



In loving memory of our  
sister, *Joella Pickup*.

# Worthy Women's Words

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## Service to God and Others Through Hospitality

The call to serve God with our whole hearts is a theme throughout the Bible. Certainly, there is a connection between faith and service. Without faith we are not going to serve as we should. Great faith leads to great service—as seen in Hebrews 11. While God does not expect us to part the Red Sea or lead millions of people out of the wilderness, He does expect us to serve based on our faith in Him and love for others.

The Bible has much to say about service. Romans 6:17-18 says that those who are obedient to the Gospel became servants of righteousness. We were created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Titus 2:14), and Romans 12:1-2 calls us to be living sacrifices – and declares that we must live for the Lord and serve others. Naturally, Jesus sets the standard in this, as He often taught disciples to love the Father before all other things in our lives, and to love others in a sacrificial manner, (Matthew 22:37-40).

Our lives are busy—there always seems to be somewhere to go or something to do. Yet, we need to make God the center of our lives and put Him first. By serving, we may sacrifice things that we may not do otherwise. This takes daily preparation... so, it is essential to begin your day in prayer and meditation. Pray for opportunities to serve. In Matthew 20:28 Jesus declares that He did not come to earth to be served, but rather to serve. Service is sacrifice of our time, energy and resources. Serving is simply lightening someone's load, and being thoughtful or helpful. Often we simply want "down" time. I understand needing to take time for ourselves, but serving is not always convenient or easy, and typically doesn't always come at the most opportune moment. Someone once said: "If you want something done, ask a busy person." I find the more that I have to do, the more that I can accomplish. By remembering to put God first and think of others' needs, I find I can go on. Jesus' example inspires me.

Women have many opportunities to reflect Jesus' example of service. When we teach our children at a young age to hold a song book, sit quietly, take notes (being as active in worship as appropriate for a child's age and development) this is a much appreciated service. Obedient children learn even though they desperately do not want to sit quietly, their wants are second to worship to God. They actually are learning to serve others. People are able to worship because children are not a distraction. We may also volunteer to teach a Bible class, clean the building, or prepare the Lord's Supper. Being early to services provides us with opportunities to greet our brethren and meet visitors—and so serve by encouraging as a "Barnabas."

Serving may be as simple as smiling, opening a door, sending an encouraging note or a simple phone call. Even attending bridal and baby showers is an opportunity to celebrate

these joyful events. Simply sending gifts is nice and generous, but think how much more uplifting it is for the recipient and yourself when you attend. We may also provide a meal for those in need. We are blessed, as our meal lists fill up so rapidly at Temple Terrace. Please consider sharing in this need. If finances are a problem, join with a friend in this good service. The "buddy system" is great, and serving with a friend and sister is very rewarding. Visiting the sick and shut-in is a responsibility that pays for both. They feel better and so do you. Consider calling a sister and taking your children. What an incredible example for them when you serve others this way. Have your little ones color a picture or make a card when you provide a meal or visit the brethren. There is nothing like the gift from a child to reflect the love of God.

Be happy to open your homes. We have all been richly blessed with comfortable homes. Show God that we are good stewards of these blessings. Being hospitable and volunteering to have group meetings, showers, Bible studies, and meals means using what God has given you for the good in His kingdom.



*A girls Bible study at the Crispell home.*

Again, simply "contributing financially" may fulfill a command, but our example in the New Testament is one of disciples interacting with each other "daily" and tangibly serving each other in many ways.

In conclusion, we all strive to accomplish what is most important to us in our lives, and we often do as we please. Yet, as faithful individuals, we must continue to keep God at the center of our lives, and serve others. Truly, as we serve others, we serve God. Serving builds us up, builds others up and builds up the kingdom. Let us all do our part to serve each other here in this place as we journey from this life to our eternal home with God the Father. ∞

*Jean Crispell*

Jean is the wife of Brian Crispell and the Mother of Riley, Conner and Sarah Katherine. She supports Brian's work as an elder, college Dean and History professor hosting college and high school devotionals as well as constantly entertaining new church members. For the past ten years she has been the cheerleader sponsor for Florida College. She and Brian have devoted their lives to pleasing God especially through hospitality.



### Jean's Story

As a teenager, Jean was introduced to the Gospel after meeting Bart White at Leon High School in Tallahassee. The Whites, who were close neighbors of Jean, took an active interest in inviting her to services at the Westside (now Centerville Road) congregation, while also allowing Bart to accompany Jean to Saturday night Catholic mass. This impressed her, as it showed that the Whites were not afraid of having a tradition like Catholicism compared with New Testament worship — while never comprising biblical principles. At the Westside congregation, Jean met other wonderful people like Maurice and Marguerite Hinds, David and Janice Nerland, and others, and also learned the Gospel teaching that called for her to be baptized.

After obeying the Gospel in 1985, Jean attended Valdosta State College in south Georgia in 1985-86, before returning home to complete a degree in Dental Hygiene at Tallahassee Community College. During these years, Jean's family was understandably concerned about the influence of faith and the Lord's church on her life — especially since the destructive "Crossroads" (Boston) movement was quite active in university towns like Tallahassee, and masqueraded under the name "Church of Christ." That Jean kept a consistent, faithful pattern of attending worship at Westside during 1987-89, and that some of the members of that congregation were known and respected by Jean's family, made the long-term difference: with her family ultimately accepting that she had left Catholicism.

If Jean had stayed in Valdosta, or if she had found a way to Florida College, or if she had not chosen to remain faithful to the Lord, then the rest of this story would be dramatically different. Instead, after completing her degree and beginning work for a well-established Tallahassee dentist during 1988-89, Jean met a young former serviceman in a local convenience store. Feeling that this young man — now using his veteran's benefits to finish a degree at Florida State University — had "potential," although his beard was too long and his clothes woefully out of date, Jean accepted when he asked her out on a date in June 1989. After the classic "movie and pizza" date, during which they realized they shared many interests, they saw each other every day after that...virtually until today.

Almost immediately during their dating, Jean asked Brian — who had been raised as a Methodist — to worship services. He realized she was different than any other girl he had dated — and not because she was simply more beautiful and caring — and during the summer of 1989 began to attend at Westside. The Whites, who were

very nervous about the "potential" of Brian and Jean's relationship, gladly offered to study the Bible and open their home — as they consistently had to Jean and many others over the years. The impact of one person's faith — originally, Ann had helped convert Mike decades before — was soon manifested again, when Brian was baptized in December 1989.

After their marriage in 1990, Brian and Jean began to make a home in Tallahassee, where they remained until 2000, as he taught in south Georgia and earned his graduate degrees, while she worked in dental hygiene until 1993. Then, with Thomas Riley's birth, they committed to Jean staying at home. 1995 brought Conner Francis, and then Sarah Katherine was born in 1999 — and the Crispells were complete. From the very beginning of their marriage, Jean practiced the hospitality she had seen in the lives of so many local Christians. The Westside/Centerville Road congregation was a true family for Brian and Jean — and they retain good friendships there. While very hard to leave, they departed in 2000 for Temple Terrace — and can't imagine being anywhere else, now.

Jean learned early, especially being married to a young teacher, about the value of saving and planning for birthday parties for others; hosting baby and bridal showers, and arranging for gatherings for friends and family. Maintaining an "open house" for this type of hospitality has long been Jean's practice, and has brought great joy. Yet, that practice is based on what Jean and Brian learned from others and read in Scripture — that real Christianity is about loving, caring, and giving to others; sometimes, it simply means making time in a busy day for someone else, or truly seeking to listen to someone else. While Jean has a special talent for this, it is not automatic for anyone — it takes an effort, but one that helps us all become more like Christ. Her planner remains full with Bible studies, "coffee" times with other women to help encourage and guide, and many other examples of service.

The tremendous concern over Jean's health during this past year again illustrated the biblical principle of hospitality and prayer. Dozens of individuals helped directly or indirectly with many things before, during her surgery, and recovery; untold numbers of prayers were offered to God — and Jean was at peace, knowing that her life was in His hands. Moreover, she knew that — while on this good Earth — that Christians help each other, and she would never need to worry about how her family would be taken care of. Her faith has led her to a life of service for God and others, and Jean looks forward to continuing to serve as long as she is given. ∞



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