



Dear Seminar Graduate,

What a joy it is to send greetings from each of us here at New Hope. You have been in our thoughts and prayers! In the midst of your busy schedule, we encourage you to steal away for some quiet time to reflect on the enclosed materials, prepared especially for you as a New Hope Seminar graduate. It is our heart's desire that they will be of great encouragement to you.

As I reflect back over the past three months, the theme that resonates in my day to day life is the importance of putting into practice a **spirit of rejoicing** in all things, to purposely, specifically speak forth thanksgiving and praise, no matter what the situation. I am reminded through my "Put Off and Put On" list from Phase II of the New Hope Seminar Materials to "put on" rejoicing always and in all things for it is written, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4) and "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:18).

What drives me to move this principle beyond the pages of knowledge in my mind to real day to day practice from the heart? The reality that rejoicing through praise and thanksgiving ushers me right into the very throne room of my Abba Father, into His Presence! There is no other place I would rather be! EVER!

In His Presence, there is joy, real joy! Who can better express joy, real joy than children? The New Hope Children's Handbook has been on my mind a lot lately. There are children all throughout the world who desperately need Hope & Healing through God's powerful Word. As I think about children, I am reminded of Jesus' response to the children when they ran to Him in the crowd. The children could not contain themselves. Their excitement and joy to be near Jesus caused every other thought to vanish...no cares...no fears...just had to be near Jesus. I can just imagine the shouting, clapping with delight, jumping up and down and the dancing eyes of the children when Jesus told the disciples to let the little children come to Him. We, adults, can learn much from little children!

In His Presence, the enemy scatters. Yes, that enemy who was nipping at my foot, (remember, the enemy is under our feet!), when I am in the Presence of God, the enemy scatters! In God's Presence, you will find a divine place of refuge, safety, peace in the midst of any storm, no matter how big it may seem.

In His Presence, there is grace. God's empowering presence to enable me to be who He made me to be and to do what He called me to do! I received this gold nugget last fall during the New Hope Seminar classes from the new materials in Phase III, also available in the "Faith & Trust" book. This picture of grace has changed my life! An excerpt from the "Faith & Trust" book on grace has been provided to you in this packet.

In experiencing God's presence these past few months, God has chosen to reveal Himself to me in two special ways: Through the praise song, "I will enter His Gates" adapted from Psalm 100:4 and through the women's Bible study, "A Woman's Heart, God's Dwelling Place, a study on the Wilderness Tabernacle by Beth Moore.

Each experience has painted a vivid picture in my mind of purposefully walking through His gates with thanksgiving, into His courts with praise, and to boldly walk right into the Holies of Holies, into His

Presence! I find it interesting that the song starts out by saying “I will enter”...that is a choice we each must make! It doesn’t say “if we feel like it,” or “if it is the right time,” or “if I’m good enough,” etc. It simply states, “I will enter”....how? With thanksgiving in my heart!

Years ago, when my girls were little, I loved to make crafts and enjoyed collecting a few country craft items for our home. One treasure I found was a wall hanging made up of seven wooden hearts strung together with ribbon, with the letters R-E-J-O-I-C-E spelled out on them. The person who made it told me that REJOICE stood for: Receiving Everything Joyfully Only In Christ Everyday. The wall hanging has been a constant reminder of the importance of Philippians 4:4, but now it has taken on an even deeper significance.

In going through the New Hope Materials, I now know the importance of understanding who I am in Christ. Once I get a hold of these amazing truths, no matter what the circumstance, REJOICE in all things takes on a totally new meaning as Jesus is now everything to me...nothing else compares to His greatness. I am safe in Him. I can trust Him and Him alone! Everything I need is in Him. If you have gotten out of the habit of reading your “Who God Says I Am” statements daily, I encourage you to start afresh! There’s great power in knowing these truths!

I have found for my own life, to learn this practice of rejoicing in all things, that it is most helpful to me to create two written lists: a Thanksgiving and Praise list. I start my Thanksgiving list by picturing myself entering into His gate and recording the things I am thankful for. I don’t get hung up on any order or how small or big...when it pops into my head, I put it on paper. This list will never be complete.

I also create a list that praises God for who He is. Sometimes I go through the alphabet and write out attributes of God from each letter of the alphabet. For example: I praise you God for you are- A-Abba Father, Amazing, B-Beautiful, C-Creative, Caring, Compassionate, etc., and/or I list the names of God that are particularly dear to me at this season in my life. It is good for me to reflect back on the list of the Names of God that was provided in the Phase I Seminar Handbook near the conclusion of the materials. Here I am reminded of the original Hebrew names of God and their profound meanings! I then turn a page or so to reflect on the Names that God has revealed Himself personally to me. What a treasure! Also, to start my time of praise, I find the Praise list provided in Phase I Handbook of the Seminar materials very helpful. For your convenience, a copy has been provided in this packet.

Why do I need lists? Shouldn’t I naturally spill over in praise and thanksgiving? Well, the reality is that there are days and times when my mind is BLANK! Whether it’s from fatigue, busyness, numbness from life’s punches or an array of many different reasons, there are absolutely times that I need these lists to remind me of what I am thankful for and what I most adore about my Heavenly Father; Jesus, My Savior; and the Precious Spirit. As we take time to be thankful and to praise Him, we will find ourselves swept into His very Presence. What a personal, intimate relationship He desires with each of us! Take time to tell God today those things you are thankful for and praise Him. He alone, is worthy of all praise!

In the King’s Service,
Cathy Berner