

The background features a light beige color with large, soft, abstract shapes in shades of grey and cream. On the left side, there is a dark brown, stylized floral vine with several small flowers and leaves. Faint, light-colored floral patterns are scattered across the background.

Turning Personal Stories into *Parables*

Devotion

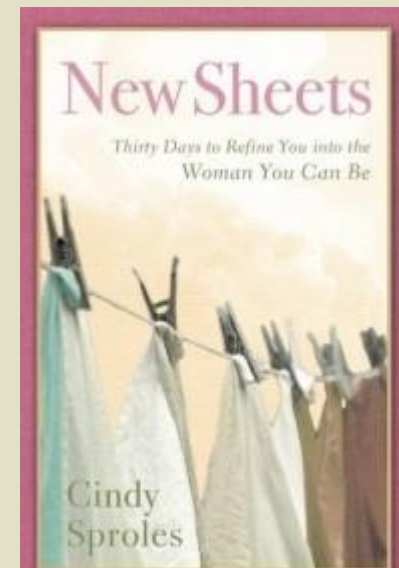
[Desert Wanderings](#)

DEVOTION BY [Nate Stevens](#) POSTED 6/25/2015 12:00:01 AM ON Deuteronomy 1:7 NKJV

Wandering around in a desert is not fun. Very few people call their travel agent and ask to schedule a two-week vacation (much less forty years) to stay in the middle of a dry, hot, desolate wilderness. I recall several times in my life when I've spent time in a proverbial desert. My soul felt dry, God seemed silent and distant, and my prayers seemingly went unheard and unanswered. Some of the desert treks were the result of my disobedience while others were opportunities of preparation for future tasks. When my desert wanderings lengthen; barren vastness dries my soul. Scorching heat and sand's erosion blast their overwhelming toll.

Could it be that God is working – all that's worthless to consume?

Devotional




What is a devotion?

***Your opportunity to teach – to be a prophet of sorts.**

***To take one scripture and break it down so people understand its application.**





Writing a devotion is one of the smartest things you, as a writer, can master.

- *It teaches you to write tight**
- *It teaches you to be concise**
- *It develops your vocabulary**
- *It stretches your imagination**

***Devotions teach you to focus on one thought**

AVOID THIS:

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide featuring a dark brown vine with several small, five-petaled flowers and leaves. The vine curves upwards and then downwards, with some faint, larger floral shapes in the background.

***Questions**

Questions act like stop signs. The more you ask the questions the faster you lose your reader.

***Exclamation Marks**

Exclamation marks imply shouting to your reader. Strengthen the sentences around the statement and your reader will see the emphasis you want.

***Preachy**

Avoid pointing a finger. Watch your pronouns. Read searching for YOU. And try to soften your work.

So how do you start?

With a good HOOK!

*Catch the reader's attention with a brief story or
Shocking statement*

*We have maybe 10 seconds on the internet to get the attention
of the reader. You want the first line to make them ask the
question WHAT?*

I got married at the age of 5 in the basement of
the First United Methodist Church.

Book

Declare your key point and your interpretation of the scripture

The book is the place where readers have an AH moment.

**No need to repeat the scripture but
Begin to teach the scripture. Make your paragraph tie
Back to the scripture*

LOOK

Present the big picture and offer practical life application lessons and tips

- *Make a strong application of the scripture. Show the reader how the scripture applies to your own life and also how it can apply to their own.
- *Drive home your point. Be concise in the message you want the reader to receive.
- *Stay focused. Don't rabbit trail.
- *Give your reader something strong to think about – something profound to consider.

TOOK

*Lead to a decision' close with an action statement
and a challenge to the reader.*

*Always offer your reader a challenge.

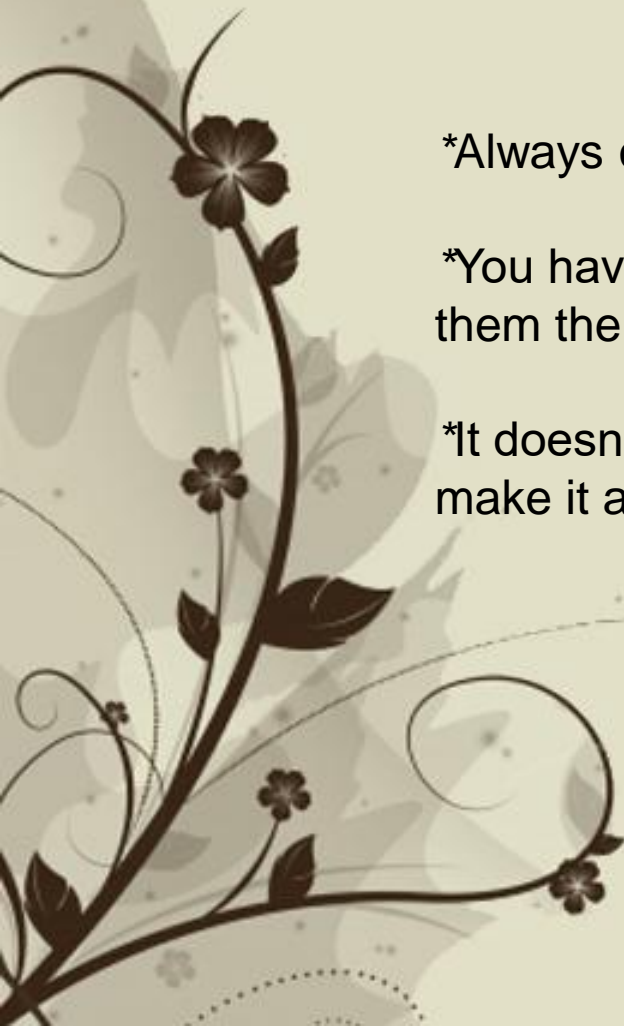
*You have a captive audience, don't let the opportunity to offer them the chance to make a choice for Christ pass.

*It doesn't have to be a question – in fact, I challenge you to make it a statement.

Will you invite Jesus into your life?

Or

Invite Jesus into your life.



I Get Weepy, but It's My Prerogative - Cindy Sproles



The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Romans 8:16 NIV

I couldn't help it. Last week I took my son to a special needs prom our church hosts each year. And what do I do? Get weepy.

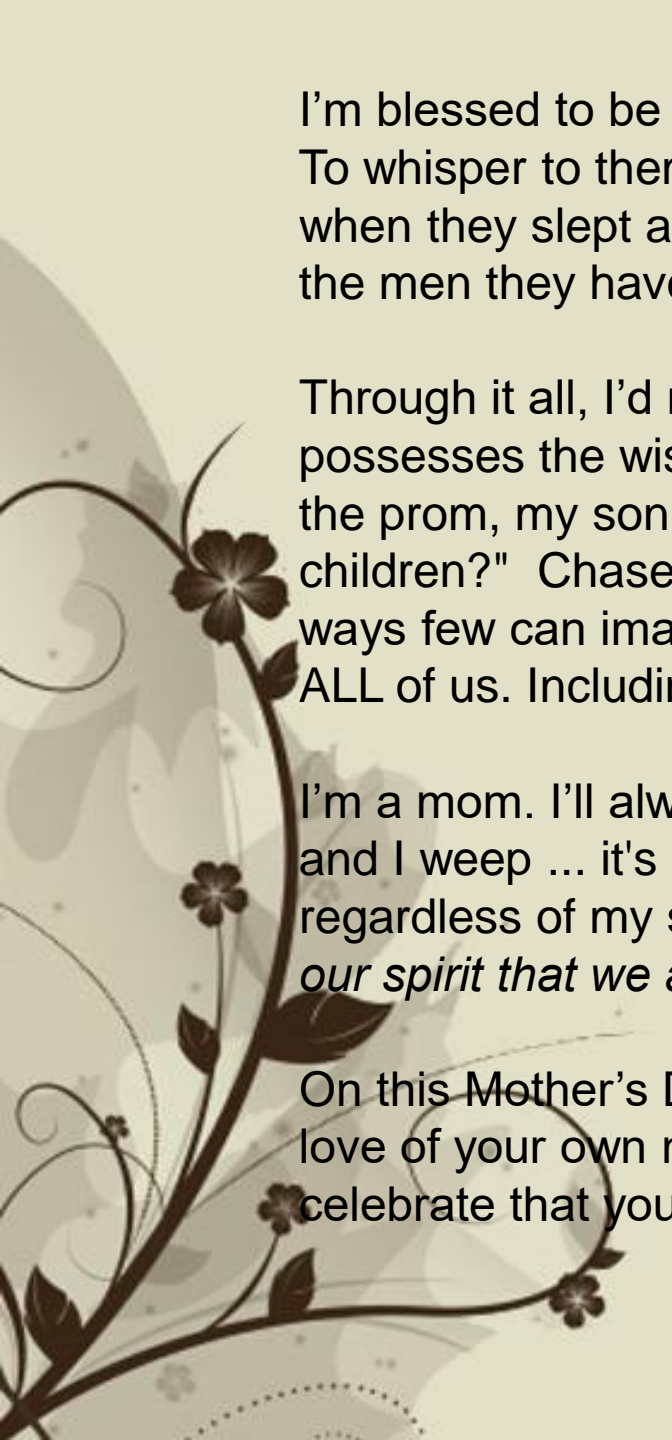
I looked around the room filled with teens, some missing limbs, others twisted from birth defects and still others, like my son, harbor mental retardation. I wept for them.

What mother doesn't wish perfection for her child? My son, bashful in a "dance" situation, sat at a table smiling from ear to ear. I so want for him ... bodily perfection. I want him to enjoy his life without the prejudice of others and to have the ability to care for himself when I die. But that won't happen and when I think of it, I grow weepy.

Paul himself understood affliction. Though Scripture only tells us he had some sort of aggravating physical problem, we never really know his issue, only that he prayed for God to remove his thorn in the flesh. Yet through his own physical ailments, Paul never doubted he was loved by God. And he reminds us numerous times we are all God's children.

The people at the prom loved my son. They loved every child, regardless of their age or ability, as they waltzed them onto the dance floor.

I pulled my camera up and snapped a picture. For a brief moment, frozen in time, were all of God's children. None less than the other ... but all of God's children ... danced in the spirit of joy.



I'm blessed to be chosen by God to carry my sons in that "secret place." To whisper to them as they grew within me. To gently stroke their faces when they slept and stand in the rear of a room and weep with pride at the men they have become.

Through it all, I'd not change a thing about my sweet disabled son who possesses the wisdom of Solomon and the compassion of Christ. After the prom, my son announced, "Ain't it nice, we're all God's children?" Chase is a child of God. Loved. Cherished. And blessed in ways few can imagine. God has promised His loving care over us ... over ALL of us. Including my son.

I'm a mom. I'll always have my moments when emotion overtakes me and I weep ... it's my prerogative as a mom. But I rest assured that regardless of my son's ability or lack of ... *the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

On this Mother's Day, rejoice in the love of your children. Rejoice in the love of your own mother. It's okay if you weep too. But do not fail to celebrate that you are first and foremost, God's child.

Train Running – She Said

*Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water. **Matthew 14:28 NIV***

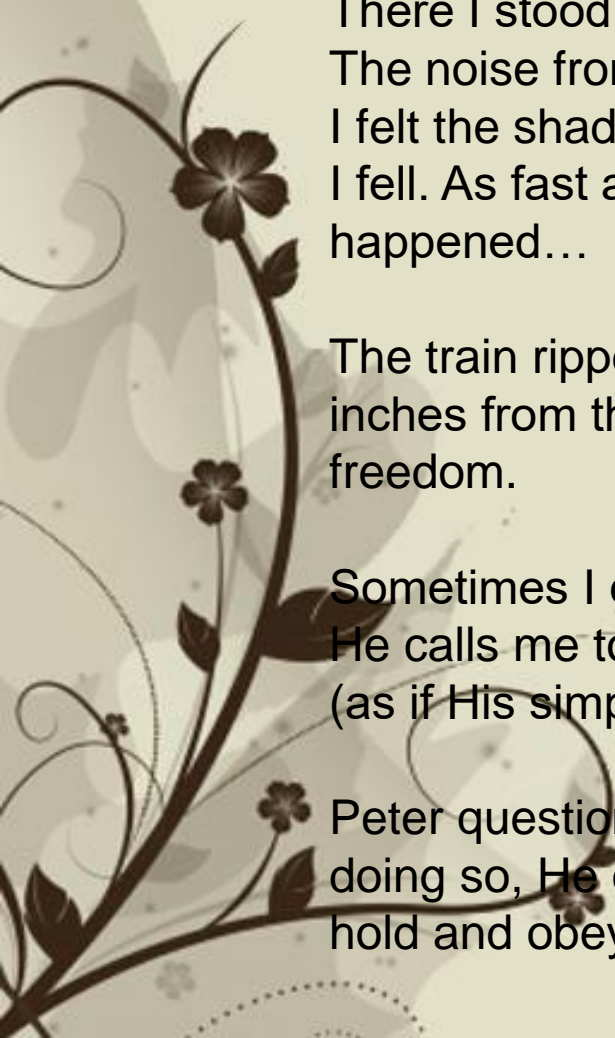
"You want me to do what?" I squawked. My friend pushed me onto the trestle that loomed hundreds of feet above the river.

"Follow me out. When the train starts across the trestle...run as hard as you can."

Randy shoved me onto the 2x4 boards nailed three feet apart. I grasped hold of the wire cable.

"You want me to walk out on that?" I pointed to the boarded walkway, "On that?"

"Yep. Trust me."

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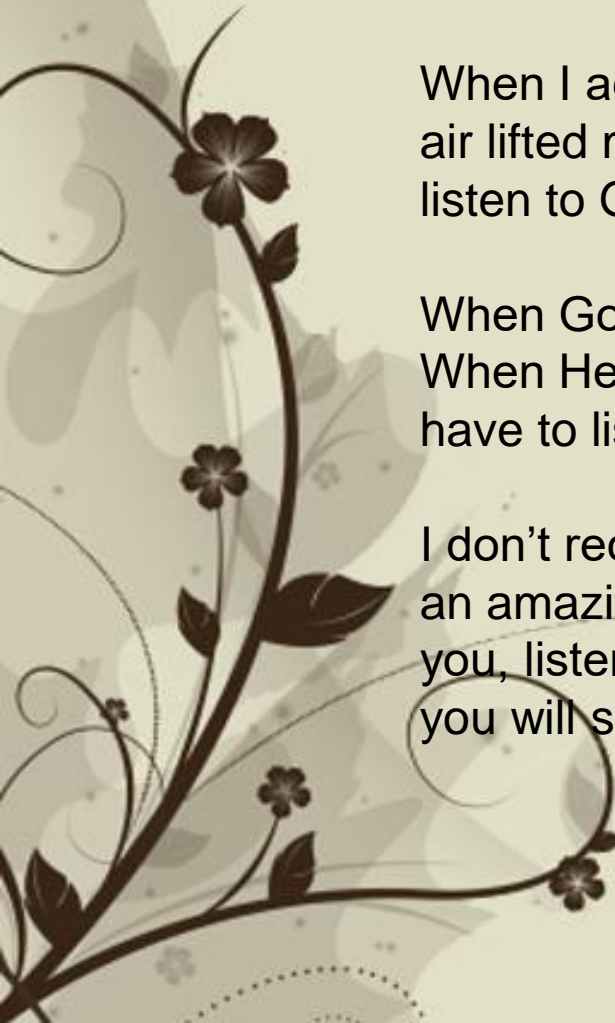
I'm not sure if it was trust or stupidity that made me follow Randy, but as the trestle beneath me began to shake I prayed not to fall between the planks. The train roared onto the trestle and I felt the metal give with its weight. Violent jolts shook the track.

There I stood, train bearing down, shouting, "Are you sure?" The noise from the whistle muted my cries. Leaping from plank to plank, I felt the shadow of the iron beast overcome me. My knees buckled and I fell. As fast as I'd fallen, I lunged back catching my balance. Then it happened...

The train ripped past and formed a cushion of air beneath me, lifting me inches from the tracks. I was running on air. I'd never felt such a rush of freedom.

Sometimes I question God's calling me. His voice is clear but the task He calls me toward is overwhelming. So I dare Him—demand He clarify (as if His simple calling isn't enough.) "Convince me, Lord!"

Peter questioned Jesus. *If it's You...* Jesus extended His hand and in doing so, He offered an invitation of trust. Peter simply had to grasp hold and obey.



The task itself may seem daunting, but when Christ calls us to it – when we listen and act accordingly, He moves us through virtually impossible tasks. More times than not, God responds to our need for confirmation; a nudge, a peace that reaffirms His call. The question is, do I accept the affirmation?

When I accepted my friend's challenge to run the train, a cushion of air lifted me above the planks then floated me across the trestle. If I listen to God, He does the same.

When God calls us to a task it's up to us to listen not question. When He invites us to trust, it's His promise to keep us safe; but we have to listen.

I don't recommend train running—we were stupid kids. But it was an amazing ride. So is the ride along side Christ. When He calls you, listen. Don't question, just do. He will lift you off your feet and you will soar alongside Him.