



Week 6 | February | Stillness of Winter

It's up to us to take the reins of
our joys, and our whimsies,
and push away the worries,
the angst, the unrelenting questions,
for enough of a pause to let in
a dribble of light.

- Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Read John 15:1-17
- Read Stillness of Winter, pp 179-191
(*Brigade to Insert Joy*)

We are called to think of others, to consider how our actions just might make a difference for good in the world. God meets us in this place of caring for those around us, providing empowerment and guidance to do so, and topping it off with a sense of joy. And just before we become too weary in our efforts, God whispers "Shhhhhh. Be still."

Discussion/journal prompts –

1. Have you participated in a meal packing or delivery effort to care for others? Or a meal kitchen serving the homeless? Or a food pantry program? Describe the effort and how you took part.
2. The scripture passage in 1 Thessalonians says that faith produces action and leads to loving acts bolstered with a confident hope. This triad of faith, hope and love is found often in the New Testament. How do you see it lived out in your life and/or in our world?
3. Our book shares a blessing about tucking in dozens and dozens of bulbs before winter hit as a "last act of hope." Seeing the bulbs poke through the dirt in the spring is "proof that hope pays off." What bulbs do you plant? What signs do you see that declare triumph, that speak hope to our world?
4. Are there ways you find helpful to stay connected to God? Share what these are and what you might try to do even more intentionally.
5. What does friendship with Jesus look like to you? What does it call you to do in your relationships with others?
6. Joy is a driving force in human nature, and it exerts a powerful pull on us, drawing us toward our highest purpose and the most complete expression of our gifts. What are the events, people and things that give you a sense of complete joy?

Before next week, read *Stillness of Winter* pp 192-223 (Prayer to Recipe Box).