

Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 5

Friday, May 14



Photo credit: Julie Fenstermaker

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayers and petition, with Thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your mind in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:2-9

A devotion for mothers with post-partum depression; thoughts by Julie Fenstermaker: I always pictured myself married and having children. My daughter was born in June of 2001. The pregnancy was good. The preparations were good. The delivery went well. However, after the delivery, I was anxious and wanted to return home quickly. The cards came congratulating us on the amazing gift we received. I started pausing as I would read the best wishes and think that I was not sure the gift was all that great. In fact, I started to feel like my life was ruined. What had I done?

I had a hard time adjusting and I felt very anxious. I continued to do my best to feel the blessing of a child. I was breast feeding and trying to be the perfect Mom, but my feelings of sadness, loss and loneliness continued.

Throughout the first 8 weeks, I sought friendship with my neighbor, my sister-in-law, and others with little ones. I was up early each day and I thank God for these women who opened their doors and hearts to me, sometimes early in the morning. They helped me to escape myself at home with a newborn. Hanna was probably the youngest person ever to take a "Mommy and Me" music class that summer.

I also sought God. I begged him to help me get myself back. I was really feeling like I had never felt before. While Hanna was sleeping or someone else was caring for her, I would walk around our pond talking to God, breathing in the gift of fresh air and the beauty of the summer landscape. Praise God it was summer.

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Hanna had an 8-week-old well-child visit with her pediatrician. Hanna was doing fine, maybe a little extra fussy, but I cried. The doctor gave me some advice to change up some things with her feedings and schedule to see my own doctor. That afternoon I fed Hanna a bottle and I enjoyed it.

I scheduled an appointment with my doctor. My Mom, Hanna and I went to the appointment, but when we arrived they said the doctor had an emergency and I would need to reschedule. I decided not to reschedule as I was feeling a bit better. The light was coming.

My journey with anxious feelings has continued and parenting is not an easy road, but the blessing, joy, and love for my children has been the greatest gift.

Prayer: *Father, thank you for mothers and children. I pray for those that are anxious, overwhelmed, depressed, or wanting to give up. Please give them your power and peace. I ask your light to break through the darkness and lift every spirit. God, please help us to reach out in community with others to support, serve and rejoice in your great gifts. Amen.*