

## THE MERCY PLANT

“His mercies fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.”

*Lamentations: 3:22-23*

I call it my Mercy Plant. It has bloomed in my side yard for the last three years. Its formal name is Mexican Petunia, but from the very first morning, I have called it the Mercy Plant. Long, slender fronds of dark green leaves sprout deep purple flowers every morning. Sometimes I pass the plant at four-thirty or five a.m. when I let the dog out. No matter how early I emerge, the flowers are there, open, awaiting the morning. By three-thirty or four in the afternoon, each flower will have launched itself off its stem in a parachute flight to the ground.

By the next morning, new flowers appear, and the cycle begins again. Every morning they burst into bloom; every afternoon they lie spent on the ground. I call it the Mercy Plant because it reminds me of Lamentations 3:22-23, “His mercies fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.”

Perhaps you had a terrific year of homeschooling last year. The children were eager learners. You were patient and organized. You scheduled appropriate field trips and took time out for service projects and visits to elderly. You are eagerly anticipating the new school year and can't wait to get started. God bless you! You need to read on.

Perhaps your school year wasn't perfect. Maybe it didn't even come close. You started out organized, but it went downhill fast. The children were behind in their lessons, your only field trip was an occasional stop at the grocery store, and elderly people run (walk) the other way when they see your kids coming. You know the Lord wants you to homeschool, but you haven't been able to muster up much enthusiasm or creativity for the new year.

The message of the Mercy Plant is for you. “His mercies fail not. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness.” Today is a new day, filled with God's grace and mercy toward you. This school year is a new school year, filled with fresh opportunities, second chances, and new beginnings. It stands on its own, but you don't have to. I encourage you to ponder the lessons you learned from last year, and

then put that year behind you. Turn your face toward the new year, and ask God to inspire, encourage, and equip you.

Thank God for the privilege of homeschooling. Rest in God's mercy day by day, knowing that like the Mercy flowers, what He gives you will be spent by the end of the day, but each morning He will send you new mercies...and you can't wake up earlier than God! Remember the words of the Apostle Paul, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (*Philippians 3:16*) My prayers are with you as you begin your new school year in light of God's mercy.

### **Application Questions**

1. When you think back to last school year, what aspect of it most needs the hope of God's mercy?
2. How should God's merciful nature affect how you homeschool this year?
3. What is the balance in accepting God's mercy when your efforts fall short and using God's mercy as an excuse not to be diligent and responsible with your homeschooling?

### **Action Step for This Week**

Commit, by God's mercy to put the past behind you and embrace the new school year as a brand new chance to honor and glorify Him.

### **Prayer of Commitment**

*Lord, whether last year was a good one or not, You have granted me a fresh start this school year. Enable and equip me to be the best homeschooling mother I can be. Help me give You the glory when things go well and rest in Your mercy when they don't. Remind me to extend the same mercy and grace You show toward me to those around me. Use each experience of this year to draw us all into a closer walk with You as we trust You day by day for new mercies.*

Excerpted from *Joy in the Journey: Encouragement for Homeschool Moms* by Lori Hatcher. Used with permission.

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