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At the beginning of every new year, there's a sense of a fresh start.

We all make promises to ourselves like:

- "I'm going to eat better."
- "I'm going to exercise regularly."
- "I'm going to yell at my kids less."
- "I'm going to encourage my husband more."

And usually we do well at these things...for a few weeks or so. But most often we find they are short-lived changes.

It's not that we don't really want to change...it's just that the strategy we use for changing is a faulty strategy.

We're trying to change from the outside-in, instead of changing from the inside-out.

When Mark and I wrote the book [Living With Less So Your Family Has More](#), we started our writing with the practical

strategies we need to do to live with less. But the deeper we got into the strategies, the more we realized that without making changes on the inside--changing our attitudes toward material items--we couldn't be successful making the practical changes we want to make to successfully live with less.

Several months after the book was published, I was reading in my Bible about fruit. Not oranges and apples, but the "fruit" that is produced in our life when God inhabits our hearts. The Bible refers to this as the "fruit of the spirit" (Galatians 5:23) and it lists them as:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control

Do any of your New Year's resolutions have anything to do with the above fruit? I know mine do!

What I'm coming to understand is that this fruit requires a change on the inside first. If God lives in my heart and I allow Him to lead my life, influence my thoughts, and guide my decisions, then the fruit I long for will be the result I eventually experience.

And when I find myself impatient with my children or being unloving to my husband, I don't need to tell myself, "Jill, you need more patience," or "Jill, you need to respond lovingly." Instead, I need to consciously say, "Jill, you've slipped back into the driver's seat of your life. Get God back in his rightful place in your heart. Let Him lead. Let His truth sink deep into your soul." And when I do that, the fruit--or changes--I long for, will happen.

Ready to make some changes that really will stick? Looking for a new you in the new year? If so, join me by fertilizing your heart with God's word and watering your soul with God's presence in your daily life.

Apples, oranges, and other kinds of yummy fruit don't have anything directly to do with motherhood (other than the fact that we should all be eating more fruit than we probably are!), but let's use them as a mental prompt when pursuing change in our life. When we see a piece of fruit, we can be reminded of the fruit of God's Spirit.

Fruit results when we attend to the soil and nourishment of a fruit tree or vine. And fruit in our life results when we attend to the spiritual soil and nourishment of our heart and mind.

Apple anyone?

Keeping hearts at home,

Jill

Wife to Mark

Mom to Anne, Evan, Erica, Kolya, and Austin

Nana to 8-month-old Rilyn

Five Ways to Grow Closer to God Every Day

- **Keep a small Bible in every bathroom.** On the rare moments of the day that you're in the bathroom alone (yes, even if there are little fingers reaching under the bathroom door!), read a few verses. Proverbs is a great place to default to. It's a book of wisdom (and who doesn't need wisdom?) that has 31 chapters. Read the chapter that corresponds to the day of the month that it is.
- **Pray while folding laundry.** Let each piece of clothing prompt you to pray for the family member who wears that piece of clothing.
- **Write some of your favorite Bible verses on index cards.** Put the index cards in places where you'll see them like the bathroom mirror, the dash of your car, or on the front of the refrigerator.
- **Keep a devotional book or a small Bible in the car.** Then you can read when you're waiting in a carpool line or the orthodontist's office.
- **Sign up for a daily bible verse text at www.seemechange.org.** Everyday you will get a single Bible verse texted to your phone.

Wisdom for New Moms

Last year, right after her granddaughter was born, Jill asked "seasoned moms" on her [blog](#) for wisdom they would pass along to new moms. The response resulted in a wealth of wisdom for new moms.

If you're a new mom, enjoy these words of wisdom from those who have walked before you. If you're a seasoned mom, could you please pass this along to a new mom who needs the encouragement?



- Sleep when your baby sleeps. Housework can wait.
- Get a regular date on the calendar with your husband and make it happen! The best gift you can give your new baby is a strong marriage.
- Don't compare yourself with other moms. You are unique, and your baby is unique.
- Find a moms group where you can connect with other moms. Check out www.mops.org to find a group in your area.
- Cut yourself some slack...there's no perfect way to mother. Do what's right for you and for your baby.
- Talk to God whenever you can. He's available during that 3 a.m. feeding, even when no one else is!
- If you're breastfeeding, read your Bible while you're nursing a couple of times a day.
- Don't let family or friends make you feel guilty about choices you are making as a mom. Only you know what is best for you and your family.
- When family or friends offer to help in any way (meals, cleaning, date with the hubby), TAKE THEM UP ON IT! Don't say, "Oh, we're ok." Simply say, "Thanks so much. I'd love to take you up on the offer."



Are you looking for a way to pray consistently for your school-age children? Check out Moms In Touch, an organization that empowers moms to pray weekly for their children and their schools. To find out if there is a Moms In Touch group for your child's school, go to www.momsintouch.org today!

Ready to revolutionize your mothering?

You won't want to miss our
2011 Hearts at Home Conferences!



Here's a sneak peek of the workshops offered at the upcoming
National Conference, March 11 and/or 12, 2011
in Normal, Illinois.

- o Ten Stress Strategies Every Mom Needs

- Read the Bible Backwards
- Mosaics: The Art of a Beautifully Blended Family
- God Infusions: Secrets to a Spiritually Full Heart
- One Size Does Not Fit All!
- Prayer: More Than Just Words
- Strong-Willed Children: A Focus on Solutions
- Multiple Intelligences: How are My Children Smart
- Get R.E.A.L. in Your Marriage
- Get R.E.A.L. in Your Parenting
- The God Who Sees You
- Life-giving Hospitality...Start Simply, but Simply Start!
- Parenting a Child With Special Needs
- Yes, No, & Maybe of a Balanced Life
- The Scriptures are Alive
- Momology A Mom's Guide to Shaping Great Kids
- Rings Around the Family: Building Relationships That Support You and Your Kids
- Your Thought Closet Makeover
- First Time Moms: Move From Surviving to Thriving
- What Your Preschooler Desperately Wants to Tell You
- No More Headaches!
- More Than a Spanking?
- Parenting Like a Pro
- Generous Friendships
- Movies, Music, Television, & Video Games: What Would Jesus Do?
- 10 Practical Principles to Help Our Children Learn to Discern

Click [here](#) to see the keynote speakers and the dozens of workshops offered at the event of your choice!

National Conference ~ IL ~ Mar 11-12, 2011

Western Conference ~ CO ~ Oct 7-8, 2011

North Central Conference, MN ~ Nov 4-5, 2011

REGISTER NOW!

Can't attend a conference?

Check out the [Conference To-Go](#) option to receive the conference of your choice via CD.

Want to bring a group?

For the first time ever, Hearts at Home is offering a discount for groups of 10 or more who register at the same time. Click [HERE](#) for details!

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