THIS ISSUE’S PICK

**Flourish**

Dr. Catherine Hart Weber (Bethany House)

Using botanical and biblical metaphors, Dr. Catherine Hart Weber addresses the areas in our lives that can wilt and languish when left unattended, unified and uncultivated. This much-needed resource offers sound practical ways to become fully alive again in our own personal lives, our relationships, in our outlook, and in what we would call our emotional immune system by showing spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally how we were intended by God to flourish and grow.

One of the important keys to regaining a flourishing life is learning to live each day with deep gratitude. According to the author, focusing on the good things and facing each day being truly thankful can actually “change your choices and pathways to your brain. By practicing gratitude exercises daily,” writes Dr. Weber, “you can become more alert, attuned, and intentional in your gratitude habits.”

This is no surprise to those who have proven the gratitude principles of the Bible. “Count your blessings, name them one by one,” as the old hymn says, has long been a stress buster and a soul builder.

But psychiatry and psychology research are bringing scientific proof to the experiences of those who have tried being thankful when things got tough. New studies are proving that gratitude leads to “infusing daily life with happier moods, more optimism, better sleep, lower levels of chronic stress, fewer physical symptoms of illness and pain, and the ability to avoid emotions that cultivate bitterness, envy, stress and depression when facing life challenges.”

And gratitude is just one of the principles prescribed in this enriching and helpful book that will bring life-giving water, nourishment and energy to the depleted spirit, soul and body. I personally have ordered several copies of this on-target treasure to give not only to those drained by the stuff of life, but to heads of institutions and organizations who are trying to revive the languishing “soul” of the places where they serve.

—Gloria Gaither

**editors’ feature**

**Without a Word: How a Boy’s Unspoken Love Changed Everything**

Jill Kelly (FaithWords)

Without a Word is the amazing story of how a boy who never spoke a word changed the lives of everyone around him.

In 1997, two weeks after Buffalo Bills quarterback and Hall of Famer Jim Kelly retired, his son Hunter James Kelly was born. When Jim and wife Jill should have been on top of the world, little Hunter was diagnosed with a fatal disease called Krabbe Leukodystrophy. Doctors expected the disease to end Hunter’s life within two years—but he lived for eight years, never allowing the disease to overcome his spirit. And in the process he transformed the lives of his family.

Now Jill Kelly recounts the inspiring story in Without a Word: How a Boy’s Unspoken Love Changed Everything (FaithWords). Jill shares with readers details of their family life—from the day she met Jim and their picture-perfect wedding, to Jim’s retirement and the birth of their three children—Erin, Hunter and Camryn.

Jill is transparent about the struggles in hers and Jim’s marriage. Their marriage already faced challenges before Hunter’s birth, yet Hunter’s weakened condition eventually strengthened their relationship. However, though they grew apart and struggled for years, a painfully honest confession from Jim, and forgiveness from Jill, allowed the Kellys to rediscover their first love and revive their marriage. Interspersed throughout the book are unguarded comments from Jim, sharing his heart on tender moments with Hunter.

Ultimately, Without a Word is a tapestry of joy, heartbreak, loss, faith, death and ultimate healing. It’s the story of a brave little boy who, in his all-too-brief eight years of life, shared an unconditional love for his parents and two sisters that brought them all closer together with each other—and with Jesus Christ.