

Footsteps Along the

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a
light unto my path. Ps. 119:105

WAY



Cynthia Davis,
Author

YOUR LIGHT HAS COME

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. Is. 60:1

What a glorious promise this verse from Isaiah is and how appropriate for this time of the year when we look at our lives and make resolutions to change. Isaiah's words are part of the longer section where the Lord declares that Israel will be restored to honor and "I will glorify my glorious house." In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul tells us that we are "...members of the household of God...with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone...a holy temple in the Lord...a dwelling-place for God." Each of us is a house for God and to each of us is given the promise of glory.



God's glory is like the geese taking flight over the lake from this year's display at the local Botanic Gardens 'River of Lights'. The image is clear and recognizable. Our lives are meant to mirror that light. Like the reflection in the lake, however, our image is blurred.

As W. H. Auden says in *"For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio"*, "Once again as in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed to do more than entertain it as an agreeable possibility, once again we have sent Him away..."

What if our New Year's resolution was to be more fully the reflection of the Glory of the Lord? Would we be able to rejoice and live as the chorus of the Oratorio suggests?

He is the Way.

*Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.*

He is the Truth.

*Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.*

He is the Life.

Love Him in the World of the Flesh;

And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you," says Isaiah. Would your life be different if you believed that God's glory really did shine through you? What adventures might you experience in 2010?

Signings & Sightings

Dancing in the Footsteps Bible study continues. You can still join at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dancinginthefootprints/join>

Jan. 10-Feb. 14—Epiphany to Lent at footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com

February 20—4th Annual Authors for Literacy Event in Moriarty, NM

Recipe from Footprints

Homemade Chalk for House Blessing at Epiphany

1 c. Plaster of Paris

1/2-1 c. water

2-3 T. tempura paint

Mix plaster and water in a disposable container (paper bowl or old coffee can) until desired consistency. Divide into smaller bowls and add paint to desired color. Pour into soap or candle molds or toilet paper rolls to dry. After they dry, peel off paper or pop out of molds. Use in the traditional Epiphany House Blessing, above.

Chalk has been mined and used since ancient times for drawing and marking. Colored chalk involved grinding the stone and mixing in pigments made in a variety of ways. Whether children in the Bible played with chalk is anyone's guess, but all children love drawing, so they could have.

Using chalk as a house blessing is a very old Eastern tradition, gradually being rediscovered by Western Christian groups. You can use store-bought chalk or make your own. A brief blessing service is below. For a more complete service, including blessing the chalk in church, see: <http://fullhomelydivinity.org/articles/Epiphanyfullpage.htm>.

The blessing of the house begins with all members of the household standing outside the main door to the home. Usually the head of the household leads the blessing, but any member of the household may be designated.

Leader: Peace be to this house.

People: And to all who enter here.

Leader: Wise men came to Bethlehem to honor the Savior and offered him gifts:

People: Gold for a great king.

Leader: Incense to the true God.

People: And myrrh for his body, for he would suffer and die.

The initials of the legendary names of the wise men are written with blessed chalk on the door or the lintel of the house, framed by the numbers of the new year: **20 C + M + B + 10**. Then everyone enters the house and gathers for the blessing of the house.



Send your blessing, O Lord, upon this house and on all who shelter under its roof. Inspire us as you inspired the wise men of old who sought your Son: give us courage on the journey, discernment to find the right way, and whatever we may need to complete the tasks to which he calls us. And, at the last, may we find our rest and fulfillment in his presence in the home he has prepared for us in your heavenly kingdom, where he now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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FEBRUARY 2010

DISCERNING THE PATH

“Those who are wise understand these things; those who are discerning know them. For the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.” (Hosea 14:9)

Each of us is on a unique journey with God. As Hosea states, “the ways of the Lord are right and the upright walk in them.” I think we all want to be ‘upright’, which is defined as *“behaving in a moral or honorable manner.”* The only way we can be sure that our journey is on the right path is with God’s help. We need to determine what God’s path is and follow God, like the baby flamingo in the picture is following his mother.



How do we go about discerning what direction God wants us to go? This is something we do every day of our life, but sometimes it helps to be more intentional about our journey. There are steps that apply to all journeys, whether it is a trip to the grocery or our spiritual journey of discerning God’s path for our life. Those of you who have been following my blog this month will recognize the steps:

1. Determining that we want to go somewhere or make a change in how we live.
2. Get advice—from friends, scripture, study, etc.
3. Make a plan to reach our goal.
4. Set out in the direction we believe we are supposed to go.
5. After some time on the journey, evaluate whether we are getting closer to the goal.—do I feel closer or farther from God?
6. Adjust our path based on more advice and planning.

This past year, I’ve been struggling to discern what direction I should move in my call to writing the stories of the people of God. I knew I was being pushed to do something. Now new avenues appear to be opening up. Watch for further info here and on my website, as I pray for discernment about which direction to take...

Do you sense that God is urging you to try something new? Maybe you feel a new interest in some ministry or feel like you want to make a change in your daily routine. It could be as simple as doing something different in your prayer habits or something as grand as reaching out to help in a new way. Take time to work through the steps of discernment and see what happens. Whatever path we choose, it must be the one that shares the love of God with the hurting world that doesn’t know that love!

I just came across this quote by St. Augustine (thanks Pat). I think it is a perfect prayer for anyone on a journey of discernment.

“Come Lord, stir us up and call us back, kindle and seize us, be our fire and our sweetness, let us love, let us run.”

Signings & Sightings

Jan. 10-Feb. 14—*On a Journey with Hagar, Epiphany to Lent* at footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com

Sat., Feb. 20—4th Annual Authors for Literacy Event in Moriarty, NM starts at 10AM (speaking at 1PM)

Feb. 21-Easter—*Simplify with Women of the Bible* during Lent at footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com

June 4-5—Annual Chama Book Fair at Cookin’ Books

Watch for information on the upcoming release of *Mary, My Love* this year!

Recipe from Footprints

This year, newsletter recipes will be for beauty and home products that Women of the Bible might have used. Using simple household products, you can try out ageless beauty secrets.

This month, for other recipes using **Yogurt**, check out the new **Bible Beauty** page on my website!



Miriam's Moisturizer Mask

1 T citrus juice (orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit or a mixture of 2 different juices)

½ c yogurt (plain, unflavored)

Mix thoroughly. Apply all over face, as mask. Leave for 10-20 minutes. Remove with soft cloth. Because this moisturizer mask is all natural, you can use it daily. In fact, one recipe will make enough for several applications.

Yogurt is an ingredient that can be used both for food and for beauty. It is a wonderful source of calcium and protein when eaten. The lactic acid is good for your skin. It can tighten

pores, smooth, and soften your face. The addition of citrus adds an additional astringent property to the facial mask.

It probably goes without saying, but if you are allergic to any ingredient in these natural beauty products, please do not try them!

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MARCH 2010

SIMPLICITY

"This is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God" (II Cor. 1:12)

Lent has come again, an opportunity to simplify our lives. Often simplicity is considered to be 'getting back to the basics', like giving up technology and processed food. A look at the citation from Paul's letter to the Corinthians and a quick check of the dictionary help give a clearer perspective.

Webster's dictionary says that simplicity is the state of being uncomplicated, freedom from subtlety or guile. Paul says, 'we behaved...with simplicity...not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God.' Simplicity is a way of life that proclaims **Whose** we are by the way we live each day. It is knowing that all we do is accomplished only through the grace of God.

Simplicity in the Biblical sense is more than giving up something for Lent. If you are, like many of us, snared by some of the trappings of the world, then giving up something may be a good discipline to start on the road to simplifying your life. On the other hand, changing the way you live life in relation to family, friends, co-workers, and strangers, may be just as important.

I am reminded of Jesus comment when he met Nathanael, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" (John 1:47) Even before he was introduced, Jesus recognized that Nathanael lived his life simply and honestly. Nathanael knew that his life was governed and grounded in God.

You have probably started some Lenten discipline. If not, I would encourage you to consider living more fully into your faith walk during these forty days by living a life of simplicity—a life of honesty and 'godly sincerity', so that others may look at you and say, 'truly this is a person who has been with God.'

My own Lenten discipline is to try and slow down the pace of my life to enjoy the *now*. I hope that will help me be more authentic and open to hearing God. To be honest, I don't expect that it will be easy—my 'to do' list has too many things on it! However, that is the point of simplifying, isn't it—to change some habits. One thing on my 'to do' list is my Lent blog where I plan to look at some of the women of the Bible and how they simplified their lives to discover the truth about the work of God in their lives. I hope that writing the blog will not only remind me of my Lenten plan, but offer some insight to random readers who happen to stop by. In case you haven't checked out the blog it's at <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>.

The little e-card above came to me in an email. (How did we share all these fun things before email?) I think it is a perfect reminder of

"The Will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you" is from a longer poem, listed as author unknown. If you want to read it all, you can go here or several other web links: <http://my.homewithgod.com/mkcathy/inspirational/godswill.html>.



Signings & Sightings

Feb. 21-Easter—Simplify with Women of the Bible during Lent at <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

June 4-5—Annual Chama Book Fair at Cookin' Books

Watch for information on the upcoming release of *Mary, My Love* this year! Go online to vote for your choice of cover at <http://cynthiadavisauthor.com/signing.htm>!

Recipe from Footprints

This year, newsletter recipes will be for beauty and home products that Women of the Bible might have used. Using simple household products, you can try out ageless beauty secrets.

This month, for other recipes using **Salts**, check out the new **Bible Beauty** page on my website!

Sarah's Citrus Bath Salts

1 C Epsom Salts or coarse Sea Salt
½ - 1 t. lemon oil
1-2 drops food color of your choice

Mix together with fingers until the color is evenly mixed through the salt. You can add 1 t. glycerin if you want. Store in baggies or air tight container. Use 1-2 T in your bath water.

The lemon salts will make a nice relaxing, sweet scented bath experience.

It probably goes without saying, but if you are allergic to any ingredient in these natural beauty products, please do not try them!



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APRIL 2010

TRUST GOD

*"I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly."
(John 10:10b)*

Simplifying was the goal for Lent 2010, which I shared last month in this newsletter. I have to admit Lent did not turn out to be simpler in the way I anticipated...In fact in some ways it was more challenging. Things on my 'to do' list changed. There was a bit more grandchild time and a bit less writing time. Unexpected crisis in and outside my family wrenched my heart. I spent a lot of my Lenten days saying "Thy will be done" and "Why?" to God. I was reminded that I wasn't in control of the events in my life and certainly was not able to 'fix' things in the lives of those I care about. The only thing I could do was turn to God and lay my concerns at the foot of the cross.



When in the middle of life's challenges, it is easy to forget that we are promised abundant life. In the parable of the Good Shepherd who 'lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:1-18) Jesus promises us each that because we are His sheep, we can trust that we will 'go in and out and find pasture', because 'I know my own and my own know me'. As I struggled to release my concerns to God, I found the blessing of the comfort of that same Good Shepherd. After all, God cares more than I do for each member of my family and all of my friends, so I can trust God to do the best for each of them. (Not that I don't have to be reminded of that on a daily basis!)

Henri Nouwen says, "For as long as you can remember, you have been a pleaser, depending on others to give you an identity. You need not look at that only in a negative way. You wanted to give your heart to others, and you did so quickly and easily. But now you are being asked to let go of all these self-made props and **trust that God is enough for you**. You must stop being a pleaser and reclaim your identity as a free self."

Through Lent I was forced to acknowledge that 'God is enough'. Maybe that is the real simplifying of life. To release control of me and my agenda to God is the only way to let in God's abundant life and grow into a true identity in God. During a mid-Lent retreat, Bishop Bill Frey told us that through the Holy Spirit we become solid wood, not just a veneer over particle board. Like my grandson on the monkey bars in the photo above, we/I have to be joyfully willing to let go and quit hanging on because that's the only way to really have that abundant life! Until then Nouwen's prayer from *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life*, rings true:

"Dear God, I am so afraid to open my clenched fists! Who will I be when I have nothing left to hold on to? Who will I be when I stand before you with empty hands? Please help me to gradually open my hands and to discover that I am not what I own, but what you want to give me. And what you want to give me is love, unconditional, everlasting love. Amen."

I invite you to join me during the Easter season (from April 11 until the end of May) when I'll be meditating about living more fully and abundantly as a 'free self', in Christ, based on Nouwen's book *The Way of the Heart* at my blog: <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>.

Signings & Sightings

April 11-May 30—Meditating on abundant life with Henri Nouwen’s book, “The Way of the Heart”

<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

June 1—Anticipated release date for *Mary, My Love**

June 4-5—Annual Chama Book Fair at Cookin’ Books.

Recipe from Footprints

This year, newsletter recipes will be for beauty and home products that Women of the Bible might have used. Using simple household products, you can try out ageless beauty secrets.

This month, for other recipes using **Honey**, check out the new **Bible Beauty** page on my website!

Hannah’s Honey Tonic

1-2 drops honey

Apply honey to wet fingertips and massage onto damp face. Do not rinse. Pat dry. Use for fine lines or blemishes.

Honey helps the skin absorb other moisturizing products, too and is often added to oils for this reason.


It probably goes without saying, but if you are allergic to any ingredient in these natural beauty products, please do not try them!



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MAY 2010

ONE BY ONE

“...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)

Recently my husband & I watched the movie *Amazing Grace*. It is not about John Newton, as you might suppose from the title, but about William Wilberforce. I did not know much about his fight for abolition in England and found it fascinating. Even more interesting was his struggle with God about what to do with his life—politics or social reform?

Early in the movie we find him in the meadow meeting God ‘in secret’, for fear presumably, of the reaction of his family, friends, and servants. ‘Evangelical’ Christianity among the upper class was met with disdain or even downright ridicule in the 18th century. Wilberforce took on the 26 year struggle to abolish the slave trade in response to the ‘still small voice’ in his heart. He persevered despite health and political difficulties until he succeeded. His actions changed the world of his day, and ours.

It is often easy to look at someone like Wilberforce and think we don’t or can’t make a difference within our circle of influence because...we aren’t famous, rich, important, well-spoken, etc., etc. Wilberforce would probably rebuke those excuses. He once remarked, “Their...paths have been allotted to them by the hand of God...it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties, and contentedly to bear its inconveniences.” He probably would have agreed with Tchekov who noted, “Don’t let [successes or failures] concern you. It’s your duty to go on working steadily day by day, quite quietly, to be prepared for mistakes...and for failures.”

We are each called to make a difference where we are, even if others don’t agree or think what we are doing is important (or great).. Madeline L’Engle says, “Jesus [made choices] and in the eyes of the world some of his choices were not only contrary to acceptable behavior, but were foolish in the extreme.”

So what difference can you or I make to the world around us? I’m slowly coming to understand that our actions don’t need to be grand and world changing. It is just as important to change one person’s outlook, even by a simple smile, as to be recognized internationally for some wonderful invention. Jesus tells of the Good Shepherd and the woman who misplaced a coin. Both searched until they found what was lost and then rejoiced with friends. The ONE is equally as important as the many. Anne Lamont says that ‘bird by bird’ is how we move forward, whether it is with a writing book or creating art or following some secret dream—or working for abolition.

Whatever the goal, we have one starting point—God’s call in your heart and mine that says ‘Follow me...’ Like Wilberforce, we then step out in faith to do whatever it is that God has formed us for.

Wilberforce once said, “Of all things, guard against neglecting God in the secret place of prayer.” I invite you to join me from now until the end of May in my blog meditations based on Nouwen’s book *The Way of the Heart*. Solitude, silence, and prayer along with faith, hope, and love are the building blocks of the path. (My blog: <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>.)



Signings & Sightings

April 11-May 30—Meditating on living a richer life using Henri Nouwen’s book, “*The Way of the Heart*”

<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

June 4-5—Annual Chama Book Fair at Cookin' Books.

Recipe from Footprints

This year, newsletter recipes will be for beauty and home products that Women of the Bible might have used. Using simple household products, you can try out ageless beauty secrets.

This month, for other **Hair conditioners**, check out the new **Bible Beauty** page on my website!

Cleopatra's Conditioner for Hair

¼ - ½ c. olive oil, castor oil, jojoba oil, or mayonnaise (not salad dressing)

Massage the oil into your hair and let sit for 10-15 minutes. Shampoo out. Use once a week.

In the summer, hair can get stressed and dry from sun, swimming, and heat. Try this to moisturize your hair. Yogurt is also good for your hair. It probably goes without saying, but if you are allergic to any ingredient in these natural beauty products, please do not try them!



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Footprints
From the Bible
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Author

JUNE 2010

ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38)

“**Ordinary time**” someone once called the time between Pentecost and Advent. We have come through the busy seasons of the liturgical year. In the space of 5 short months we have traveled with Jesus from birth to cross and resurrection. Then we remember His Ascension (a day that slips by pretty quietly most years) and on to the birthday of the church—Pentecost. Now, however, we enter the long green period of the Church year where we can sit at Jesus’ feet, walk with Him through his ministry, and offer ourselves and ministry anew to our God.

Several years ago a friend introduced me to Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th century mystic and abbess who stood up to rulers and even the Pope. Her writings are filled with images of the ‘greening’ of humanity, the world, and all life. This summer I will have several events around New Mexico to introduce my latest work, *Mary, My Love*. It seems appropriate to quote one of Hildegard’s writings about Mary:

Mary, ground of all being.

Greetings! Greetings to you, lovely and loving Mother!

You birthed to earth your son.

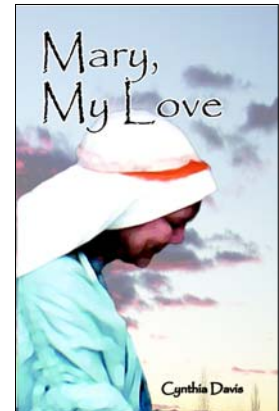
You birthed the son of God from heaven by breathing the spirit of God.

How many of us can truly say, “Let it be to me according to your word” when responding to God? We might complain, ‘I never had that intimate experience of God’ or ‘Mary was special.’ The specialness of Mary and the other men and women of the Bible is that they were willing to be open to God’s action in their lives. That unique quality did not go out of fashion at the end of the Bible—we can each respond to God’s gentle call with our own variation of Mary’s words or as Isaiah said, “Here I am, send me.” Why are we afraid to say yes to God? Those ordinary men and women, long ago and today, who do offer themselves find it a joy filled experience, even if it is not an easy path.

Mary felt did not take the easy road when she said ‘yes’ to God. She learned that the grace of God was more than enough. In my book, she tries to explain her experience to Joseph, *“I have never felt so alive! A rush like warm water washed over me invigorating and comforting. There was such peace that I slid to the floor unable to move. Still I was bathed in such warmth...”*

Maybe this summer, this ‘ordinary time’, will give you a chance to think about living into God’s desire for your life, which is the very thing that will make you fully who you are meant to be! Our Loving Father gives us all we need for each step and fills us with the same grace Mary felt. How can we say ‘no’ to such love?

I invite you to share the information about the upcoming book events with friends and family and to **join me throughout this ‘ordinary time’ on my blog** for a look at some of the ways God interacts with you and me. (<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>)



Signings & Sightings

June 5—Chama Book Fair at Cookin’ Books, 10-3. Many authors, many genres, special pricing, and maybe even some surprises.

June 6-November—God is not ordinary—meditations on some ways God interacts in surprising ways with us! <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

June 19—Bible-inspired Nosh and book signing at Cathedral of St. John 1:30-4PM, with [Art by Marcie Brown Sweet](#) (postcard below to share)

July—Book signing in Farmington area (details being worked out)

August 8-14—Book events in SE NM (watch for more details in upcoming E-news)

October-Albuquerque book events

November-watch for big pre-Christmas announcement about *Mary, My Love*

December-*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present.

2011-watch for book events outside of NM

Recipe from Footprints

This month, I'm taking a break from the Bible beauty products to give you a **recipe I'll be using at the Bible-Nosh Signing!** Come to the signing to enjoy other foods that Mary and other Bible women and men could enjoy

Cucumber Yogurt Dressing

1 cup plain yogurt
½ cup diced seedless cucumber
¼ cup minced red onion
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

Mix all ingredients together, chill at least an hour. Serve with veggies or fruit, over potato salad, on sandwiches or as a dip.



Cucumbers have been cultivated for thousands of years and were readily available to Bible moms. They are full of surprising health benefits, too, for such varied things as hair growth and digestion. Cool slices of cucumber reduce puffiness when applied to the eyes.

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Volume 5, Issue 7

MOUNTAINS AIR AND DREAMS

"I lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord..." (Ps. 121:1-2)

From Leadville, CO south along the Arkansas River is a place with so much history that the very air is alive with it. Ken & I visited the area in early June so I could do research for a contemporary novel I'm working on. I was reminded of so many things from my childhood, including the Angel of Shavano. (photo above) The Angel always fascinated me and 'she' was the first thing I looked for.



JULY 2010

In the spring, as the snow melts off Mt. Shavano and adjacent 14,000 foot peaks, it remains in the valley and forms the shape of an angel. How early in the season 'she' is visible is an indication of how fast the snow is melting. A too early appearance of the Angel means that it will be a dry summer because there was a shallow snow pack.

The Ute Indians of the area have a legend about the formation. *"Long ago, there was drought in the valley. An Indian princess came to the foot of the mountain to pray for rain. The god of plenty asked her to sacrifice herself for her tribe, which she did. Henceforth, she appears each spring as the Angel of Shavano. Her tears water the valley so there will never again be a drought."*

My character, in the work-in-progress, sees the Angel and is reminded that although we "look to the hills, our help is really from God, who made heaven and earth."

Men and women originally came to the CO mountains for many reasons. We tend to think they came for the ore in the ground, but not everyone came seeking wealth. There were people of faith who believed that "the Lord will keep your going out and your coming in..." (Ps. 121:8). Their dreams planted churches and created towns that still stand. The Episcopal Church in Salida, for instance, was established by two women with a vision for a school and church in 1883. Meeting behind a bar and grocer did not deter these ladies and Ascension Church is still active in Salida.

Visiting the sights and scenes of my late childhood has made me stop and think about how the decisions we make daily have an impact on us, and those around us. Men and women following their dreams made a lasting impression on the landscape of the area. My own four years in Buena Vista was pivotal in my life and faith journey. I think it was there that I really knew that God was present as my "keeper...the shade on [my] right hand." Certainly, in "Buena" was the first time I articulated what seem at the time a distant and even unrealistic dream—to be an author. Although I forgot that idea for many years, God did not, because it was God that planted the idea in my heart.

The trip left me with so many ideas and images that, truly, I'm having trouble sorting through them. Watch for updates on the work-in-progress and maybe other books.

Take a look at some of my meditations about our Leadville trip at TheTravelBelles.com. (My guest article is called *Breathless, Breathtaking Leadville* if the link doesn't work.) Other thoughts can be found mixed into the Ordinary Time Excursions this summer on my blog: (<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>)

Signings & Sightings



Food at the Bible Nosh Book Release Party at St. John's, June 19

Summer 2010—Ordinary Time Excursions: <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

August 8—Hastings, Carlsbad 1-3PM

August 19-21—Daughters of the King Assembly, Hope Episcopal, Albuquerque

August 28—The Book Haven, Salida, Colorado 5-7PM

September 25—Hastings, Farmington 12-2 PM

Fall signings in Albuquerque area TBA

November-watch for big pre-Christmas announcement about *Mary, My Love*

December-*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present.

2011-watch for book events outside of NM

Recipe from Footprints

This year I'm focusing on Bible beauty products. These are beauty regimes that women of the Bible might have used.

Orpah's Oat Facial Scrub

¼ c oatmeal (blend in food processor or blender)

2 T. baking soda

Stir oats and soda together. Mix 3 teaspoons with 1 teaspoon water (or more) to make a paste.

Rub gently over face. Rinse and pat dry. Apply moisturizer.

Oats have been a staple grain for generations. It has been found in Egyptian tombs. Probably the first oats were wild grasses that were later cultivated and domesticated.



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Volume 5, Issue 8

AUG 2010

RUSHING OR RUNNING

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” (Heb. 12:11)

Do you sometimes feel that rushing from one new technological thing to another has become a societal habit? We are encouraged to sign up for Facebook and Twitter, to be constantly connected via the newest I-Phones or Blackberries. Checking email every 10 seconds is necessary, we think, just in case someone sent an important fwd or video or...‘something.’ In fact, while writing this, I found myself wanting to double check my email, just in case someone needed some response from me.

What does that have to do with the citation from Hebrews? The writer advises the Hebrews to look at Greek athletes. They couldn’t be loaded down with excess baggage when running. As Christians we also can easily get burdened by the extras of life and lose the focus of our calling. How often do the techno timesavers end up stealing our time and leave us rushing to finish work and even prayers? We dash from Twitter to Facebook to our Bluetooth in the car to our email at work instead of “running with perseverance the race set before us.”

Blogs, websites, social networks, u-tube, links on other websites or blogs are all pushed as important for keeping in touch and getting noticed. Doing it all can become a full time job, and creativity, which Madeline L’Engle* says, “is a way of living life, no matter what our vocation,” gets pushed to the back burner. Often our spiritual life suffers, too.

Thinking back to some recent times when I was ‘unplugged,’ it’s amazing how relaxed I felt, not having to check the web constantly. I did, of course, have my cell phone handy, though, just in case. ☺ Has it really only been a little over a decade since cell phones and email became commonplace?

I’m not saying we should log off permanently from our accounts. What I’m suggesting is that logging on to God’s page is just as important (more so really) than checking all the emails and Facebook updates and u-tube videos. I try to take time every day to journal *by hand*, not computer! Often it’s just random scribbling about thoughts and sounds and ideas, sometimes it really is prayers or meditations on some Bible verse. Perhaps you have some discipline you practice that gives you a daily connection with God. If so, I applaud you. If not, it might be something to consider. Barbara Brown Taylor in *An Altar in the World* says, “The easiest practice of reverence I know is simply to sit down somewhere outside...and pay attention [even to just] the 3 feet of earth on which you are sitting.” During this last month of summer-before the rush of fall activities start, I am going to attempt to be more intentional about taking time to ‘log on’ to God. Perhaps I’ll get a renewed sense of the “race set before me.”

This summer I’ve been looking at several Biblical women during the *Ordinary Time Excursions* on my blog: (<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>) They didn’t have the distractions of the web, but they did let the busyness of life get in the way of their relationship with God. Sarah and Rachel for instance, both let their barrenness alienate them from those around them. Only when they turned to God, did they find the answer to their needs. I think the same holds true for us in our techno-rushing, too. We have to log off sometimes in order to hear God. Like the athletes, we have to throw off “everything that hinders” our walk with God.

**Walking on Water*, by Madeline L’Engle



Signings & Sightings

If you are in the area of any of these signings, stop by!

Summer 2010—Ordinary Time Excursions: <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

August 8—Hastings, Carlsbad 1-3PM

August 19-21—Daughters of the King Assembly, Hope Episcopal, Albuquerque

August 28—The Book Haven, Salida, Colorado 5-7PM

September 25—Hastings, Farmington 12-2 PM

November-watch for big pre-Christmas announcement about *Mary, My Love*

December-*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present.

2011-watch for book events outside of NM

Recipe from Footprints

This year I'm focusing on Bible beauty products. These are beauty regimes that women of the Bible might have used.

Anna's Aloe Balm

1 Leaf of aloe

Break leaf off the plant, gently rub the juice from the broken end onto the burn.

Aloe is known to be soothing and healing for burns, including sunburn, and other injuries. Aloe can also lighten dark spots. The nice thing is that the plant will grow another leaf and be ready for the next emergency.



Footsteps Along the

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a
light unto my path. Ps. 119:105

WAY



Cynthia Davis,
Author

COMING ALONGSIDE

“Take my yoke upon you...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:29-30)



Not many of us are used to seeing oxen yoked together and doing their job. The closest we probably come is the recent TV ad showing oxen walking down the street of Old Williamsburg, VA. Oxen, however, have been essential partners of farmers and laborers across the world for centuries, and some places they still are. Oxen pull plows, carts, and wagons. They thresh out grain or turn water wheels when yoked to a turnstile. They are the muscle for many other tasks, too, where there are no engines.

To our ‘city sensibilities’, the thick wooden yoke and constraining collar look uncomfortable or maybe even cruel. The opposite is true. The yoke evenly distributes the load between the two animals and the U-shaped collar gives them leverage to pull against. In addition, an older and wiser animal is yoked with the younger, inexperienced beast so it can learn how to pull in unison and learn not try to go in a different direction from the way drover wants the team to go. The well trained ox pulls more of the weight at first until the newcomer learns to do his share.

“Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden,” Jesus says. “Take my yoke upon you.” When we are working in our own strength, life can be heavy and discouraging. However, when we are yoked with our Lord, the load is more than halved. “My yoke is easy and my burden is light,” he says. That is true because, like the experienced ox of the tandem, Jesus takes on the greater part of the work for us.

It occurs to me that as we are yoked with Jesus Christ, we are also called to work in teams with our fellow human beings to help them with their burdens. We can help our brothers and sisters who are struggling with sorrow or trouble or fear or loneliness. It isn’t easy to step into the yoke with someone who is struggling. We may not know what to do, precisely, and so we stay away. Sometimes, we think we cannot ‘take on’ another thing, or subconsciously think that associating with someone who is, say, in trouble with the law, will affect us negatively.

However, often our mere presence, the touch of a hand, the phone call, or email contact is enough to reassure our friend that they aren’t walking the path alone. In times like that, we can be the wiser ox and bear the weight of the load for a little while. At a recent women’s retreat, the speaker noted that our “common vulnerability calls forth our gifts.” As a community shares stories, pain, and experiences, all are strengthened.

There are many ways we can share the yoke with our fellow human beings. Is a friend lonely? Does the local Food Pantry need volunteers? Do you know a child, or adult, who could use a tutor? All of us can easily come alongside just one other person, just as Jesus comes beside us to bear the burdens we cannot handle alone.

This summer I’ve been looking at several Biblical women during the *Ordinary Time Excursions* on my blog: (<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>) In September, a new series will start. Stop by the blog and share your observations on finding God in the routine(s) of my/our day-to-day existence. I will be drawing inspiration from Madeline L’Engle and Barbara Taylor Brown, as well as others.

Signings & Sightings

If you are in the area of any of these signings, stop by!

September - November 2010—God in the Routine(s) <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

October—Grandbaby #8 due (no signings scheduled)

November-watch for big pre-Christmas announcement about *Mary, My Love*

December-*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present.

2011-watch for book events outside of NM

Recipe from Footprints

This year I'm focusing on Bible beauty products. These are beauty regimes that women of the Bible might have used.



Salome's Citrus Almond Face Scrub

- 3 almonds
- 1 t. Lemon juice
- 1 t. honey

In mortar & pestle (or food processor), grind almonds finely. Mix in juice and honey. Massage gently onto face in circular motion. Rinse with warm water.

The citrus and honey together tighten the pores and the ground almonds provide just enough texture to scrub the face gently. Citrus trees didn't find their way to Israel until the 1st Century, which means Salome might indeed have used something similar on her skin before her dance for Herod.

Footsteps Along the

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a
light unto my path. Ps. 119:105

WAY



Cynthia Davis,
Author

Volume 5, Issue 10

OCTOBER 2010

SOUGHT OUT

“[will he not] go after the one that is lost until he finds it?” (Luke 15:4)

Nearly everyone knows the Parable of the Lost Sheep as told in Luke 15. A shepherd loses one of his 100 sheep and leaves them to find the missing sheep. Jesus is saying that our God will seek us out no matter how far we think we have strayed.

A popular representation of the scene is *The Lost Sheep* by Alfred Soord (1868-1915). The shepherd risks his life to rescue the sheep on the cliff. Our Shepherd, too, goes to any and all lengths to rescue the lost, no matter who we are or how far we have strayed.



At the end of the parable, the assumption is they ‘all lived happily ever after’. The lost sheep is safely back in the fold and everyone is happy. However, sheep are not necessarily content to stay where they are put. They are inquisitive and a small opening is all they need to slip out and get in trouble again. The grass looks greener in the next field and off they trot to check. Turns out it’s the same grass, but there’s a nice tasty looking spot on the next hill. The next thing you know, the sheep can’t remember how to get back to the fold.

A flock of sheep needs a shepherd and usually a sheep dog or two to keep them safe. Wandering sheep are herded back to safety before they can get into too much trouble.

We, too, tend to be wandering sheep. I think perhaps we drift into complacency or get “too busy” to keep up with our spiritual habits. “I’ll just skip morning prayers today, because I have so much to do.” Or “It won’t matter if I miss church to go shopping again.” Or “Tomorrow I’ll read the Bible.” Then, the next thing you know we are feeling adrift from God and our faith and wondering how that happened. Isaiah truly says, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way.”* (Isaiah 53:6)

The really good news is that our Good Shepherd doesn’t quit seeking us. However, unlike the sheep dog who forces the sheep back to the fold, our Shepherd waits for us to say, ‘Where am I? How did I get here?’ Then we discover that we have never been out of sight of the Shepherd. Our Shepherd is always right there to lead us back to the fold.

Can you remember a time in your life when you were “lost”, or feeling far from God? If you are like me, you have times when you feel far from the Good Shepherd. There really is a ‘happily ever after’. Just stop and turn around. I’ll bet you’ll find Him waiting for you.

On my blog (<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>) this fall, I’ve been sharing some of my own observations and inspiration from Madeline L’Engle and Barbara Taylor Brown, as well as others, about ways to find God in the routines of our lives. Spiritual routines can help keep us close to God, but so can the everyday tasks and scenes and people we meet.

I am proud to announce that Mary, My Love is a finalist in the historical fiction division of the NM Book Awards 2010. Winners to be announced November 19!

Signings & Sightings

If you are in the area of any of these events, stop by!

October - November 2010—God in the Routine continues <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

November 14-*Processing Theology, the journey from Bible story to novel*; St. Chad's Episcopal Church, Albuquerque

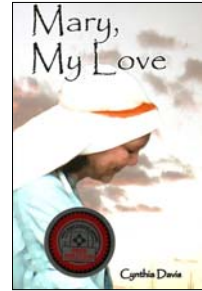
November-watch for big pre-Christmas sale announcement

November 19-NM Book Awards Banquet

December-*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present.

March 12, 2011- *People of the Bible Still Speak, reading Biblical fiction can enhance your Lenten discipline*; San Gabriel's Episcopal Mission, Albuquerque

2011-watch for more book events



Recipe from Footprints

This year I'm focusing on Bible beauty products. These are beauty regimes that women of the Bible might have used.

Leah's Lavendar Vinegar Hair Rinse

Lavender flowers and stems

2 c. cider vinegar

Fill a pint jar with the lavender. Pour the vinegar over the top, seal and refrigerate. Shake daily for two weeks. Strain solution. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ c. vinegar with 2 c. water. Use as a rinse after shampooing.

The vinegar will add shine to your hair and the lavender leaves a sweet perfume.



Footsteps Along the

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a
light unto my path. Ps. 119:105

WAY



Cynthia Davis,
Author

Volume 5, Issue 11

NOVEMBER 2010

GOOD FRUIT

"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. (Matthew 7:18)

Over the past month I've been part of several events that have me thinking about the fruit we produce, and how that fruit impacts those around us. We sometimes focus on what seems dry, like the branch sticking out of this tree near the Valle Caldera. It can keep us from doing what we can to live as children of God and ambassadors of the Gospel.



One event was a retreat focusing on Outreach, esp. to the 'street folk' who wander in to the church on a daily basis needing everything from food or clothing to a listening ear or referral. The work the gathered women accomplished is only a drop in the bucket of the need, but for the men, women, and children who will benefit, it is enormous. Those who attended planted a seed that may grow strong and produce much fruit.

Another special occurrence was the birth of our 8th grandchild. A little girl born healthy and whole is a real miracle from God. She is just a little seedling now with her life of bearing fruit ahead of her. Our duty as family and friends is to nurture and nourish her growth.

There was a funeral at the church for a long time member. Listening to the grown children extol their father's life as one of joy and adventure, I knew he was a fruitful 'tree' and indeed his giving of self extended to everyone he met. It made me pause to remember that our daily lives are testimony to where our treasure is.

This month we celebrated, with much pomp, circumstance, and joy, the consecration and seating of a new Bishop for the Diocese. What fruit his tenure will produce remains to be seen. We've been through a dry time in the Diocese and are now eager to be part of the new and invigorated ministry.

The little pine tree with a dead branch symbolizes, to me, the hopefulness of doing what we each can, without comparing the fruits that result. I don't always think of pine trees as 'bearing fruit', but they produce pine cones that have seeds for the forest animals and even people. Our fruit may not be big and juicy like a tomato or bright and refreshing like an orange. It may be a simple and somewhat prickly pinecone full of seeds. We don't know what future growth will come from those seeds, though.

Hildegard of Bingen says, *"In humankind, God brings to fullness all his creation. God created humankind, so that humankind might cultivate the earthly and thereby create the heavenly. Humankind should be the banner of divinity."* With cultivation we become strong, healthy, fruitful trees and the dry part is discarded.

The needs of the outreach ministry are large and those who come may seem like dry and unfruitful sticks, but who can say that God cannot make even the dry branches grow again. It is sad when a friend dies, even after a long and well-lived life, but the fruits visible in the children and grandchildren will continue to prosper.

A new life and a new ministry both offer the promise of much growth. Both need loving care to prosper. We cannot know where the path may lead, but we can provide the sustenance and support and prayer needed to make them strong and fruitful.

Signings & Sightings

If you are in the area of any of these events, stop by!

October - November 2010—God in Routine continues, Advent Series starts Nov. 28

<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

November 1 – December 24 -*Mary, My Love* would make a perfect Christmas present-25% off, online and email special

November 14-*Processing Theology, the Journey from Bible story to Novel*;
St. Chad's Episcopal Church, Albuquerque

November 19-NM Book Awards Banquet (*Mary, My Love* is a finalist)

November 27-3PM, Signing-NM Food & Gift Showcase, 6920 4th Street NW, Los Ranchos, 87107 (purchase books by *Cynthia Davis* & many other NM Authors, November 1-December 24 (10-6, Tues.-Sun.)

February 19-5th Annual Authors for Literacy Event, Moriarty Civic Center 9-4

March 12, 2011- *People of the Bible Still Speak, reading Biblical fiction can enhance your Lenten discipline*;
San Gabriel's Episcopal Mission, Albuquerque

Recipe from Footprints

This year I'm focusing on Bible beauty products. These are beauty regimes that women of the Bible might have used.

Syntyche's Cinnamon Tea

1 Cinnamon Stick

2 C. boiling water

1 teabag (plain or decaffeinated)

Honey or other sweetener, if desired

Boil Cinnamon in water for 5-10 minutes. Pour cinnamon water over teabag and steep to desired darkness. Add sweetener if desired.

Cinnamon is one of the oldest known spices. It adds a naturally sweet flavor that people love. A cup of this tea will relax you.



Footsteps Along the

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a
light unto my path. Ps. 119:105

WAY



Cynthia Davis,
Author

Volume 5, Issue 12

DECEMBER 2010

REDEEMING THE TIME

“Look carefully how you walk...redeeming the time” (Ephesians 5:15-16-ASV)

Recently I have run across several articles and a sermon that have referred to this citation. The idea that we are each called to live *NOW* so that we ‘redeem the time’ or ‘make the most of every opportunity’ is a challenge. It can apply to our professional lives, our church work, within our families and even in our interactions with strangers. We too easily become self-centered and forget that how we live does have an impact on those we are in contact with.

In Ephesians, Paul goes on to suggest some changes in our fashion of living (vs. 17-20):

“Understand what the will of the Lord is...”

“Be filled with the Spirit...”

“Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord...”

“Giving thanks always for all things...”

“Subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear (reverence) of Christ...”

Paul isn’t suggesting an easy transformation. Just looking at the list is a bit intimidating. To ‘understand the will of the Lord’ means I have to give up my own agenda. Being ‘filled with the Spirit’ would cause me to act differently when things aren’t going ‘my way’. ‘Making melody to the Lord’ and ‘giving thanks for all things’ requires a change of attitude so that I don’t complain (as much or at all). The hardest perhaps is ‘subjecting yourselves to one another’, which means I have to put the other person first. I used a quote from Barbara Brown Taylor in my Oct. 10 blog: we are to ***“love the neighbor you also did not make as if that person were your own strange and particular self.”*** A fellow writer suggests that if we live into the challenge of ‘redeeming the time’ we might well start a revolution of sorts—a Christian Renaissance!

What sort of Renaissance might we make if we tried just one change a week during Advent? It will take time and effort and concentration, certainly. It seems to me that this is a good time to start living differently. After all, we are at the Church’s New Year. Most of us make New Year’s resolutions on January 1, but the Christian New Year is the First Sunday of Advent (November 28 this year).

If you want another Advent challenge, visit my blog during Advent when I’ll be looking at “Saying Yes to God” through the lives of those most closely impacted by the Nativity Story. There might even be some activities to make you think about how you respond to God. Are you skeptical like Zechariah or open like Mary? Do you struggle like Joseph or seek out God like the Magi? Does God awe you like the Shepherds or make you fearful like Herod?

<http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

Signings & Sightings

If you are in the area of any of these events, stop by!

November 1 – December 24 -Mary, My Love would make a perfect Christmas present-25% off, online and email special



November 27-3PM, Signing-NM Food & Gift Showcase, 6920 4th Street NW, Los Ranchos, 87107 (purchase books by Cynthia Davis & many other NM Authors, November 1-December 24 (10-6, Tues.-Sun.)

November 28—Advent Series (Saying Yes to God) <http://footprintsfromthebible.blogspot.com>

2011- Release of *Lester's First Flight*, a children's book

February 19-5th Annual Authors for Literacy Event, Moriarty Civic Center 9-4

March 12, 2011- *People of the Bible Still Speak*, reading *Biblical fiction can enhance your Lenten discipline*; San Gabriel's Episcopal Mission, Corrales

Recipe from Footprints

This month, I offer a new take on a traditional Hannakah food. Watch the newsletter and website for information on a collection of the beauty recipes featured here this year.

Sample these at my book signing on November 27th

NM Style Cheese Gelt

1 c. grated Cheddar cheese
1 c. grated pepper jack cheese
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup flour
1 t. onion powder
1 t. garlic powder
1/4 t. cayenne or chipolte powder
2 T milk
Sesame seeds



Blend together cheeses, butter, flour, and seasonings in a mixer, mix in milk until dough forms. Shape into 2 logs about 1 inch in diameter and 12 inches long. Roll logs in sesame seeds. Wrap each log tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight. (You can freeze the logs and thaw in refrigerator before slicing.) When ready to bake, preheat oven to 375°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Slice dough 1/4-inch thick. Bake 10-12 minutes until lightly browned and firm. Cool and store in an airtight container.

The Jewish feast of Hannakah is celebrated in December. It commemorates the liberation of Israel and rededication of the Temple in the 2nd Century BC. "Gelt" refers to the gold wrapped chocolates given to children during Hannakah. This adaptation is a bit spicier and can be served as an appetizer or snack.