



WATFORD TOWN SDA CHURCH

Women's Ministries

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Newsletter/Digest



*There is no pit so deep, that He's not deeper still.
– Corrie ten Boom*

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Good Day from your Women's Ministries Team, Pamela, Gillian and Carrisa.

I hope this collection will find you and yours well and ready to face the challenges ahead.

Our quote this month reminds us that God will not allow us to face more than we can bear, if only we put our full faith and trust in Him, He is able to sustain us through all life's perceived difficulties and trials.

This quote comes from a woman who faced severe trials in life, more than many of us has faced or may have to face; the death of members of her family at the hands of people under Nazi orders and control with the objective to destroy the Jewish people in their communities. She then had to reflect God's grace when confronted by the very guard who assisted in the death of her beloved sister. Did she hesitate? Momentarily, yes she did. But she realised that she could not expect God to forgive her transgressions, unless she showed compassion and equally forgave those who had transgressed against her even in that bitter circumstance.

And this is taught to us by Jesus Himself, when He taught the disciples and us to pray. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". We need to have or cultivate a forgiving (and forgetful) nature.

How can we, both personally and collectively as a church, prosper if we hold grudges; where is there room for the Holy Spirit in that? We need to demonstrate love and forgiveness in every aspect of life. To ask the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, to reflect the love and mercy shown to us on a daily basis, that we should be accepting and thereby increasing our love to our fellow human-kind, with the desire to spread the Good News of salvation to all around us, however we encounter our fellow human beings in our work, home and general community.

Let us pray that we can be a forgiving and loving community and that the Gospel will prosper in our vineyard

Wishing you all the very best for March, as we move forward together sharing the good news of salvation with those who are seeking answers. Enjoy our offering for this month, Pam and the Women's Ministries Team (Gillian and Carrisa)



Knowledge of Christ

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? — John 14:9 NET

There seems to be pain in the Master’s question. This disciple had been with Him for three years. He had seen His beautiful and gentle life. He had witnessed His works of power. Surely by this time, after such long and close intimacy, the disciple ought to have known Jesus. Yet Jesus tells him here that he did not really know Him.

We get this lesson — that it is possible to be with Christ a long time, and to know very much about Him, without ‘knowing’ Him in the true sense of the word. Philip knew Jesus as a man, as a worker of miracles, as having a very beautiful character; but he seems never to have gone below the surface in understanding Him. He did not know Him as the revealer of the Father. He never saw divine glory in the radiance that streamed from that blessed life. And not to know Christ in this aspect, to know Him only as a man, is not to know Him at all. To leave out the divine in our thought of Christ is not to have any Christ at all.

We may be quite familiar with the facts of our Lord’s life, from His birth in Bethlehem to His ascension from Olivet, and yet may not know anything of Him as a personal Saviour, saving us from our sins, or as a Helper in our times of need. Such knowledge will do us no good unless it leads us to the true knowledge of Christ as Saviour, Lord, and Friend.

There is something very touching in the thought that for so long the Son of God walked with His disciples, all the glory of divinity dwelling in His humanity, and that they did not recognise Him. But is it any better with us? The divine love is close to us perpetually, flowing all about us, with all its infinite tenderness, but how unconscious we are of it! May our prayer be, “Lord, make thyself known to us!”



Immanuel

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? — John 14:9 NET

That was surely a very strange thing for a man to say. Can we imagine John, the beloved disciple, saying of himself that those who had seen him had seen the Father? The fact that Christ said it shows that He was conscious of divinity that He really claimed to be the Son of God. So it is in all Christ's words: He speaks always as God. Wherever we turn in the Gospel we find the out flashings of Christ's divinity; it was easier to pluck the stars from the sky than to tear the truth of Christ's deity from the pages of inspiration. Everywhere it shines — its light the brightest beam in all the radiant splendour that blazes there.

What did Jesus mean when He said this? Evidently that although He was a man, He was also the incarnation of God; that He was living out in a human life, which men could see, the invisible life of His Father. Men on earth could never see God. Then God sent His Son that He might veil His Divine splendour in flesh and show people how the unseen God feels and acts.

Thus, when we see Him taking little children in His arms, laying His hand on their heads and blessing them, we see how God feels toward children. When we see the compassion of Jesus stirred by human suffering, we learn how our heavenly Father is touched by the sight of earthly woe. When we see Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them, speaking forgiveness to penitents who crept to His feet, and making soiled, stained lives white and clean, we learn the mercy of God. When we follow Christ to His cross and see Him giving His life a willing sacrifice to make redemption for lost men, we see how God loves. So the meekness and patience and gentleness of Christ were mirroring of the same traits in His Father. If we would see the likeness of God, we have but to turn to the story of the Gospel. To know Christ is to know the Father.



The Secret to Loving Your Enemies

It's not merely about willpower or warm feelings.

Kelli B. Trujillo

There are people I cannot bear to love. Rage springs up afresh in me when I think of those who spew racist hatred, or sexually exploit children, or commit acts of terrorist violence. The desire to hate also wells up within me toward people who've committed less extreme but equally infuriating acts against people I love—betrayers, liars, bullies, critics.

I could easily justify that instinctive desire to hate. For I hate evil—and it's just a small step from hating evil to hating the *bearers* of evil.

But this is where Jesus confronts me: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43–44, NIV).

What does this call to love mean in the face of ISIS or the man on the sexual predators list down the street? What does this mean for the person who's betrayed and cheated a loved one or the teen who's bullied your child?

Does this mean drumming up patently false warm feelings or gritting our teeth as we will ourselves to push back hateful reactions? The will certainly plays a part as we assent to Jesus' teaching. But there is a deeper idea that can help us grapple with and grow into this radical call. We find it in Genesis 1:27: “God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

This reality of the *imago dei*—that each of us, friends and enemies alike, are made in God's image—calls us to recognise an innate worth that cannot be erased by any evil action. Here is the truth: That evil-bearer? He or she is also an *image-bearer*. And this has far reaching implications for each of us. I invited several women I know to share their own thoughts on how Scripture's teaching on the image of God challenges us to truly love our enemies, and this is what they said:

• **It roots out our prejudices.** “If all people are made in the image of God and yet we see a particular group of people as an enemy or as someone to fear, then we need to ask why. What are we afraid of?” [Sandra Maria Van Opstal](#) observes. This teaching challenges believers to wrestle with how fear may be “causing us to dehumanize other people.”

• **It forces us to face ourselves.** For [Patricia Raybon](#), loving enemies means “seeing them as I am—broken, confused, messed up, hurting, struggling.” For example, she says, “I can pray for the poor lost souls of ISIS because they are, indeed, lost. As *I* am lost—on my worst days for certain. . . . They need Jesus just as *I* need Jesus.”

• **It calls us to grapple with the extraordinary gospel.** “To love our enemy is to believe that no one is beyond the grace of God—that every single human being is on the same footing before God as sinners. It is only through Jesus’ death and resurrection that we are able to be reconciled to him,” [Jenny Yang](#) asserts. “We should view our enemies as people not just made in the image of God but also potential instruments God can use for his glory.”

• **It invites us to live out our true calling.** “To love our enemies we must learn to see them as image bearers . . . But first we must learn to see *ourselves* as image bearers,” [Hannah Anderson](#) says. “When I remember that my core calling is to show what God is like and do what he would do, it fundamentally changes how I respond to my enemies because I remember how God responded to me when I was *his* enemy.”

Understanding—deep, deep down—that we are all made in God’s image has implications not just for how we view and treat enemies, but for so many other aspects of how we view ourselves and relate to others.

Recognizing the *imago dei* in my enemies doesn’t magically erase negative feelings that arise, but it does forcibly reorient my perspective—away from my feelings and onto the Cross. Thank the Lord that, as Romans 5:10 says, “Our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies”!

Terrorist, abuser, adulterer . . . *sinner*. Our indelible, God-given dignity remains. For we each are made in his image—and that will never change.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD: **Bangladesh – Give a gift: Change a Life**

In Bangladesh, the seventh most populous nation in the world, most people are subsistence farmers. Health problems abound, and according to the World Factbook, only 41 percent of Bangladesh’s women over the age of 15 can read and write, compared to 54 percent of the men.

Providing women with literacy and sewing machine skills means a better life for them and strengthens their families, their church, and their community. According to Lucena Chambugong, Bangladesh Union Women’s Ministries Director, more than 60 women have received the

sewing machine training, allowing them to start small businesses and provide food for their families. Your gift can empower women in Bangladesh to become “somebody” in a society where they are “nobody.” But your greatest gift is the tangible evidence that someone cares. You can give them a way to feed and educate their children, and even more—a vital ingredient for life: HOPE.

Love's Time Line

How to make sure your marriage gets better with age

Gary J. Oliver

Mike considered himself a good lover. That is until his wife, Tina, asked him to move out after nine years of marriage. "It has become painfully clear that I don't know much about what it means to love," he admitted. "I mean *really* love."

Why is love so difficult? Why do so many couples like Mike and Tina start out with good intentions and then stumble?

The answer is that many don't really understand love. Over the years, I've counselled couples whose functional definition of love could be summed up as "a feeling that you feel when you feel that you're going to feel a feeling that you've never felt before." Add to this confusion the expectation many couples have that love will never change—and disappointment is guaranteed.

But just as each year has different seasons, there are also seasons to a relationship. God designed each season to produce a different kind of love.

The First Season Face-to-Face

Falling in love is the first, and sadly for some couples the *only*, season of love. Often couples confuse infatuation with love. A husband might see his wife as he would *like* her to be—a warm, caring person who always keeps his needs foremost in her mind. Who she truly is—a woman who can be angry and upset with him at times—is irrelevant.

Judith Voist, in her book *Love & Guilt* (Simon and Schuster), provides a humorous, and yet truthful, distinction between love and infatuation. "Infatuation is when you think he's as gorgeous as Robert Redford, as pure as Solzhenitsyn, as funny as Woody Allen, as athletic as Jimmy Connors and as smart as Albert Einstein. Love is when you realize that he's as gorgeous as Woody Allen, as smart as Jimmy Connors, as funny as Solzhenitsyn, as athletic as Albert Einstein and nothing like Robert Redford in any category—but you'll take him anyway."

Tina and Mike, in their nine years of marriage, had never moved beyond infatuation. During their courtship, they experienced the electricity of *eros*, or romantic love. It was new, exciting and intense—everything they assumed love would be.

When they were dating, Tina and Mike experienced an all-absorbing involvement in one another—seeing each other daily and talking by phone late into the night. They yearned for physical closeness and held hands whenever possible. "Our love felt so real," Tina says, "and I thought those feelings would last forever."

Of course the feelings didn't last. Soon after their honeymoon, life got in the way. Mike worked hard to establish himself as a top salesman in a major communications company. His 60-hour work weeks didn't leave much time for his wife. By their fifth anniversary, Tina was busy, too, keeping up with three active pre-schoolers.

Looking back, they realised that since their wedding day, they had done little to cultivate their relationship. In fact, with each passing year, they ran their life more as "married singles" than as a married couple. What communication they did have focused on housekeeping and childcare.

Like many couples, they were treating love as a commodity. But love isn't like a piece of furniture that sits off in the corner, needing only an occasional dusting. Love is more like a plant that requires careful, long-term attention. For ten years I lived in Nebraska, where I learned about farming. The first lesson was that planting a seed is only the beginning of the growth process. Many long hours are spent

cultivating, fertilising and watering before the seeds grow into mature plants. It's not always fun, but when the harvest comes it's worth it. And so, in the romance stage of love, the seeds are planted. But without constant care and attention, romance can't grow into mature love.

Mike and Tina were relieved to learn that there were steps they could take to turn their disillusionment into a deeper level of love. I encouraged them to find three other couples who would pray for them and their marriage on a daily basis for the next six months. Then I helped them shift the focus away from the tension between them by having them concentrate on becoming friends as well as lovers.

To help establish that friendship, I recommended that each day they read a devotional from *Quiet Times for Couples* (Harvest House), by H. Norman Wright. The devotionals are short and easy-to-read, and rather than focusing on problems they focus on growth.

Most of us tend to overestimate the loving things we do for our partner, and underestimate the loving things they do for us.

Finally, I encouraged Tina and Mike to go out on a date at least twice a month. Often I encourage couples to see engage in an activity that they review and talk about, but with two stipulations. First, the activity must end early enough that they can go to a restaurant afterward to discuss it. Whether they liked the activity or not is irrelevant. The point is to share thoughts and feelings. And second, during their dates, they can't bring up any conflictual issues. A date is a time to enjoy one another.

By nurturing their friendship, Tina and Mike were able to move beyond the disillusionment of lost romance. This is a necessary step that bridges the first and second seasons of love.

The Second Season Shoulder-to-Shoulder

Many couples miss the rollercoaster highs and lows of early romantic love. But as their love deepens, they will enjoy the beauty of *phileo*—the bond of friendship. Friendship love combines the intensity of romance with the stability of knowing a spouse is committed to learning how to appreciate you for who you are rather than what he or she thinks you should be.

In this second season of love, couples begin to understand that love is a deliberate choice—not merely a feeling. To build on this deeper level of love, I often encourage couples to choose a meaningful act they will perform for each other. I ask them to write it down somewhere so they can keep track of what they've done. Most of us tend to overestimate the loving things we do for our partner, and underestimate the loving things they do for us.

The action can be something simple like taking out the rubbish. It might be a phone call or a card. My wife, Carrie, and I have devotions together in the morning. I always try to get her a hot drink before she asks. I like to anticipate her need and go ahead and meet it.

The deeper sense of friendship that develops in the second season leads to a different kind of communication. You're eager to learn how to read your mate. What are his or her unique needs and desires? What shows that she's hurt or discouraged? What indicates he's unhappy or anxious?

Several years ago, Carrie and I decided to read the book *Prayer* by Richard Foster (HarperSanFrancisco). We would read a chapter independently, then talk about it and practice a particular approach to prayer. Often we found out more about one another in meaningful, intercessory prayer than we did in long conversations.

While partners are learning more about one another, it's also a time to learn what methods of communication are most effective. For Mike and Tina, their pattern of communicating—a brief

comment here, a short observation there—created what Paul Tournier calls "dialogues of the deaf." They were talking but not being heard.

Carrie and I have experienced that in our marriage. I sometimes hear my wife express concerns in prayer, things she has already expressed to me, but her words didn't register before because we were communicating on the run.

An excellent tool to help spouses draw one another out is the workbook *Experiencing God* (LifeWay) by Henry Blackaby and Claude King. I encouraged Mike and Tina to set aside at least 30 minutes a week to share what God was teaching them about their individual relationships with him and to ask some open-ended questions of one another.

I reminded Mike that in conversation, men like to get to the bottom line. But women aren't looking for a summary statement. For them, the bottom line is the *process* of sharing together. What may seem like "small talk" to Mike is probably "important talk" to Tina.

While romantic love is almost always a face-to-face relationship, friendship love is often shoulder-to-shoulder. Spouses are working together on something greater than both of them. They don't just find their oneness in each other, but in shared interests and in working toward a mutual goal. Spiritual growth was such a goal for Carrie and me when we worked through the *Experiencing God* workbook and applied the truths to our marriage.

The Third Season Soul-to-Soul

As Mike and Tina made progress in the friendship stage of love, they were excited to learn that in the third season of marriage they would experience more passion and intensity than ever before. Couples build on the foundation of romantic love and the security of friendship love and then discover that real love involves an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person. That's when *agape*, or sacrificial love, begins to take root.

In *Mere Christianity* (MacMillian), C.S. Lewis observed that many people have the mistaken idea that "if you have married the right person you may expect to go on 'being in love' forever. As a result, when they find they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and are entitled to a change—not realising that, when they have changed, the glamour will presently go out of the new love just as it went out of the old one. In this department of life, as in every other, thrills come at the beginning and do not last. ... Let the thrill go—let it die away—go on through that period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follow—and you will find you are living in a world of new thrills all the time."

Couples in this season experience a sympathetic sensitivity that accepts each other's weaknesses and shortcomings. This mutual acceptance comes largely with time. When God makes a squash, he takes six months. When he makes an oak tree, he takes 100 years. Couples who want a deep, sacrificial love know that growing such a love, like growing a tree, takes time.

While acceptance is vital in this stage of love, author Leighton Ford adds an important twist to it. He said, "God loves us just the way we are, but he loves us too much to leave us that way." The third stage of love goes beyond acceptance to growth. Because you love each other, you want to see your mate become the person God designed him or her to be.

The seasons of love don't always follow a set sequence. Rather, the growth of love is more circular. I've worked with couples who are experiencing all three stages at the same time. Also, none of the stages has a prescribed time limit. I know couples married less than ten years who were already enjoying the harvest of love in season three, and others married for 35 years who were still riding the roller coaster of the first season.

Most people don't have a clear understanding of the depth and breadth of true biblical love. For that reason, I encourage couples to look up three different versions of 1 Corinthians 13. I then have them

write out their own paraphrase, in 2016 language, of this chapter of Scripture. Couples have told me it helped them personalise God's truth about love.

To make love practical, as well as personal, I challenge every spouse to do one thing for his or her partner every day for the next month. Pick an act of kindness, and practice it for 30 days without calling attention to it. Observe the difference that comes when you work to build, encourage, nourish and cherish the love you and your spouse share.

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Ways to use honey

The sweet stuff is bursting with goodness, so stir it into drinks and spread it on your toast – or even on yourself, says Catherine Francis

1. As an immune booster

Honey is bursting with vitamins and minerals, including vitamins B and C, copper, potassium, manganese, iron and calcium. It's also rich in amino acids, healthy enzymes and antioxidants – all of which strengthen your immune system and help ward off colds and bugs. For a daily immunity boost, spread it on wholemeal toast or stir one teaspoon into warm water and lemon juice for a morning cleanser. (Babies under the age of one should not be given honey, due to a low risk of botulism.)



2. To reduce hay fever symptoms

Many people swear by local, unprocessed honey to beat hay fever. That's because it contains traces of local pollen, which may desensitise your body and build up resistance to the allergens that trigger sneezing, stuffiness and itchy, runny eyes.

Look for local honey at farmers' markets or farm shops, or look online for local beekeepers. Take one tablespoon of honey a day for several weeks before your hay fever season begins.

3. For beautiful skin

Honey has been used for millennia as a beauty treatment, thanks to its antibacterial and humectant (moisture-retaining) qualities. It's especially good for sensitive skin that doesn't respond well to chemical products. Try a homemade face mask – mix one tablespoon of honey with two tablespoons of live yogurt, and enough oatmeal to thicken it. Smooth over your face and leave for 10 minutes. Scrub gently to exfoliate, then remove with warm water. You can also spread honey on chapped lips to heal and protect them, and add it to your bath for a soothing soak. Try dabbing it on spots, too – its hydrogen peroxide content and antibacterial properties help to counter the bacteria that can lead to infection and inflammation.

4. To heal burns, wounds and ulcers

Honey is traditionally used to soothe burns as it reduces blistering and speeds healing by drawing in nutrients to enhance cell growth. A review of clinical research found honey can actually reduce healing times in burns compared to conventional treatments. For wounds and ulcers, honey's soothing, antibacterial properties can help to clear infection, reduce inflammation and minimise scarring. Apply to minor burns and wounds, cover with a sterile dressing, and change daily. (For serious burns and wounds, always seek medical advice.) It's good for sunburn, too.

5. As a throat soother

Singers commonly use honey to soothe their throats, and studies show it can be more effective than cough medicines for easing a sore throat and reducing a cough. Thanks to its antimicrobial and antibacterial properties, honey can also help to kill certain bacteria that cause infections. So pass on the honey-flavoured lozenges and go straight to the source. If you prefer, you can gargle with it – mix 2 tablespoons of honey into warm water with four tablespoons of lemon juice and a pinch of salt.

Choose the best

For the best healing qualities opt for manuka honey from New Zealand and Australia – this 'superfood' is extra rich in nutrients and antibacterial properties. Go for organic whenever possible and look for raw honey, which hasn't been heat-treated or pasteurised.



How to Effectively Witness

6 principles for personal evangelism
Arianne Benedetto

For a long time, I've had an uneasy understanding of what it means to share the gospel. Being concerned only with the message—that is, being quick to mention Jesus and to point out sin when I saw it—left me feeling like a clumsy, jerky clod. On the other hand, focusing solely on avoiding awkwardness by sidestepping controversial topics such as God and sin made me feel like a coward, more concerned about my own comfort than the eternal well-being of others.

The balance point of effective, genuine witnessing eluded me. How do you speak honestly without alienating the listener? How can you be relatable and sensitive without sacrificing the truth—which often offends?

While struggling to reach this balance, I've found the Book of Acts to be eye opening. Here, the saving message Jesus first trusted to an intimate group began to spread, as per his instructions: "You will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). One fine example of this is Paul's ministry in Athens ([Acts 17:16–32](#)).

Paul did not go to Athens based on his own plans or timing. Opponents of the gospel were chasing him and his fellow evangelists from city to city, agitating crowds and inciting animosity as they preached. Fellow believers brought Paul to Athens so that Silas and Timothy could join him.

In the meantime, he was troubled to find the Athenians steeped in idolatry and eager to entertain any spiritual ideas that piqued their interest. Paul reasoned with residents there and was eventually invited to speak to a group of people meeting at the Areopagus, the place where new ideas were vetted.

Paul's methods there are somewhat surprising but also instructional on how to share the gospel effectively in our own culture. Here are some of the most helpful principles to be gained from his teaching.

1. Respect Your Audience

Learn about your listeners, and show them sensitivity and respect. As Paul started speaking to the crowd, he acknowledged their own value system: “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines” (17:22–23).

Wait, he saw that they were “very religious”? He saw their “many shrines”? Just a few verses earlier, we find that Paul was “deeply troubled” by their pagan lifestyle (17:16). It’s almost surprising that Paul didn’t start with a truth-in-love style denouncement of their idolatry.

But Paul understood that such an approach would only shut down any hearing he had gained with them. Paul wasn’t shying away from addressing sin; he simply knew that there was an effective and an ineffective way to do this. He opted to show respect for his listeners and sensitivity toward what was important to them.

2. Begin with the Familiar

Start with what they do know rather than what they don’t. At this point, the Athenians had no basis for recognising their worship as sinful. But they did understand what it means to be zealous for spiritual things, and it was to this religious zeal Paul first appealed.

The very existence of an altar “To an Unknown God” (17:23) showed that the Athenians were open to the likelihood of there being more out there than what they knew, and Paul used this opportunity to tell them about a God—the God—whom they’d not yet known. He provided them with a starting point from their own culture for understanding what was otherwise unknown to them.

3. Present a Correct Picture of God

Speak accurately and winsomely about God. At the root, the Athenians’ idolatry stemmed from an inaccurate—even reversed—understanding of God and his nature.

They were perhaps willing to add Paul’s strange, new god to their collection, yet Paul promoted a God who requires exclusivity (see [Exodus 20:1–6](#)). They served gods created by their own hands, but Paul spoke of the one true God who “made the world and everything in it” (Acts 17:24). Their religious system could not exist without the work they’d done, but the living God does not rely on human hands because “he himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need,” and “he decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries” (17:25, 26).

God is more powerful, majestic, and sovereign than the Athenians could imagine—yet also closer and more intimate. This all-powerful God has done all of this so that people might “perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us” (17:27). This is far beyond the scope of relationship one could have with a mere idol.

4. Find Common Ground

Seeing the truth—and speaking to those who don’t yet see it—can estrange two parties. But Paul did not take the condescending posture of one who is superior to his listeners.

Rather than highlighting the disparities in their beliefs, Paul used an understanding of their culture to help them find common ground—in this case, by quoting poets’ lines about the Creator: “For in him we live and move and exist,” and “We are his offspring” (17:28). The classic poets would have been widely known and revered by the Athenians. Interestingly enough, the second of these lines is taken from the poet Cleanthes’ “Hymn to Zeus,” an unlikely source for Paul to use in familiarising them with the true nature of God. Like Paul, we may be able to find common ground and build connection even in surprising ways.

5. Gently Correct Error

Be prepared to disarmingly but truthfully point out the fallacy of sin, along with the need for repentance. Paul drew the logical conclusion from what had been established: Of course God is not an idol, and to worship this way is misguided—and perilous. He kept this line of reasoning blessedly free of emotionally charged words of condemnation, but he was clear, accurate, and urgent in his message.

Paul achieved this in part by making the summons to correct understanding and worship of God corporate rather than personal: “We shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone” (17:29, emphasis added). Further, Paul made clear that God used to excuse this kind of thinking, but things have changed and he now calls all to amend their erroneous ways.

Paul stressed that changing course was necessary. Where the path to restoration with God had once been closed, a way has been made ([John 3:16](#)), and it has been opened to all people ([Romans 10:12–13](#))—but the time is limited. Paul’s message culminated with the truth that this way is through Jesus, as proven by his resurrection—which, unsurprisingly, drew a mixed reaction from the crowd.

6. Be Ready in All Situations

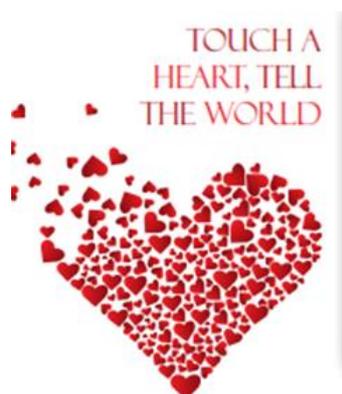
Paul was in Athens in a period of waiting, and, given the circumstances that brought him there, possibly also a place of frustration or disappointment. But he made wise use of every chance to share the gospel. He didn’t wait until he was back in his comfort zone or when the opportunity to witness was the kind he hoped for.

Paul engaged people in the synagogue, in the market place, and in the meeting at the Areopagus. He spoke to those who already feared God but didn’t yet know Jesus, to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers without any acquaintance with Yahweh, and to Athenian citizens and foreigners alike. Notice that Paul spoke to those who *wanted* to engage, and he knew when it was time to leave. He spoke the truth, but he also took pains to provide them with every opportunity to understand and *receive* that truth.

These days I interact differently with those whom I hope to share my faith. I make more intentional efforts to not just know but also understand their worldviews, and I notice aspects of the gospel that they may already identify with. I wait for the Spirit to reveal more logical, organic opportunities to discuss weighty issues, such as the existence of God, rather than taking the first awkward one that pops up. I’m not a witnessing superstar, but I’m now confident that being true to the message and sensitive to the listener are not mutually exclusive goals.

In the end, some responded favourably to Paul’s message, asking to hear more and even accepting the gospel truth. Others rejected it. We all want to witness effectively, and we should make every effort to do so. Yet no matter what we do, there will always be some who scoff and turn away. If we keep our hearts both soft and true, we will help others receive the truth rather than contributing to their rejection of it.

Arianne Benedetto lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband, Anthony, and four children. She is passionate about learning and meditating on Scripture to guide how we think about and act upon our faith.





So - we come to the end of this month's collection - a selection of articles which we hope is thought provoking.

We would really welcome submissions from you ladies - anything you have come across and would like to share, would be welcome. Any comments, feedback, suggestions, gratefully received. Articles don't need to be original material, although we would welcome that as well.

We want to bring back our Profiles of Ladies of Watford Town Church - but we need willing participants We see each other from week to week - but how much do we really know about each other? If you are approached for a profile, please do consider it positively, and hopefully next month we can restore this feature.

We would welcome any graphics from budding artists - this is your newsletter, so please, feel free to offer up submissions.

Please send to: watfordtownwm@gmail.com and it will be included in forth-coming editions.

So once again time is speeding by, we are at the end of February and fast heading into March.

*Please prepare for the **International Women's Day of Prayer - 5th March** and Mother's Day on the 6th. We want to join in with other Adventist women as we use this time to focus on the particular prayer needs of women, as they undertake the various tasks as mothers, daughters, sisters, mentors, leaders, carers, wives, and girlfriends, oh so many many hats. We appreciate that our brothers wear a multitude of hats also; however, women seem to have a never-ending supply.*

By time the next issue comes out Mother's Day, Easter and the clocks going forwards will have happened or about to happen. Hopefully spring will be in the air, and the warmer weather that goes with it.

Please do listen out for announcements about our programme of local events from the Women's Ministries Team - we have been planning and hope that you will enjoy what we have put together.

We would like to refresh the Secret Friends, so we will be redrawing in March, and we would like to have the ability to communicate with you on a more personal basis so we will be asking for addresses, if you have happy to let us have them. Do listen out for announcements.

With best wishes for March and the months to come -

Carrisa, Gillian and Pam