



ESPECIALLY FOR

FROM

DATE



A CELEBRATION
of the SIMPLE LIFE
Inspiring thoughts from Amish Country

Wanda E. Brunstetter



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INTRODUCTION

One of the things I most admire about the Amish way of life is their dedication to keeping true to their faith. While the Amish and other Plain groups would be the first to admit that they aren't perfect, their simple way of life and deep faith in God provide us with a model of how we might simplify our own lives to live better physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The Amish way of life offers us ideas on how to live a slower-paced, satisfying life with less dependence on modern things and more emphasis on God, family, and friends.

In this devotional, I've shared some of the experiences I've personally had with the Amish. These experiences have not only drawn me closer to the people I've come to know and love, but they've given me a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's amazing love. My Amish friends have inspired me to live my life a little simpler and to keep my focus on things that have eternal value.





ATTITUDE

*The seed of discouragement will not
grow in a thankful heart.*





*For the LORD seeth
not as man seeth;
for man looketh on the
outward appearance,
but the LORD looketh
on the heart.*

I SAMUEL 16:7



A Humble Attitude



*When it comes to being humble,
Jesus set the example for us.
He went willingly to the cross,
Without resistance or making a fuss.
When others spoke of His greatness,
He withdrew to a quiet place.
A look of humility must have shone clearly
On our Savior's face.
Lord, help me to have a humble attitude,
Not prideful, conceited, or vain.
I want to be an example to others,
Never haughty, just humble and plain.*

—WEB

Clothed with Humility

*Yea, all of you be subject one to another,
and be clothed with humility:
for God resisteth the proud,
and giveth grace to the humble.*

1 PETER 5:5

During one of our trips to Ohio, my husband and I met with Dr. Elton Lehman, who gave us a tour of the birthing center in Mt. Eaton, which he started several years ago. I was impressed with the facilities but even more so with Dr. Lehman's humility and caring attitude. Even though he's no longer working full-time at the clinic, he fills in when needed. His love and concern for the Amish people were the reasons for starting the birthing center. His humility was evident as he spoke of his desire to make a place where Amish women could have their babies in a safe environment that reminded them of home.

The Amish culture is embedded in the German word *Gelassenheit*, which means yielding to a higher authority and becoming a humble person. The Bible teaches us to be clothed with humility. That means we are to wear it all the time so that others may see Christ living in us. Humility isn't just about not bragging; it's about being willing to do the most menial tasks. It's about serving others and thereby serving the Lord, without needing any recognition. The humility I saw in Dr. Lehman reminds me of the gentle, humble spirit I've seen in so many of our Amish friends. It encourages me to wear the clothes of humility, too.

*Heavenly Father,
remind me often to wear the clothes of humility.
May others see You living in me. Amen.*

Attitude of Acceptance



*It's not easy to accept some things;
We often worry, grumble, and fret.
How much better it would be
If we trusted God instead of getting upset.
An attitude of acceptance
Gives one a sense of peace.
When we trust God to know what's best for us,
Our anxiety and tension will cease.*

—WEB



Accept What You Must

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

I PETER 5:7

If there's one thing I've learned about the Amish, it's their ability to accept things that happen to them as God's will. An Amish couple we know are unable to have children of their own. As much as they would like to be parents, they've accepted it as God's will. Rather than brooding about their situation, they take pleasure in spending time with their nieces and nephews and ministering to others in need.

Another Amish man we know is confined to a wheelchair due to a childhood accident. While some might question God and bemoan their situation, he chooses to remain positive and does whatever he can.

Life isn't always fair, but if we learn to appreciate what we have and trust God with our future, we'll feel a sense of peace and acceptance. Remember this week to accept what you must and change what you can. Look to the future with a sense of hope and thank God for each new day, for we really do have much to be grateful for.

*Heavenly Father,
there are many things in my life
over which I have no control.
Help me learn to accept those things,
knowing that You are in control.
Fill me with Your perfect peace,
and give me a heart of acceptance. Amen.*



Joyful Attitude



*Birds are joyful every day,
Just like children out at play.
Their sweet, shrill singing is the way we know
That the birds are happy, and they let it show.
It's good to be cheerful and wear a smile,
Thanking God and giving praises all the while.
The Bible tells us to rejoice and be glad,
Just like the birds, we're to be joyful, not sad.*

—WEB

Joyful Hearts

*This is the day which the LORD hath made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

PSALM 118:24

Every time my husband and I have been invited into an Amish home for supper, we've enjoyed the light banter, joke telling, and laughter that accompanied the meal. During such an occasion, one of our Amish friends volunteered to play the part of my ventriloquist dummy as I put on a short routine. Everyone had a good laugh over that.

Having grown up in a house where laughter was scarce, I find it refreshing to be with people who like to laugh and have a good time. In fact, I often look for things to laugh about, knowing that laughter is not only good for me emotionally, but physically as well.

There are times when I might not feel like laughing, but if I remind myself to look around, there's always something to smile about—a frisky pet, singing birds, flowers in bloom, children at play.

The Bible tells us in Proverbs 17:22 that a merry heart is good medicine. Just like the birds that sing in my yard, our Amish friends know how to share their joy with others. Make a list of some things that bring a smile to your face. Remember that a joyful heart is pleasing to the Lord, and it's an added benefit to know that it's good for you, too.

*Heavenly Father,
remind me to look at the brighter side of life.
Thank You for the gift of laughter.
Help me to use it often. Amen.*



Attitude of Forgiveness



*An attitude of forgiveness doesn't always come easy;
It's our human nature to carry a grudge or retaliate.*

*But God's Word says that to be forgiven,
we must forgive;*

Jesus taught that we're to love others, not hate.

With heartfelt forgiveness comes healing,

And to be forgiven we must first forgive.

It will draw us closer to God in our Christian walk,

Through the things we say and the way we live.

—WEB

True Forgiveness

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

MATTHEW 6:14

On October 2, 2006, a terrible tragedy that shocked the world occurred in a small Pennsylvania Amish community. An English man, who lived and worked in the area, entered an Amish schoolhouse and shot ten girls before turning the gun on himself. Five of the girls were killed and five were seriously injured. Everyone in the community, the children's families most of all, were stunned and deeply wounded by this senseless, unbelievable act. Instead of anger and retribution, however, the families of the dead and injured chose to forgive the man who had done the evil deed. A few days after the attack, I was asked by a reporter if it was true that the Amish would really forgive the shooter, and if so, how could that be? I replied, "It is true that the Amish will forgive the man, but this kind of forgiveness comes only from God."

The Amish community not only forgave the shooter, but they raised money to help the man's wife and children through the ordeal. As surprising as it might have seemed to the world, half of the mourners at the gunman's funeral were Amish. The Amish knew they had a choice to make. They could either harbor resentment or choose to forgive. They knew that without forgiveness, their hearts would never heal.

Is there someone you need to forgive? Is there something you need to seek forgiveness for? Why not do that today?

*Heavenly Father,
forgive me if I have wronged someone,
and help me to find forgiveness in my heart toward
anyone who has done wrong to me. Amen.*

Patient Attitude



*The nature of a flower is to wait patiently for spring.
Flowers don't worry or complain about every little thing.*

The nature of a flower is an example to all.

*When wind and rain threaten,
a flower stands straight and tall.*

Let the flowers be your example for having a patient attitude.

*For when you face each day with patience,
you'll be in a better mood.*

—WEB



Patience Pays Off

*I waited patiently for the LORD;
and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

PSALM 40:1

During one of our visits to an Amish schoolhouse in Indiana, my husband made some balloon animals for the children. Since Richard has been blowing up balloons for a good many years, his lungs are strong and he rarely uses a pump. The children were impressed at how easy he made it look, and several of the boys wanted to try blowing up a balloon. After a few attempts, all except one of the red-faced boys gave up. The determined boy had a bit more patience than the others. He continued trying to blow up the balloon until he ran out of air and passed out for a few seconds. Undaunted and unhurt, he picked himself up and continued blowing until his balloon was fully inflated.

Seeing the determination of this young boy made me think of how easily some people give up when they're faced with a challenge. Sometimes we give up praying because we don't receive an answer quickly enough. God wants us to wait patiently for Him, and He wants us to pray and continually seek to do His will.

Are you faced with a challenge today that seems daunting? Ask the Lord for the courage and strength to keep going. Ask Him for an attitude of patience as you wait for answers from Him.

*Heavenly Father,
sometimes when I'm feeling stressed or in a hurry,
I run out of patience. Help me remember in
such times to take a deep breath, say a prayer,
and wait patiently for answers. Amen.*



Attitude of Contentment



*The birds of the air don't worry or fret;
They don't complain when it rains and they get wet.
The birds of the air sing a sweet melody;
Their simple contentment is really the key.
Our Father cares for the birds of the air,
And He cares for us when we offer a prayer.
He provides for the birds with insects and seeds;
He provides for His children's daily needs.
There's much we can learn from the birds of the air,
Who don't worry about what they're going to wear.
If we learn to be content like the birds of the air,
Our life will be blessed with His tender care.*

—WEB

Lasting Contentment

*Not that I speak in respect of want:
for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,
therewith to be content.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

The last time my husband and I stayed with our Amish friends in Pennsylvania, I observed their grandchildren playing together. They weren't bored and didn't complain because there was nothing to do. They found enjoyment in simple things like reading, playing a ball game, petting their dog, riding their scooters, swinging, and swimming in the pond. They didn't need computers or electronic games. They laughed and talked together and didn't send text messages in order to communicate.

In our fast-paced electronic age, many "Englishers" don't take the time to enjoy the simple things life has to offer. We rush from place to place, hurry to complete our tasks, and find that our lives are full of stress and worry. We've become exhausted and discontented because we don't spend enough quality time with our family and friends. Many people strive so hard to get ahead that they don't see what's right beside them. Material things don't bring true happiness, nor do they bring lasting contentment. When we look around at the beauty God created and find joy in being with those we love, our discontent fades and appreciation sets in.

*Heavenly Father,
remind me to appreciate the things You've given me;
and no matter what's going on in the world around me,
help me to learn to be content in whatever state I'm in. Amen.*

Attitude of Trust



*When you're discouraged
And feeling a bit down,
Answers for your troubles
Are waiting to be found.
Put your trust in God;
He'll show you the way.
God watches over you
At night and through the day.
An attitude of trust
Is what every Christian needs.
Trust God fully and follow
Wherever He leads.*

—WEB



Complete Trust

*I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress:
my God; in him will I trust.*

PSALM 91:2

The Amish are some of the most trusting people I know. They trust their horses to pull their buggies. They trust their older children to care for the younger ones. They trust God to provide for all of their needs.

When my husband and I visited an Amish schoolhouse for the first time, even though the teachers had never met us, they trusted us to come in peace. In fact, we were welcomed into their classroom.

God wants us to trust Him in all things. He is our fortress, our shelter in the time of storm. Are you able to lay your worries and cares aside and trust that the Lord will see you through anything life throws at you? In Numbers 6:25, we are told that the Lord makes His face shine upon us. Knowing that God is always with us and that His face is actually shining on us should give a sense of security and trust, even in the most frightening circumstances. A calm mind and a confident heart are available to every believer. Ask God to teach you to trust Him more and help you to relax in Him.

*Heavenly Father,
when my world seems to be crashing in,
I feel frightened and insecure.
Give me a gentle reminder that
I need to put my trust in You
and not focus on my circumstances.
Give me a calm mind and confident heart.
Teach me to trust You more. Amen.*