

Journal # 5 Moving forward FOWTA # 8, 9, 10

The New You: The new woman in the mirror--different, and strong.

By now I trust you realize you're not alone. Hopefully you've been able to put into perspective some of the changes and challenges you've faced as a widow. We've spent four weeks examining our reality. We've faced new facts and examined our emotions. We've gained understanding and wisdom about these powerful feelings. Money is no longer a mystery. We know that we can sort through our new budget and live with contentment. We've learned that a revised friendship mobile is OK. The shape of our new family tree will become familiar over time and we'll adjust.

Now its time to face forward, look ahead, and consider the possibilities of this new life.

I cannot promise you quiet, but I can promise peace.

I cannot promise material comfort, but I can promise meaning.

I cannot promise health, but I can promise soul satisfaction.

Story: Lori Fox

During your reflection time we'll be encouraging you to write your personal mission statement. Why? What are the benefits of having a mission statement? There are many:

When choices are necessary because our life is feeling cluttered, holding an activity up to the light of our mission statement helps us choose our top priority.

We set boundaries for time, emotional, and financial investment. Seldom does this happen without us declaring some investments 'enough,' 'no more,' and 'the end.'

We add new aspects to our life and discard others because we are no longer reacting, but initiating based on our values and what we treasure.

We are free of the yardstick others may apply to our life, that 'How can I please you?' measure. Why? Because we have carefully determined our mission with accountability to our Creator.

We are at peace about what we did not accomplish. It was not our priority when compared to our mission statement.

We are free of comparisons with other people. Questions like, “Who is most productive?” or “Whose accomplishments are more valuable?” become irrelevant. Our missions are simply different.

What is a personal mission statement?

A brief, descriptive, statement that reflects how you were created and what matters to you.

These prompts may help you create your personal statement.

COMPLETE THESE STATEMENTS

I am energized when I’m looking forward to:

I would like to be remembered as a person who:

Past accomplishments which I treasure include:

Each of the widows I interviewed in this series, including myself, are experiencing new adventures and have new meaning we could not have imagined before. In hindsight, the foundation for these existed before. Knowing how to sew on a treadle machine was a forgotten skill until my Africa adventures.

You heard Margaret Nyman’s story in Lesson 3. She loved to write, and now is a published author.

(picture of Margaret’s new book cover. I’ve asked for this from Discovery House)

Psalm 139: 16 takes on new meaning. “Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

God knew. God prepared. You’re ready.

You may experience a significant moment when you begin to look at your future with new vision. One of my moments was in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. It may be a series of events that moves you forward. Be expecting new opportunities and they’ll come to you.

Table talk

What are some positive outcomes of the new realities in your life?

What are some pitfalls that can result as you navigate these new realities?

What “God prints” have you seen in your life through the events of your husband’s death and this season afterwards?

Share what you’d LIKE to see in your life 6 months from now.

Table talk time thoughts

Not everyone in your group may see a “God print” yet. They will be encouraged by hearing what others report. They will also be strengthened to know that He does care for us.

Since most small groups are quite diverse with differences in desire and/or ability and resources to do new things, you may gain new ideas from each other.

Prayer

Pray that each one will in some practical personal way sense God's hand on their life this week.

Pray that each person can find meaning in each day.

Pray for each other that your faith will grow so that you can have peace, whether you receive answers to your questions or not.

Personal Reflection

What “God prints” have you seen in your life through the events of your husband's death and this season afterwards?

Compare the risks and rewards of finding a new mission for your life.

Write your personal mission statement

IDEA PROMPTERS

1. What tasks have I done that brought great satisfaction?
2. What tasks do I look forward to doing?

3. What personal values are important enough to me to motivate me to act when there is no apparent reward or positive feedback for my action? Look back to the 'Rating Your Life Values' scale in Lesson 3. What were your top 5 values?
4. What activities in my life give me that feeling of anticipation, energy, and "I can't wait to get to it!"

Look back over your personal reflections in Lesson 1. These might also help you write your personal mission statement.

What personal habits might interfere with your moving into God's best in your new life?

Write on a piece of paper your unanswered questions today. (Yes, this is a private exercise.)

These unknowns will be the source of your new 'muscle for life.' Be sure to record when God answers these unknowns. Record how those challenges changed YOU. Save and review on hard days.

Scripture for reflection

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Isaiah 43:19

See, I am doing a **new thing!** Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

1 Peter 5:10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

“A ship is safe in harbor, but
that’s not what ships are for.”

William Shedd