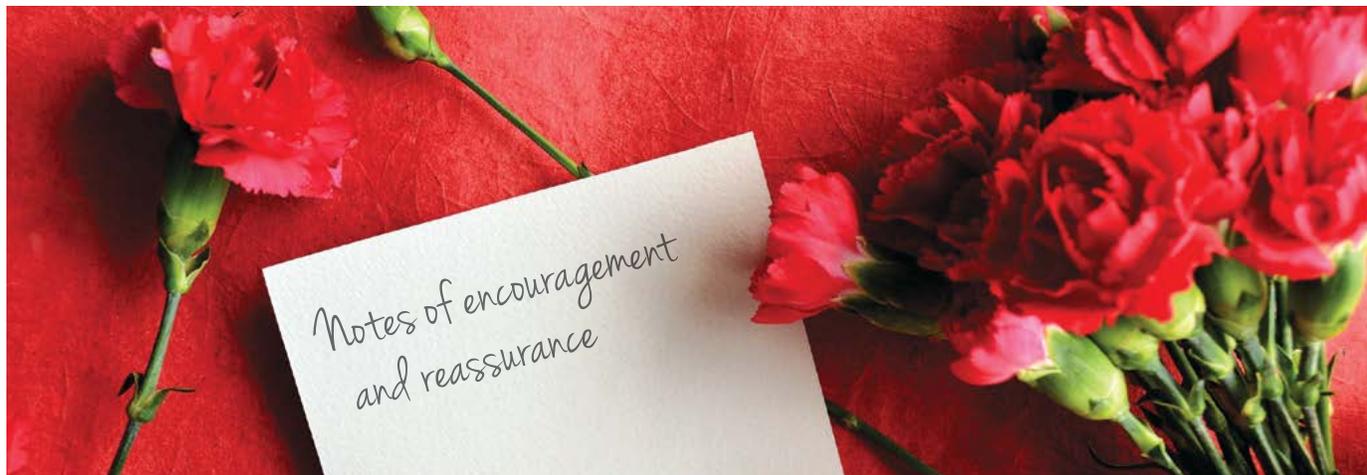


That We May Know Him

By Dianne Swaim



During a planning meeting, invite the WMU leadership team to share in a corporate devotional experience. Ask someone to read Ephesians 1:15–17.

Over many years as a conference and retreat leader, I received some beautiful encouraging notes and letters. For fun, someone suggested I begin a “Miss Wonderful” file and keep these letters for future down days. (I also received a few “You’re Not So Wonderful” letters, but I didn’t keep those!) I started that file in the 1980s. It’s not terribly thick, but it’s enough to fulfill the purpose for which it was suggested. I seldom open it, but there have been low times when I desperately needed some encouragement. Reading one or two letters from that file was just what I needed for a pick-me-up.

Ask leaders to share similar experiences of encouragement to them personally or to their WMU group. Have they saved thank-you notes for something they did to help someone? Or precious personal letters from friends? Why do they save them?

Most of Paul’s letters were written to small groups of Christians meeting in house churches. The Christian movement was only beginning and Christians were in the minority in large metropolises like Ephesus. They frequently needed encouragement, and Paul’s letters often provided that. Paul wanted the small, struggling group ministering in Ephesus to know he was praying for it.

The group members’ faith in Jesus and love for one another impressed Paul. He wanted them to know he recognized their commitment and he was praying for them. In a sense, this was their “You’re Wonderful” letter and it was passed around and read aloud for their reassurance. Indeed, it is today read to encourage believers.

Prayer for Personal Knowledge

What did Paul pray for these Christians? That God would make Himself known to them through a spirit of wisdom and revelation. They were already strong in their faith and love for the saints, but without a knowledge of God given by God Himself, that strength would gradually weaken into simply charitable good works. These believers needed more; they needed wisdom and revelation from the Father of glory.

Reflection Questions: Do you ever find yourself losing your motivation, your insight, your passion all while living faithfully and loving others? What do you need to “come alive”?

Knowing the truth is one thing and can be accomplished by education. Knowing the Truth, knowing God personally, knowing His character and His heart—these are the ingredients for passionate and healthy Christian living. These keep the flame burning in ministry and service. This was the reason Paul remembered the Ephesian believers in prayer.

In closing, ask your leaders to form small groups. First, ask them to verbally thank one another for their faith and love in service. After a moment, ask them to pray for one another as Paul prayed: “I pray that God will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation and that you will know Him better day by day.” Close with the same prayer for your WMU groups.

Dianne Swaim lives in North Little Rock, Arkansas. She serves as a hospice/palliative care chaplain for the VA Hospital.

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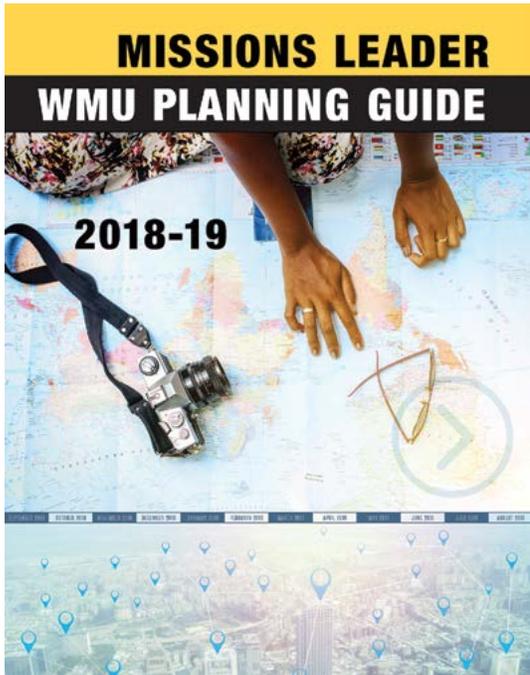
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