

## Session 1: The Wildflower

**Focus:** If you were a wildflower, what would you look like?

Matthew 6:28-30

*“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”*

### 1.1 Introduction

This Ministry Manual has been based upon our own personal experiences of God in the desert places of our life. We have travelled many times to the Outback which is the name given to the desert regions of Australia. The Tromp and McCabe families have made 5 camping trips out into the desert, each time taking photographs and writing of our experiences. Lots of stories have been told around the evening campfire! We have travelled through the Outback of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It has been a great adventure and a wonderful opportunity to meet with God away from the safety of our own homes! All the wildflower photos included in this Ministry Manual have been taken during these trips.



The Tromps



The McCabes

Wildflowers are usually found in uncultivated areas in their natural habitat. They are not deliberately planted nor tended. Many of these wildflowers have a short life span with the seeds shooting up and growing into plants, then flowering in all their glory for a few weeks, finally dying away and leaving their seeds behind for another year to begin the process all over again. They are here today and gone tomorrow. In Australia you will find many of our wildflowers out in the desert. The Australian desert is famous for its wildflowers with Western Australia in particular noted for its abundance of desert blooms. There are annual tours available that will take you out to see these stunning wildflowers in their natural habitat. There is something amazing about seeing this incredible beauty appear for such a short period of time in one of the driest places in the world. How



can it be, to see such beauty in what some would describe to be such a barren place – the desert?

## 1.2 Sturt's Desert Pea

**Common Name:** Sturt's Desert Pea

**Botanical Name:** *Swainsona formosa*

**Description:** The Sturt's Desert Pea is one of Australia's best known wildflowers. It grows naturally in the arid areas of Central and Western Australia as well as in New South Wales and Queensland. It grows prolifically in outback South Australia with this state adopting the Sturt's Desert Pea as its state floral emblem in 1961. The common name is attributed to Charles Sturt who observed the plant during his exploration of inland Australia in 1844. We found this wildflower carpeting the entire region around Tibooburra in the Corner Country of North/West New South Wales.



In creating this wildflower God made provision for the Sturt's Desert Pea to grow well as a desert plant. It has small seeds that are long lived and can germinate after many years of lying on the ground waiting for the next favourable rain. The seeds are protected from the harsh desert conditions by a hard coating and it is this coating that makes the seeds so difficult to germinate in the domestic garden. It was designed for desert conditions. The Sturt's Desert Pea grows best in sandy, well drained soils. Once germinated, the plant develops a deep taproot that is necessary for desert survival. The plant requires little water and can tolerate the extreme range of desert temperatures from 45+ degrees Celsius to some frost. The Sturt's Desert Pea flowers from Spring through to Summer and comes in a range of colours. The most common is the blood red pea-shaped flower with the black centre (or boss). But the flowers have also been found to range from pink to white, with the boss being paler also. Birds pollinate the flowers. The grey green plant is prostrate and grows up to 2 metres across with the flowers spiking up every 10 – 15 cm.



*Fields of peas south of Tibooburra,  
Outback NSW*

As the wildflowers grow uncultivated in their natural habitat, God has made provision for their distinctive needs. Some grow near the creeks and as the creeks flow during the rainy seasons, they burst forth into bud. Some require very little rainfall and sprout after just one shower. Some tolerate rocky soil, some sandy. Some are prostrate with a spreading growth, others upright. Some produce a single flower whilst others an abundance of heads. God has made them each one unique to their species and has a provision for all of them.

## 1.3 God's Provision For Us

In the book of Matthew Jesus uses the wildflower to teach us about the Kingdom of God. We are encouraged not to worry about the things of this life; about what we will eat and drink; about our body or even what we will wear. Our Heavenly Father has all these things in hand for He knows that we need them all. We are encouraged instead to *"... seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* (Matthew 6:33-34).



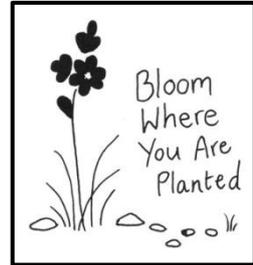
The Apostle Paul certainly experienced many trials that we would consider worth worrying about. He was imprisoned repeatedly; flogged; faced death over and over again; beaten with rods; stoned; shipwrecked in the open sea; faced many dangerous situations; was hungry and thirsty, cold and naked (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). Yet despite all these difficulties he encourages us with these words in Philippians 4:6-7, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* How is that possible? How can we not be anxious about the trials we face in our life? They are so painful. They are so difficult to endure. Well, Paul encourages us to come and present our requests before our Heavenly Father. This is the same Heavenly Father who clothes the wildflowers of the field in all their beauty and provides for them. As we pray and present our requests to God, the peace of God comes upon us - a peace that passes all understanding and guards our heart and mind in Christ Jesus. This peace is real and can be felt by our body. It is tangible. It is this peace that we seek in the times when we worry about our circumstances. We need to take our eyes off our own circumstances and look to see how Jesus is interceding for us before His Father (Romans 8:34). The Holy Spirit intercedes for us too with groans that go far beyond what we can express in words (Romans 8:26). As we position ourselves in what Jesus is doing for us and with us, it is then that this peace will cover our heart and mind. We will be at peace as the storm rages around us.

We all know these scriptures! We know that we should not worry. We know that we should let go. We know that we need to be moving on. But it is all so difficult! Many times it feels like it is almost impossible to look for God, let alone find Him, when we are anxious and filled with worry. This Ministry Manual seeks to speak into these places. It gives an opportunity to explore some of our desert experiences



when we felt so alone, when we were anxious and filled with the worries of life. As we come together and seek God during each session, we will be encouraged to lift our eyes off our present circumstances and to go looking for that same God and His faithful provision that the wildflowers in the desert experience. Just as God has provides for the Sturt Desert Pea, He provides for us. As we seek first His Kingdom, then allow Him to take care of the rest!

Remember that in the scheme of eternity we are like wildflowers, here today and gone tomorrow. So let's make our days count! Let's bloom where we are planted! We acknowledge that this may be a big step to take but it is our testimony that it is one well worth risking. James 4:8 reminds us to draw near to God and He in turn will draw near to us. God is always present in our circumstances but we are not always willing to go and look for Him. Let's make the effort to do so today!



## 1.4 Sharing Time



This Ministry Manual uses *Card Ministry* to access the deep places of the heart. In each session there will be an array of themed cards to choose from. These cards will form the basis of a sharing time and an opportunity for God to come and speak to you through your choice of card. You will also be sharing your choice of card with a partner. Questions are given to prompt discussion. In choosing a card and sharing about it, you are given the opportunity to talk about your experiences and to share how life is going for you. There is no right or wrong answer – just your own personal response. In sharing with a partner, you have an opportunity for your heart to be heard in a safe environment, one on one. We are wounded in community but we also heal in community. It is as we share and are heard that some of the heaviness of our heart is released. We begin to process the painful places as we talk about them. But we also want the Holy Spirit to be a part of this healing journey so some of the questions will encourage you to involve Him also.

We would like to acknowledge Patricia Hutchinson and the inspiration she provided for this *Card Ministry*. Patricia gave a very creative and informative presentation about using cards in ministry that sowed the seeds for the Sharing Time of this Ministry Manual. We are very appreciative of the creative gifts the Lord has blessed her with.

We will be using a variety of cards for this Ministry Manual. As Leaders you may choose to be creative and prepare some of the cards yourself, or if you prefer, to purchase them. **Peoplemaking** ([www.peoplemaking.com.au](http://www.peoplemaking.com.au)) in Camberwell, Victoria, Australia has a wide range of cards available for purchase.

In preparation for the Sharing Time for this session, Leaders will need to have a collection of wildflower cards available. We went through our photo collection from previous desert trips and sourced our cards from them. You might like to source the cards from your own photo collection, or perhaps from magazines, travel brochures, postcards or cards.

Leaders, to begin with, spread the wildflower cards out on a table for easy access. Then invite the participants to come forward and choose one that catches their eye. They don't have to have a firm reason for choosing it. They just choose one and pick it up. Then encourage everyone to find a partner they feel safe with and begin to share about their card using the following prompt questions:

1. Share 2 things that caught your attention.
2. What encouraged you to decide to choose this card?
3. Do any feelings begin to surface as you look at this card? Put words to these feelings.
4. What is encouraging about this card?
5. What discourages you?
6. If you were this wildflower, what provision has your Heavenly Father given you? Ask your partner for suggestions as well.

Now swap over and invite the other partner to share. When finished, pray a simple blessing over each other using the imagery of a wildflower. Allow 15 minutes for this sharing time.

## 1.5 Small Groups

It is now time to break up into your Small Group for prayer. It takes time to build trust in the Small Group so Leaders, don't rush things. If the participants are comfortable sharing their prayer needs right away, then encourage them to do so. If not, then invite them to just relax and allow the trust to build over the coming weeks. Invite them to watch and listen for the first few sessions and then when they're ready, ask for prayer. The invitation for prayer in this session is with regards to some of the issues that were raised in the Sharing Time. But it can also be an opportunity to pray over some of the things that are happening at their home or have happened during their week. The participant is to suggest what they would like prayer for.

In the Small Group the Leader is responsible for the overall safety of the group and for supervising the prayer time. In the first few sessions the Leader only will be offering the prayer, but as trust grows the Leader may begin to invite others to participate when they have a word or picture to offer. Remember that it is up to the participant whether they receive this word or not. If it is received then pray it in. If it is not received, then allow the word to blow



away like chaff on the wind (Psalm 35:5). Never push anyone to take on a word that is not received willingly.

It may not be possible to pray for everyone every week. The Leader is to supervise this ensuring that everyone gets regular prayer over the duration of the course. Some of the prayers may be deep ministry prayers whilst others may be shorter prayers of blessing. Expect a mixture of both!

## 1.6 Prayers

### When I am worried (Participant)

Dear Lord, I confess that I am worried about ..... I ask You to forgive me for worrying. I invite You in Your boundless grace and mercy to come to me as Peace. You are the Prince of Peace and I need You in this place. You promise us a peace that passes all understanding and I claim that peace for myself in this situation. In Jesus' name. Amen. (Philippians 4:7)

### God, where are You? (Participant)

Dear Lord, I can't find You in this place of pain. I confess that my circumstances have overwhelmed me yet again but I choose to take my eyes off these circumstances as I look to You. You promise to never leave me nor forsake me so I choose to believe that You are always with me even if I can't always see You. You are good and You are faithful and I thank You for being with me. In Jesus' name. Amen. (Psalm 34:8, Hebrews 13:5)

### Confession of unbelief (Participant)

Dear Lord, I confess that I have unbelief in my heart. I confess that I don't always believe that You are good or that You are for me (*or anything else you don't believe about God*). I ask You to forgive me for my unbelief. Thank You for Your forgiveness and Your cleansing. I choose to believe as an act of my will that You are good and You are always for me. I choose to believe ..... I bless Your Holy Name. In Jesus' name. Amen. (Mark 9:24)

### Reassurance that God cares for me (Participant)

Thank You Lord that You care about me. Thank You that there is nothing at all that can separate me from Your love. Thank You that no trouble that comes my way can separate me from Your love. Thank You that not even death or life can separate me from You! Thank You that there is nothing in all creation that can separate me from Your Presence, neither angels, demons nor any other powers. Even the present and the future are unable to cut me off from You. Thank You that Jesus is my Lord always! In Jesus' name. Amen. (Romans 8:38-39)

## 1.7 Journal

Draw a sketch of yourself as a wildflower. Spend some quiet time with Jesus and allow Him to give you some impressions. Make a note of them and see how these impressions develop over the course.