



# CAPTIVATING Thoughts

## Holding On While Letting Go

by Stasi Eldredge

"She grabs life with both hands." Isn't that a good thing? Doesn't it mean she lives with passion? She is fully IN. She wants to be fully present and drink deeply from the draught of life. Diving in to experiences and people with abandon. She does not hold herself back.

Wow. That's sounds really appealing—so why am I exhausted just writing it? Thing is, though I want to live with passion, I can't be fully present 100 percent of the time. It's too much for this soul to take. I need to retreat. Pull in. Tune out. Life is loud, my heart needs quiet.

I've dived in with abandon in the past and slammed into the unseen, rocky bottom. I am aware that I am more cautious now. It is my toe that dips in the water first. I want to know how deep, exactly, is the water before I go. Some of my discretion is wisdom born of suffering. Some of my holding back is fear born of suffering.

Come, Jesus.

But we are those who do not shrink back." I don't want to be a woman who shrinks back from anything or anyone God calls me to. If He says "Dive," I don't want to hesitate. But sometimes, like cliff jumping into the water 30 feet below, it takes a bit of encouragement to my soul to buoy my faith and resolve. If Jesus calls me to do something, then He will equip me to do it. Leap!

He doesn't promise that I won't get

hurt in the jump. He promises that He won't abandon me in the free fall or in the landing. He calls me to LIVE. To live in Him. To live fully. To press in. To pursue Him and to pursue people. He cautions, "Don't shrink back. Don't sit on the sidelines. Don't let your soul take up residence in a cul-de-sac."

He promises that He is my Life. He is my safe place. He says, "Take hold of Me with both hands."

That I can do. That I will do. Because I trust His good heart. And if I get bruises in the process of following, I can know that He will use even those for the honing of my heart to become more like His. His heart holds on to His Father's in a Union He prays for us to know. I desire to know it. To live it. To love from it.

He invites me to love. He fuels my passion for life by the fire in my heart that He lights Himself. He asks me to let go of my fear. He calls me to let go of holding back.

He tells me to release my demand for a pain-free life for myself and all those He loves.

Turns out, pain is not the enemy I thought it was.

A cold heart is. Hands that cling to this false idea that a good life requires a vigilance of self-protection rather than a vigilance of nourishing my resolve of faith. God knows what my soul needs. Yes, I need quiet sometimes. I can

more easily find Him there. But He is also to be found in the hustle and bustle that our lives sometime require. In all of it, He will not be held back. He has leaped from the highest of Homes to dive after you and me.

He has committed to grabbing on to us with both nail-scarred hands. And He is holding on. He will not let go.♥

*The above article is a reprint from 2018, but worth the reminding.*

### COMMENT CORNER

**Bluebonnet** is a name given to any number of purple-flowered species of the genus *Lupinus* predominantly found in southwestern United States and is collectively the state flower of Texas. The shape of the petals on the flower resembles the bonnet worn by pioneer women to shield them from the sun.

It's ironic that the name *Lupinus* is derived from the Latin word *lupus*, meaning wolf. In fact, at one time bluebonnets were known as wolf flowers because they appeared to devour the soil, as they were **often found growing in thin rocky soils which didn't support** any other plant life.

**Called to Change** (C2C) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization reaching those who have been impacted by incarceration through weekend crusades, mentoring, and partnering with prison Chaplains to deliver pastoral care. **Visit** C2C Captivating Alumni on Facebook to connect & learn about monthly gatherings.

# Bloom Where You Are Planted

BISHOP OF GENEVA, ST FRANCIS DE SALES (1567-1622)

[Danielle Bernock, Crosswalk.com](http://DanielleBernock.com)

The “ancient” times when this phrase emerged undoubtedly reflects the fact that changing your location, where you lived, was not nearly as easy as it is today.

## What does it mean?

“Bloom Where You Are Planted” can mean various things depending on its usage.

1. To be fruitful, blossom, become all you were created to be.
2. Make the best of what you have when life throws lemons at you.
3. Do what’s right, even when it’s hard.

Each have their place and even corresponding Scripture, which I’ll elaborate on.

## Meaning 1: Be Fruitful

Saint Francis is recorded as saying:

“Truly charity has no limit; for the love of God has been poured into our hearts by His Spirit dwelling in each one of us, calling us to a life of devotion and inviting us to **bloom** in the garden **where** He has **planted** and directing us to radiate the beauty and spread the fragrance of His Providence.”

I believe the words of St. Francis were inspired by words in the Bible. In the book of Genesis. After God created Adam and Eve, He blessed them and told them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” GEN. 1:28

Other Scripture describes a believer’s fruitful flourishing by trusting in God.



*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”* JEREMIAH 17:7-8

Scriptures and other writings such as these encourage us to be all God has made us to be.

## Meaning 2: Make the Best of Life

Using the phrase in this way encourages resilience. Sometimes life is hard. Things don’t always go according to plan. Even in less than wonderful situations, we have control over how we respond. Blooming where we are planted is to make the choice to respond in a positive manner. It’s in agreement with another familiar phrase about making lemonade when life throws you lemons.

When many Israelites were exiled to Babylon, they were in a less than wonderful situation. But God told them, in a way, to bloom where they were planted for that time.

*“This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.’”* JEREMIAH 29:4-7



## Meaning 3: Do What’s Right

Doing what’s right when it’s hard is—hard. Perhaps that’s why Paul gives this instruction in 1 Corinthians 7: 20-24, which is another place we find the sentiment of blooming where we are planted.

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This passage does not sanction human slavery, especially in the way slavery was practiced in the West during the 17th-19th centuries. Instead, this passage is a call to honor God above men.

*“Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord’s freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 7:20-24

And it doesn’t mean to stay stuck

Blooming where you are planted doesn’t mean you can’t improve yourself or must stay stuck in an awful place. Let me remind you of line above “if you can gain your freedom, do so” (vs. 21). The Bible is full of words encouraging us to grow and change.