Proverbs 1	Proverbs 2	Proverbs 3	Proverbs 4
Proverbs 5	Proverbs 6	Proverbs 7	Proverbs 8
Proverbs 9	Proverbs 10	Proverbs 11	Proverbs 12
Proverbs 13	Proverbs 14	Proverbs 15	Proverbs 16
Proverbs 17	Proverbs 18	Proverbs 19	Proverbs 20
Proverbs 21	Proverbs 22	Proverbs 23	Proverbs 24
Proverbs 25	Proverbs 26	Proverbs 27	Proverbs 28
Proverbs 29	Proverbs 30	Proverbs 31	

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Cathedral City, CA held an International Thanksgiving Party. *What a great idea for next month!*

El Cajon, CA did a program about The Salvation Army’s ministry worldwide, highlighting international development work. They also had a meaningful time of learning about and praying for the Army’s work in Ukraine and Russia.

Lewiston, ID made cookie mix jars for every single client family that came in for Christmas toy assistance. They also helped distribute these on distribution day. It provided a wonderful, personal touch in the Christmas ministry season. **Phoenix Kroc, AZ** made candy bouquets for the ladies at the ARC.

Sacramento, CA did a program about Salvation Army music. The Divisional Music Director and Corps Bandmaster formed a small group to play the music.

San Gabriel, CA meet together weekly (virtually) for 30-60 minutes where they read the Bible together. They have read through the whole New Testament together and are now reading Genesis.

Sitka, AK have been having fun playing card games such as *Phase 10* and *Snerts*.

Torrance, CA did a book club using the book, *The Divine Adventure: Spiritual Practices for a Modern-Day Disciple* by Rebecca Friedlander.

Flourishing in Ordinary Days: Practicing the Presence of God

Brother Lawrence was a 17th century Carmelite monk in France. He was assigned to kitchen duty in the monastery, where he prepared and cooked the food for the day and then afterwards he spent his time cleaning. He wrote a book entitled, *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

With such a dull, monotonous task, Brother Lawrence began to infuse His relationship with God into His menial tasks. Instead of just doing the dishes or cooking the meal, he decided to have an on-going conversation with God as he went about his daily chores. He believed God could be invited into everything he did and His presence could be enjoyed anytime.

He wrote, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God; those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.”

Practicing the presence of God means keeping in mind that God is with you as you go about your day: in your morning routine, as you eat your meals, drive kids to and from school, in the office, as you wait at the doctor office, scrolling on your phone. It is simply being aware that God is with you everyday, in every activity.



***“Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.”
Proverbs 4:23 NLT***



Flourishing Fun in October

Here are ten fun ideas to help you flourish this October.

1. Buy a New Piece of Clothing for Fall
2. Check out Fall Foliage
3. Collect Fall Leaves and Press or Preserve Them
4. Decorate the House for Fall
5. Try a New Fall Recipe
6. Roast Marshmallows and Make S'mores
7. Gather Friends for a Fall-Themed Brunch
8. Go to a Fall Festival
9. Go Pumpkin Picking
10. Carve (or Paint) Pumpkins