

SECRETS *Savored*

P.O. BOX 2257

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DECEMBER 2023

— THE —

# True Gift

OF THE SEASON



When I was a little girl, a local church adopted my family as their "Christmas project." We were invited to a dinner where we received our gifts from the church family. I do not remember many details of that night, but I do clearly remember the gift I was given. It was my very first baby doll. The little blonde-headed doll was the greatest gift I had ever received.

Each year, in reading the Christmas story, my heart is drawn to Mary. An innocent, humble, and lowly Jewish girl chosen by God to bear his Son, the gift who would come to save the world. Without hesitation, Mary received and embraced the gift in her womb. In her words of praise, we can sense her humble and grateful heart.

*And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."  
— Luke 1:46-49 ESV*

Because my parents spent a large part of my childhood earning numerous educational degrees, our family of six had very meager birthday and Christmas celebrations. Their funds went to pay for educational expenses rather than giving elaborate gifts. Because receiving gifts was a rare part of my childhood, each one I was given was very special to me.

When I was young, the baby doll placed in my arms was a special tangible gift. Now, years later, my perspective on gifts has changed. Many of the gifts I treasure are not found beneath my tree. They are gifts that God has graciously given to me, just as he graciously gave to Mary the gift of bearing his Son. Gifts such as my eleven-year journey with Mark through his illness, lunch with a friend, my morning quiet

time, watching our youngest granddaughter ride her horse, praying for others, discovering new and profound truths in God's Word, conversations with my daughters, watching a sunset on the beach with my granddaughters, making a cake for a friend, having people over for dinner, sending a card of encouragement, visiting my mom, siblings, nieces, and nephews, watching the faces of my grandchildren as they open gifts, visiting my grandson at college, meeting a young lady for coffee, watching my grandsons play baseball, attending Mark's family reunions, talking with a neighbor, giving financially to those in need, playing Sorry with Josh and Lila, sharing my story with others, and on and on I could go.

It is no longer the tangible gifts under the tree that hold the greatest importance for me. I cannot hold the gifts of greatest importance in my hand, but like Mary, I can treasure them in my heart. This Christmas and in the coming year, I pray that you and I, like Mary, will receive and embrace each and every gift God chooses to graciously give us.

Merry Christmas!

*Dianne*

I WANT TO THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE WHO PRAYS FOR AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE SECRETS SAVED MINISTRY. I COULD NOT FULFILL GOD'S CALLING UPON MY LIFE WITHOUT YOUR FAITHFULNESS. THANK YOU AND MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS THIS MINISTRY THROUGH YOUR OBEDIENCE!

*Dianne*



You are cordially invited to not attend the

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# LONGVIEW POINT BAPTIST CHURCH

*Hernando, Mississippi*



I first heard about the *Secrets Savored* ministry when Dianne spoke at a women's event at my former church. I was so impressed with the ministry, but at that time I was not able to participate. A few years later, I was ready to jump right in. I began my first *Secrets* small group over seven years ago in my former church. After leaving there, I was able to continue my investment in utilizing *Secrets* at The Point in Hernando, Mississippi.

The *Secrets* ministry has been such a blessing in my life. It is a wonderful mentoring program that brings women from all stages of life together. I know lives are being changed and friendships forged that will stand the test of time, all because of this ministry. The relationships that are built through *Secrets* will last a lifetime. I'm so thankful that Dianne was obedient to the Lord.

*JoAnn Bishop | Discipling Leader*



I attended a gathering at our church, The Point, where ladies shared opportunities to participate in different Bible studies. That day, I heard JoAnn Bishop talk about the *Secrets* ministry. She explained that it was a mentoring ministry based on Titus 2 where older women invest in the lives of young women. At the end, I spoke with her sharing that I liked what *Secrets* offered, in fact, I loved everything I heard. So I joined and now have the privilege of being a Titus 2 woman.

*Secrets* has provided an opportunity for women of different ages to come together to cook, eat, and study God's Word. Weekly our group discusses the challenges of life. I have two grown daughters who are young wives and mothers. I am so thankful for other Christian women who are investing in them. *Secrets* has allowed me to be a part of young women's daily walk with Jesus. Each week, we share a meal and also learn more from one another about our Lord and Savior—Jesus Christ! We experience sweet fellowship, laughter, tears, and times of praising God for His LOVE.

*Rebecca Ray | Discipling Leader*



I heard about *Secrets Savored* through my church, The Point, and was instantly intrigued. I put off joining for a few years because I was "too busy" and often had to work late. But during those years, God began to work on my heart. My parent's and grandparent's faith and spiritual influence led me to Jesus.

The older I get, the more I appreciate the role they played in my life. I am still young, having only been married a few years, and without children. But, due to my deep desire to grow in my faith and pass it along to the next generation, I joined *Secrets*. This ministry has connected me with women who have successful godly marriages, have raised godly children, and love the Lord deeply. I have been blessed by *Secrets* and I am thankful I put aside my excuses; jumping into this sweet fellowship with other women.

*Rachel Vinson | Participant*



In moving to Cookeville, Tennessee, I began to pray about the role God had for me as the pastor's wife. When I discovered the *Secrets* ministry, it resonated with my heart and what I desired for the women of our church and community. It gave us the tool to learn from one another and build healthy godly, homes and families. I have found such joy in the fellowship it provides with the younger women but also with my peers and the older women in our church.

*Secrets* has been instrumental in bringing all ages of women together, which has been a turning point for our congregation. Each week, we learn from one another as we laugh and share our stories of hospitality throughout the different eras. The Bible study has opened our eyes to the fact that we aren't the first! What an encouragement that women in Scripture struggled with the same issues we do today. Because of *Secrets*, our ladies are growing in spirit and in number. What a blessing!

*Danna Jackson | Pastor's Wife*

In teaching the weekly Bible study, I had to step out of my comfort zone. But I placed my faith in God, and He helped me with each lesson. In preparing, I have learned the value of digging deeper into God's Word. This has been a true spiritual blessing in my life.

My *Secrets* group ranges in age from their mid-20's to their mid-60's. Many of the women did not know one other prior to our group meetings. After just a couple of weeks, while waiting for the Sunday service to begin I noticed four of our ladies of various ages huddled around and laughing and talking. Some of these ladies had not even spoken to one another prior to *Secrets*. That's when I realized ... this is what *Secrets Savored* is all about. One on one mentoring and fellowship. What a blessing *Secrets* has been in my life. Hopefully, the younger ladies have learned some things from me because I have certainly learned a great deal from them.

*Mary Jane Howard | Discipling Leader*

Dianne has put her finger on the pulse of intergenerational ministry! *Secrets Savored* is a skillful blend of Biblical principles, tips for hearth and home, and ageless sisterhood. When teenagers, women old enough to be their grandmothers, and others in between connect over Scripture, life in Christ takes on a richer quality.

*Maston Jackson | Pastor, Hampton Crossroads Baptist Church*

The *Secrets Savored* study has been such a huge blessing to me. The ability to gather with other ladies and share stories, testimonies, and laughter has allowed me to get to know these ladies on a level that I otherwise would not have been able to. I look forward to learning together with these ladies each and every week.

*Jenny Anderson | Participant*

HAMPTON CROSSROADS BAPTIST CHURCH  
*Cookeville, Tennessee*