



A Perennial Life

By Tammy Borden ©

I love annual flowers: zinnias, petunias, impatiens, verbena, and the list goes on. They're quite impressive, blooming continuously throughout summer, providing lots of color and garden interest. They grow quickly, mature fast and provide nearly instant gratification. They're attractive, eye-catching and beautiful. The downside? They're fragile. Annuals will perish easily at autumn's first frost. They're also more high maintenance, preferring lots of water, care and fertilizer to perform best.

Perennials, on the other hand, are unfazed by harsh winters and months of lying dormant beneath a blanket of snow. Many can tolerate drought, prairie fires, withstand storms, heat, wind, cold and other environmental abuses. The ups and downs of life make them stronger and they persevere. They aren't concerned with a momentary display of beauty to impress passers by; they're concerned with sustaining a life that's in it for the long haul.

I want a perennial life. I want to live a life that withstands the harsh realities, the cold winters, the storms, the droughts, the abuses of this world. I want my roots to go down deep and to hold on tightly to a foundation that can sustain me through tough times. I want to live my life so that its impact continues on for generations, not just for a season. I want to be reliable, strong, determined, unfazed by death or darkness.

I don't want to be like an annual; a flash in the pan, a brilliant display for a moment in time, high maintenance. I don't want to merely impress with my outward appearance, knowing that it will all fade away at the first sign of opposition or hardship. I don't want to be constantly screaming for more – more nourishment, more water, more attention. More, more, more!

But here's the problem... I want the results of a perennial life, but I don't want to endure the painful, tedious and difficult process. I would just as soon not go through all the hardships. I'd much prefer an easier life, a prettier life. Admittedly, my human nature wants to be known as beautiful, alluring and desirable, and for people to not notice my character flaws and selfish ambitions. My human nature wants to be impressive, colorful and noticed. See me. Notice me. Take care of me. Tell me what I want to hear. But an annual life is a selfish life.

But there's another side of me... a side that longs to put aside and not care what other people think of me. I long to be known as a person of integrity, reliability, humble confidence and unwavering character. I want to be known as someone whose life impacts future generations and the world. Even more than just to be known as those things... I want to be those things. I don't want to exist just for my own selfish ambition or glorification... for more, more, more, shriveling when opposition comes my way. I prefer a perennial life, lived one painful season at a time.