

ERENDIRA RAMIREZ-ORTEGA

PECULIAR PEOPLE

11 MEDITATIONS

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All scripture is taken from The Holy Bible, King James Version.

WHY PECULIAR PEOPLE?

Jesus didn't fit into the world from the moment he was born. There was no room in the inn for Him.

Now, as children of the King, we don't fit into this world either.

Attempts are made to fit in, however. We know the watered down gospel, the seeker-friendly church, and a Christ made in the image of man are marks of that quest to remain indistinguishable in the world. These are sordid attempts to fit in a world that rejects the Christ of the Bible.

But we are called to live like a salmon swimming upstream. We're called to be a separate, distinguished, peculiar:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" 1 Peter 2:9

Our minds ought to always strive to think more Christ-like. Our energy and endurance in the race should go against the current stream of the age. For we are set apart as beloved children of the most High. We're a peculiar people. We aren't cookie cutter copies of the same ole life we once lived before the saving grace of Jesus.

As such peculiar people, we distinguish ourselves from the rest of the world. We hate sin because God hates it. We rightly divide the truth because God is truth. We stand on conviction and live out our faith because God sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins. We are called out from among them. We are repulsed by the world's philosophies. We don't need to pursue acceptance from the world but rather from God.

We are distinct because He is distinct. He's called us out of the darkness that once covered our eyes and now we are in His marvelous light, adopting us into His family as joint heirs with Jesus. We belong to Him now and are a peculiar people.

Enjoy the following 11 meditations and prayers from me, your friend in the Lord,



1

THEN SHALL YE CALL UPON ME, AND
YE SHALL GO AND PRAY UNTO ME, AND
I WILL HEARKEN UNTO YOU. AND YE
SHALL SEEK ME, AND FIND ME, WHEN
YE SHALL SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL
YOUR HEART. (JEREMIAH 29:12-13)

I know God is able. He moves the hearts of man. He moves the power of the sea. He forgives and bestows grace.

I consider what He does every day of my life. As I changed my lifestyle by eliminating a host of toxic food, I've felt the astonishing results: better sleep, less fatigue, and anxiety, more peace, less urge to control what I can't. The Spirit helps me with self-control. I don't pamper my feelings but rather let God drive my day. I'm ever thankful for this balance. My soul is in lockstep with God and He renews my mind daily. My faith, I'm learning, wasn't where it needed to be.

Only by God's grace am I able to renew my mind—to focus on gratitude, to read the Proverbs, and to apply self-care.

I wake up motivated to read His word, to study it, journal my prayers, and apply His teaching. It sounds like the ideal process—and it is. But the success rate only depends on my devotion and consistency.



2

WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL? AND WHY ART THOU DISQUIETED IN ME? HOPE THOU IN GOD: FOR I SHALL YET PRAISE HIM FOR THE HELP OF HIS COUNTENANCE. (PSALMS 42:5)

Family issues don't go away. Our extended family continues to disappoint us relentlessly. When the holidays roll around, we are reminded of unfinished business.

When we think about families getting together, it may seem to reflect a manufactured togetherness. Yet, it takes a lot of grace to sit in the same room near someone in the family who's offended you, slighted your children, or censored your words. During those moments, it's crucial to trust God's word, to wait on Him to give direction, to lean on the best counsel from our husbands.

This is when the Lord is working us towards grace. When my tears have been my meat day and night, I pour out my soul. I hope in Him and praise Him for the help of His countenance. It would make my heart sick if I deferred hope.

When gladness confounds me, my joy is renewed, my desire is fulfilled, and it is as a tree of life, rooted and grounded on the abundant soil of the word of God, nourished by the hand of the Almighty. I'm full and rich in this life—mentally, spiritually, morally, emotionally—all by His grace. His eternal grace.



3

BUT THERE IS A SPIRIT IN MAN: AND
THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY
GIVETH THEM UNDERSTANDING.
(JOB 32:8)

We owe it all to God. He is life and His word is a lamp unto our feet. He is the root of all we are and came to be by His mighty hand. He knows me better than anyone—better than my mom, my husband, my children.

I don't need to hide from God as Adam and Eve did in the garden. It's foolish to attempt to mock God with our secrecy. I'm a sinner and He knows. But as a sinner saved by the blood of Christ, I can be bold to come to His throne and repent.

It's unnecessary to pretend I'm the only one who knows my deepest secrets, my darkest surmisings. It's convicting, then, to acknowledge how well He knows us—and we can be open and honest about all that too. Our good, our bad, our ugly is all well known to Him. But it's wisdom which compels us to ask for forgiveness in those reckoning moments.



4

THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD
HATH MADE; WE WILL REJOICE AND BE
GLAD IN IT. (PSALMS 118:24)

For many years, my husband would plan ideas for the children's birthdays and as we'd anticipate the date looming, it would all seem to fall apart. Like most things do in life.

We plan our most attainable goals, but God's ideas and His will are what always wins. Why bother planning for tomorrow when it's not even guaranteed?

Why not let the Spirit drive our lives in complete submission to Him, knowing He is the better planner of our lives? God is ready to do amazing things in our lives and it behooves us to be ever present and ready to accept His plan.

Let's look at today with sharp focus and sincere gratitude for all He does.



5

AND THE RAIN DESCENDED, AND THE
FLOODS CAME, AND THE WINDS BLEW,
AND BEAT UPON THAT HOUSE; AND IT
FELL NOT: FOR IT WAS FOUNDED UPON
A ROCK. (MATTHEW 7:25)

I seek to build up my little home as a place of joy and peace. I can't build my house on sand and expect a firm walk with the Lord, for myself or my family. For the homeschool, we wrote a family statement to declare our mission. We're intentional to build our home on God's truth because the world is bitterly cold. It blasts our Lord's name into shreds. At least at home, I can construct a haven where I educate my children in the Lord.

I can already see the hearts and minds of my children knitted in the truth and love of God. My littles sing the hymns and praises of God with great abandon. They compose their own melodies.

We may not have much like other families. We may not have a room dedicated exclusively to the home, or have annual upgrades in our home, but "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices and strife." (Proverbs 17:1)



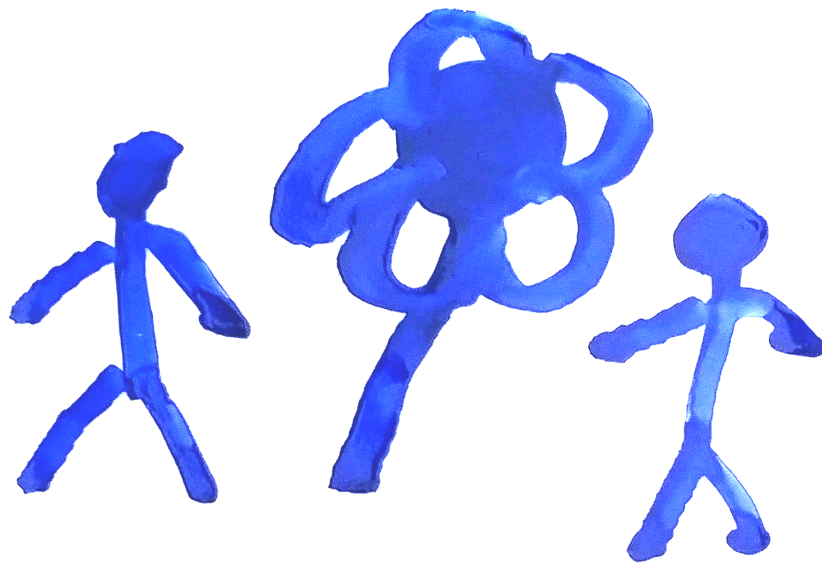
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FAVOUR IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS
VAIN: BUT A WOMAN THAT FEARETH
THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED.
(PROVERBS 31:30)

The pressures to fit a certain form in this culture—as a mom, a wife, a homeschool family—are severe. We're always on display, it seems. What I do and how I live reflects the state of my heart. When I'm in a bad state, I'm ugly. And it shows. And my words confirm it.

I know God's word is a mirror into my deepest faults, my horrid sins. The word of God shows me my wrinkles, my dark spots, my light areas, my blemishes.

God sees me as I truly am, faults and all, desperate for forgiveness and terribly afraid of disappointing Him. I don't want to forget what I look like when I see my own reflection within the lines of scripture—those words that also tell me I am loved by the Master Who made me. For that alone, when I consider the mirror, I can like what I see.



7

BUT IF ANY PROVIDE NOT FOR HIS OWN, AND SPECIALLY FOR THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSE, HE HATH DENIED THE FAITH, AND IS WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL. (1 TIMOTHY 5:8)

During the holidays, if we're in our right mind, we tend to more charitable than usual.

Why then do we hold back our generosity other times of the year? We sabotage countless blessings when we make excuses about why we couldn't be a blessing to someone. A gesture of kindness is never out of season—the time is always due for it.

We all need a helping hand now and then—some of us more than others. When it's in our power to extend support, we should. Granted, we won't be able to provide for the needs of those outside of our immediate families at times, but God understands this.

As we boast about gratitude during the holidays when we're more apt to focus on God, let's boast of His mighty work and give more of Him to others.



8

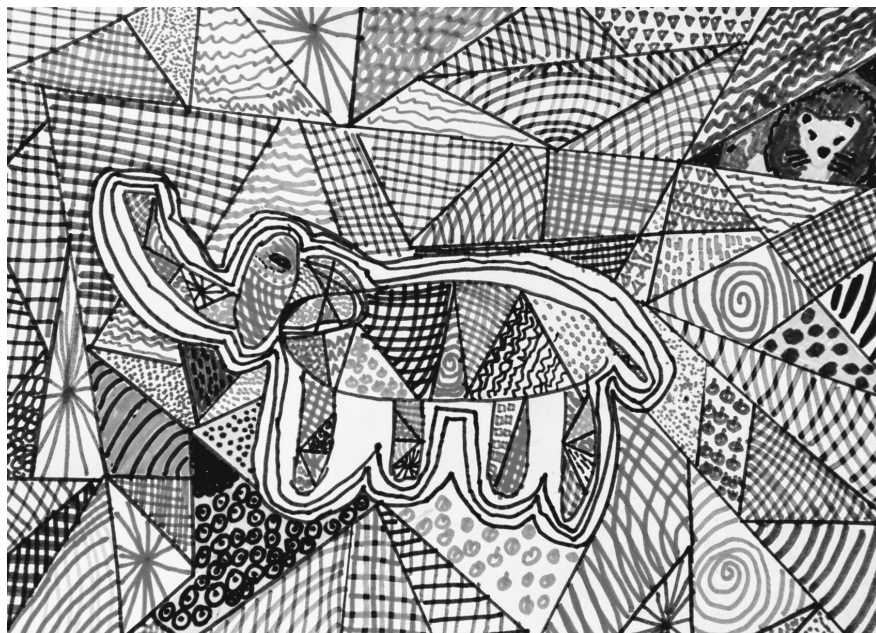
IT IS NOT GOOD TO EAT MUCH HONEY:
SO FOR MEN TO SEARCH THEIR OWN
GLORY IS NOT GLORY.
(PROVERBS 25:27)

God hates pride, fraud, and dishonesty.

Pride will come into the heart of us all—while we're in this flesh and bone, while we're on this side of heaven.

It's unnerving to observe the way of our culture today. How many venues have I come across online who will publish the work of writers and only pay them if they're popular! It's true. A popularity contest is a standard for which some markets will pay writers, all depending on which piece gets the most shares on social media. They have pay scale brackets listed on their site to tip off potential submitters. It's one of the darkest times in our history where the height of platform measures the worth of our words and the significance of our God-given purpose. The longevity of a brand rides the current waves of the culture and the standard is always arbitrary.

There's a constant temptation to magnify our name, to stand out above the rest of the pack. However, when we live a life of integrity, we magnify our Father's name. And that's Who should take preeminence.



9

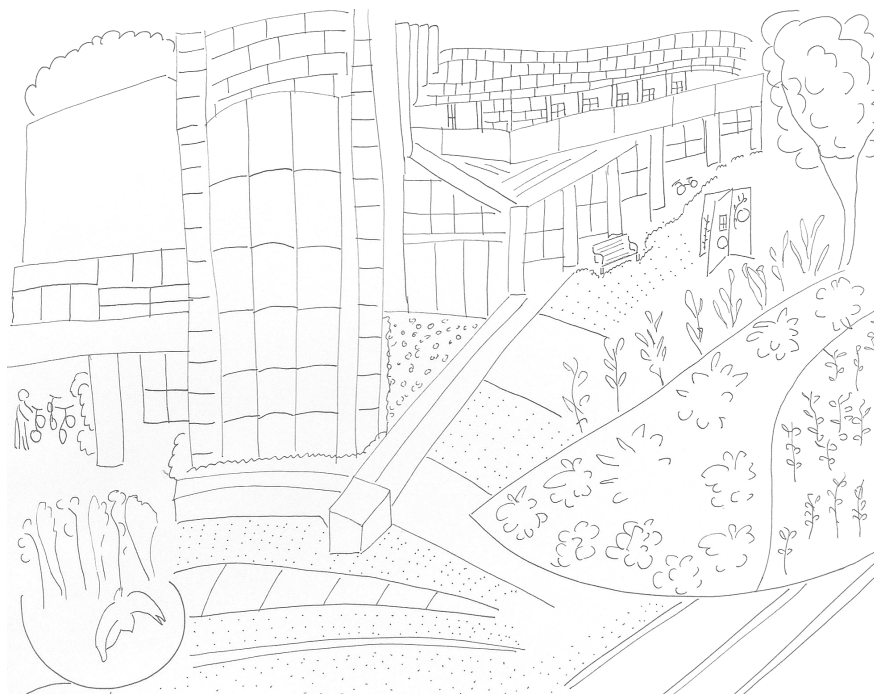
FOR IT IS NOT YE THAT SPEAK, BUT
THE SPIRIT OF YOUR FATHER WHICH
SPEAKETH IN YOU. (MATTHEW 10:20)

I'm not a talker. I don't have the gift of conversation. I'm a quiet introvert with a very keen sense of my surroundings. I'm intimidated by talkers who work so hard to make me talk. I get uncomfortable around clamorous people and attention-seeking exercises.

We can be willing to admit our shortcomings. We're part of a world that requires hard and sound participation—in conversation with library children's programs, homeschool co-ops, and church events. Not to mention writerly events that are rife with networking expectations and impressive maneuvering of works in progress. God sees us as works in progress. We're only complete in Him. His daily sanctification of us, the renewing of our minds, the consistent reading of His word are all essential necessities for survival in this world.

On those occasions when it's showtime, I make every effort to choose my words wisely, to ensure they sharpen, edify, and reveal truth and minister grace unto the hearers. I rely on the Spirit to guide my conversation.

God's word supplies what we need to say. When we immerse ourselves enough in His word, we're sure to experience the Spirit more deeply, and speak as He does to those who don't know Him.



10

BUT IF YE HAVE BITTER ENVYING AND
STRIFE IN YOUR HEARTS, GLORY NOT,
AND LIE NOT AGAINST THE TRUTH.
(JAMES 3:14)

Wisdom compels us to put away strife, selfish ambition, bitterness, and envy. Envy is rooted in selfishness, when we want what another has—and we don't want the other to have it themselves.

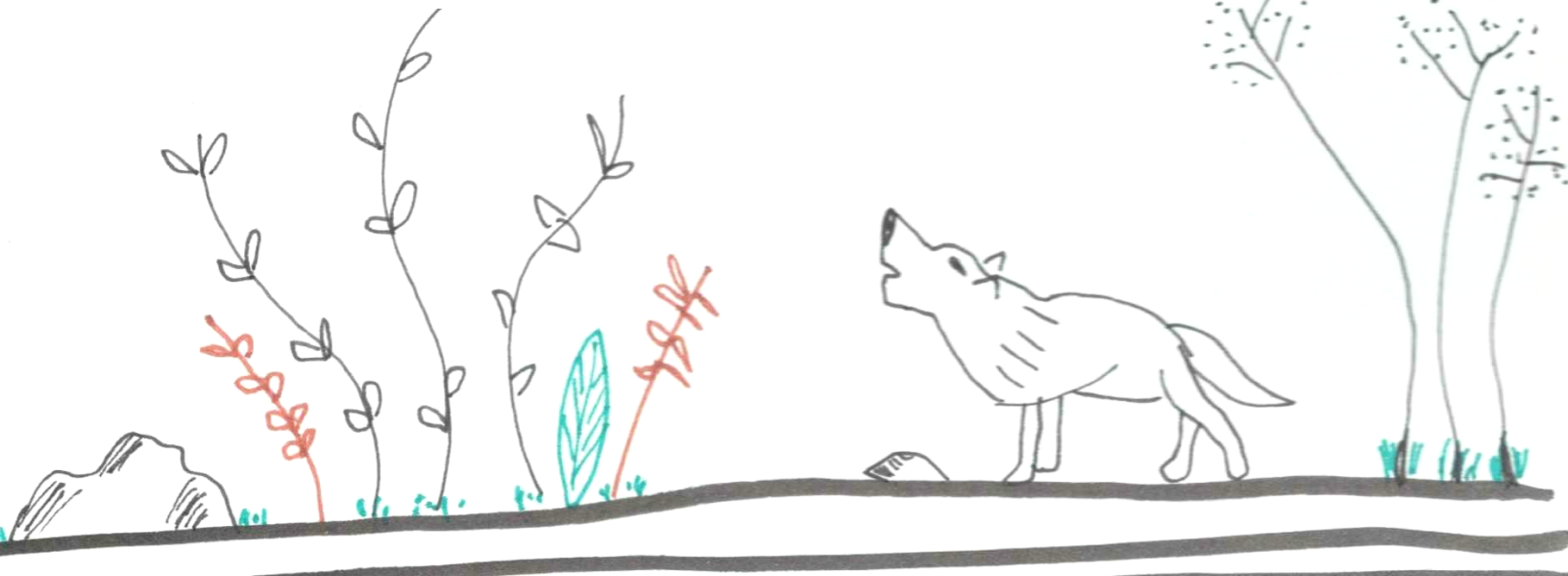
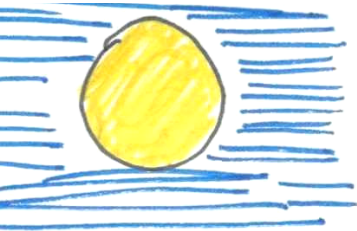
Someone once said that comparison is the enemy of contentment. The disciples, I'm sure, were comparing themselves to the beloved John (John 21: 21-22).

When we follow Christ as His disciple, we destroy the roots of envy. There's no need to fret about who's in what position, who got this commendation or that one. We need to look at our place next to Christ and not preoccupy ourselves by looking over at who else is seated at the table with Him.

With careful steps moving us forward in our walk with the Lord, we'll grow into a deeper relationship with Him, as opposed to longing for our own greatness. When we love God, we hate envy. We make room for the fruit of the Spirit, so we can taste what is wholesome and kind: we love and we rejoice with others who are succeeding.

Let's not bear rotten fruit but rather face God with the confidence of knowing that He is the center in our lives. When we make comparisons with others, we take away God's blessing for us because we want what He doesn't give us.

And having what He gives is always better anyway.



11

THEN I LOOKED ON ALL THE WORKS
THAT MY HANDS HAD WROUGHT, AND
ON THE LABOUR THAT I HAD LABOURED
TO DO: AND, BEHOLD, ALL WAS VANITY
AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT, AND THERE
WAS NO PROFIT UNDER THE SUN.
(ECCLESIASTES 2:11)

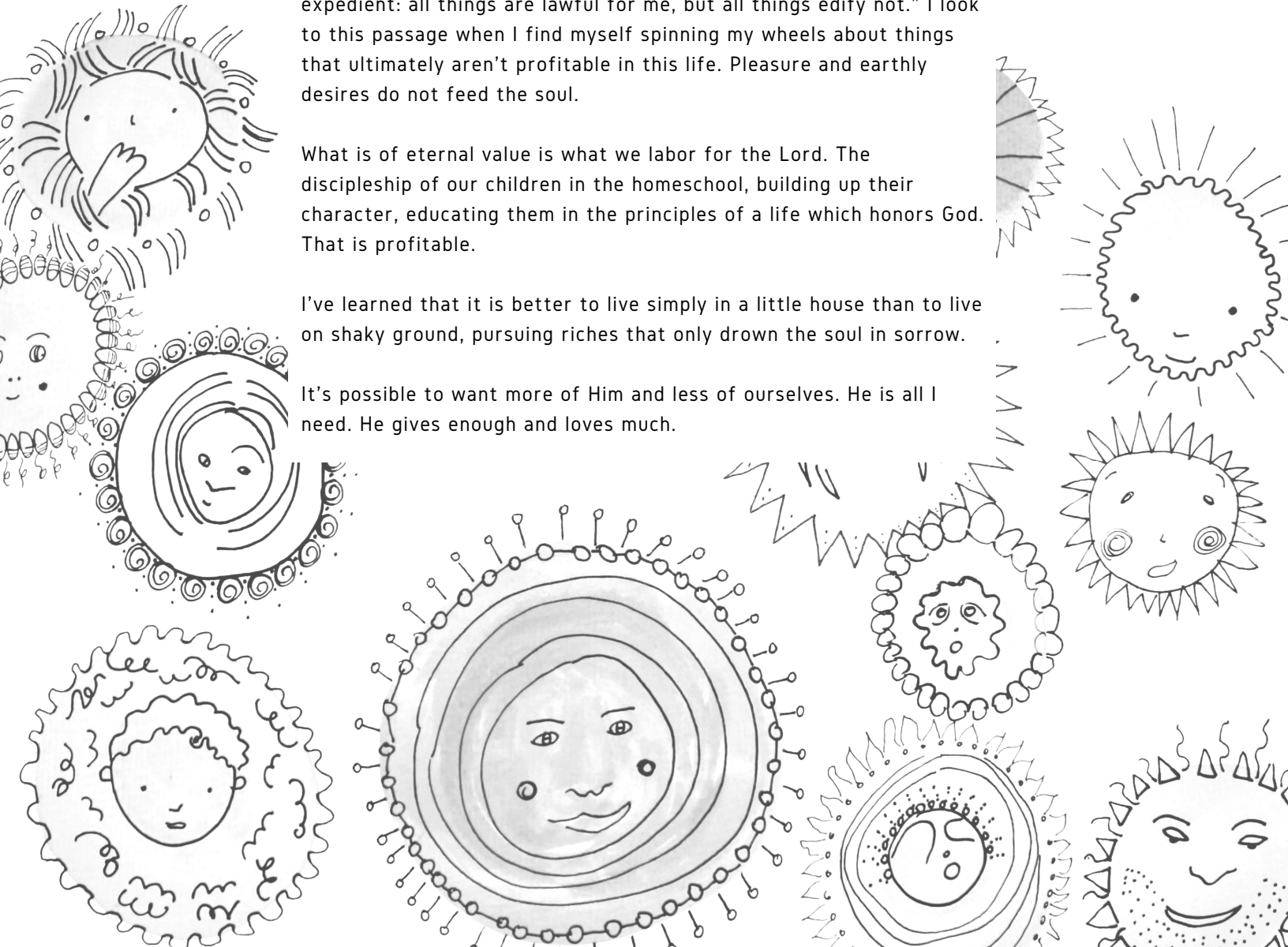
I'm so glad God has simplified my life with less belongings and less pursuits. I don't desire more than is necessary. The pleasures of life are so temporal: vacations, careers, homes, bonuses, trends. They're all vanity, as Solomon said.

How wise are his powerful and pointed words! Our work here is fleeting indeed. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." I look to this passage when I find myself spinning my wheels about things that ultimately aren't profitable in this life. Pleasure and earthly desires do not feed the soul.

What is of eternal value is what we labor for the Lord. The discipleship of our children in the homeschool, building up their character, educating them in the principles of a life which honors God. That is profitable.

I've learned that it is better to live simply in a little house than to live on shaky ground, pursuing riches that only drown the soul in sorrow.

It's possible to want more of Him and less of ourselves. He is all I need. He gives enough and loves much.



PRAYERS

I pray Lord, that you give me the wisdom to continue to build my house on your truth and love, on the certainty of your Word—that I may never grow weak and give up hope. I know I will fail (as I already do), but your mercies are new every day. May my house never fall apart into a heap of ruins. May my family always strengthen their bonds of truth, honesty, and kindness. Please continue to make us into your image. May the winds blow and the rainfall, and the floods fill the land, but let my house be founded on solid rock!

Lord, help me to be more impressed when I see more of You in my life. Help me to never fall into the standards of the world's test for beauty. Remind me to care for myself for your cause alone, to love how you created me because your hands are perfect.

Lord, help me not be stingy with what you provide. There's much I can give. Please show me how to always see the need and take the lead. May I be quick to act and give generously as you've given to me.

Lord, help me to measure my life on your standard. I know your leading is best, your way is right and narrow. Help me do life with meekness, help me willingly die to myself daily. I hear that putting others first is essential to combat pride and I know my strength can only come from you. Let me be teachable—I don't know it all—and let me see your words of wisdom as valuable lessons and warnings in my life. It's wise to be humble. It's always best.

Lord, help me to form my words according to your wisdom. Help me to love others enough to speak graciously to them, to encourage them with good things. I'm so glad you know me profoundly and deeply and that you know what my heart's desire is.

Lord, there is no need to nurse my sorrow or pacify my gritting teeth with abundance, consumption, and more of anything. Lord, please let me always remember that wanting more turns into greed. That being dissatisfied turns into complaining. These are traits that are ugly. They are a false picture of your Son. Help me be a better child who appreciates and loves all you give daily. Help me to never expect more but to instead offer myself to others. That is what is profitable and of eternal value in your eyes.