

## Pouring Out

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I love my husband and children. I love being a wife and mother. But lately I've been feeling a bit frustrated. Things haven't been flowing like I would like them too. The lists of things to do have piled up. My kids have been exhibiting some attitudes I'm not happy about. My husband has expressed that we're lacking enough time together. And I haven't really been sure what to do about it all.....

God is faithful! :-) Over the last few weeks, as I've laid before Him my desire for things to change, and asked for help, He has renewed my vision and purpose, and reminded me of some essential truths:

- I am a finite being. I have limited resources of time, energy, strength. I can only do so much, so I need to pick what I do. Plus, I need to make sure I take time to "fill my cup" back up, or I won't be able to keep pouring out.
- God has called me first and foremost to these things: a relationship with Him, to being a wife to my husband, and to being a mother to my children. All these things MUST be in order before I give in other directions. My God, my husband and my children need the best I have to offer - not my left-overs.
- Life is short, and kids grow quickly. Don't let these precious years slip through my fingers.
- It is VERY easy to let oneself be sucked into wasting time on non-essentials. It's important to take stock every now and then and eliminate the dross.

My family is so precious in the sight of God! How I relate to them, and how I treat them, what I do with and for them, what I pour into them - all these things are seen by God. These are the things that can bring the greatest rewards - or the greatest heartache. Oh, my friends, I cannot express the great DESIRE that is welling up in me afresh to be all that God means for me to be towards my husband and children! To pour myself out for them, daily. To love them more fully, to have great relationships with them, to walk beside my husband and help disciple my children.

And as I've thought about these things, I've seen more fully how essential it is to remove from my life everything that holds me back, everything that entangles or hinders me in fulfilling this great calling. Let me share 8 C's that are areas of some of those hinderances and what I've done or plan to do about them. Maybe you'll see something you need to change too. :-)

Computer. My computer is a wonderful tool and resource, but can also be a HUGE time waster. It's so easy to come to print out something for one of the kids and "just check my email" while I'm there, and then get sucked in to one thing or another. It's easy to escape to the computer when I'd rather not be doing those other things I should. I get a lot of email - and it takes a lot of time to deal with it all, even when a lot is just skimming. Over the last few months I've cut back a lot on how much time I spend writing emails to online groups etc, but over the last few days I've made some really big changes. I've unsubbed or gone no-mail on every yahoo group I belong to, except the GCHP lists and one other group which I run and feel is essential. All those others have their uses, but it's too easy to feel the need to respond to emails on them when I really don't have time. Those

that are useful as a reference I still have access to online if I need them. Meanwhile that's cut my daily emails down a bunch. Then there are all the ezines, newsletters and advertising emails I get. I never realised just how many there were! I thought about whether any of them really add anything great to my life, and the answer is no. As I've also decided not to spend any more money on curriculum until I've used or eliminated the resources I already have, it's better not to receive any more tempting offers also. So I unsubbed to every single routine email list I'm on. Plus I've deleted over 22,000 emails so far! Wow, does that feel good! All those things hanging over me, waiting for me to read, to do something with, or that I was keeping "just in case" - how silly!! It feels so good to release all that e-stuff and it's surprising the mental weight it lifts! Now, I need to set limits as to when I go on the computer, and even keep it turned off more so it's not an easy distraction.

Clutter - we all KNOW that too much clutter really slows us down, weighs us down, and makes it hard to function smoothly. I have to confess, I still have too much stuff. But coming to realise in a fresh way what REALLY matters has given me a renewed sense of determination to ruthlessly eliminate non-essentials, and extra desire and energy to do so. All this stuff that holds me back just has to go!

Comings and Goings - we don't do a LOT outside of our home, but I've come to realise even what we do do has got to be too much once again. We need to cut back, stay at home more, and focus on US as a family more. I'm working on this.

Communication - it helps a lot to talk about things with your loved ones - to make them feel a part of the consultation process. I'm making more of an effort to talk things over with my husband and kids, or at least let them know what's going on. This builds relationships, and helps us to work as a team towards common goals.

Commitments - I'm awful good at saying yes. For some reason, folk seem to think I will get things done. I know I need to pull back from some of the things I've been doing and narrow my focus. I've been getting spread too thin!

Consumption - what I eat and drink has been affecting my health and energy. My husband and I have agreed on a plan, and are taking steps towards better health. We've switched to a high-raw diet, and I'm learning whole new ways to prepare food. I've cut all caffeine containing foods and drinks - as I discovered they were causing my heart problems and preventing me from sleeping, even in small quantities. If I want to be all I can be for my family, I need to be as healthy as I can be, as well as a good model.

Consumerism - I have a really hard time not buying things I think will benefit my family, especially in the homeschool area. It's even harder to turn down free stuff! LOL Result - I have a computer hard drive full of resources, a small fraction of which we ever use. I have bookshelves overloaded with books and manuals, and papers all over the place. First step - decided not to get ANY more "useful stuff", but use what we have. Second step - removed myself from all sources of tempting bargains, email lists, junk mail etc. Third step - work my way through what we already have and make it either accessible so it will be used (eg put audio files on labelled discs so kids can use them), or eliminate it if really isn't that good or that useful to us. Use it or lose it!

Confusion - a lack of routines and simple structure causes confusion. No one knows what they're

supposed to do when, and I get frustrated with not getting things done, or having to nag kids over and over to do stuff. An important focus for me is to set some routines back in place - they seem to have completely slid since our accident last year. No more excuses!

Oh! Life IS so precious! And we all have the same number of hours in a day. Every day we are confronted by choices about what to do, what to keep, how to spend our time. We need to make choices that will benefit our loved ones and ourselves, not detract from our ability to fulfill our greatest calling - that of wife and mother. What choices are you making? (For more thoughts on choices, see a previous article of mine here: <http://www.cynthiahancox.com/MakingChoices.pdf>)

May the Lord bless you as you pour yourself out daily for your loved ones, in His service.

Love

*Cynthia*