

Omigosh it is April!

The other day I cut a gardening schedule out of the newspaper. Today I scoured for weeds and hoped for survival of plants that made it or lived through another one of the coldest winters in Florida. April came so suddenly – I heard the weatherman say it was warming up at least 5 or six times since the end of January. Sometimes it got up to 50 for a day – I still must wear fleece, scarf and gloves when I walk and it is 50 degrees. We normally enjoy short winters in Florida. Those of us who live in West Central Coastal Florida believe we have the best of both worlds: sunshine during the day and a cozy fireplace at night.

So now it is April and about time to put the heavier clothes away and think about global warming again. As a female I think of April in terms of birthdays, clocks to adjust, Easter Holiday, the last part of the school year, spring break and how much weight I gained over the winter. As an employer I think about the end of the first fiscal quarter, paying taxes, planning and development this year, and quality assurance check ups. As a Floridian I think about snowbirds going away and real butterflies and flowers and heat and bugs and hurricanes and a quiet slow lifestyle. As a Christian I ask myself if I will get depressed again in April.

Isn't that strange? For most of my life if I was going to get "down" it is usually in April. Why should that be? By nature women are cyclic creatures, their biology ebbs and flows with the tide and cycle of the moon. It takes each of us almost 40 or 50 years to figure out our bodies through periods, pregnancy and sex and clothes and our own expectations. I am now in my 6th decade and I know what I am allergic to, how many calories I can eat combined with the exercise I get and what kind of clothes I want to wear. Some counselors advise that our emotional and spiritual clock is also cyclic. Does it matter that my mom died in April? Or that twice in my life I was attacked by a stranger in two different states eight years apart but both times in April?

I love that we celebrate Easter in April, new life, the resurrected Christ, Flowers, baby chicks and chocolate candy. For years I used the candy to settle my angst that might become anger or depression. Those years when I felt I could overcome without the candy I would need long naps and sad movies (Schindler's List is a great cure for depression). These days I am happy to slow down, spend time alone and think about how I feel, process

it and realize clinical depression is a pretty self-centered mood. Depression means my brain cells are not connecting freely. I might feel bored, weepy, and sorry for myself or ticked off.

The problem with clinical depression is that needing "to wind yourself up everyday" means you just are not energetic and excited about life. Maybe something you love is lost – gone forever. Being in that part of your brain to find the feelings, the moods, the words and the sludge that we become (sometimes every month for a few days) require exploration to improve it. It becomes like cleaning a closet: the longer it has gone with out attention and the more stuff that is stuffed there, the more painful it is to go there. We would rather blame someone or something else on our sorry state or take a pill or a piece of chocolate to make ourselves feel better.

The more we learn about ourselves as humans the more we either expose our unlovely parts or cover them over and hide them. – Or perhaps we are so used to them inside of us we don't realize how unlovely these parts are and how they affect others. I think one of the unloveliest parts of myself is my conceit. Another part is my deceit – to myself about myself. When I don't live up to my own standards and others do not see what I think they should see to be healthy and happy, I get tired of trying or I beat myself up and shake my manipulative finger at the others and feel sad over the sin, the loss the darkness. The conceit is the belief that if I am doing my part in the world it should be a better place: not so broken, not so sad and dying. As if I am God's gift to the world! The reality is that Jesus is God's gift and although He is mine, I am also His – thankful for His grace and "willing" to serve Him in whatever capacity. Willing of course until it is too hard, too uncomfortable, painful and depressing or I become the worm, the slug, the sludge that I feel I am. Good thing my feelings are not the truth of my actual state. As a Christians the truth of my state is Galatians 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." How can I be depressed about that?