

God's Mission for You 50th Anniversary of Change

Growing up my favorite movie was *The Sound of Music*. Still is. I love the thought of Maria on the top of the Austrian mountain just outside Salzburg, spinning around as she sings, "The hills are alive with the sound of music." I love inspirational music and I appreciate the beauty of the Alps. I love the purity in people, which was certainly depicted by both the real Maria and the pure voice and wonderful character of Julie Andrews.



Think about the compelling storyline of the movie. Maria is seeking to be a nun, entering the convent to give her life to God. But, Maria is a free spirit with a special sparkle about her. God created Maria to be even more than a person willing to dedicate her life sequestered in prayer and study as a nun. God wanted to share her loving spirit with the world. Mother Abbess recognized this, and sent Maria to experience life as a governess at the home of the widowed naval officer, Captain Von Trapp. As we all know, Maria falls in love with the Captain, a man struggling between the loyalty to his homeland, the Austria "he used to know" and his orders to serve the Nazi regime in WWII. The free spirited and loving Maria is afraid of her developing love for the principled Captain, and flees back to the convent. She is sent back to the Von Trapp family, and eventually marries the captain and cares for his 7 children. As the Nazi's close in on Captain Von Trapp the entire family escapes to neighboring Switzerland. Their flight is assisted by the nuns in the abbey, who admit they "sinned" by disabling the German automobile that is searching for the Von Trapp family.

Isn't this like our life today? Life is not simple, and has challenges coming at us from all directions. Our world is not what it once was. New demands put us in conflict with what we think is right. We want to serve God, but hiding in the safety of a convent to avoid facing them is not an option. We, too, have a restlessness longing to experience life to the fullest.

If we look, we will find we can love God and serve Him in so many ways, in spite of the challenges. Like Maria Von Trapp, this includes serving Him through our families, but that, too, has competing influences demanding our time and attention. There are plenty of detours, most of which are not our own doing. But, keeping focused on the goal we *can* find our way.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary of *Sound of Music*, we still can feel the emotion during the twists and turns of the storyline. The love of "16 going on 17" Lisel looks wonderful, but there is a challenge because of Rolf's allegiance

to the Third Reich, adding drama to the storyline. A father who loves his children but is too busy for them eventually realizes the importance of family. Captain Von Trapp shuts the joy of music out of his life because of his disappointment for the direction of his homeland, is eventually inspired by the words to one of his country's most emotional songs. The flower, Edelweiss, thrives in a rocky, unforgiving soil. How symbolic is that? "Bless my homeland, forever."

Don't deny joy when facing severe challenge? Through God there is hope. Aren't we often too busy for our children? How do we break the cycle?



The Sound of Music is a story about courage and hope, in the face of danger, oppression and change. It took one person, empowered by God, to be the catalyst for change. You can be that person for someone else in need. Maria changed the father's relationship with his children from militaristic to loving. She changed the outlook of Captain Von Trapp from disappointment to one of hope for a future, even if it involved climbing a mountain to freedom. And, in the process of helping everyone else, Maria changed her own outlook from frustration and hiding to being what God made her to be, enriching the lives of everyone around her. It was all

done through God's love: *"A dream that will need, all the love you can give, every day of your life, for as long as you live."*

You can be that catalyst for change around you, and find what God meant for you to be. *"Climb every mountain ... follow every rainbow, 'til you find your dream."*

Scripture: *He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9)*

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails (Proverbs 19:21)

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me (John 6:38)

Question: Have you served in a role where you have helped someone to see life in a more positive way, seeing them to make important changes that enriched their life? How did it affect you.

Prayer: Help us, dear Lord, to find ways where we can help others to improve their outlook on life. Guide us to be helpful to others and grow in our faith as well. Amen.