

Christ
Festliche
Stunde

ANITA YVONNE SCHNEIDER

in Christ
Twisted
Sisters

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A heartfelt THANK YOU

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my most wonderful daughter-in-love, Erica Godfrey, for creating the perfect cover art for Twisted Sisters in Christ. Created by her hand before pen to paper actually began ... when it was just a list of titles. She was able to express what I didn't even fully understand at that time.

Thank you, Erica ... I love you!

To my most wonderful daughter-in-love, Celina Schneider, for her ongoing encouragement through the years of this process. She has walked it with me.

Hup Two Three Four ... getter done ... I love you!

To my dear and most wonderful Twisted Sisters who have participated in this journey with me ... you know who you are.

Twisted Sisters in Christ ... I am a blessed woman.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

I am well-aware there have been mega-multitude of writings, sermons preached, and lessons taught on every subject that will be addressed in this series from those much more qualified, educated, insightful, wise and Biblically knowledgeable than I (and with better punctuation but it's my punctuation).

I have gleaned much from many through my journey to this point and am so very thankful for each Holy Spirit inspired book, sermon, song, teaching, touch, and person that has fed my soul.

What I know is this was given to me, set on my platter ... so let's see where it takes us.

Note: Bible quotes are from several different versions as noted - Amplified or AMP, American Standard Version or ASV, Blue Letter Bible or BLB, Berean Study Bible or BSB, English Standard Version or ESV, Good News Translation or GNT, King James Version or KJV, New American Standard Bible or NASB, New International Version or NIV, New King James Version or NKJV, New Living Translation or NLT, Weymouth New Testament or WNT. Renner International Version or RIV is a translation by Rick Renner that has not yet been released. Parentheticals within verses are my inserted comments regarding the text.

We are open books to one another.
There is nothing we cannot share, confess,
cry, scream about with confidence ...
and with the knowledge
that our words are sacred and
will be held in confidence,
forgiven, comforted, and calmed.

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Introduction

When we are on a difficult journey, trying to accomplish a seemingly impossible task ... crossing a gorge of cratered dreams, lost relationships, loneliness, health issues, darkness of the soul ... we can become blinded to the Truth and do the slip slide. The circumstances of life as a fallen woman engulf our minds and take over our feelings as we begin the decent into the gorge of despair. Imma thinking we have all had times of despair ... We need each other.

As Christian women we have a tendency to think that once in this state of spiritual darkness, we should be ashamed for not having faith, trusting in our Lord, powering thru to victory ... so ... we keep it to ourselves. Putting on that smile in front of others, standing with shoulders back, singing with hands raised ... Amen and Amen to the sermon but we are deafened by the crashing waves of despair battering our thoughts. Hugging those around us and wishing we could quietly and quickly exit before someone notices the darkness behind our eyes ... that little light of mine isn't shining. God bless ... God bless ... I've gotta go. Maybe I'm the only one that has been there ... I think not.

After all, we are Christian women ... hear me PRAISE ... and ... sad as it may seem ... Christian women (women in general ... not all) are notorious for harshly judging and gossiping about their sisters in Christ (or anyone for that matter) ... but of course ... that's those other Christian women. It's the truth and must be acknowledged to correct it. I am sure I have participated in the past ... I ask forgiveness.

The Holy Scripture speaks of confessing our sins one to another ...

***Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”***

James 5:16 NIV

Now, let me ask you ... when was the last time you confessed a sin to another sister in Christ? Don't even tell me you have no sins to confess, cause that is not true ...

***If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us ...***

1 John 1:8 NIV

Been a long time hasn't it ... and if you can keep it a secret you sure will because that immediate searing look of disapproval that burns through your heart and shames your soul is not a place you want to go. Plus, our thoughts turn to ... will the confession be held in confidence? You are already in a low place ... sure don't need to be burned at the stake.

Now, let me ask you this ... when was the last time a Sister in Christ came to you and confessed her sin? And if one did, what was your internal reaction ... which spoke loudly ... externally? Was it merciful and full of compassion for a wounded Sister? Did you draw her near, covering her in prayer that she would be healed ... words of encouragement ... speaking forgiveness ... being understanding ... loving her as your own Body ... a wounded part of the Body of Christ? Or did you pretend to be sensitive ... Bless your heart ... but in your mind thinking how superior you were for not doing what she did ... a smirk in your heart ... your mirror not reflecting the likeness of Christ Jesus?

Were you anticipating that phone call to another Sister to share the sinner's sin as an act of piety by requesting prayer ... "I just have to share this with you so you can pray ..." but in reality you were thrilled to share her slip slide story? Then, the calls just start multiplying and the "requesting prayer" keeps on keeping on, turning into a gossip fest.

Before you know it, her confidence in restoration has been shattered ... why should she even want to return to the Sisterhood ... cause she will know ... she will feel it ... put down instead of being lifted up ... and I guarantee you she won't be sharing/confessing to anyone else ... ever ... carrying her burden alone.

Thankfully, I have some sisters today that whatever I throw their way ... they have powerful and effective prayers ... because they desire my healing ... not my destruction ... as I do theirs ... I just wish there were more. Let's gather them in.

Let me clarify this. We are NOT to be separated from our sisters who have fallen and come for restoration ... we are to be available ... the lifter ... the encourager ... the shoulder ... the wisdom speaker ... the gentle discipline giver ... the Elder Sister. We are gifted as the earthly Restorers ... Twisted together in the Golden Cord! We are new creatures, adopted into the family of God. We, the family, take care of the family ... that's why we are called Sisters (and Brothers)!

We are saved by Grace, not by how good we are ... because our righteousness is as filthy rags in the presence of God ... His Grace is MORE THAN SUFFICIENT!

Okay, Twisted Sisters ... let's get on with it. LOVE YOU ... and FYI this is not a quick read ... it's a conversation and a study ... so buckle up buttercup.

Part I

The Golden Cord

THE GOLDEN CORD

***Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.
For if either of them falls, the other will lift up their companion.
But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift them up.***

***Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?
And if one can overpower the one who is alone, two can resist.
A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.***

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NASB

I had a Pastor that suffered from severe insomnia and instead of lying there tossing and turning in misery, he began to turn that no sleep time into prayer time.

After hearing what he had decided to do, I decided to do the same when I couldn't sleep.

One night I was up late, and my thoughts were suddenly inundated with what I knew were titles. One after another came to me and I saw them clearly. I grabbed a pen and paper and began writing each one down knowing this was important, for me as well as for others. Several hours later, I sat the pen down with multiple handwritten pages and massaged my hand.

In front of me were words written with my hand but were not my words. I was not spiritually prepared to take up this task. However, I did know that the title was "Twisted Sisters in Christ". The pen idly maintained its space on my desk for about seven years.

During those years one might say I sank into a spiritual vortex, whirling through spiritual and mental battles. I had gradually and willingly laid my armor down, one piece at a time, on the shelf of neglect. Circumstances (LIFE) had taken some drastic twists and turns which resulted in my peace being shattered. My joy sapped, my light faded, my soul in turmoil and my spirit crackling dry. I was trying to balance on a cracked pebble instead of a solid rock

I chose to look at the circumstances and desperately try to fix them instead of activating the Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit within me ... setting them away by my self-composed shuttered doors to hide from view. Out of sight, out of mind. I chose to starve my spirit of its essential nutrients and rely on self as I sunk deeper into despair.

I read this somewhere and wrote it down, but not the author. I confess I am going to plagiarize, forgive me, but it fits, and I don't want to reword it.

“I dedicated a season of my life to making stupid, idiotic, Godless decisions.”

To be perfectly honest, I've experienced a number of turbulent, battle torn seasons. I have friends and family that can provide you details if you are curious ... or you can ask me. To put it lightly, I have been a messy mess at times.

Some of you reading this can probably testify to the same. Thankfully, I'm not there now and if you are, listen up ... there is HOPE ... renewal and restoration!

As each battle torn season would come to a peaceful plateau, I would throw off the garments of despair, loneliness and fear that had enveloped me. Free at last. Then, little by little, I would gradually begin putting those tattered garments back on. This went on for much of my young adult years, as well as some older adult years. I walk slower now so as not to easily lose my footing ... spiritually and mentally (and physically). One step at a time, sweet Jesus.

Don't feel alone if you have had or are in the midst of a battle season and have lost your footing. That fall will create a wound that can be healed by the Great Physician. I know, I have had many wounds healed throughout my lifetime and I'm sure there will be more to come ... it's called LIFE and I am well acquainted with the Balm of Gilead ... the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Once the talons of evil are defeated, the scars left behind are proof of each battle won. These scars are humbly yet proudly (yes, it can be both) brandished. They represent Love, Mercy, Grace, Strength, Wisdom and Compassion to those we encounter. Don't hide your scars ... share them.

My scars are VICTORY BANNERS of Battles Won.

Then a friend came to visit for a weekend. We had not seen each other for at least 40 years and a dramatic spiritual event took place for me.

That weekend was a catalyst moment as darkness of the soul lifted from me and a broken spirit began to be restored and renewed.

Oh, do I still occasionally get a tad baffled ... moments of “good grief, what now, oh crap” and wonder what God is up too? You betcha, but I am growing in strength, bolder with each “I TRUST YOU MOMENT.”

*It is now time for each of us to learn and
recognize who we are in Christ.*

Our Battle Cry ... I am:

A daughter of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

A living stone being molded to fit perfectly in the Temple of God
and without me there would be a stone missing.

A walking, talking Arc of the Covenant
containing the power of the Holy Spirit.

A spring of Living Waters filled by the River of Life.

A light in the darkness for the wandering traveler to find their way.

Know who you are!

Each of us are living stones fused together with THE Living Corner Stone, Jesus Christ, the Son of God which is the conduit of power within the eternal Temple of God. Without YOU there would be a stone missing, a void, that has yet to be filled. With a stone missing or misshaped reroutes must take place until the missing stone is returned ... molded to fit perfectly in its designated stronghold.

Not only are we sharers in the divine life by experiencing the presence of God, but, in essence as a mystical, flowing temple, we are called to bring the presence of God to others ... a mosaic of ... peace through the storm ... strength in weakness ... calm in chaos.

Our lives are works of beauty, like precious stones, reflecting the divine glory that glows from within.

What do you think?

If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones will perish.

Matthew 18:12-14 NIV

But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and we all are the work of Your hand.

Isaiah 64:8 ESV

YOU and I, as living stones are valuable and irreplaceable. Each of us fused together with Christ, a force to be reckoned with ... followers of the Way. We each have a position to hold in the spiritual realm here on earth for the Eternal Kingdom. We, dear sisters, do ROAR ... the Victory ROAR!

We will identify the crystal clear instructions given us to be peacefully prepared and battle rattle ready (in full combat gear) for whatever storm comes our way ... to know who we are in the Body of Christ and come to the realization that what we have accepted as impossible, unreachable and mysterious is as easy as 1, 2, 3 ... Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You will be seeing the words “prayer” and “meditation” throughout this series. The word “prayer” is a Creator word versus “meditation” which is a creature word. Prayer is our direct line to our Creator, a communication process that *available free on Scribd [here](#)*

allows us to talk to God, person-to-person, face-to-face and bask in His presence as we give Him thanksgiving, honor and glory (by the way, He “inhabits” our praises).

In return we are keepers woven into the tapestry of all He has created ... we have been assigned as the keepers of creation.

The word “meditation” is where an individual uses a technique, such as mindfulness, or focusing their mind on a particular object, thought or activity, to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear, emotionally calm and stable state.

*Prayer is heavenly communion.
Meditation is human communion.
We need both.*

Some of you are possibly surprised that I would say we need to utilize both prayer and meditation.

I believe we, as Christians, have set “meditation” on the shelf of Humanism, not to be touched with a 10 ft. pole. Our spirit requires prayer, that one-on-one, face to face, communion/communication, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, through the Son, before the Father.

Our mind requires meditation to receive the Eternal message from the Holy Spirit thru the Word and prayer. We must contemplate what has been placed before us, seeded into our spirit and understand it ... with our mind. CLARITY!

God gave us a brain for a reason, USE IT!

THINK AND KNOW

What would happen if we truly realized WHO the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the Trinity as One) really is? I mean REALLY have the clarity ... an AHHH-HA moment that rewires our thought process to understand the Divine Distribution Center of the Cosmos!

That we are aliens of this dimension/visible world and we have been endowed with being light bearers, servants, darkness destroyers, prayer warriors, truth speakers, burden carriers, peacemakers and so much more on this earth by the power of Most High and Holy God, the Three in ONE.

*The Trinity is the center of the Cosmos ...
the Divine Distribution Center.
I pray for clarity!*

The following is a simple, yet still mysterious, breakdown of the makeup of the Holy Trinity. Until we actually come face to face with the One who sits on the Throne, it will continue to be a mystery.

God is one God, but three coeternal consubstantial (of one and the same substance, essence, or nature) persons or hypostases (the essential nature of a substance as opposed to its attributes) – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – as one God in three distinct Divine persons.

GOD the FATHER. The embodiment of the Trinity.

Creator of all things and without Him was nothing made. He spoke the Cosmos into place, breathed life into the creature and has continually protected and nurtured the creature and creation ... or we surely wouldn't still be inhabiting the earth.

God the Father is the Power Source of all that exists. The life-giver, the authority, and powerful protector, often viewed as immense, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent with infinite power and charity that goes beyond human understanding.

Omnipotent: All-Powerful. Supreme Power. His power is infinite, or limitless.

Omniscient: All knowing in the sense that He is aware of the past, present, and future. His knowledge is total. He knows all that there is to know and all that can be known.

Omnipresent: His divine presence encompasses the whole of the universe. There is no location where He is not. He is distinct from the universe but inhabits the entirety of it. He is everywhere at once.

He is Life.

JESUS CHRIST the SON. The Breath of Life of the Trinity.

Can you imagine the impact on the whole of the Cosmos when the Breath of Life took His last breath on the Cross!!??

***And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded His spirit.
Then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom;
and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.***

Matthew 27:50-51 NKJV

He willingly stepped out of The Trinity through the Portal of Eternity to establish a clear and sure passage to redemption from the fallen nature (death/darkness) to a risen nature (life/light), where we have always been meant to be. A mission to the death, to restore mankind back to Himself. To offer clarity of truth from the abyss of deceit, heal the sick and broken hearted, and restore the light to all imprisoned by the darkness of the soul, making available the Holy Spirit as a guiding light.

He was not from this world ... willingly transforming into His creation to free us from our self-inflicted destruction ... delivering us from the grasp of the deceiver. Only Jesus was in the position to accomplish this as the Breath of Life.

The death sentence proclaimed by the Prince of Darkness was thrown as far as the east is from the west when Jesus became the Veil of Sacrificial Blood. He covers our imperfections (sin), and provides us direct access to the Father, free from the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. Jesus is our Savior ... the Rescuer ... eternally connected to God the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

He is the glue in the mix ... the breath in the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6 KJV

HOLY SPIRIT the COMFORTER. The Provider of Guidance.

She teaches and nurtures us along our journey.

Yes, I used “she”. The Holy Spirit reminds me of a divine mother figure. We have the Father, the Son, and I’m thinking the Mother. (Not going to get theological here ... just stating what I perceive as the personality and attributes of the Holy Spirit ... sounds like a female to me.) After all, the Hebrew (and Aramaic) word for “Spirit” is grammatically feminine, so any words used in relation to the Spirit in the Hebrew Bible will be feminine.

The Holy Spirit was released to us when Jesus ascended to the heavenlies, claiming His rightful place at the right hand of the Father. The Holy Spirit is our here and now comforter, intercessor, advocate/helper, power spreader and knowledge giver. The indwelling Spirit of Truth for those who are a part of, grafted into, the Body of Christ, the Temple.

Body, Mind and Spirit make up The Trinity. The Creator duplicated Himself in the makeup of mankind. To me it’s a simple deduction.

***For God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

Genesis 1:27 NASB

We have been given the opportunity to access the Divine for restoration of ourselves and others ... seeking the truth, studying, and reaching for that breakthrough moment of clarity on how to access the Living Waters which will flow through us to those around us.

We must give reign of our body, mind, and spirit to Jesus Christ as He provides us power thru the Holy Spirit as a conduit of His mercy and grace here on this earth. We will recognize those who need comfort, we have the power to use the truth as the sword of deliverance and healing.

RESPONSIBILITY

Discipline ... that dreaded word ...

D.I.S.C.I.P.L.I.N.E!

*An assertion of willpower over more basic desires
and is synonymous with self-control.*

It includes having the personal initiative to get started and the stamina to persevere. Being disciplined gives us strength to withstand hardships and difficulties, whether physical, emotional, or mental.

I came to a life-altering realization one day that it was MY responsibility to be knowledgeable of who I am in Christ, even when going through the most difficult of times. To be peacefully prepared when the storms of life blow through, sometimes from every direction. To be an earthly vessel of the Balm of Gilead ... OR, I could choose to continue living a mundane life, floundering in a sea of despair ... Muddy Mush. It was up to me.

I needed a plan ... I asked for one ... I got one, but to follow the plan would take a commitment to do what needed to be done. It's called taking responsibility for my own spiritual wellbeing. Feeding who I am, spirit/soul/body.

Was I willing to commit ("sacrifice" was my immediate thought) time to such a venture? I mean, after all, I had kinda gotten used to good ole faithful Muddy ... comfortable in my misery, one might say.

I chose to commit and learn the maintenance procedures for maintaining my spirit and soul in good working order by seeking the truths/instructions of the Word and taking time for prayer and meditation. I'm still learning ... failing and succeeding ... it's a journey.

"Walking" with the Lord through our journey here on this earth refers to stability or an ongoing relationship ... the spiritual walk. We will be talking about a lot of walking.

My spiritual sight is being restored. It's a process ... and even now there are times I need vision care ... sometimes vision surgery as the Word comes alive to me and is seeded within.

The dam built around my spirit crumbles as the rush of Living Waters washes it down stream. I have been venturing into new and exciting territory. A journey worth traveling to discover that we, dear Twisted Sisters, contain the Power of Truth as a Sword of Deliverance. We are hedge builders, gap closers, evil crushers, praise singers, battle winners and the list just keeps on going on. Eyes to see and ears to hear.
available free on Scribd [here](#)

***The thief does not come except to steal, kill and destroy.
I (Jesus) have come that they (you and I) may have life,
and that they (you and I) may have it more abundantly.***

John 10:10 NKJV

For the sake of clarification, if needed for the following point, the thief is the Prince of Darkness and his minions who only exist to “kill, steal and destroy” the Creator’s creation. A high-ranking angel ... with exquisite beauty and great wisdom ... a guardian cherub (powerful and majestic angelic creatures) ... the model of perfection who became full of pride and decided he should be the one to sit on the Throne.

Kill the body ... Steal the spirit ... Destroy the mind

Do not take this lightly. There are ferocious battles being fought all around us and throughout the Cosmos between the Heavenly Hosts and the powers of darkness. Guess what the prize for the winning side is? We are the prize.

We are the Holders of Truth for the salvation/rescue of mankind and the destruction of evil ... the vessels of Living Water that nourish creation.

We, dear Twisted Sisters, are being disciplined and molded together as an Earthly Force containing the Spirit of the Most-High God Jehovah. We are a force to be reckoned with, therefore a threat to the Evil One’s designs on humanity, as it should be.

So very thankful for the FINALITY of that verse, “*I (Jesus) have come that they (you and I) may have life, and that they (you and I) may have it MORE ABUNDANTLY.*”

What is life more abundantly? Meaningful, purposeful, joyful, and eternal. So, what is our responsibility?

This is our destiny...

FEED MY SPIRIT

I have the responsibility to continually grow spiritually (mature, not behave as a child) by nourishing my spirit with study and prayer.

The definition of prayer is ... an evolving means of interacting with God, most frequently through a spontaneous, individual, unorganized form of petitioning and/or thanking ... a method of changing a situation for the better.

There is much more to prayer that will be addressed further into this series, but one particular paragraph from the “Prayer” study, caught my eye and is important.

“We must guard against equating Christian belief in the efficacy of prayer and magic. Magic attempts to control or manipulate the divine will in order to induce it to grant one’s wishes, especially through the use of techniques such as charms, spells, rituals, or ceremonies. Christian prayer involves a struggle of wills in which the pray-er attempts to persuade God, **all the time seeing prayer as a divinely given means whereby the pray-er can participate in God’s agenda.**”
A relationship.

Our desire is to be a “participant” not a soothsayer/fortune teller/crystal ball gazer used as tools of destruction by the dark side to muddle our brains to the Truth. Is there power in such actions? Yes ... Yes, there is, BUT we choose not to participate in the dark side. We are divinely appointed as a BEACON OF LIGHT!

Don't think this journey is magical, it is a Divine Appointment. Also don't think that there isn't magic out there ... cause there is ... and it ain't the Holy Spirit.

As we purposely nourish ourselves, our spirit softens and strengthens into a sanctuary as the Holy Spirit takes up residence and unpacks her baggage of strength filled with the weapons of Gifts and Fruit. I love being soft and strength comes in very handy cause there is always a mission right around the corner.

Our spirit is her home away from home and she is such a thoughtful guest. Our desire is for her to take up every nook and cranny of our inner most being.

The Gifts she bares are distributed, as appropriate, for one's level of maturity through training and testing, continually increasing our maturity, giving us the ability to know how and when to apply. There are instructions that must be learned, taught and applied.

There are those that will encourage rapid growth, but slow and deliberate growth strengthens the core of our innermost being. It's not a fast food restaurant nor a game to play... it's a journey into the unseen ... the Holy of Holies.

Let's look at Paul the Apostle. He was raised and educated to be a Rabbi and knew the Torah (we would call that the first five books of the Old Testament) inside and out. Then he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus and his education needed an upgrade.

A short time after his revelation that Jesus was the Messiah, he went to Arabia ... the surrounding desert countryside ... for a time of maturing ... gaining knowledge ... establishing a firm foundation. He spent three years in "school" under the tutelage of Jesus Christ before walking into his ministry.

Just like the other apostles, Paul studied with Christ for three years before beginning his ministry. THREE YEARS ... I'm thinking there is something significant about "three years."

***I did not consult any man,
nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was,
but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.***

*Galatians 1:16-17 RIV
(a translation by Rick Renner not yet released)*

The seed of the Fruit is planted and nurtured into producing a vast harvest which feeds not only each of us but those that cross our path. Without consistent nourishment/fertilizer/The Word we will become as dry bones and be useless to the Kingdom.

We each have our useless moments ... at least it "feels" like it at times.

***The hand of the Lord was upon me,
and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord
and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones.***

***He had me pass among them all around, and behold,
there were very many on the surface of the valley; and behold, they were very dry.***

***Then He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?
and I answered, "Lord God, You Yourself know."***

***Again He said to me,
"Prophecy over these bones and say to them,
'You dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.'***

***This is what the Lord God says to these bones:
'Behold, I am going to make breath enter you so that you may come to life.***

***And I will attach tendons to you, make flesh grow back on you,
cover you with skin, and put breath in you so that you may come to life;
and you will know that I am the Lord."***

Ezekiel 37:1-6 NASB

The Word breathes life into dry bones ...

I make an effort to establish time each day to sit at the Banquet Table, with servings dished out by the Holy Spirit ... some days just a snack ... other's a seven-course meal ... maintaining my cup filled to overflowing with the Eternal Thirst-Quenching Elixir of Living Waters ... Divine nourishment to stay spiritually alive.

Trust me though ... I go through times of getting busy and distracted (a Martha vs a Mary) and before I know it, I have let days pass and end up wondering why I'm feeling so out of sorts ... my cup is empty. Then I come to the realization that I need to become a Mary again and sit at His feet. Martha has her place but Mary dwells in the Place ... Imma thinking the two can intertwine.

*We leak ... and we need a daily filling ...
more than once a day ... Drip ... Drip ... Drip.*

Maybe the only time we can niche out is when we are in the shower ... or in the car ... or when laying our head on the pillow. We all have days like that. Some of us have weeks like that ... but take that time we must. As it's been said ... you can't pour from an empty cup. I know, I've tried ... a dust bowl.

Oh, and don't let other's shame you with ... you know, if you really wanted too ... if you were REALLY dedicated ... you would spend that hour or more on your knees and reading the Word. There are times when one really can't ... but have many moments thru the day. We just need to get back to that dedicated time ... it makes a huge difference in our daily journey.

***Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.***

Psalm 23:5 KJV

TRAIN MY MIND

***Therefore, prepare your minds for action,
keep sober in spirit,
fix your hope completely on the grace
to be brought to you at the revelation, of Jesus Christ.***

I Peter 1:13 NASB

Sober ...

thinking clearly or is alert.

Revelation ...

a removal of the veil, a disclosure of what was previously unknown.

I have the responsibility to train my mind by meditation.

Remember further back we discussed that meditation is a “creature” word where an individual uses a technique, such as mindfulness, or focusing their mind on a particular object, thought or activity, to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear, emotionally calm and stable state.

***Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are
TRUE,
whatsoever things are
HONEST
whatsoever things are
JUST,
whatsoever things are
PURE
whatsoever things are
LOVELY,
whatsoever things are of
GOOD REPORT;
if there be any VIRTUE,
and if there be any PRAISE, think on these things.***

Philippians 4:8 KJV

One day when I came across this scripture, I had a WAALAA moment. In front of me were simple, clear instructions on maintaining a peaceful mind and BEING who God called me to be no matter what came my way, BOOM SHAKALAKA!

This made a 360° difference in my peace of mind as I began applying the “think on these things.” Resulting in peace of my mind, no longer reacting with knee jerk responses to issues which solved nothing, only adding to the chaos. I am training my mind to think as instructed in ALL things ... remember ... it’s a process and we will process until we step thru the Portal to Eternity.

Think on These Things ... What is ...

True, Honest, Just, Pure, Lovely, Good Report, any Virtue, any Praise,

We are a work in progress.

As we travel towards the Portal of Eternity, we have been provided with an instruction manual on “Accessing His Promises.” As we are obedient to follow these instructions, the powers of darkness will attempt to kill, steal, and destroy. Thankfully the Holy Spirit opens our spiritual eyes and will keep us alert to our surroundings ... as we are buffeted on all sides ... our thoughts are peacefully prepared for what is now and what is to come.

I believe one of our main defensive moves is PEACE. When Peace reigns there will be no mind stealing taking place. He is true to His Word.

***Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who seeks finds,
and to the one who knocks the door will be opened.***

Matthew 7:7-8 ESV

TRAIN MY BODY ... BODY OF DUST

I'm sure many of you are body training/workout sistas ... I'm definitely not. It relates to my mind attempting to direct my body and sometimes (most of the time) my body rebels against what my mind directs it to do. BOSSY MIND!

Oh, I'm always moving and sometimes that "bossy mind" tells me I need to be still ... rest ... my body rebels at that as well ... COME ON ... Just. One. More. Step.

Bottomline is, this body of dust must be trained to hear and respond to the "small still voice". Our assigned Guardian (Messenger), as directed by the Holy Spirit speaks, alerting our mind to command the body to react.

You will know when you hear that small still voice ... a gentle whisper ... sometimes a commanding whisper, it is unmistakable.

***And after the earthquake a fire;
but the Lord was not in the fire:
and after the fire a still small voice.***

I Kings 19:12 KJV

I will give you one personal encounter with the small still voice ... a commanding whisper.

I was at work, engrossed in some financials that refused to make any sense ... a jigsaw puzzle of numbers. It was my responsibility to assure correctness ... and the person that developed this particular balance sheet (the owner's wife) had created quite the conundrum ... it was a mess that had to be unconundrmed ... with finesse ... and I wasn't feeling very much finesse.

Suddenly I heard an urgent whisper, "MOVE!" There was no time to think. I immediately pushed away from my desk as the air-conditioning exchanger, directly above my desk, crashed down, impaling the desk exactly where I had been so engrossed.

The result was catastrophic damage to my desk. I was shook-up but unharmed with only a slightly grazed wrist.

That small scar ... a Banner of Victory.

Had I not immediately acted upon that command, pretty sure I wouldn't be here today. My numbered days were not up.

Now listen, I definitely was not praying, meditating or communing with the Lord prior to this happening. I was pissed-off and frustrated (the only way to adequately describe my state of mind), so evidently even at one of my many human "unspiritual" moments, that "still small voice" whispered like a fog horn. I clearly heard and reacted with obedience.

I was thankful and in absolute AWE at what had transpired. I still am and can tell you my ears have perked up over the years.

Back to our body of dust ...

Our bodies of dust are temples that the Holy Spirit takes up residency in as walking, talking Arks of the Covenant. What does the Ark of the Covenant represent? The Ark is a picture of the Person and saving grace of Christ. It contains the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's Rod, and a Pot of Manna.

The Ten Commandments are the summary of the full moral law of God. By Christ's obedience on the Cross, He covered all our transgressions of the law with His precious shed blood.

***But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;
upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with His wounds we are healed.***

Isaiah 53:5 ESV

According to Jewish midrash (exposition, investigation), the tablets of stone were made of blue sapphire as a symbol of the heavens and God's throne, inscribed by the "finger of God" (Exodus 31:18). The Hebrew letters were said to be bored fully through the stone (Exodus 32:15), which was a miracle, since the inner part of the Hebrew letters (such as Samekh and the final Mem) "floated" in place. Moreover, even though the letters were bored fully through the stone, both sides appeared normal (that is, the "back" of the tablet looked identical to the front – Shabbos 104a).

Another midrash says that the tablets "carried their own weight," enabling Moses to carry them down the mountain, but when Moses saw the people

dancing around the Golden Calf in worship, the tablets became heavy and were smashed to the ground (Exodus 32:19). Moses then destroyed the molten calf.

Sometime later Moses was told to prepare a new set of tablets, in order to once again ascend the mountain, where God would graciously reinstate the covenant. The second set of tablets was carved from sapphire by Moses himself (instead of God) as an atonement for Israel's sin with the Golden Calf. The Arc of the Covenant holds these tablets.

There's much more history and knowledge to be gained concerning the Arc and the Ten Commandments but we must move on. Maybe we will delve deeper into this at another time and another writing.

Aaron's rod represents Jesus' eternal priestly authority. The exclusive right to the priesthood and since we are One with Him, we have been identified as priests under His authority for the Kingdom.

***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies
of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***

I Peter 2:9 NASB

The manna represents God's provision for His people in the wilderness. He has set in place provision for all our needs.

***And my God will meet all your needs according to the
riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.***

Philippians 4:19 NASB

Each of our dusty bodies, no matter what shape (or lack thereof), are to be honored as a beautiful work of art, a precious vessel containing the Covenant, Authority, and Provision ... perfectly and wonderfully made.

As women we seem to have a common dislike for our bodies, the reflection we see of ourselves in the mirror needs to be adjusted to reflect who we are designed to be as Twisted Sisters in Christ. How do we do that?

*Shed my own perceived bodily imperfections
and the imperfections of others.*

*“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*

Psalm 139:14 NIV

What does “fearfully” mean?

I know some have an issue with the word “fearfully.” I don’t have any idea why fearfully is used because in the Hebrew, the word used means, **with great reverence, heart-felt interest, and with respect.**

We need to value our body as a vessel containing priceless cargo ... Living Water and the Light of the World.

*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink,
you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.*

John 4:10 NIV

*Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying,
“I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me
will not walk in the darkness,
but will have the Light of life.”*

John 8:12 NASB

*I have that Living Water ... I shine that Light
... and ... SO DO YOU!*

Our ugly is His beauty.

To pull the above together, look at it this way. When prayer (spirit) and meditation (mind) collide, they become one ... the dusty body becomes the earthly vessel/temple made of dust, housing the Glory of God. It's just that simple.

As we journey through this life, we benefit from the realization of who we ARE in Christ, and who we are not. It's a journey to identify what produces light and life through us to be a beacon of hope ... our purpose as the dusty earth keepers, created by the Creator in His likeness. An opportunity to factcheck ourselves, to BE who we have been created to be.

Part II

Who are we?

WHO ARE WE

*But you are a chosen race a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people for His own possession,
that you may proclaim the excellencies of
Him who called you out of darkness
into His marvelous light.*

1 Peter 2:9 ESV

*That is who we are ... and ...
This is who we are assigned to be.*

A CHOSEN RACE

The Israelites/Jewish nation is the “chosen race” ... a covenant with God ... placed on this earth to fulfill a certain purpose ... before Jesus Christ conducted the inclusion of the Gentiles (you and I). We are now included in that “purpose.”

Personally, I believe Jerusalem ... the “City of Peace” ... the ancient kingdom of Judah ... is the center of the Universe ... and the Jews/Israelis are the assigned keepers of the center ... we Gentiles, who are Followers of the Way, have been grafted into this assignment.

If there is one ounce of belief in your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ... that He rescued you from the depths of darkness by His sacrifice on the cross ... His blood covering all your transgressions ... then you are one of the chosen.

Chosen for a Purpose.

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

“**Royal**” implies kingship or royalty. “Priesthood” speaks of being a priest before God. Given that the Scripture calls you a “**Royal Priesthood**” it follows that we are not merely one or the other, but rather we are both.

Royalty and Priesthood

A HOLY NATION

Holiness means to be set apart, different, not the same. We are separated from the darkness by the Light. There is an intention to it ... a focus ... energy. A heart that can love, obey and enjoy God.

Loyal Kingdom Citizens

A PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION

God formed this Holy Nation ... this Chosen Race ... this Royal Priesthood.

We are His.

We belong to Him.

The first step is knowing who we are ... the second step is learning to be who we are. It's a process ... let's jump head first, ankle deep into discovering how to be who we are.

VESSELS OF ... TRUTH

*Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable,
he will be a vessel for honorable use,
set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.*

II Timothy 2:21 NIV

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
Against such things there is no law.
Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature
with its passions and desires.
Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in touch with the Spirit."*

Galatians 5:22-25 NASB

When we take that first step of giving our lives over to Jesus Christ ... the Fruit of the Spirit is planted in our spiritual garden ... a Holy seed ... by the Gardener of Eden, Jesus Christ; nurtured by the Holy Spirit into producing a vast harvest. We become a vessel of Truth and there is nothing more powerful than the Truth.

There is no fruit produced by darkness only rotten lies which are brandished as truth, designed to kill, steal and destroy ... sly as a fox.

The Fruit of the Spirit entwines with us ... nourishing our spirit ... bringing life to the crackling dry with His Living Waters ... the Holy seed developing into ...

LOVE which defeats hate/apathy.
JOY which defeats misery/grief.
PEACE which defeats despondency/hostilities.
PATIENCE which defeats anxiety/agitation.
GOODNESS which defeats wickedness/evil.
FAITHFULNESS which defeats disloyalty/betrayal.
GENTLENESS which defeats brutality/harshness.
SELF-CONTROL which defeats instability/greed.

Reread that list. It is worth spending time reviewing now and again. There is unimaginable POWER in our Fruit. That floats my boat!

VESSELS OF ... POWER

Let's investigate the Gifts of the Holy Spirit ...

***O taste and see that the Lord is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge (sanctuary) in Him!***

Psalm 34:8 NASB

***“The Helper, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my Name (the name of Jesus Christ),
He will teach you all things and bring into remembrance all things that I said to you.”***

John 14:26 NASB

***Now about the gifts of the Spirit,
I do not want you to be uninformed.***

***You know that when you were pagans
(worshipped many gods or goddesses or the earth/nature),
somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols
(not capable of relationship).***

***Therefore, I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says,
“Jesus be cursed,” and no one who is speaking by the Spirit can say,
“Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.***

There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit distributes them.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

***There are different kinds of working,
but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.***

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

***To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom,
to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,
to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,
to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy,
to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in a different kind of tongues,
and to still another the interpretation of tongues.***

***All these are the work of one and the same Spirit,
and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines.***

I Corinthians 12:1-11 NIV

***For this reason I remind you to fan into flames the gift of God
which is in you through the laying on of my hands.***

II Timothy 1:6 NIV

First it is clearly stated that the gifts are distributed “for the common good”, and in all of them and in everyone it is the same Spirit at work.

Secondly, when it says “He distributes them to each one, just as He determines.” He decides when one will be distributed and to whom. ... a divine portion of the Ancient of Days power.

His distribution of the Gifts has nothing to do with age. Timothy was a young man that Paul placed over the church in Ephesus. Here are Paul’s words to him ...

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

I Timothy 4:12 NASB

I know of many that believe and teach that some of the Gifts of the Spirit were only given to the Apostles/Disciples, specifically: prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation, healing and miracles. My question is why not include wisdom, knowledge and faith in that discontinued list?

Why is this scripture considered only partially active today?

Well, it’s all listed in the same sentence, therefore, it’s either all Gifts are active today or none are, and the answer is that all are active today. God’s Word has not changed because someone decided it was just too far out ... not distinguished ... surely one must not succumb to such antics. Evidently there are a lot of those someones. Remember this ... HE distributes the gifts as He sees fit ... each of the Gifts.
available free on Scribd [here](#)

***Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.***

James 1:17 ESV

Let's look at one more scripture that is considered only partially active for today, just to get a sense of the Word being dismantled.

***And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets,
and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.***

Ephesians 4:11 NASB

I have heard many times that there are no more apostles or prophets, that this was for the time period of the Twelve, but once again, every calling is listed in the same sentence ... nothing broken out ... no "but ifs." So, if there is no more Apostle or Prophet, then there can be no more Evangelist, Pastor or Teacher. How exactly can those two callings be separated out? They can't. It's either all or none. It's all.

Now let's get back to the Gifts of the Spirit, ALL the Gifts of the Spirit as identified in the Word for "the common good."

Each Gift must be exercised in LOVE. The "Love Chapter" immediately follows the "Gifts Chapter".

***Love is patient, love is kind.
It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,
it keeps no record of wrongs.***

***Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in truth.
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
Love never fails..."***

I Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV

The “Gifts” are noisy, abrasive and worthless without love ... like fingernails raking across a chalkboard. If the Gift does not produce love, comfort, correction, encouragement, and edification, then it is not of the Holy Spirit which is an indication that the person declaring they are gifted is promoting themselves rather than God.

Correction and discipline are to be presented with love ... we want each other to be the best we can be. A building up ... not a tearing down.

WHAT IS LOVE?

The seed of Truth produces an eternal harvest with the attributes of love.

Patient vs Intolerant

Kind vs Abuse, Hatred, Harshness and Cruelty

Keeps No Record of Wrong vs Need for that Pound of Flesh

Does Not Delight in Evil vs Delight over the Fall of Others

Rejoices in the Truth vs Comfortable in the Lies

Always Protects vs Knowingly allow Harm, Disregard

Always Trusts vs Fear

Always Hopes vs Hopelessness

Always Perseveres vs Gives Up

Never Fails vs Short Sightedness

available free on Scribd [here](#)

Love ... the ultimate weapon against the powers of darkness... the Glistening Sword of Truth ...

If a person declares they have a “Gift” ... and that gift doesn’t produce the offshoot of Love ... then it is a weed seed. Kinda like GMOs ... looks good ... tastes good ... will make you “feel” full but provides no nourishment.

The Gifts of the Spirit as identified in the Word working “to the common good”.

Wisdom overcomes foolishness.

Knowledge overcomes ignorance.

Faith overcomes self-sufficiency.

Healing overcomes harm.

Miraculous Power overcomes defeat.

Prophecy overcomes misinformation.

Distinguishing Spirits overcomes confusion.

Speaking in Tongues overcomes mental control.

Interpretation of Tongues overcomes miscommunication.

“Let all things be done for building up.”

1 Corinthians 14:26 ESV

Our spiritual Gifts are to be used to strengthen each other and be strengthened in return; to encourage and increase the faith of others and be a beacon of light to those lost in the darkness.

Does the use of the spiritual gift increase the faith of others ...

If it doesn’t, it’s weed seed.

*Does the use of the spiritual gift result in
encouragement ...*

If it doesn't, it's weed seed.

*Does the use of the spiritual gift result in
comfort and strengthening others ...*

If it doesn't, it's weed seed.

The Gifts of the Spirit must operate within these boundaries or they are false
thistles and thorns.

I have personally watched as a person was “prophesied over.” There was no
guidance of encouragement on how to smoothly transition to a peaceful
conclusion to that person’s situation. Only words of defeat and hopelessness ...
the words spoken painted a picture of failure ... tearing down instead of lifting
her up.

It appeared to me that the person “prophesying” had a disdain for this person’s
weakness ... my heart broke ... I was angry ... rightly so. I wanted to intervene
... to declare that this was not of the Holy Spirit but ... I was held back. God
works in mysterious ways and we trust that He knows best ... knee jerk reactions
are not one of the Gifts of the Spirit. We have to trust in His leading.

I was given the opportunity to discuss this face-to-face later that day. In our
conversation I asked, “Did that comfort you?” and the sobbing started. Obviously,
the answer was no. We talked ...

May I suggest you get your Bible after reading this and do your own study on the Gifts of the Spirit. I personally suggest a New American Standard Bible (NASB) which is easier to understand than the Old English King James version, not as elementary as many translations and holds the reputation for being the “most accurate” Bible translation in English. I do have a tendency to go back to the New King James often. I love the language used, albeit sometimes it’s not as easily understandable.

I also suggest you go online to derekprince.org and choose “The Teaching Legacy of Derek Prince.” Starts right off with the Gifts of the Spirit. Derek Prince, who has already stepped through the Portal of Eternity leaves behind an excellent legacy of teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit.

Following is a brief, very brief, summary of each Gift.

WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

The ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting.

***The fear (respect, awe, submission) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***

Proverbs 9:10 NASB

***But the wisdom that is from above is first
pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits,
without partiality and without hypocrisy.***

James 3:17 KJV

For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 2:6 NASB

***Do not forsake Wisdom, and she will watch over you.
Wisdom is supreme; therefore, get Wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.***

Proverbs 4:6-7 NIV

As I was reviewing/editing Twisted Sisters, this last scripture, Proverbs 4:6-7 jumped out at me in a whole new light. Maybe you know this but honestly, I had never grasp it until now.

Reread that again ... it says Wisdom is “supreme.” Of course, I was pretty sure I knew what supreme meant ... and to be honest ... never thought much of it ... but decided to look it up ... a tad more powerful definition than I had ever thought about. Supreme is having power over all others.

Wisdom is the dominant ... a necessity, having power over all gifts. In other words, without Wisdom the gifts cannot function properly ... actually, they cannot function at all.

I guess that’s why it says ... “Though it cost all you have, get understanding.” Wisdom is understanding.

*I wonder what the cost is ...
Time ... Diligence ... Sacrifice.*

KNOWLEDGE (TO KNOW/AWARENESS)

The ability of one person to know what God is currently doing or intends to do.
A form of revelation similar to prophecy or a type of discernment.

The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge for the ear of the wise seek it out.

Proverbs 8:15 NIV

The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

Proverbs 15:14 NIV

Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.

Proverbs 20:15 NIV

FAITH (EXPECTATION)

An extraordinary trust and confidence in God's promises that allows one to have a strong and unshakable confidence.

... so that your faith might not rely on the wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God.

I Corinthians 2:5 NASB

So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

Romans 10:17 KJV

***Now faith is the substance (realization) of things hoped for,
the evidence (confidence) of things not seen.***

Hebrews 11:1 KJV

HEALING (RESTORATION)

Supernatural enablement given to a believer to minister various kinds of healing and restoration to individuals through the power of the Holy Spirit. Healing and Miracles are not the same. Healing is a process. Miracle is immediate.

The spiritual Gift of Healing is actually plural in the Greek which is the language in which I Corinthians was originally written in. It is translated "Gifts of Healing" which goes hand-in-hand with thanksgiving and praise.

***Is anyone among you sick? Let them call for the Elders of the church,
and let them pray over him, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.***

James 5:14 NASB

(I don't see many anointing with oil anymore ... but it says "anointing them with oil.)

***The Lord sustains them on their sickbed
and restores them from their bed of illness.***

Psalms 41:3 NIV

***He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you.
Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."***

Mark 5:34 NIV

MIRACULOUS POWERS (SUPERNATURAL)

Transcends the laws of nature and conflicts with known laws governing the universe. Divine or superhuman.

The Gift of Miracles translates to "working of powers" in the Greek. Diverse and not permanently available at will of the gifted believer but provided at various times and circumstances ... subject to the Divine will of God and His purposes. Those with this gift have a heightened sensitivity to the presence and power of God through His Holy Spirit, spiritual ears perked ... listening for the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

***Jesus replied,
"What is impossible with man is possible with God."***

Luke 18:27 NIV

***"If you can?" said Jesus.
"Everything is possible for one who believes."***

Mark 9:23 NIV

***Jesus said unto them, "Because of your unbelief; for verily I say to you,
if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed (tree is in the seed),
ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove;
and nothing shall be impossible for you."***

Matthew 17:20 KJV

The following is long but there are a couple of things as Twisted Sisters we need to see ...

And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha;

(Notice, a FEMALE disciple)

this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.

*And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died;
and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room.*

*Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples,
having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him,
“Do not delay in coming to us.”*

So, Peter arose and went with them.

*When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room;
and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the
tunics and garments that Tabitha used to make while she was with them.*

*But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed,
and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.”*

*And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.
And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows,
he presented her alive.*

It became known all over Joppa and many believed in the Lord.

Acts 9:35-42 NASB

Then there is Phillip. Honestly, I suggest you read the entirety of Acts 8.

*So, he commanded the chariot to stand still.
And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*

*Now when they came up out of the water,
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAUGHT PHILIP AWAY,
so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way Rejoicing.*

But Philip was found at Azotus.

(Approximately 30 miles from where he had been with the eunuch)

***And passing through,
he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea***

Acts 8:38-40 NKJV

Do ya think there just might have been some Miraculous Power going on here? The corpse is no more, tossing those burial wrappings aside. Phillip picked up and flung through time, instantaneously transported to another divine assignment. There are so many more instances of Miraculous Power documented, not only in the Bible but all through history up to this very day.

Personally, I have never seen, with my own eyes, what I would consider to be a Miraculous Power like the ones mentioned in the scriptures above, although I have heard and read of many throughout my life. My grandparents and parents saw and experienced Miraculous Powers along with many other individuals I grew up with, albeit I have witnessed many healings ... I am an example of healing.

Even though I have not personally seen ... I believe.

***Jesus saith unto him,
“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,
blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”***

John 20:29 ASV

PROPHECY (FORESIGHT)

The inspired declaration foretelling a divine will and purpose. A divinely inspired prediction, instruction, or exhortation. A divinely inspired utterance or revelation. Beyond the power of human insight to foresee and discern.

***If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.***

I Corinthians 13:2 NIV

Watch out for false prophets.

They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Matthew 7:15 NIV

***But know this first of all,
that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,
for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,
but those moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.***

II Peter 1:20-21 NASB

***But the one who prophesies
speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation.***

I Corinthians 14:3 NASB

If the prophecy does not echo love (remember, sometimes there is tough love ... but it better be gentle tough love) ... if a prophecy doesn't follow the instructions/rules of I Corinthians 14:3 ... then you can check it off as a false prophecy/false prophet.

THE RULES

DOES THE PROPHECY ...

Instruct someone in a way that enlightens or uplifts them morally, spiritually intellectually.

EDIFY. Strongly encourage that which is good or commendable.

EXHORT. In the Latin it means “strengthen greatly”. Shore up the mood or physical state of someone else ... to give strength and hope to ... ease grief or trouble.

COMFORT. An offer of rest and easement to a troubled, suffering soul ... best induced by warmth and restful conditions.

Making sure we understand this. There have been many prophecies in the Bible that don't exactly seem to spell out what we would consider Edification, Exhortation, or Comfort ... but are warnings. When we are warned and provided with grace (knowledge) ... we are encouraged and strengthened because we matter enough to warrant a warning. Maybe we should even ... you know ... pay attention to those warnings ... maybe.

Edify ... Exhort ... Comfort

DISTINGUISHING SPIRITS (IDENTIFICATION)

Being able to distinguish, discern, judge, or appraise a person, statement, situation, or environment ... that 6th sense one might say. The ability to distinguish between good and evil spirits.

I have experienced this ... more than once.

The Holy Spirit provides this Gift when needed for clarity in distinguishing between the influence of the Holy and the influence of the unholy. This is when our spirit has vision into the unseen of another or a happening ... or even ourselves.

A nudging ... a tap ... an awareness of peace or chaos, of safety or danger, of light or darkness. Those moments when the sweet fragrance (freedom) emanates from one yet one which is more appealing in appearance smells of bitter herbs (slavery). Much is attractive on the surface that is unholy. Holy is not always beautiful in appearance and unholy isn't always ugly in appearance ... it's the unseen.

I was reading a book the other day and there was a twist in the plot where someone successfully manipulated others into believing a falsehood. They were able to distort the truth with a created artifact which appeared to be proof. That's what the powers of darkness do ... that ole mantle of deceit ... they are quite good and bold with this mantle ... had lots of practice and experience significant success, with distortion.

***Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,
because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

I John 4:1 NASB

***It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer,
a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us,
who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.***

***Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying,
“These men are bond-servants of the Most High God,
who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”***

***She continued doing this for many days.
But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit,
“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!”
And it came out at that very moment.***

Acts 16:16-18 NASB

***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces
of evil in the heavenly realms.***

Ephesians 6:12 NIV

GIFT OF TONGUES (GIFT OF LANGUAGES)

Is the utterance of prayer and spiritual edification or of a message spoken to God glorifying God in a language that is unknown to the one speaking it and may be in a language unknown to humanity ... heavenly utterance.

“Tongues are also the manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit, “an event subsequent to conversion in which a believer experiences a fresh infilling with the Holy Spirit that may result in a variety of consequences, including greater love for God,

greater victory over sin, greater power for ministry, and sometimes the receiving of new spiritual gifts.” ([Grudem](#) note 1,242)

***When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind,
and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves,
and they rested on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues,
as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”***

Act 2:1-4 NASB

I sure would have liked to have been a fly on that wall! Actually ... I sure would have liked to attend that ball!

I was raised Pentecostal (Assemblies of God and then Charismatic), my Dad was a Pastor. I have attended many services where the presence of the Holy Spirit was overwhelming

If you ever encounter being doused to the core by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will then understand. I pray that you do ... it empowers us to be more. I still speak in tongues, albeit it is currently used only in my “personal” private prayer time.

I am saddened that the Church has become “too cool” for such things. Not all churches, some still welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit with her bag full of Gifts.

“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”

I Corinthians 14:18 NIV

Paul is speaking here ... encouraging the believers to speak in tongues. This wasn't just for the Disciples ... thought I would clarify that.

There are three separate uses for tongues as follows:

Personal Prayer

When we don't know what or how to pray for a situation/person/self and edification of one's own spirit.

***For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God,
for no one understands; but, in the spirit speaks mysteries.***

I Corinthians 14:2 NASB

***For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.
What is the conclusion then?***

I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.

I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

I Corinthians 14:14-15 NKJV

Corporate Word

There must be proper order in a gathering of Believers. That responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Elders ... and if in a church environment it falls on the Pastor.

***I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied;
for the one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks with tongues,
unless indeed someone interprets, that the church may receive edification.***

I Corinthians 14:5 NKJV

***If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love,
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.***

I Corinthians 12:1 NIV

***I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;
yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding,
that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.***

I Corinthians 14:18-19 NIV

A Sign for Unbelievers

Open your Bible and read Acts 2 ... or pull it up on the internet and read. I personally do both.

Therefore, tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers.

I Corinthians 14:22 NKJV

And these signs WILL accompany THOSE WHO BELIEVE:

***In my name they WILL DRIVE OUT DEMONS;
they WILL SPEAK IN NEW TONGUES ...”***

Mark 16:17 NIV

*Point made ... Tongues did not disappear
with the Disciples.*

To be very clear ... if saved by grace is being taught/shared ... but they are unwilling to acknowledge the “speaking in tongues” ... I don’t get into a dither trying to argue them into it. I am THANKFUL for all Sisters and Brothers in Christ who share the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Interpretation of Tongues (Clarification)

Interpretation of tongues is found along-side the gift of tongues and simply means to interpret, explain, or expound some message that is not able to be understood in a natural way. The Holy Spirit reveals to the interpreter the meaning/interpretation of the language spoken to those who need to hear it, resulting in edification of the Body and glory to God.

When a “message” in tongues is spoken within a group, it is to be orderly, one at a time and must be interpreted for understanding.

*If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three,
and each in turn, and someone must interpret;
but if there is no interpreter,
the speaker must keep silent in the church (gathering);
and let them speak to self and to God.*

I Corinthians 14:27-28 NASB

BOTTOMLINE concerning the

Gifts of the Spirit ...

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels,
but do not have love,
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
If I have the gift of prophecy and can move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.
If I give all I possess to the poor
and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.
Love is patient, love is kind.
It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

Love never fails.

*But where there are prophecies, they will cease;
where there are tongues, they will be stilled;
where there is knowledge, it will pass away.
For we know in part and prophesy in part,
but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.*

*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
When I became mature/adult, I put the ways of childhood behind me.
For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.
Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.
And now these three remain:
Faith, Hope and Love. But the greatest of these is Love.*

I Corinthians 13:1-13 NIV

THE GOLDEN CORD ... Faith, Hope, Love

Part III

What Are We?

WHAT ARE WE?

*I reflect at night on who You are, O Lord, therefore,
I obey your instructions.*

Psalm 119:55 NLT

We are vessels of Love that are to flow with the tributaries of Joy, Peace
Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control ... The
Fruit of the Spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
Against such things there is no law.*

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature
with its passions and desires.*

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in touch with the Spirit."

Galatians 5:22-25 AMP

We are filled with the perfect blend of ... Living Water which quenches our
spiritual thirst ... the Breath of Life for when we are spiritually dusty ... the
Bread of Life for when we are spiritually malnourished ... The Light of the
World for those walking in darkness.

I was reading about how a photographer was able to get a picture of the “Light Pillars” in Northern Ontario and the following statement jumped out at me.

“A light pillar is an atmospheric optical phenomenon, which is an interaction of light with ice crystals. When the temperature drops and these crystals position themselves horizontally as they fall through the air, they act as ‘vessels’ for light, shooting it upwards.”

Notice “light” interacting with “ice crystals” (water).

So, what are we?

What makes us different?

What defines a Twisted Sister?

LOVE PURSUERS

The Primary Source of Power.

***But now faith, hope, love, abide these three;
but the greatest of these is love.***

I Corinthians 13:13 NASB

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts.

I Corinthians 14:1 NKJV

Hmmmm, so Love is to be pursued, as in to proceed in accordance with a method or plan; to seek to attain indicating that Love is a continual process for us to strive for on our Twisted Journey up a narrow path.

We addressed a scripture earlier in the “Gift Taster” section but let’s readdress here. Instructions clearly presented on how to pursue love.

Love is ...

*patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
It does not dishonor others (rude), it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,
it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
It always protects, always hopes, always perseveres.
Love NEVER FAILS ...*

I Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV

What a Promise!

Here’s something to contemplate:

The one who does not love does NOT know God. For God is love.

I John 4:8 NASB

When trying to mentally digest the Garment of Love which is made up of the threads listed in *I Corinthians 13:4-8*, I completely understand why we are instructed to **pursue** Love, but to be quite honest, I personally have moments of being overwhelmed when attempting to follow these instructions because, good grief, they just seem too simple ... then you realize ... They. Are. Hard!

That towel could be thrown in and the Garment of Love considered out of our means ... too expensive ... but it is a desire of our hearts to have perfectly woven threads of Love ... but of course ... perfection will come on the other side of the Portal.

Each time we knot up one of these threads out of frustration, failure, anger, whatever, we must recognize the “knot” and allow the reweaving process to take place. Kinda like, letting go and letting God have His way ... or as Ecclesiastes 3:6 says, *a time to give up as lost* ... handing over the loom to the Creator as He mends each thread with Grace and Mercy.

As each thread is woven together by the Master Weaver, our Garment of Love strengthens, expands, and shapes us into who we have been created to be.

Some of my threads haven't been knotted in quite some time, however, others have had to be rewoven multiple times. Human I am and human I will remain until I step through the Portal of Eternity, but I refuse to give up and accept defeat because I have threads that got a twang going on at times. There is peace in growth, but sometimes that process of growth is uncomfortable ... growing pains.

*Each time Love triumphs, our Garment
becomes more comfortable to wear.*

The Garment of Love ... Woven Threads

THREAD OF PATIENCE - MERCY, COMPASSION, ENDURANCE

(My Nemesis)

Patience is the quality of self-restraint or of not giving way to anger, even in the face of provocation. Closely related to mercy and compassion.

Patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset. It requires mercy, compassion and endurance.

Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace.

Proverbs 15:18 GNT

***Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.***

Galatians 6:9 NIV

***Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.***

Psalms 37:7 NIV

I love the words Mercy and Compassion. I know them well since they have followed me all the days of my life and will continue to do so, by the Grace of God.

Patience (endurance), on the other hand, jerks my chain. That patience stuff is one tough cookie to swallow. But look how patience identifies with endurance. Love endures albeit, it can be a time of unpleasant or difficult situations that require patience ... but ... when Mercy and Compassion are tightly woven with Endurance it becomes a Three-Fold Cord of Patience, that is not easily broken.

As we have moments of our thread of Patience knotting up, we once again put into practice the “Think on these Things” as addressed back in “Train my Mind.”

*True things ... Honest things ...
Pure things ... Lovely things*

I believe that’s where Mercy and Compassion provide the groundwork for us to Endure without snapping our cord of Patience.

Mercy is not getting what one deserves. Mercy restrains punishment even when justice demands it. In the judicial system it is identified as granting “clemency,” which is another word for mercy. This depends entirely on the will of the grantor, who doesn’t have to give a reason for granting it.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matthew 5:7 NASB

*...He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy.
He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

Titus 3:5 NIV

Compassion is to recognize the sufferings of others, then take action.

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved,
cloth yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

Colossians 3:12 NIV

Endurance is the power to withstand something challenging to us.

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement
give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ had.*

Romans 15:5 NIV

*Consider it all joy, my brothers/sisters when you encounter various trials (pressures of life),
knowing that the testing (pressures of life) of your faith produces endurance.*

*And let endurance have its perfect result
so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James 1:2-4 NASB

Let's intertwine Mercy and Compassion with Endurance to achieve
Patience, as we pursue Love. We look through the eyes of Mercy, taking action
with Compassion, and are steadfast with Endurance.

The Three-Fold Cord of Patience ...

Mercy ... Compassion ... Endurance

As we go back to the loom, each time our threads are knitted together
tighter and tighter creating the Cord. It's a life-long process ... our Garment of
Love.

For God is Love ...

THE THREAD OF KINDNESS – NOBLE DEED DOERS

An act of goodwill; an act of benevolence which promotes the happiness of others. Charity, hospitality, attentions to the wants and needs of others.

Sounds sweet ... easy to do ... it's not.

***Be kind to one another, compassionate,
forgiving each other,
just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.***

Ephesians 4:32 NASB

Nice or Kind? You are hurriedly in the process of a quick Walmart shopping spree when up ahead you spot an elderly man. He is standing in a baby section aisle looking around as if lost and confused. You stop and ask if you can help him. He needs pant hangers but has no idea where to find them. Just short of kindness would be to give him directions to where they were and then go on your busy way. That is being nice and nice is a good thing. Taking him to the other side of Walmart to show him where they are and helping him pick out the kind he wants ... now that is Kindness.

***Let love of the brothers and sisters continue.
Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.***

Hebrews 13:1-2 NASB

I am wondering how many angels I have turned a blind eye to over the years ... not *entertaining angels*? I'm thinking we all walk by them ... encountering them daily.

One can be nice, which is a definite attribute of where we are pleasing and agreeable to others, but there are many times that we need to step up and BE a Noble Deed Doer.

We have a tendency to think of Noble Deeds as jumping into rushing waters to save a life, battling zombies to reach the wounded. Our thought pattern leads us to think "Noble" is way beyond our daily encounters with others ... or the life that we live, but we are presented with the opportunity to be Noble Deed Doers. This is where "eyes to see" are essential.

***Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see."
So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw,
and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
II Kings 6:17 ESV***

With his physical eyes, by the Lord's illumination, what had been unseen in the natural was right there in front of him! I want that illuminating eyesight! Let's ask for it, believe that He has given it and practice it! It takes practice.

We might not see Heavenly Hosts in chariots of fire (but we might) ... our eyes opened to see, not only great needs of others, but what we might consider to be small needs.

Great or small ... they are NEEDS.

What might look like a small, insignificant need could very well be a weight almost too heavy for that person to carry yet our eyes lack *illuminating sight*.

Have you ever been that person that needed a Noble Deed Doer to catch sight of you ... recognize your need? I have, many times. There have been times I was unseen in my struggle, yet there were times when an act of kindness made all the difference in that moment. A Noble Deed Doer with eyes of kindness rescued me ... by being who God called them to be.

Here's a simple example of kindness that I'm thinking many of us struggle with ... letting another driver merge into our lane ... in front of us ... after not getting over back when the sign said to GET OVER. I've gotten good at this one ever since I experienced another's blind eyes of unkindness.

Several years ago, I was at work and received a call that my stepdad had been taken by ambulance to the ER with a life-threatening illness. Hurriedly telling my boss what had happened, I headed out. The hospital was about 40+ miles from where I was ... rush hour traffic ... the other side of Houston ... and one exit past where I would have normally exited to go to their home.

As I approached the home exit (an exit only lane) I realized I needed to get back over and head to the next exit. As we sat, inching along, I put on my blinker, finally rolled down my window and literally begged the woman blocking my car to let me over. She looked at me with a smirk (yes, a literal smirk) and smugly shook her head no, then looked away with a pleased smile on her face.

I will never forget the look of superiority on her face as she stood her “rightful” ground. I was forced to exit and continue on the packed feeder to the hospital.

I made it to the hospital ... my stepdad survived ... but ... that one act of kindness would have made a positive impact on me, instead of adding to my weight of stress.

Since that day, when someone wants over, I let them. Maybe they are late for work or to pick up their child ... maybe they are headed to the hospital because their stepdad is gravely ill and not expected to live. Bottomline is doesn't matter if they are just being rude, my act of kindness might help lift a weight ... might save a life ... might put a smile on someone's face ... actually it even puts a smile on my face. It feels good to be kind.

Be a Noble Deed Doer ... it's WHO WE ARE.

One of the definitions of “Noble” is: Of an ancient and splendid family; as noble by descent. This definition of “Noble” resonates and you might be wondering why, so let me explain.

We are in the lineage of the Noble.

We are told in the Word that when we are joined with Him, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we become ONE in the Spirit with Him.

***But whoever is united with the Lord
is one with Him in spirit.***

I Corinthians 6:17 NIV

We are ONE in the Spirit with the Ancient of Days. Not just us, but those that have come before us ... Noble Ancients ... we are one with them as well!

Nobility runs in our blood ... Kind Nobles

THE THREAD OF CONTENTMENT - DOES NOT ENVY

(The Green-Eyed Monster)

The state of mind you reach when you look at your life in all its imperfections, and say, “good enough”. True peace of mind has absolutely nothing to do with any external pleasure.

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

Proverbs 14:30 NIV

It has been scientifically proven that emotions have a significant impact on the physical body with envy being one of those body destroying emotions. It plants a seed of self-destruction in our hearts and minds, resulting in depression, hatred, hostility, anger and irritability triggered when one measures their self-worth against what is perceived in another. This weed seed produces a toxic attack on our bodies, resulting in immune deficiencies, infections, cardiovascular diseases, arthritis, cancer ... and much more.

The scripture says peace gives life to the body and envy ROTS the bones ... rots us from the inside out.

available free on Scribd [here](#)

When Paul wrote the following scripture he was imprisoned in Rome or Ephesus for preaching the gospel (good news) of Christ and thinking his execution was close at hand ... hmmm ... “content in whatever circumstances I am.”

***Not that I speak from want,
for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.
I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity;
in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry,
both of having abundance and suffering need.
I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”***

Philippians 4:11-13 NASB

I see some instruction in the above scripture; “For I have learned.” So how do we learn to shake off envy like water off a duck’s back? How do we strive to be content in whatever circumstances we are in?

Quite some time ago I stopped looking at what others had and began focusing on and being thankful for what I have been blessed with ... training my mind to be full of gratitude and contentment for what might be considered the small things ... not wishing for more, thankful for what was in front of me ... provision. I do slip occasionally ... that ole humanity stuff.

Did you know that when you start the “contentment focus” the small things become treasures collecting in your treasure trove? That eye contact with another ... a smile and chat with a stranger ... an act of kindness ... a hug ... I could go on and on.

That Thread of Contentment feels soft and I am comfortable. When my contentment gets a little outta whack it becomes a little itchy ... a warning to get back in focus ... “Contentment Focus”.

There will always be those who have more money, nicer clothing, perfect houses, and “seemingly” better lives than we have (on the surface). At the same time there will always be those that have less money, worn out clothing, houses in need of repair or no house at all and seemingly worse lives than ours (on the surface), but neither are an absolute.

“Seemingly” better lives might have no peace, love, or joy ... their perceived treasure only in material goods ... bling bling ... no food for the soul.

The “seemingly” worse lives might be full of peace, love, and joy ... and their lack of bling bling does not reflect their true wealth.

Then there are those “circumstances.” The heartbreak ... the sorrow ... the penny pinch ... the nail in the tire ... the health issue ... the changing of seasons. I think with each circumstance we find ourselves in ... there is a purpose ... a purpose under heaven. We might not understand the whys and wherefores, but the whys and the wherefores impact eternity ... and we begin to realize that it is not all about us ... it’s about the Kingdom.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 KJV

What is our true wealth? It’s not “things” or “circumstances” ... albeit there is nothing wrong with having things and pleasant circumstances. It’s not available free on Scribd [here](#)

beauty because we know, especially us Elder Sisters, that physical beauty fades (thank God for Maybelline and Spanx). Things become tarnished and worn. Circumstances continually change ... sometimes daily ... sometimes hourly.

True wealth is being a vessel full of the Fruit of the Spirit and with this Fruit we “***...can do all things through Christ who strengthens us***”.

Go back to Galatians 5:22-23 concerning what the Fruit is and apply ... then “Think on These Things” as instructed in Philippians 4:8 addressed previously in “Training the Mind”. I’m telling you ... girl ... what a relief it is.

To learn how to keep Envy from creeping up on us, we must follow and apply the instructions ... there will be a test.

Envy can turn into delight at the failure of others ...

Shed the Green Eyed Monster

THE SILVER THREAD OF HUMILITY - DOES NOT BOAST

Genuine gratitude and lack of arrogance, a modest view of one’s self. Trusting in the wisdom and salvation of God.

Boastful is to talk with excessive pride and self-satisfaction about one’s achievements, possessions, or abilities ... boasters are sowers of the envy seed in others ... Bad Seed Spreaders.

***Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;
a stranger and not your own lips.***

Proverbs 27:2 NASB

This is what the Lord says,

***“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or
the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches
but let the one who boasts boast about this:
that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord,
who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth,
for these I delight,” declares the Lord.***

Jeremiah 9:23-24 NIV

When I hear someone boast/brag about themselves in excess I immediately know that there is something missing in their lives and they are making up for it by being braggadocious/arrogant trying to cover their insecurities ... which in reality magnifies those insecurities. Doesn't make it any more pleasurable to my ears.

When I hear someone boast/brag about someone else I hear admiration and encouragement which produces a fragrant aroma of confidence ... a sound of harmony in perfect pitch.

Sustainable truth, power and riches are provided by the treasure trove of the Divine. Unsustainable truth (falsehood), power (futility) and riches (insufficiency) comes from relying on self and/or false teachings.

Humility is contentment in action.

THE GOLDEN THREAD OF HUMILITY – IS NOT PROUD

Humility comes with the knowledge that God's creation transcends our own narrow interests. As with other aspects of wisdom, humility will gain us much more than we sacrifice.

The main Hebrew root of pride is ... ideas of arrogance, cynical, insensitivity to the needs of others.

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 11:2 NIV

By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom..

Proverbs 13:10 NKJV

Pride is when someone shines their own light on what they perceive to be greatness within themselves...SEE ME...SEE ME! When we step up and say, “LOOK AT ME” others look and maintain a diligent watch for one misstep of the self-proclaimed greatness which can result in disgrace, losing face and dignity.

With humility we know and accept our missteps ... not ashamed because we know our humanity is always going to be with us but so is God's Grace and Mercy ... mending our skinned knees and setting our feet back on the path we stumbled off.

I've known people (and have been one from time to time) that continually tooted their own horn without regard to others, sounding like clanging cymbals ... hurts the ears.

Have you ever met someone that was initially beautiful/handsome but once you got to know them they gradually turned ugly right before your eyes.

*Arrogant pride becomes ugly no matter
what angle you look at it from.*

On the other hand, have you met someone that initially appeared ugly, yet they radiated humility with such inward beauty/joy that their ugly transformed into captivating? I have, many times.

J.O.Y

Jesus ... Others ... Yourself

*Putting God ... then others ahead of our own
interest.*

Did you notice that both scriptures noted above state that with humility comes wisdom? How does that take place? Evidently humility is a powerful tool we need to learn how to use ... expertly ... so let's investigate.

***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility
consider others better than yourself.***

Philippians 2:3 NIV

When you are humble you are free from pride and arrogance (Imma thinking those two are a heavy load to bear ... actually I know from experience). You can be a peacemaker without needing to fight for your rights. You can walk humbly by the power of the Holy Spirit, not in your own strength.

HOW?

Being comfortable with who you are in Christ. We seek to build others up, not ourselves. For as we build, our spirit is filled in return with gratitude for God's grace, mercy and forgiveness ... what goes around ... comes around.

"... I am gentle and humble in heart..."

Matthew 11:29 NIV

That is Jesus speaking ... Be like Jesus.

Being Humble is NOT being a wimp, weak or passive, but emits a powerful fragrance of steadfast strength that cannot be toppled.

*A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Proverbs 15:1 NIV

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander,
along with every form of malice.
Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other,
just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV

We don't need to toot our own horn because we have nothing to prove ... the proof is in the pudding and our pudding is tasty with no bitter aftertaste.

So, if we throw that knotty thread of pride away, the Golden Thread of Humility will serve us well.

Sounds like Wisdom to me!

THE THREAD OF TEMPERANCE – IS NOT RUDE

Moderation in thought, word, or action. Those who practice temperance are self-controlled, showing restraint in their passions and behaviors.

This “Rude” ... does not mean “offensively impolite” but means untrained, ignorant, raw and crude.

Untrained: Unqualified in experience.

Ignorant: Untaught, savage.

Raw: Untaught; not skilled or practiced.

Crude: Coarse manners, uncivil.

Unless you have had your head in a proverbial hole in the ground you have noticed that politeness and common good debate/conversations are becoming a thing of the past. Rudeness has become acceptable ... even applauded. This is evident in what we read or hear every day on the TV, radio, social media, at the store, and sadly even in our own homes.

Manners and integrity have pretty much become unimportant for so many ... a thing of the past ... a disastrous loss. Not everywhere ... but many are gone ... others are slipping away.

I can curse in public and/or call someone a filthy name even in the presence of elders and children, after all, it's all about free speech, baby.

I can throw a fit because I don't like something, after all, I have the right to express myself.

I can verbally and/or physically attack someone I don't agree with after all, I have the right to be right. I love my "right" and my neighbor should love my "right" as well...their "right" doesn't even come close to the mega-importance of my "right"... I am a spoiled brat and I have the "RIGHT" to be a spoiled brat.

Whew, looking in the mirror is the reflection of an "untrained", "ignorant", "raw" and "crude" person. In all honesty, I can be that RUDE person ... not a pretty sight ... I ask forgiveness.

Let's make a commitment to diligently work together and change that reflection, first in us and it will spread to others ... no knee jerk reactions ... and sometimes silence is golden.

Be trainable and then BE the trainer. Be teachable and then BE the teacher. Be mannerly and then BE the example for others to follow. Some of us need to recognize our responsibility ... to educate ... to train ... to be an example (walk it) ... and to correct.

Discipline produces Knowledge.

Knowledge is a powerful tool.

===

Knowledge produces Confidence.

Confidence is powerful tool.

I have to say I am continually shocked and saddened at the many crude posts I see on social media and words spoken. The make fun of, demeaning and some serious hate talk, with “supposed” humor (usually in the political field these days ... on both sides) is pretty constant and around every corner.

I wonder at times if someone didn’t like me would they send out degrading, cartoonish pictures of me with a list of all my mistakes/failures? That would take some time in my case, and there is plenty of fodder for the fire.

I would hope not, so why would I choose to do this to someone else ... anyone else? It truly blows me away that this rudeness (crassness) is so readily accepted as okay ... it is not okay. What are we reflecting? Well, I can tell you it’s not the love of Christ.

There is nothing wrong with civil disagreements/debates, in fact I enjoy a good debate (my debate field is limited to my knowledge field, which is just limited).

Let’s talk about our individual differences and our stance on different subjects. How do we learn from one another if we refuse to have a civil conversation between both sides ... having ears to hear. Might not come to an agreement, but at least there is knowledge shared and hopefully a peaceful understanding takes place.

I’m not saying we have to bow down, set aside our beliefs and not stand firm on what we know to be true, but surely we can disagree with temperance and gentle wisdom ... **Jesus did** ... and if that’s not possible ... the gracious walk-away is.

Let's look at some of Jesus Christ's encounters as He walked this dusty earth where He used Temperance.

Jesus did not demand to be followed.

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Matthew 4:19 NASB

*They were given a choice and they chose well.
Fish by the boat loads.*

*Jesus said unto him, "If you wish to be complete
go and sell your possessions and give to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me."*

*But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving;
for he was one who owned much property.*

Matthew 19:21-22 NASB

*I wonder if the young man ever made the
choice later in life? I hope so.*

He didn't demand the "Law" be broken OR abided by.

*But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
Early in the morning He came again into the temple,
and all the people were coming to Him;
and He sat down and began to teach them.*

*The Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery
and having set her in the center of the court, they said to Him,
"Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.
Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women, what then do You say?"*

*They were saying this, testing Him,
so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.
But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground.*

*But when they persisted in asking Him,
He straightened up, and said to them,*

***“He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”
Again, He stooped down and wrote on the ground.***

***When they heard it, they began to go out one by one,
beginning with the older ones,
and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.
Straightening up, Jesus said to her,
“Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”
She said, “No one, Lord.”
And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you either.
Go. From now on sin no more.”***

John 8:1-11 NASB

*As the stoners walked away in shame ... she
walked into Grace and Mercy.*

Some today would call Him a “middle of the roader” ... “lukewarm” ... a “fence sitter.” He should have boldly stood up for her ... loudly, with self-righteousness, and cursed their actions.

I wonder what the result would have been if Jesus had ignorantly demanded the stoners not follow the Law?

Of course, she would have been promptly stoned and He would have been accused of blasphemy with a death sentence tagged on ... but ... He had a cross to bear ... a ransom to pay ... a penalty of “the Law” to be paid ... a woman to rescue ... wasn’t time for His death sentence ... or hers.

Then I wonder what would have happened had He agreed with them in abiding by the Law? She would have been stoned to death ... the rescue mission aborted ... and darkness would cover the earth ... end of story.

***For no one can ever be made right with God
by doing what the law commands.
The law simply shows us how sinful we are.***

Romans 3:20 NLT

By the way, this woman was never biblically identified as Mary Magdalene ... not once. Mary Magdalene was identified as one of His followers and was a witness to his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Were they one and the same ... guess we will find out when we step through the Portal of Eternity.

He didn't demand His rights.

***And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge,
so the governor was quite amazed.***

Matthew 27:14 NASB

Jesus had been “arrested” by a Royal Jewish lynch mob and delivered to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, demanding that Jesus be put to death, for committing “sedition”.

Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest, accused Jesus of claiming to be the “King of the Jews”, which was a capital crime in Rome ... there was no king but the Roman Emperor Tiberius. The real crime in their minds was they were losing power over the people.

Pilate knew this and had no desire to put him to death... questioning Him ... hoping Jesus would defend himself, but Jesus remained quiet. Even though He was innocent of the charges, He knew there were ... GREATER THINGS TO COME ... and the crucifixion took place.

NOT ONE REBUTTAL! WE HAVE GREATER THINGS TO COME!

He did not demand respect.

Jesus and His Disciples were traveling, and the shortest route was through Samaria ... the land of the Samaritans. The Jews and Samaritans did not speak to each other, lived separately and there was no intermingling. The Jew considered the Samaritan second class Jews, and the Samaritans considered the Jews second class Samaritans.

When they came to Jacobs Well, Jesus sat down to wait on the Disciples to return with food. I'm not going to tell the whole story here so look it up in John 4:4-26.

While He was waiting a Samaritan woman came to draw water. To her shock, He actually spoke to her, asking for a drink of water.

He could have demanded the drink ... Give me a drink of water! After all He was the Son of God ... but Jesus did not see her as a cursed Samaritan OR an adulteress, which she was. He saw her for who she was ... a disciple in the making.

Obviously, she was not pleased that Jesus asked her for water and responded (I'll just ad lib a little here but it's the same meaning), "How dare you, a Jew, speak to me for I am Samaritan!" My thoughts are, why not just give the drink and walk away? She was pulling up the bucket anyway ... but no ... she's insulted and she ain't gonna take it ... no Jew talk allowed!

We (at least I) have always seen the portrayal of the woman at the well as meek and shy ... head bowed, tears flowing ... humbly asking why He would speak to her ... so ashamed and pitiful. I'm not thinking that's who she was at all ... crap ... she had been married five times and the one she was with now wasn't her husband ... she was a tough broken cookie ... seriously! AND she had no idea who this guy sitting on a log was ... just a Jewish freeloader.

Jesus could have responded with a demand, stirring up the discord that had brewed between the Samaritans and the Jews for centuries ... Woman, I said get me a drink! Instead, He poured Living Water into her cup. A truth that rocked her world and she was transformed from adulteress water girl to a Vessel of Life flowing with Living Waters.

Do you think if Jesus had treated her with disrespect and reproach there would have been any good come out of this Divine appointment? Pretty sure He would have felt the wrath of this rough around the edges woman. Any chance of springs of Living Water welling up to the River of Life would have been permanently placed in drought mode ... the schism never to be brought back into harmony.

He didn't go there for a drink of water anyway ... and it doesn't appear that he got one. He went there for HER ... the first Samaritan disciple. She was chosen ... She was His mission that day which had been strategically planned out.

As I read about this woman. I envision a woman bitter, full of broken promises and here she is faced with this racist Jew who thinks he's better than her, the audacity of asking her to get him some water.

We're not talking about turning on the faucet. We are talking about lowering a clay pot, which she had to carry from the village to the well, lower down into the well and then draw the pot full of water back to the surface. Back breaking work. I'm thinking her ears heard a demand. This was NOT what she needed after the day she was having.

Then the sound of many waters reached her ears ... the voice of Jesus.

God's grace and mercy reached out to her, and she was forever changed by the love Jesus had for her. His love changed her ... not demand nor shame.

Have we allowed ourselves to use unwise and rude tactics to express ourselves and demand agreement? Shame on us.

Can we force our beliefs by demand or shame ... NO.

Kinda makes it pretty clear why there are those looking on who feel that they have good reason to doubt saving grace, forgiveness and renewal of spirit, mind, and body by Jesus Christ. Twisted Sister, we must walk the walk, not just talk the talk because talk is cheap.

Let's practice Temperance.

THE THREAD OF BENEVOLENCE - *NOT SELF-SEEKING*

The disposition to do good; good will; kindness; charitableness; the love of humanity, accompanied with a desire to promote their happiness. Children, on the norm, have selfishness down pat and there are those who have never outgrown it, remaining in child mode. I WANT IT ... I DON'T CARE HOW I GET IT... GIVE IT TO ME!

I have eight perfectly and wonderfully made grands. Oh, how I adore each one and their precious, peculiar personalities (it runs in the family). One thing that has remained constant with each child is that they want what they want, when they want it. A brother or sister is playing with a toy ... they see it ... they want it ... they don't care what it takes to get it. They will grab and run or tussle to the ground. They don't care about their sibling's feelings nor fairness. The mindset is only "I" matter.

Now don't get me wrong, my grands hung the moon and can be most compassionate and fair minded with one another. Warms the heart. But that selfish bone raises its ugly head often because ... they are children and must be taught the value of sharing. As they grow, with each lesson learned, they will understand this value. Not only how it gives joy to the one on the receiving end but brings a smile to their own hearts as well.

Doing good for others always comes full circle back to the giver. Did you know that kindness has been identified as an act that actually prevents illness? Self-esteem, optimism and a healthy heart are benefits of kindness. I kid you not ... look it up ... but you probably already know. It is a healing salve to the body.

Wealthy ... maybe not in the financial sense, but a wealth of emotional warmth within your soul that cannot go bankrupt. Wisely choosing to care for others can make a bad day good, and a good day better. The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, they must be felt with the heart.

Let's talk just a moment about the "servant's heart". Not slave ... servant.

***"You, my brothers and sisters were called to be free.
But not to use your freedom to indulge in the flesh; rather serve one another humbly in love.
Galatians 5:13 NIV***

***"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others,
as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."
1 Peter 4:10 NIV***

I think, for the moment and due to the clarity of the above scriptures, we can leave selfish right here.

The Applaud Seeker is a little more complicated. It's possible to do good and still be self-seeking if we only do good to be praised for doing good. Desiring to be applauded for what "I" have done. In a sense, a higher order of selfishness.

*Those who give only for others
to applaud their generosity.*

***If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship
that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.***

I Corinthians 13:3 NIV

Our service is not for us to be applauded ... but to glorify the Kingdom of God and ... it's all about walking in love.

If we feel like tooting our own horn, we had better make sure it's in a chorus of praise to our Lord...if so...TOOT AWAY...He likes that.

TOOT ... TOOT

THE THREAD OF CALM – NOT EASILY ANGERED

Calm ... Freedom from motion or disturbance; stillness.

Angered ... Strong and often heated displeasure.

You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters.

Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger ...

James 1:19 NASB

I can say I am not easily angered and pretty sure I know why. I learned to set anger aside in my early childhood. Anger frightened me and I didn't want to frighten anyone. I did not want to be that kind of person.

My Grandma's siblings were absolutely delightful to be around until they were not. A fight could breakout among them in the blink of an eye, turning into a hair pulling, fist flying, head stomping, body slamming, screaming brawl ... sisters and brothers. A large, angry family.

Trust me, I do not exaggerate, and it scared the hebegeebees outta me. Thankfully, my Grandpa and Dad would get us all to safety within that "blink," always watching and waiting at each family gathering of the siblings. Eventually family gathering with that side ceased to be.

I could have gotten sucked into that anger, after all it was my blood line. I can't remember not knowing that this wasn't the path I was choosing. Yep, I chose not to.

We are given opportunities in our life to choose what kind of person we are going to be. The result of witnessing intense fury and rage set my mind to abhor the emotion of anger ... to the point of becoming totally non-confrontational about anything ... passive would be the word, very passive. Just an FYI, I'm not passive anymore ... thankfully I have been taught, learned the lesson and matured.

My passive has turned into calm passion.

Clarification time. This does not say love is never angry, it says, "Love is not easily angered." There are times when anger is a righteous tool for truth and justice ... but ... we are to speak the truth in love ... dealing with what has angered us in a constructive and grace-affirming way.

***Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
Neither give place to the devil.***

Ephesians 4:26-27 KJV

So, what is a legitimate reason to be angered? Remember when the children were turned away from Jesus by the disciples? Here's that story....

***Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray;
and the disciples rebuked them.***

***But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me;
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.***

Matthew 19:13-14 NASB

Once again I have always heard it sound like Jesus was making this statement gently to the disciples, but you know what...I think he was angry with them saying, **Let the children alone! Do not hinder them from coming to me!** I doubt that he yelled at them, but I'm thinking he firmly ... sternly demanded it with a tad of aggravation in his voice.

After all, they were His disciples ... when would they learn!? Maybe not but that's how I hear this scripture. I'd call it a righteous (right standing) anger, said with authority and firmness.

Then there was the time that He cleansed the Temple.

***And Jesus entered into the temple
and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple
and overturned the tables of the money changers
and the seats of those who were selling doves."***

Matthew 21:12 NASB

I see Jesus approaching with a calm burning anger. He demanded it with deliberate action ... no knee jerk going on here. His reason, *"It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of robbers."*

Righteous anger emulates God who is good, righteous, and just. It does not mean human “perfection”. It means being angry at what angers God. The perversion of His goodness; and turning wrong of what He made right ... Evil. “Evil poisons and distorts reality, resulting in the destruction of joy for every creature that chooses the perversion over God’s good.”

Jon Bloom - “How Can We Be Angry and Not Sin”

Can we be angry and express that anger with Love (might be tough love) with its “is nots”? If you’ve forgotten what the “is nots” are go back to the “Love Pursuers” section, but here is another of what Love “is not”.

***Doth not behave itself unseemly,
seeketh not her own,
is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.***

I Corinthians 13:5 KJV

Love is opposed to evil in an earnest way. In love we stand firm, unmoved and unwilling to allow identified evil to go unnoticed and profit. Reflecting anger in a loving way which sometimes takes on the task of rebuke (an expression of strong disapproval) ... if you really ... and I mean REALLY love ... your desire is for others to be turned from evil. If you didn’t care ... it wouldn’t matter. Point is, do we care? It is a matter of life or death.

Yep, sometimes that’s what love really looks like. Loving another enough to gently and wisely rebuke a wayward moment that could lead to destruction. As Love Pursuers all of our actions must be founded in love therefore our refusal to willingly allow that loved one to slip away into the darkness of the soul.

We are prepared with our war paint on and the glistening Sword of Love ready to strike at a moment's notice when unexpected evil plops down in front of us.

Peacefully Prepared

THE THREAD OF FORGIVENESS - NO RECORD OF WRONGS

Forgiveness ... Giving up my right to hurt you, for hurting me.

Wrongs ... An unjust, dishonest, or immoral action. Action or conduct inflicting harm without due provocation or just cause.

I have struggled coming to grips with shredding those records of wrongs. Every time I pick up the "list," even if there is only one "wrong" listed, I mull over this cherished wrong which I hold dear to my heart, as the thread of forgiveness begins to be eaten away by the moths of offense.

Many of us have moments of delight in the rehash, tearing down, pointing our fingers, and lounging around the pigsty of offense. We immediately call anyone who will fuel our fire, spreading our delightful offense so that we may be vindicated. That's called "record of wrongs."

What does it mean that love keeps no record of wrongs? It takes no account of the evil done to us...it pays no attention to a suffered wrong. Paul
available free on Scribd [here](#)

really shook his finger at the Corinthians for bringing lawsuits against other Christians, dragging them to court, instead of settling the matter among themselves in a spirit of humility and love. He speaks to them firmly,

“The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?”

I Corinthians 6:7 NIV

To combat the attitude of demanding one’s “pound of flesh,” Paul wrote that love *“keeps no record of wrongs.”* In fact, it is better to be cheated than to be unloving. Kinda sounds like setting one’s self up as a walking mat for others to stomp on, or does it?

In actuality ... it’s one of the most powerful places to reside ... that place of forgiveness ... freedom. This next verse also ties forgiveness to love:

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Colossians 3:13-14 NIV

You know, it’s almost a given that when we get angry at someone, out comes the list of past wrongs. We accuse, dredge up those buried painful memories and bygones are now current not gones. This scripture is speaking about the spirit of reconciliation, to forgive, letting go, deciding the offense isn’t worth our time. Personally, I ain’t got the time nor the energy to hold on to offenses.

I see people that have had disastrous situations happen in their lives due to the “wrongs” of another (I’ve had a few and have dished out more than a few myself). Then I hear them say, “I forgive.” You know why? They know that if

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they keep that record of wrong seeded in their heart it will result in a hardening ... a heart turned to stone. ... squeezing the joy right out of it.

Now don't read between the lines on what has been written above. This is not about keeping quiet about abuse. That's a whole nother matter. If you are in an abusive relationship, speak out and ask for help. You were not created to be a physical or mental punching bag, but forgiveness of the abuser is to be sought or even this will attract the moths of offense which will mar your Garment of Love.

Forgiveness does not always mean allowing someone back in your life ... it means giving yourself back your life.

"...forgive, and you will be forgiven."

Luke 6:37 NKJV

If WE forgive then WE are forgiven. I could be in big trouble! If I refuse to forgive then I am in the same category as the one who wronged me ... UNFORGIVEN! Tit for Tat!

The Master Weaver is ready and willing to weave in the Golden Cord of Forgiveness in our often tattered Garment of Love, but we must be willing to go back to the loom ... the Master Weaver is ready and waiting.

Hmmmm, what happens at the loom and how do we participate in the re-weaving of our garment? There's bound to be instructions so let's search.

How do we erase a wrong that we have recorded? One of the first actions would be to realize you nor I are capable of forcing our self to not think about it. The more we try not to think about it, the more we think on it ... a Catch 22. I refuse to think on it ... therefore I think on it.

We could go back to the “Train your Mind” section and discuss the “Think on these things” again, but let’s take another route, which will point back to “Think on these things.” Tools for how to “Think on these things.”

Let’s use the example of getting a song stuck in your head. Over and over you hear, “There’s a hole in the bucket dear Lila dear Lila, a hole in the bucket, dear Lila a hole.” Trust me, there is much more to this little ditty and once stuck in my mind, it’s a force to be reckoned with!

The only way I can unstick the needle on this brainwave record is to start focusing on a different song and I have to sing it out loud. Before long “The Hole in the Bucket” ceases to torment my thoughts ... yep it can get on my last nerve but I have to choose to change the channel/tune.

Every time a record of offense/wrong rises to torment your thoughts, immediately start singing a new tune ... turn the channel whether you feel like it or not. (This works for anxiety attacks as well. I know ... I’m well practiced.)

Simply said, and sometimes considered too simple, is to begin counting your blessings ... name them one by one. Then take action and speak the words, “I forgive ____.” Whomever that may be, speak their name. When they come to your mind, speak forgiveness. You won’t “feel” those words at first, but our words are alive and have a definite impact on our thoughts ... our health ... and our spirit.

What happens to the spirit, mind and body when the heart doesn’t function as it should? It becomes weak and easily attacked by the powers of darkness, looking for any way to kill, steal and destroy your destiny for the Kingdom, available free on Scribd [here](#)

whether it be spiritually, mentally or physically ... they are ready and waiting to pounce on that weak spot of unforgiveness. That heart of stone ends up destroying who we are ... not the perpetrator of the wrong ... they were just being used as a tool. Eyes to see and ears to hear.

Try it ... don't give up ... from experience I know it works ... and it takes time for the channel to switch and that forgiveness to become imbedded in your heart. The offense/wrong will dissipate and forgiveness will take its place resulting in the wrong erased and the record of offense shattered.

Remember ... we can forgive and still keep our distance. Sometimes there is wisdom in distance.

Refusing to keep a record of wrongs is a clear expression of God's love and forgiveness for us ... pass it on.

Forgiveness is not a feeling ... it's a choice.

Choose wisely.

THE THREAD OF GOODNESS – DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL

Goodness ... The nutritious, flavorful, beneficial part or all of something.

Evil ... A lack of goodness. Profoundly immoral and wicked.

“Goodness” in the Greek means “an uprightness of heart and life.” It is an action that, like nutrition, meets the need of another ... flavorful ... pleasurable ... when our actions are beneficial to others.

*Placing others needs before our own ...
following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.*

In Acts 10:38 Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were placed before Him ... because God the Father was with Him.

***You know of Jesus of Nazareth,
how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power,
and how He went about doing good
and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,
for God was with Him.***

Acts 10:38 NASB

Well, as ones rescued by the goodness of Jesus Christ, God is with us as well ... we are grafted into the Body of Christ ... His goodness is now our goodness.

***In the same way,
let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.***

Matthew 5:16 NIV

***But if some of the branches have been pruned away, and you, although
you were but a wild olive, have been grafted in among them
and have become a sharer with others in the rich sap of the root of the olive tree.***

Romans 11:17 WNT

Did you know that grafting involves joining together parts of two plants to function as a single plant? One plant provides the lower trunk and root system ... the stock or rootstock. Once a different plant is grafted on to the rootstock,

the different plant grows into something new ... fed and supported by the rootstock.

Grafting is also used to repair injured trees, to strengthen the plants resistance to certain diseases, to retain varietal characteristics, to adapt varieties to adverse soil or climate conditions ... to ensure pollination, or to produce.

When we are grafted into Christ ... we become one with the Rootstock. He provides all that we need to flourish with the Thread of Goodness weaved into our Garment of Love. Makes me think of the Tree of Life.

*I am the vine, you are the branches;
the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit,
for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5 NASB

Kindness, Generosity, Advantageous

On the other hand, evil is putrid, bitter, or a sinister part or all of something ... the complete opposite of Goodness.

Hatred, Vengeful, Dangerous

*“Blessed is the person who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the path of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and in His law they meditate day and night.”*

Psalms 1:1-2 NKJV

Let's break this scripture down ... the "how to" keep our Thread of Goodness from being shredded ... how to avoid evil ... and be BLESSED. I love being blessed, so what are requirements for being a Blessed Woman, with that Thread of Goodness weaved in tightly?

"... walks not in the counsel of the wicked,"

"Wicked" is the mental disregard for justice, righteousness (right standing, ethical conduct), truth, honor, virtue; evil in thought and life; depravity (morally corrupt).

So what is walking in the counsel of the wicked? I mean, surely we don't look at someone and think ... looky there ... they are wicked ... just the counsel I need ... wicked is exactly what I want to be schooled in! No, no we don't. Well, there are some that do but a subject for another time ... they have been blinded ... but do we allow ourselves to be cunningly pulled into wicked counsel?

Remember, what we feed our souls ... our eyes and ears ... is what we produce. It is seeded into our spirit ... the harvest is from the seed that has been planted. Might end up thinking our blooming weeds are Juliet Roses if we aren't paying attention.

Let's think about this. Some examples that easily come to mind are ... what do we choose to watch on tv ... listen to on the radio ... read? Who do we allow our ears to hear and our eyes to see? ... because whether we want to admit it or not ... we are sitting under the counsel of those choices and those choices are seeding our soul.

I personally had to make a major decision concerning my book reading, tv watching and radio listening more than a few years ago ... in fact ... quite a long time ago. I am extremely selective about what I set before my eyes and allow to enter into my ears. If someone is watching something on tv that grates on my spirit ... I exit ... and I control my radio stations.

I found that many (most) of the movies, sitcoms, news, songs ... even some commercials were seeding my soul with foulness. Nothing good was produced by that “entertainment.” I made a decision not to sit under that counsel. Oh, I watch some tv ... very little but some ... just saying I am selective ... very selective.

I remember when I was a child ... we were Pentecostal, and our denomination was against television saying it would corrupt the mind and soul. A Pastor could get fired for having a tv and a member roasted. The black box from Hell.

Of course, as time went on it was determined that this was just legalism and needed to be set aside ... after all, there wasn't anything wrong with Gunsmoke, Lawrence Welk, I Love Lucy, Red Skelton, and Walter Cronkite. But little by little, it has become the little black box of wicked counsel. I look back and think ... you know ... I'm thinking they were right. Might shoulda maintained that. Maybe ... just maybe ... not legalism ... but was good council. Just a thought.

Here we are today, surrounded by “entertainment” (much fodder and foulness) whether it be on tv, radio, tablet, computer or our sacred mobile phones.

Maybe it is time to turn them off ... at least more than we have them on. I am speaking to myself here as well.

Let's do a quality control check on what we are allowing on our platters ... not just the entertainment portion. We all have a weakness for some form of wicked counsel ... time to reject those weed seeds and it's NOT an easy endeavor ... but necessary for good seed to prosper in fertile soil, and our soil needs to be fertilized.

The following scripture explains it ...

*And He told them many things in parables, saying,
"Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed,
some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.*

*Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil;
And they sprang up immediately, because they had no depth of soil.*

*But after the sun rose they were scorched,
and because they had no root, they withered away.*

Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

*But others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop,
some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.*

The one who has ears, let him hear."

Matthew 13:3-9 NASB

Food for thought ... if we think for one minute that we are going to reach the lost by condemning them for their "wicked ways" ... then we have no idea what we are living ... cause it definitely isn't shining the love of Christ.

Those being condemned are in the dark ... blind ... imprisoned ... the only way they are going to be released from the darkness is with The Light of Truth

... and the Truth will set them free ... we are to shine that Light with gentleness and wisdom.

I guarantee you ... they already know they are in the darkness. Some have become quite comfortable there ... others are desperately seeking the Light of Truth. Those truly seeking Truth will find saving grace of Jesus Christ at the end of their search ... for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Not saying we are to agree with the “wicked ways” but go back and notice how Jesus ministered to the woman at the well and the woman who would have been stoned ... me ... you ... in some form or another.

Our lamp is to be full of Oil and shining brightly the love of Christ. The filling station is the Word and prayer. The joy of the Lord is what we shine. His goodness ... His grace ... His mercy. Let's be reminded of that phrase that has been used quite often ... “What would Jesus Do?”

There is no wicked in the Thread of Goodness ...

“ ... nor stands in the path of sinners,”

What in the world does that mean? I have had to ponder this and I'm thinking it is a mind set that I am seeing more and more of these days which saddens me greatly.

Are we actually shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against the world ... us and no more? Look at this one ...

***But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ...***

Matthew 23:13 NKJV

I ask myself ... is that me? I pray not.

We look out at the masses ... casting stones. CASTING STONES ... good grief ... we must STOP IT! Jesus never cast one stone ... not one!! We get some kind of crazy idea that we are above ... superior ... because we place the name Christian on a placard over our head.

We have done NOTHING to deserve His saving grace. Even now ... we are as filthy rags compared to Him ... BUT by His saving grace we are one with Him ... and only by His saving grace ... not one thing we did to deserve it ... NOT ONE.

*We are all clay being molded into the
likeness of Christ.*

*For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
and our righteous deeds are like a filthy rags;
and all of us wither like a leaf,
and our wrongdoings, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself to take hold of You;
for You have hidden Your face from us and have surrendered us
to the power of our wrongdoings.
BUT NOW LORD, You are our Father;
We are the clay, and You our potter,
and all of us are the work of Your hand.*

Isaiah 64:6-8 NASB

Have you ever thought about the fact that here He is saying we are clay ... lumps with no form or fashion. All of us ... just lumps. That outta humble us. Then by the hands of the Master we are formed and molded into the likeness of Christ. He does it all. We start out as a lump of mushy mud ... He forms us into His likeness.

*One of the scribes came and heard them arguing,
and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him,
“What commandment is the foremost of all?”*

*Jesus answered,
“The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One Lord;
and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

Mark 12:28-31 NASB

There are more, but in my personal opinion they pale in comparison to the above. Problem is, we decide that the Law/Command doesn't meet our immediate need or desire ... our feel-good quota. If it feels good do it, can possibly result in short-term good and long-term bad.

You and I fail often ... but His grace and mercy is more than sufficient. We are to stand in the gap ... not in the way.

“... nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ...”

*“Sometimes that splinter in your neighbor's eye is actually
just a piece of loose bark hanging from your log.”*

Joseph Hebert (quote used with permission)

What is a “scoffer?”

“Scoffer” translated in English can mean “one who mocks, ridicules, or scorns the belief of another.” In Hebrew, the word translated “scoffer” or “mockers” can also mean “ambassador.” So, a scoffer is one who not only disagrees with an idea, but also considers self as an ambassador for the opposing idea who cannot rest until foolishness is demonstrated of any idea other than what this self imposes. Voices disagreement, ridicules all with differences, and actively recruits others to join the idea side.

WE are NOT to carry this label!

We had better pick up our mirror and take a gaze!!! Are we arrogant? Pointing out faults ... cramming our beliefs onto others ... shaming them if they don't do what we believe they should do ... believe what we believe they should believe? Is arrogantly shaming and belittling others in our demeanor? Oh my, I hope not but I had better do a quality assurance check on my actions ... because actions do speak louder than words.

Listen ... If we love others and truly do know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (because He IS) ... it would be a travesty if kept to ourselves. I can tell you right now ... Imma gonna tell others about Him ... Imma gonna share the Good News ... and this lil Light of mine will shine ...

Cause I love ya ... and ... Right now counts for Eternity

“... but her delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His law she meditates day and night.”

The Law is set in the Cosmos by our Creator. His creation ... His rules ... He knows how we tick and He has provided us with our maintenance procedures.

That can be a tough one for those of us (all of us) who have a bit of rebel nature going on. In one way or the other, all of us fit in the rebel category. Imma gonna do what Imma gonna do ... until our “gonna do” results in chaos. Chaos that can sometimes impact a lifetime ... and other’s lifetimes. There are consequences to our rebellious nature.

He knows what’s ahead and what results when we are left to our own devices ... mayhem. His Law/Commands lead to regeneration. The Law/Commands can be a Sword of Righteousness (right doing). Let’s learn to fence. We, you, I, were created and chosen for such a time as this.

THE THREAD OF TRUTH

Today my 92 year old momma said, “Some people delight in other’s failure.” Ain’t that the sad truth!

What is Truth?

Something that is true at all times and in all places ... utterly reliable and enduring. It is something that is always true no matter what the circumstances ... a fact that cannot be changed.

Unlike opinion, which is open to reasonable debate, Truth is not and encounters great opposition. It has become a somewhat dirty word, or at least a corrupted one. In its place we are left with a whole lot of uncertainty.

*“The Truth,” ... something definite ... no
vagueness or uncertainty ... absolute.*

Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God. The way things really are ... the perfect expression of God.

Christ and His Word perfectly embody the essence of what truth is. God is truth. He is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter, ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth and we are infused in Him ... part of the Body ... His life force flows through us.

*As for you,
the anointing which you received from Him abides in you,
and you have no need for anyone to teach you;
but as His anointing teaches you about all things
and is true and is not a lie,
and just as it has taught you,
you abide in Him.*

1 John 2:27 NASB

The following is from another source, not my words ... well, some of my words intermingled. It lays a foundation for what we will be addressing. You can type in some of the wording on the internet and probably find the source if you desire to do so. Just letting you know.

Truth, by definition, cannot contradict itself. The Truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture are of the very same character. They are in perfect agreement in every respect ... both equally true. God has revealed Himself through Scripture and through His Son, Jesus Christ. Both perfectly embody the essence of truth. Scripture is called the “Word of Christ.” (Christ means ... “anointed one” or “chosen one” ... the Messiah ... Savior ... Liberator) We could call Him our HERO.

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,
with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another
(true love instructs, corrects and warns)
with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
(Heavenly language),
singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”*

Colossians 3:16 NASB

God reveals basic truths about Himself in nature.

The heavens declared the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.

Psalms 19:1 NIV

He is on constant display...CREATION.

*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities,
His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen,
being understood from what has been made,
so that people are without excuse.*

Romans 1:20 NIV

Knowledge of Him is inborn in the human heart.

*...because that which is known about God is evident within them;
for God made it evident to them.*

Romans 1:19 NASB

His Law is implicit in every human conscience.

*They show that the requirements of the Law are written on their hearts,
their consciences also bearing witness,*

Twisted Sisters in Christ
***and their thoughts sometimes accusing them
and at other times even defending them.”***

Romans 2:15 NIV

Truth can't be adequately explained, recognized, understood, or defined without God at the source. I know because I tried in every way imaginable ... didn't work. A half-truth isn't Truth, it's a lie masquerading as Truth ... that wolf in sheep's clothing.

Go to the internet and type in "truth". You will get a plethora of definitions and ideologies that are not "Truth" ... they are "ideals."

He, the Ancient of Days ... the One is eternal, self-existent, the Creator of all. He is the Fountain of Truth flowing into Living Waters. The whole concept of Truth becomes nonsense as soon as people attempt to remove the thought of God from their minds.

***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth and the life;
no one comes to the Father except through Me."***

John 14:6 NASB

Some ask, "Why does God only provide one way to Him?" My question is, after all the evil mankind has committed, why should He give us even one way? We are bad. We sure don't deserve it ... and I am speaking collectively. Thankful for His mercy.

If we rejoice in the Truth, we are rejoicing in Jesus Christ. What does rejoicing look like on us? It should look like Jesus.

***The Thread of Truth fastens our Garment of
Love in place.***

If that Truth Thread unravels the whole Garment falls into a useless heap of nonsense but that's not going to happen to us ... well maybe sometimes ... then the Master Weaver pulls out His loom. We know who we are ... we know the Truth and the Truth has set us free ... here's why:

... DO NOT FEAR,

for I have redeemed you (restored your relationship with Me);
I have called you by name; you are Mine!

When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you; and through rivers, they will not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched,
nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God...

Isaiah 43:1-3 NASB

Hold that Truth Thread Tight!

THE THREAD OF PROTECTION = SHELTER = JOY

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress. My God, in whom I trust!"

For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge.

(the outer part of a bird's wing including the flight feathers).

His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark (a defensive wall).

You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or the arrow that flies by day;
of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand,
but it shall not approach you.

You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense (reward) of the wicked.

For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place.

No evil will befall you, or will any plague come near your tent.

For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.

They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

***Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him securely on high because he has known My name.***

***He will call upon Me, and I will answer; I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.***

“With long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation.

Psalm 91 NASB

There have been times in my life that I have needed protection ... Divine protection ... mostly from myself (you too? ... go figure).

This is protection from every angle ... a Hedge of Protection ... a Sphere of Protection ... a Shelter in the Storms that are constantly stirring ... the assigned Guardian ... Chariots of Fire ... prepared for what is waiting around the corner of darkness.

***My loving kindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer,
My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.***

Psalm 144:2 NASB

.....That's a wall of defense.

***But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.***

Psalm 59:16 NIV

.....That's a bomb shelter.

***You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.***

Psalm 32:7 NIV

.....That's the knitch in the cliff.

Notice that the three above scriptures are full of praise. God inhabits our praises. Each time David is speaking about who He is, what He does and what He is about to do, he starts with praise. David knew his Provider personally ... the way to His grace and mercy.

The Thread of Protection comes with our Garment of Love already woven in by the Manufacturer but can lie dormant until generated by our praise ... but there are times His protection surrounds us when there ain't no praise going on. I believe that is when He is getting our attention. Hey, daughter of Mine ... I'm still watching over you.

I shared one example of the Thread of Protection in the "Train my Body" section. It was about the whisper to MOVE ... I was spared! Here is another example.

The Wreck

I was in a head on car collision when I was 27 years old which resulted in my body and mind catastrophically damaged: broken/crushed neck, crushed spleen, brain damage, caved in left ear, ribs broken, punctured lungs, leg crushed from knee down, and other odds and sundries.

There was a period of time that there was no hope that I would survive. Then when I survived, there was little hope that I would ever regain movement ... a quadriplegic (my 2nd and 3rd vertebrae were shattered).

It was also a consensus among the physicians that I would never be able to speak or breath thru my mouth again ... my throat ... vocal cords had been crushed. Awe but the grace and mercy of our Lord ... the tears and prayers lifted before the Throne by family and friends ... and then I had not reached my last numbered days.

It took me a very long time to heal physically, mentally and spiritually ... years ... and yes, I am still healing.

Since that time, I have had several physical issues as a result of the damage done but each issue has been successfully dealt with to this point.

As many of you know, and ... if you don't ... let me update you ... I walk ... I talk ... my scars are my Banners of Victory.

The battle was to the death this time ... not my time.

So how does this play out with the Thread of Protection? What is the reasoning? Once I am spared ... once I am crushed. I don't know. Yep, that's my answer ... I do not know.

What I do know is when, not if, I step thru the portal to Eternity, it will be God's perfect timing ... and until then there is nothing that can take my life ... I'm in His hand. I don't worry about death nor how I will die, it's going to happen. Life is a mist ... here today ... gone tomorrow.

***Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.
For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.***

James 4:14 NASB

Doesn't sound like we are of much importance but ... We are the righteousness of God ... we carry the DNA of Jesus Christ, His blood ... a protected protector assigned to this dimension. We are the earth's keepers.

***God blessed them; and God said to them,
“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it;
and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky
and over every living thing that moves on the earth,***

Genesis 1:28 NASB

*I have an assigned shelter of protection ...
a safe haven with an address.*

This body is just a dusty dwelling. Spared or crushed ... I am still who I am and will always be until I “cross over Jordan” or He steps through the clouds with a shout of ... ENOUGH!

***Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.
We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.***

1 John 3:2 NASB

*Have you recognized who
you are in Christ yet?*

THE THREAD OF TRUST

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.***

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

The words translated “trust” in the Bible literally mean “a bold confidence, sure security or action based on that security.”

Trust is not exactly the same as faith, which is the gift of God (*Ephesians* 2:8-9). Rather, trusting is what we do because of the faith we have been given.

So then, faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 NKJV

Trusting is knowing that the promises of God ... in all circumstances, even those where the evidence seems to be to the contrary, will manifest themselves thru the providence of God ... and we trust Him.

Paul asks, “*If God is for us, who can be against us, and who can separate us from the love of Christ? Is it going to be distress, peril, the sword, persecution, suffering, sickness, or human hostility?*” ... and of course the answer is nothing ... nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Isn’t that the most comforting thing you ever realized.

I love that word “nothing” ... no reading between the lines there. And it’s pretty clear that we are not going to avoid the distress, peril, the sword, persecution, suffering, sickness, or human hostility that the world has to offer.

*Remember ... today counts for Eternity ...
and it's all about Eternity.*

No matter what we endure or how we fail, nothing has the power to sever the relationship we have with the Father thru the Son, Jesus Christ. NOTHING.

Once we really get this ... know it ... we have peace that is beyond understanding. How does one walk in peace when in distress, peril, the sword, persecution, suffering, sickness, or human hostility?

*Trusting provides a peace that is
BEYOND understanding.*

The practical consequence of faith in God is trust, which we prove by living out our full acceptance of God's promises day by day. It is by this trust that we are promised peace.

***'You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in You.'***

Isaiah 26:23 NIV

A bold confidence, knowing that no matter what comes before us, His promises are steadfast. If I stumble, He will lift me up. If I miss the mark, He will forgive.

In the original languages, sin means "to miss a mark" or a target. Sin is to miss the mark of God's perfect standards. According to St. Augustine of Hippo (look him up) ... sin is "a word, deed or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God." Well, we're all screwed! I'm teasing, no we aren't ...

“... for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:23 NKJV

Every. Last. One. Of. Us ... BUT we have an advocate with the Father ... His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, Messiah, King of kings and Lord of lords.

***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.***

John 3:16 KJV

Now back to “Trust.”

***For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future,
nor any powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Romans 8:38-39 NIV

This is not wishful thinking, it's a firm knowledge ... a trustworthy promise ... a knowing ... a calmness deep in one's soul. An assurance that no matter what happens ... *tho He slay me, yet I will trust Him* ... there's more than meets the eye ... what happens today impacts tomorrow ... and all the tomorrows impact Eternity.

His ways are far beyond our understanding, therefore let our Garment of Love be woven thickly with the Thread of Trust ... cause stuff is gonna happen. We are talking universal results taking place exponentially for eons ... a result of our trust through all ... the good ... the bad ... and the ugly.

***A God thump for an eternal vibration to set
in motion His intention.***

My wreck for example. It was bad ... really bad ... but I'm still here. It was a catalyst moment in my life ... one of many ... but this one came within a breath and a heartbeat of being my last moment in this body.

I was really lost at that time. My life was in shambles. I was in the serious depths of darkness of the soul ... alone and afraid. Then the wreck ... BOOM! Life changed forever and through time (and it took a very long time) my body healed. It's not exactly the same as the previous body, but it works.

It took much longer for the connections in my mind to heal (albeit I still use brain damage as an excuse when it comes in handy for my benefit) ... and even longer for my spirit to be renewed/restored. In fact, that took many years ... many difficult years of continued aloneness and fear.

What I did learn during that time was there were people that would do whatever it took to assure my healing process. Praying, sharing of themselves, physically holding me up. My mission had not been completed ... I had places to go, people to see, things to do, and meat to eat.

*I still have things to do ...
until all my things are done.*

I've got a lotta stories I could render here ... another time. Bottom line is, when the trenches were won, one by one, I was ministered to by the Brook of Cherith and fed by the ravens. My strength renewed, my soul refreshed and my spirit filled ... my cup runneth over.

Then another battle more fierce than the previous would take place. Each time I would learn more ... each time I would have to take two steps back and then would gain ground ... each time my spirit would break and then strengthen ... each time my mind would reel then clarity ... my thoughts would settle on firmer ground. There was/is a plan ... His plan.

Today my trust in His way is stronger than it has ever been but there is always more learning to do and more strength tests to pass. I just don't want to go back and have to be retested on those successfully won trenches. I want to have learned that lesson well and be able to successfully apply when a similar storm begins to brew ... calming it before it works up its anger ... or peacefully prepared to walk through it.

Yes, there are more lessons to learn, more trenches to battle through but we are NOT in this alone ... the battle is His ... we are just honored participants with a FANTASTIC encore.

I don't know what tomorrow holds ...

but I know who holds tomorrow.

***When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.***

Isaiah 43:2 NIV

And we will come out on the other side not even smelling of smoke ... but we are going to go thru the fire ... you can count on it.

Then of course, us being trustworthy to others is imperative. We could go into all of that, but we already have in some sense ... that personal one-on-one “trust.”

That Thread of Trust encircles the Garment of Love.

THE THREAD OF HOPE – PREPARED TO RECEIVE.

Hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised, and its strength is in His faithfulness.

What is the difference between Faith and Hope? Well, let's find out because to tell you the truth, I'm not exactly sure. I've heard explanations many times but they all seem to just bounce around my understanding ... always ending with Faith and Hope sounding pretty much identical. So, first...let's do this.

Faith is the connecting power into the spiritual realm, it links us with God and He becomes a tangible reality to the sense perceptions of a person.

He IS ... whether one believes it or not ... just saying.

Faith is the assurance that the things revealed and promised in the Word are true, even though unseen, and gives the believer a conviction that what she expects in faith, will come to pass.

Faith is the tangible essence of what is hoped for – so tangible that the faith itself, is the evidence/reality of those things that are not yet visible. In other words, it becomes so tangible that you now possess it. It becomes a reality in the spiritual realm.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 NKJV

Hope, on the other hand, is the application of your faith that supplies a confident expectation in God's fulfillment of His promises.

Hope's strength is in the strength of the person's desire. A confident expectation...a firm assurance that the desire will be fulfilled, and preparing for that fulfillment. A knowing that it will be fulfilled.

***For in hope we have been saved (rescued),
but hope that is seen is not hope;
for who hopes for what he already sees?***

***But if we hope for what we do not see,
with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.***

Romans 8:24-25 NASB

Please read the whole chapter of Hebrews 11 ... it is the faith chapter.

Hope is a fundamental component of the life of the righteous (right-standing).

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Proverbs 23:18 NASB

Without hope life loses its meaning.

So I say, "My strength has perished, and so has my hope from the Lord.

Lamentations 3:18 NASB

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to an end without hope.

Job 7:6 NASB

Parallel to those passages in the Old Testament, Paul says hope does not disappoint us.

***... and hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

Romans 5:5 NASB

The reason is that we already have a taste of the future glory because of the love with which the Holy Spirit fills our hearts. In other words, the gifts of love and of the Spirit are down payments of future glory for which we hope.

***By whom also we have access by faith into this grace
wherein we stand,
and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

Romans 5:2 KJV

***In Him, you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation; in whom also,
having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.***

Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV

There are many more scriptures we could look at concerning Hope, but let's stop here and delve into what we can see from the comparisons of Faith and Hope.

It's getting pretty clear to me but first ... if we are desiring something ... anything ... that is not of God's perfect eternal plan ... it ain't gonna happen because it will result in destruction ... if not immediately, somewhere down into the days of our life ... or possibly into the next generations.

Not a magic show to just tap the hat with the wand and pull whatever willy nilly out ... it's a Parenthood. The perfect Parenthood of the Cosmos ... Protection, Love, Stability, Discipline.

This is what I picture in my head when it comes to the relationship between Faith and Hope with assembly instructions included.

Faith in us, awaiting activation ...

Once Faith stirs, Hope is awakened.

Once Faith stands, Hope takes a step.

Once Faith runs, Hope wins the race.

The Thread of Hope ... an exercise in good faith.

I'm definitely not a "name it and claim it" believer but I'm a believer that believes the promises of God.

I am completely confident in the authority of the Bible ... not in ALL those that teach/preach the Bible ... but the Bible itself. There are teachers/preachers of the Word that are worth sitting under ... make sure those you are sitting under are teaching/preaching the Word and not an opinion.

I've always believed that if God could tell them ... He could tell me. Don't get me wrong ... I need teaching and I have sat under many an excellent teacher of the Word ... and continue to do so to this day. There's an old saying that was written a long time ago ...

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.*

II Timothy 2:15 KJV

THE THREAD OF PERSEVERANCE – STEADFASTNESS

*Perseverance is the effort to do something
and keep doing it until the end,
even if it's hard.*

As I write this, today is Martin Luther King Day ... isn't that something that this study falls on this day. I am drawn to his quote, "If you can't fly then run. If you can't run then walk. If you can't walk then crawl. But whatever you do you have to keep moving." I'd call that Perseverance.

I think the Thread of Perseverance provides strength within each of the thirteen other threads as each thread of the Garment must be entwined with perseverance to maintain the form of the Garment true to its design.

Here's a simple example of perseverance that affected my normal daily life. I was staying with my Grandma and Grandpa Godfrey for a couple of weeks while Dad and Mom moved our belongings from Dove Creek, Colorado to Cedar Hill, Texas, where Dad had just accepted a new position as Pastor of the small ... farm/ranch community ... Assemblies of God Church. I stayed with the grandparents to finish the last two weeks of third grade in Plainview Texas.

I was standing beside Grandma as she was filling the sink with hot water and soap over dirty dishes. She looked at me and said, "I absolutely hate washing dishes, but once I get my hands in the water I'm okay." She then determinately put both hands in the dirty water and scrubbed away.

She persevered through her dislike for the service to be rendered and the result was sparkling clean dishes for the next meal ... then she would do it all over again and again and again. Her kitchen was always sparkling clean. It's really quite simple, isn't it ... Perseverance.

I would have been 8 yrs. old ... here I am in my late 60's and that statement still makes an impact on me when I think of it. Might sound silly to you but when there is something that I know needs to be done but I dislike the doing, I just plunge my hands in the water and carry on.

*These 14 Threads make up the Garment
of Love which NEVER FAILS.*

Part IV

What Are The Promises?

WHAT ARE THE PROMISES?

More than a few times we will see the “Promises” pop up. I remember that hand clapping ole hymn, “Standing on the Promises.” We sing about them ... but ... do we actually know what the Promises are? Imma thinking we need to identify them because we need to know what’s in our treasure trove. His promises ... our arsenal of Light Weapons against the darkness.

A Promise is a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specific. A legally binding declaration that gives the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or forbearance of a specified act. The promiser binds herself/himself ... like a contractual obligation.

*His contract has a guarantee clause and
cannot be broken.*

In Scripture, the promise of God is the declaration or assurance which God has given in His word of blessing His people. Such assurance resting on the perfect justice, power, benevolence and never changing truth of God. His promises are iron clad and cannot be broken ... we are just surprised as to how He dishes them out.

This is not a get rich quick scheme ... no, “name it and claim it” stuff going on. God’s promises perform at His direction to the perfect end. Every word that comes out of the mouth of God ... IS. He’s not an idle talker ... not one word is left undone. His words...every word...is ALIVE. To be honest with you, I believe that the “big bang” was God speaking, “BE!”

Side Note:

There are only two possibilities for the universe and life’s existence, these are:

*Everything was created by
a supernatural being.*

OR

Everything was created by nothing.

That “created by nothing” one is clearly illogical ... nothing can be created by nothing, not a single thing ... nothing means **no thing ... nothing ...** absolutely nothing is a no greater nothing than nothing because nothing is absolutely **no thing**. There is no existence in **nothing**.

After the “BE” He rested, and I think He is still resting today...and no, I do not follow the belief of Deism...we will get to that at another time.

Once man and woman were created, existence was set in place with instructions. Of course, the first instructions were pretty much to eat, garden and be merry, then that dreaded one “DO NOT” was thrown in there and we all know how that ended. Kidnapped by a slight twist to God’s instructions ... a lie ... just enough to make it appear unfair of God to deny such a gift ... that was surely selfish of Him.

BUT there was a battle plan already in place to defeat Satan and his followers at his own game. Satan wanted surrender of God to him, so the Son of God did surrender Himself (a secret mission ... a covert operation) ... the result was setting free the captives ... us.

Bottomline is, humanity had to be saved/rescued because we have a purpose ... we are the keepers with an eternal purpose. A sacrifice was required but would have to be disguised as a victory for the lord of darkness to take back the Key to open the Gate/Portal. Satan didn’t have a clue that this surrender was in fact the Trojan Horse entering the gates of hell to set the captives free.

The chains were snapped. It had taken a long time through the Ages ... maybe just a few eternal minutes ... planned out perfectly for the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to make it to the Place of the Skull where redemption of humanity had to take place.

Satan now knows what his demise is ... his key is no longer any good and he is gonna take as many as he can capture down with him ... out to kill, steal and destroy the praise of God ... the keepers.

Now by this Cosmic event taking place, we, the created, are given authority.

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Luke 10:19 KJV

The plan is still in motion ... we are participants ...

Vital participants.

Angels (including Satan ... some call him Lucifer ... described as the most beautiful of all angels) and heavenly creatures/beings were present when God "laid the foundation of the earth" and "set its measurements" (*Job 38:4,5*), when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (*Job 38:7*). This involved all the heavenly hosts rejoicing with God.

Satan then stirred up the rebellion sometime after the original creation of the heavens and the earth. Whether he fell before or after human creation, is still a tossup ... it was one or the other.

Another tidbit of information that I think needs to be shared because ... it is important and rarely spoken of. Check out the following ... it clears up some misinformation we have kinda been led to believe. I am quoting from a great

teacher I have learned much from. He now walks the streets of gold but his words are rich with historical facts and biblical truths.

“Where did the idea of a red-flanneled, pitchfork-bearing Devil come from? The roots of this grotesque caricature of Satan are found in the Middle Ages. It was popular sport in medieval days to mock the Devil by describing him in ludicrous terms. There was a method in this madness. The medieval church believed in the reality of Satan. It was aware that Satan was a fallen angel who suffered from an overdose of pride. Pride was Satan’s supreme weakness. To resist Satan, that proud but fallen creature, required fierce combat. The combat focused on Satan’s most vulnerable point, his pride. The theory was this: Attack Satan at this point of weakness and he will flee from us.

What better way to attack Satan’s pride than to depict him as a cloven-hoofed court jester in a red suit? These silly images of Satan were intentional caricatures. Unfortunately, later generations responded to the caricatures as if they were intended to be the real thing.

The biblical view of Satan is far more sophisticated than the caricature. The biblical images include that of an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). The “angel of light” image indicates Satan’s clever ability to manifest himself sub species boni (under the appearances of good). Satan is subtle. He is beguiling. The serpent in the garden was described as “crafty” (Genesis 3:1). Satan does not appear as a fool. He is a beguiling counterfeit. He speaks with eloquence. His appearance is stunning. The prince of darkness wears a cloak of light.”

R.C. Sproul “Satan the Proud and Powerful” (Part I)

If you want to learn more, I suggest you go to
www.ligonier.org/blog/satan-proud-and-powerful-part-1/

“The prince of darkness wears a cloak of light.”

Now back to His Promises.

*A promise is of no more value
than is the ability of the one who makes it to
carry through.*

It also includes willingness to do so.

If God said it ... I believe it ... and it's so. That's an old hymn that became a popular saying many years ago. I like it. We just need to have our eyes opened to what His Promises are so we can apply them because they belong to us. Our eyes are opened when we learn ... yep, ya gotta know what is yours.

His promises are readily available to any and all that place their trust in Him. Promises that are ours for the receiving. So, what are they?

There's a bunch, approximately 3,573 ... soooo I'm just going to pick out a couple to wet our whistle. Look up the promises, check it out ... get in the know of what's in your treasure trove just waiting for you to discover. Trust me ... we

need to know because they are the source of Light to our weapons of warfare against the powers of darkness.

The following is a quote from “The 7 Promises of God to Man” on bible.ca. There are many more promises than the title identifies, but I like what is said here:

“The contour of Jesus’ life, while living on earth was shaped by His trust in the power of the promises of God.”

He was empowered with these promises, when walking as a man. Jesus, the Son, was empowered with each promise by the Father. You and I are empowered by the same promises.

There’s a scripture that promises, “*greater things than these will you do.*” That’s talking about you and I. What greater things could we possibly do greater than Jesus raising the dead, healing the sick and most importantly, rescuing creation from imploding?

To be honest, I don’t know what the greater things are but I’m more than willing to participate in whatever it means cause it says ... “***GREATER THINGS THAN THESE WILL YOU DO***” ... that sounds like a promise to me. I wonder what those greater things are? I am willing to find out.

As we are tightly twisted together with the Body of Christ ... we are a force to be reckoned with. I don't believe for one moment that Jesus went through the torture and agony of death on the cross for us to end up pew sitters ... mealy mouths ... keeping our faith under wraps because we don't want to draw attention to ourselves because we might have to actually stand up for something ... offend anyone cause then we would need to apologize because we are not knowledgeable enough to lovingly teach the reasoning behind our belief, or look "stupid" to the cool ones, whoever the "cool ones" are.

Oh, I'm not talking about going to church ... I'm talking about day-to-day pew sitters. You know, that ... I'm too busy sitting to read my Bible today, it's okay, I'll read it tomorrow ... I'm too busy sitting to be a prayer warrior today, but God knows my heart. I'm too busy sitting to check on another ... I'm just too busy, but God knows my heart. That might work once or twice, but it will get to where the presence of God becomes dormant. I know this by experience.

We decide that someone else should do the doing while we bury our treasures in the muddy mush, hiding the greatest of gifts for another day.

There are consequences to hiding. Once one starts, those who were destined to be in our path, to be ministered to, had to wait for an obedient person to come along ... after all ... we were just too busy sitting. Oh, we look so good sitting, well-practiced and spiffy ... BUT our treasure trove is dusty, crusty, and rusty. Lack of use causes decay. Time to come out of the closet. Stand and be counted.

*Now ... here's some dust rags,
cleansing balm and shine-on ...*

A FEW PROMISES TO PONDER ... OUR TREASURE TROVE

The door to freedom ... open it ...

***I am the Door; anyone who enters through Me will be saved (rescued),
and will go in and out (freely),
and find pasture (nourishment/spiritual security).***

John 10:9 AMP

Rescued from the dark side ... call on Him ...

***And it shall come to pass, that
whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord
shall be saved.***

Acts 2:21 KJV

Hope = Renewed = Rise = Strength = Refreshed

***... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not faint.***

Isaiah 40:31 NIV

Know who you serve ... confidence.

***So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.***

Isaiah 41:10 NIV

You will pass through ... “when” not if.

***When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.***

Isaiah 43:2 NIV

Cleansing forgiveness ... right standing with God.

***If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.***

1 John 1:9 NIV

It's a fool proof plan ... it's all about Eternity.

***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans give you a hope and a future.***

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

You are the world ... just for you.

***For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.***

John 3:16 ESV

The chains have been broken ... freedom.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:36 NIV

Might take a while ... an exercise of expectation.

***Therefore I tell you,
whatever you ask for in prayer,
believe that you have received it,
and it will be yours.***

Mark 11:24 NIV

This is a commandment ... I just now noticed that!

***Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous.***

***Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,
for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”***

Joshua 1:9 NIV

No fear ... Confidence.

***The Lord is my light and my salvation –
whom shall I fear?***

The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 27:1 NIV

Call ... Trust ... Honor the Deliverer.

***... and call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and
you will honor Me.***

Psalms 50:15 NIV

Declare ... Believe ... it's good for the soul.

***If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"
and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified,
and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.***

Romans 10:9-10 NIV

Present petition with thanksgiving ...

then ... peacefully let go and let God.

***Do not be anxious about anything but
in every situation, 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.***

Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

Trust ... then take the step ... or possibly stand still

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and
lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to Him, and
He will make your paths straight.***

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Who are the Elders ... are you one?

***Is anyone among you sick?
Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them
and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.
And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well;
and the Lord will raise them up.
If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.***

James 5:14-15 NIV

There are those of us that need to recognize that we are Elders, and as Elders we are responsible for teaching, correcting, leading, and comforting those that are spiritual children so that the child matures into a healthy Twisted Sister ... that “Solid Rock” stuff.

We are to ready them for battle and the storms of life. There will be battles and life storms ahead for each of us ... that is a given. Even the Disciples were knocked off their feet in those first storms and had to be instructed.

The result of us not only talking the talk but walking the walk ... setting a visual example for others to emulate ... which includes acknowledging our slip slides.

I prefer to be peacefully prepared. How about you? We are responsible to teach those new in Christ. Men need Men Elders ... Women need Women Elders although the twain can meet in the middle. I've learned from men, and I have, in a sense, taught and encouraged men ... but not my calling.

There are those that will encourage rapid growth, but slow and deliberate growth strengthens our innermost being ... our spiritual core. This is a journey and a mission which requires guidance. I require guidance ... we all require guidance to recognize when our feet are firmly planted on the solid rock versus the cracked pebble of human ideology.

It's time to shine those weapons of warfare up and walk through the land where the giants dwell with more than a few Goliaths, where imps have free rein, and where death and destruction inhabits the land. Outside our doors ... in our homes ... on our knees.

We are gonna need the promises cause those in Goliath land need to be rescued out of the blinding darkness. Could be right outside our front door ... the car racing around us on the freeway ... in our own home where we are picked to pieces by the imps of depression, anxiety, fear, loneliness. A chaotic dance to keep us occupied from doing.

Get up from our seated position ...

TIME TO RISE AND SHINE

Part V
Who we are
Designed to BE?

WHO WE ARE DESIGNED TO BE

It's well past time that we woman-up, pull up our big girl panties and BE who we are ... Twisted Sisters in Christ ... a force to be reckoned with ... a Tribe of Light Warriors ... carrying the mantle of Truth ... recognizing our strength as individuals as well as collective in the Body of Christ. Now keep this in mind and let's move on to recognizing who we BE.

Out there ... you know ... out there in religious land, where some say you are saved by works and others say works have nothing to do with salvation ... both "exacts" are incorrect and here's the bottom line. We are not saved by works (good deeds) but works (good deeds) are a result of being saved ... they go hand in hand.

BUT know this ... just because someone else's "works" are not visible, does not mean there aren't works going on. Think about the thief on the Cross ... when he asked Jesus not to forget him and Jesus told him he would be with Him in Paradise ... that thief did not have an opportunity to be saved by works or to accomplish any works as a result of his salvation, did he? But in reality ... his story is his works ... passed on for eternity showing the love of Christ has no boundaries ... even to a twisted up, guilty sister such as I.

Rescued from the pit of Hell.

Let's BE who we are designed to BE.

PEACE WALKERS

To the crowds Jesus spoke ...

With many such parables
(short and simple story)

He was speaking the word to them,
so far as they were able to hear it (understand it)
and
He did not speak to them without a parable;

but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

On that day when evening came, He said to them,
“Let us go over to the other side.”

Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was;
and other boats were with Him

And there arose a fierce gale of wind,
and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

Jesus Himself was in the stern,
asleep on the cushion;
and they woke Him and said to Him,
“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea,
“Peace (Hush), be still.”
(I seem to see a little discipline going on there.)

And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.
And He said to them (rebuked), *“Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”*
(I think there should be an exclamation mark to go along with that question mark)

They became very much afraid and said to one another,
“Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

Mark 4:33-41 NASB

Just before Jesus said let's take a trip, he had sat with the Disciples and **“explained everything.”** Not in a simple short story but with clarity.

*I wonder what He explained?
“Everything” covers a lot of ground.*

After calling on Peace to calm (hush) the storm, Jesus chided them for their unbelief, *“Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”*. So where was their belief?

Well, they didn't have any ... at least not for when it was *they* that were in trouble and fearing for their lives. They weren't even sure of who Jesus was ... they called Him “teacher” and when He asked them “who do you say I am,” ...

*Now when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi,
He was asking His disciples,
“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”*

*And they said,
“Some say John the Baptist, and others, 'Elijah;
and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets.”*

*He said to them,
“But who do you yourselves say that I am?”*

*Simon Peter answered,
“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Matthew 16:13-16 NASB

Only Peter answered that He was the Christ. Peter was beginning to get a glimmer of who Jesus was ... they would all eventually have eyes to see and ears to hear which happened on the Day of Pentecost.

I'm thinking they had been feeling pretty secure walking with the Master all this time. The feeling that there would be no storms in their lives ... after all ... they were called and special ... life was gonna be smooth sailing as long as they walked with this "Teacher."

I have actually heard people toot this ... following Jesus was gonna be a walk in the park. Do NOT toot this! It is NOT a walk in the park ... but ... it can be a Peaceful walk thru the chaos.

*At this moment the Disciples
were scared outta their wits.*

The opposite of peace is fear and this was their first major encounter with this level of fear ... the fear of their own death consumed them. Even after Jesus commanded the Cosmos to settle down, they were shaking in their sandals.

This wasn't going to be their first encounter with fear. They were going to have many more but little by little ... actually giant leaps ... fear was going to be replaced by that walk of peace. They would come to know His peace that is beyond understanding.

Peace beyond understanding.

We have all been there ... times where the situation was dire. It is a horrid, dark place to be ... helpless. I've been there ... I've shook so hard from fear my teeth literally rattled and my body shook uncontrollably. But I can say, without a

doubt, once I discovered the instructions on walking in peace versus fear ... my teeth haven't rattled once ... well ... maybe once or twice. I'm still a work in progress.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentle spirit be known to all people.

The Lord is near.

***Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and pleading
with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.***

***And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***

Philippians 4:4-7 NASB

Jesus commanded PEACE to bring a hushed calm ... the winds and waves were obedient. The mantle of peace was thrown over the sea ... saturating the depths of the angry tempest ... extinguishing the fury. Immediately the storm was transformed from angry destroyer to calm caregiver bent on gently harboring the ships (all the ships) safe passage to the destination.

He aimed His command directly at the specific storm raging right in front of Him. This was a teaching moment ... a required course. Peace was vital and that particular storm would have put a major dent in the travel plans to the Place of the Skull.

The day was coming very soon when Jesus would no longer be physically present on their earthly journey and there was going to be many violent storms crossing their paths until they stepped through the Portal of Eternity which each of them, except for John, did so by martyrdom ... this was gonna be a tough ride.

It's pretty obvious that on this day the Disciples had no idea what they had been chosen to do ... the BIG picture. They were astounded and fearful of the power they had just witnessed ... probably as much as they had been frightened by the storm ... sprouted some gray hairs and needed a new pair of underwear as they shook in their sandals.

They had just witnessed an unimaginable ... beyond comprehension ... supernatural act ... MINDS BLOWN. A man ... spoke directly into the forces of nature, commanding obedience and those forces responded respectfully. This was on a whole new level of miraculous. This was a Cosmos event.

I'm wondering why they would have had NO faith? That's what Jesus said about them. I mean, really ... I'm thinking I would have at least had some faith by now ... a tiny mustard seed. After all, I've seen it with my own eyes ... I was there ... bread and fish for all ... insanity to clarity of mind ... sick to fit as a fiddle ... deaf to hearing a pin drop ... cripple to street dancer ... death to living it up ... unless ... there is no such thing as "some" faith.

We are told that the faith of a mustard seed can move mountains. What is in the seed? The whole Tree.

***He presented another parable to them, saying,
The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed,
which a person took and sowed in his field;***

***and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown,
it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree,
so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches."***

Matthew 13:31-32 NASB

Before this storm, miracles had been performed by the Disciples ... big time miracles when Jesus commissioned them to go on short mission trips ... yet in this storm fear squashed their faith. Got their feet knocked out from under them, on an up close and personal level, looking death in the eye was a bit unnerving.

Jesus was a tad disappointed in their slip and slid from faith and confidence in Him ... but He had a plan in place. After all, they were still human, just like you and I.

After Jesus stepped back into His rightful place at the right hand of the Father ... as promised He sent the Holy Spirit which resulted in an Upper Room fireworks exhibit. A spiritual power surge took place, aka Pentecost.

When the flames of the Holy Spirit blew into the Upper Room and settled on each one, they were consumed ... head to toe ... inside and out ... with the River of Living Waters surging through their spirit, soul and body ... shattering the sphere of ignorance and deception that surrounded their thoughts and replaced those thoughts with power, knowledge and clarity.

Their spiritual eyes and ears were opened. They were entwined, twisted together with Christ as part of the living, breathing Temple of the Almighty, through Jesus Christ. Living Stones ... binding the Temple together.

*And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but
is choice and precious in the sight of God,
you also, as living stones
(pieces of the puzzle, perfectly fit together),
are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood,
to offer up spiritual sacrifices
(sacrifices of praise)
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

I Peter 2:4-5 NASB

Jesus' prayer for the disciples was,

*"I have given them Your word and
the world has hated them;
for they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

*I am not asking that You take them out of the world,
but that You keep them from the evil one.*

*They are not of the world just as I am not of the world.
Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.*

As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world."

John 17:14-18 NIV

I believe this prayer is not only for those living then, but for us today. We have been sanctified (set apart to a sacred purpose ... purified) by truth and are on a Holy mission as we walk this earthly journey, not only for our own soul's well-being but for those we touch with the truth along the way. We are to keep our ears spiritually perked upwards and our eyes spiritually scanning the horizon.

*Peacefully Prepared
BE the Peace ... Walk the Peace ...
we have been ordained as Peace Walkers.*

Ain't nothing better than Peace gently slicing through turmoil and chaos with each step we take.

Where fear is extinguished ... Peace reigns.

We declare Peace to hush the storm in our mind or the chaos that is rumbling and tumbling all around. When we walk in Peace, fear is extinguished ... not even allowed to exist. POOF!!

By the way ... this takes practice and honestly, we do and will continue to get plenty of practice to be a Peace Walker ... becoming more and more like Christ. His Disciples and the Followers of the way did ... as will we.

***When I was a child, I spoke as a child,
I understood as a child, I thought as a child;
But when I became a man,
I put away childish things.
For we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.
Now I know in part,
but then I shall know just as I also am known.***

I Corinthians 13:11 NKJV

I want to talk about, “*For we see in a mirror, darkly,*” an obscure or imperfect vision of reality that is referring to being childish ... not paying attention to the necessity of feeding our souls, expecting others to do it ... FEED ME ... FEED ME ... and thinking we are to just sit back and enjoy the show.

We are to “*put away childish things*” and take responsibility ... diligently seeking the knowledge of the Word, spending time with our Lord, and becoming the Peace Walker by following the simple instructions provided.

The next part of that sentence states, “*but then face to face*”. That moment when we gaze into the mirror of our soul and see Jesus in the reflection ... we are one with Christ ... and becoming more like him.

“PARABLE OF THE SILVERSMITH”

Some time ago, a few ladies met to study the scriptures. While reading the 3rd chapter of Malachi, they came upon a remarkable statement in the 3rd verse:

***“He shall sit as a refiner and
purifier of silver”***

Malachi 3:3 ESV

One lady decided to visit a silversmith, and report to the others on what he said about the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the silversmith the reason for her visit, asked him to tell her about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot.

Then she asked, “Sir, do you watch while the work of refining is going on?” “Oh, yes ma’am,” replied the silversmith. “I must sit and watch the furnace constantly, for, if the time necessary for refining is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured.”

The lady at once saw the beauty and comfort of the statement, “*He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*” God sees it as necessary to put His children into the furnace ... but His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for us. Our trials do not come at random, and He will not let us be tested beyond what we can endure.

Before she left, the lady asked one final question, “How do you know when the process is finished?” “Oh, that’s quite simple,” replied the silversmith ... “When I can see my own image in the silver, the refining process is complete.”

Author Unknown

The last of that scripture says, “*Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*”

We will never fully understand the mystery of God while engaged in our earthly journey, but we have been provided the opportunity and instructions to reach for the stars while we are still on this side of the Portal to Eternity.

Once we step over we will surely look back and think, “Wow, I wasted away my life when I had the instructions right in front of my face.” The Fruit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are readily available. Don’t waste any more time. Apply the instructions to your life...it works.

Power commands.

Knowledge clears the way.

Clarity lights the path.

Hope takes the steps.

Results ... Peace Walkers.

Goodness and Mercy follow a Peace Walker.

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psalm 23:6 NKJV

WISDOM WALKERS

***But the wisdom from above is first pure,
then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy
and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.***

***And the seed whose fruit is righteousness
is sown in peace by those who make peace.***

James 3:17-18 NASB

One day I was reading James 1:5-7 NIV which says,

***“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God,
who gives generously to all without finding fault,
it will be given you.***

***But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt,
because the one who doubts is like
a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.
That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord,”***

It can't be any clearer, yet I questioned, how do we act on our belief that He has generously given us wisdom without a doubt? Personally, I've always been quite good at knee-jerk reactions, self-doubt, stressing, powering through, second guessing, fear of confrontation, with many regrets of past actions taken and not taken. I seriously doubt if I am alone. So, how could this season be our season of Wisdom?

The more I read and reread this scripture...I finally got it! You read it again. What do you see? This is what I see ... We ask, knowing we have received upon asking, without a doubt. The rules are ...

First Pure ... I know I have wisdom if my action is pure.

What does that mean?

... Focused on exactly one thing ... whatever God has called us to. And what has He called us to? He has called us to ...

Love One Another

*This is My commandment, that you love one another,
just as I have loved you.*

John 15:12 NASB

then Peaceable ... I know I have wisdom if my action is a product of and in turn produces Peace.

What does that mean?

... Peace loving ... Putting a high value on easing conflict ... Ready to serve. And what has He called us to? He has called us ...

To be Peacemakers.

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called the children of God*

Matthew 5:9 NKJV

Gentle ... I know I have wisdom if I am gentle.

What does that mean?

... Having love for others ... Soft and calm ... Our true spiritual nature as a child of God. He has called us ...

To be Kind and Careful.

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Philippians 4:5 NIV

Reasonable ... I know I have wisdom if I am reasonable.

What does that mean?

... Sound judgement ... Fair ... Sensible ... To think, understand.

Renewed Mind.

*And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
so that you may prove what the will of God is,
that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Romans 12:2 NASB

Full of Mercy ... I know I have wisdom if I show mercy.

What does that mean?

... Forgiveness ... Letting someone off the hook ... Compassion ...
Leniency in an unmerited way.

Relieve Someone of their Suffering.

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 4:16 ESV

and Good Fruits ... I know I have wisdom if I bear good fruits.

What does that mean?

I produce ... Love ... Joy ... Peace ... Patience ... Kindness ... Goodness ...
Faithfulness ... Gentleness ... Self-control.

The Produce of our Walk in the Spirit ... Fruit of the Spirit

*Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad;
for the tree is known by its fruit.*

Matthew 12:33 NASB

Unwavering ... I know I have wisdom if I am unwavering.

What does that mean?

... Steady ... Resolute ... Firm ... Unshakable ... Knowledgeable.

Perseverance.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles.
And let us run with perseverance the race set before us.*

Hebrews 12:1 NIV

Without hypocrisy ... I know I have wisdom if I am without hypocrisy.

What does that mean?

... Truthful ... Honest ... Fair ... Forthright ... Sincere.

Authentic

Love must be free of hypocrisy. Detest what is evil; cling to what is good.

Romans 12:9 NASB

If all these requirements are met, I know that the words I speak and the actions I take are wise. Can they be met ... I'm thinking so. I mean ... He's not setting us up for failure but to prosper. It's a goal ... aimed for ...

*Love ... Peace ...
Kind and Careful ... Renewed Mind ...
Relieve Suffering ... Walk in the Spirit ...
Perseverance ... Authentic ...*

Must believe and not doubt ... Faith

What about this “*must believe and not doubt?*” That’s the definition of “Faith.” The scripture speaks that faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains. When I went back to Matthew 17:20, this is what it says in the King James Bible,

***And Jesus said unto them,
Because of your unbelief: for verily I say to you,
If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,
ye shall say unto this mountain,
remove hence to yonder place; and
it shall remove; and
nothing shall be impossible unto you.”***

Matthew 17:20 KJV

As the Bible was translated into more friendly easy reading English/American language, the term “Because of your unbelief” was changed to “Because you have a little faith” ... it is “unbelief”.

There is no measurement scale to determine what level of belief we have achieved; no charts on the screen, no check points along the way because we already have it. We just don’t think we can use it ... after all ... we are just flesh and blood.

What are perceived as small healings/miracles/wonderments are just as powerful as those perceived as large ... they are all the same to Him. He moves a mountain just as easily as He moves a grain of sand ... there is no HARD for Him.

We have doubted ourselves, just like the disciples did, sitting back and watching the show. We aren’t to be just fans of the show, we are to be

participants. Our mission is to BE a Living Stone, radiating the Glory of the Lord. It's either all or none, albeit there is a learning curve ... Lean in ...

Faith comes by hearing ... and hearing by the Word

My thoughts on the mustard seed. The Holy Scripture says the faith of a mustard seed can move mountains. That sure doesn't sound like "little faith" to me. He's not talking about a "little faith". The mustard TREE is within the seed, an embodiment of the whole. This seed transforms into a 9 ft. tree. It is just as much alive as it is when it's a full grown, seed. If you got the seed, you got the tree! If you've got faith...YOU GOT FAITH! Might take you a while to recognize how to access it but access it you may if you follow the instructions provided. BELIEVE IT...YOU GOT IT ... WISDOM.

***So I say to you ask, and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.***

Luke 11:9 NASB

***Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing,
and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.***

***And I will do whatever you ask in My Name,
so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.***

John 14:12-13 NIV

Let me add an important fact right here ... and it IS a fact ... not everyone who is prayed over for physical healing, receives physical healing. Yes, there have been ... currently are ... and will continue to be physical healings, even the miraculous ... but ... it ain't all about the body which will return to dust ... it's about the Eternal.

An Eternal Impact.

I have a precious Sister in Christ that was prayed for all her young life for healing. Her parents taking her to every healing service they could get too. The physical healing never manifested but beginning in early childhood she was fed the faith filled Word and grew into a main artery of the Body of Christ. She is amazing ... don't tell her I said so ... she might get the big head. SMILING!

She became a successful professional and along with that she became a Watchman on the Wall ... a Light to the world ... a vessel of Living Waters. That body of dust is fading but the light will never be extinguished ... His grace is more than sufficient.

Her parents received what they believed for. A daughter who could do all things thru Christ that strengthened her. She is MORE THAN ENOUGH in Christ ... the perfect vessel for the flow of Living Waters. She has moved mountains, even in her suffering.

Why was she not physically healed? I'll ask Jesus when I see Him, but until then I will continue to trust that He knows exactly what He is doing.

... without finding fault, it will be given you.

God gives generously to all that ask without "*finding fault*." WHAT! I just ask and He gives even though I'm faulty! That's just crazy but He is not concerned about our past failures. He knows that Wisdom will use those past failures as stepping-stones to success ... relationship success with Him and the Kingdom glorified.

As we walk in Wisdom, we are assured to walk in good works. He knows that ... we need to know that as well ... it's a WIN WIN.

*For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that we would walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:10 NASB

Wise Works

*And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"
when you turn to the right or to the left.*

Isaiah 30:21 ESV

Wise Navigational Moves

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts:
If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge,
then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts,
and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.*

Zechariah 3:7 ESV

Wise Results

*Who among you is wise and understanding?
Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.*

James 3:13 NASB

Wise Behavior

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

II Timothy 2:15 KJV

Wise Responsibility

TONGUE TAMERS ... GIANT SLAYERS

*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,
but that which is good to the use of edifying,
that may minister grace into the hearers.*

Ephesians 4:29 KJV

- Build others up. Speak that which is “edifying” to others.
- Become a wellspring of good works.
- Leave a sweet taste in people’s mouth every time you leave a conversation or walk out of a room

"Does God commend me for leaving others in better shape because of my words or is He saying that I need to get a grip on my tongue and stop talking in a way that puts others down and harms their reputation."

Rick Renner

Food for thought ...

TONGUE CONTROLLED ... Whole body Controlled

*For we all stumble in many ways.
Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect,
able to keep their whole body in check.
When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us,
we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example.
Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds,
they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.
Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but makes great boasts.*

AN ADMONITION ... He is shaking His finger at them/us ...

*Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.
The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.
It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire,
and is itself set on fire by hell.*

*All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed
and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue.
It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father,
and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.
Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing.*

LISTEN TO ME ...

*My brothers and sisters, this should not be.
Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?
My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?
Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

THIS IS WHO WE ARE TO BE ...

*Who is wise and understanding among you?
Let them show it by their good life,
by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

James 3:2-13 NIV

Now let's delve a little deeper into the above ...

TONGUE CONTROLLED ... Whole body Controlled

The tongue ... "Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound!"

YES, it's a Twisted Sister, a strange visitor from another planet, who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal humans. Who can change the course of mighty rivers, mend hearts in our bare hands, and who, disguised as a mortal woman, is a mild mannered warrior who fights a never-ending battle for truth, justice and the Divine Way.

Well, those of us old enough know, these were statements made for the intro to the series, “Superman,” back in the 1950’s. Obviously, I changed a few words but the statement is true for Twisted Sisters in Christ as well. Unless ... our most powerful weapon is not controlled.

The tongue is not only the hardest member of the body to control but it is the most powerful tool for either despair and destruction ... renewal and restoration ... death or life. Depends on how it’s used.

I’ve been reading this same scripture over and over lately and every time I read it, it becomes clearer. I’m a work in progress. One step forward ... two steps back. Two steps forward ... one step back. Then there’s three steps forward ... and two steps back. Progress ...

Now, let’s look into the benefits, warnings and instructions for how to control a weapon more powerful than a 58-megaton atmospheric nuclear weapon ... requires strict obedience.

***From the fruit of their mouth a person’s stomach is filled;
with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.
The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.***

Proverbs 18:20-21 NIV

Our words are alive with an eternal impact ... **Speak LIFE.**

***Those who guard their mouths and their tongue
keep themselves from calamity.***

Proverbs 21:23 NIV

Think before you speak ... God gave us a brain for a reason ... **Speak LESS.**

***The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.***

Proverbs 12:18 NIV

The pain is real, like a soul slashing ... **Speak HEALING.**

*Either make the tree good and its fruit good,
or make the tree bad and its fruit bad,
for the tree is known by its fruit ...
For out the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Matthew 12:33-34 NASB

Listen to your words as they pour out of your mouth ... **Speak LOVE.**

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise –
the fruit of lips that openly profess His name.*

Hebrews 13:15 NIV

The sacrifice of praise produces fruit ... Speak PRAISE.

We either speak life or we speak death and this can be on so many levels. It affects your health, your mental capacity, your spirit ... and it affects everyone that crosses your path who then passes it on to another's path ... round and round she goes, where she stops, nobody knows.

AN ADMONITION ... Shaking His Finger at Them

*You shall not bear a false report;
do not join your hand with a wicked to be a malicious witness.*

Exodus 23:1 NASB

Don't run with the crowd ... be ethical ... **Speak TRUTH**

*You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people,
and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.*

Leviticus 19:16 NASB

Don't spread the crap ... we all have crap ... **Speak RESTORATION.**

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26 NASB

Shine on ... you have received a Blessing ... **Speak PEACE.**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:14 NIV

Even in the darkest of times ... be the light ... **Speak BLESSINGS.**

*But I say to you who hear, love your enemies,
do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you,
pray for those who mistreat you.*

Luke 6:17-28 NASB

His ways are far more complex than we can comprehend ... **Speak
RENEWAL.**

*... not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but
giving a blessing instead;
for you were called for the very purpose
that you might inherit a blessing.*

I Peter 3:9 NASB

Turn the other cheek ... bless the slapper ... **Speak STRENGTH.**

LISTEN TO ME

My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?

Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

James 3:10-12 NIV

In that first sentence I hear him adamantly saying, “STOP THIS! You are speaking out of both sides of your mouth!” That ole forked tongue just a slithering ... spreading a destructive venom.

Our words speak life or death ... LIFE or DEATH!

I don't think we take this seriously at all. I mean, after all...it's just words ... can't see them. It's not like a slap to the face ... no black eyes or busted lips but the results are suffocation by death words.

One minute we are speaking good about someone and the minute they trip, we are all over it like stink on a skunk. The accusations, true or false, just start flying and turns into a curse against that person coming out of our own lips.

Our words impact another individual's life, even from great distances which impacts the future. If we aren't building up (Life) then we are tearing down (Death). The old saying is, “If you can't say something nice...don't say anything at all.” Those, dear girls, are some wise words right there.

You know we can speak curses over ourselves as well. STOP IT! This is IMPORTANT! Stop using negative words over yourself. Negative words will eat you alive from the inside out and eat away at your soul. Just chomping away. I cringe even when someone jokingly says, “You're killing me.”

What kind of seed are we planting with our words and what will be the harvest from that seed ... cause it will be harvested with either life or death ... but never both. The twain do not meet.

Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue curses the spirit.

Proverbs 15:4 TLB

Be a life giver and a health restorer ... **Speak GENTLY.**

Kind words are like honey – sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

Proverbs 16:24 TLB

What do our words taste like ... are they sweet or sour ... **Speak KINDNESS.**

*The words of the reckless pierce like swords
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*

Proverbs 12:18 NIV

Are we a slasher or a healer ... **Speak HEALING.**

*Those who guard their lips preserve their lives,
but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.*

Proverbs 13:3 NIV

Be careful little mouth what you say ... **Speak THOUGHTFULLY.**

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1 NIV

Don't be pulled into another's chaos or stir the pot ... **Speak QUIETLY.**

*But I tell you that every careless word that people speak,
they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.*

Matthew 12:36 NASB

Because it impacts the entire Cosmos.

This is SERIOUS!

*The tongue directs the entire body ...
what direction are we speaking?*

GRACE SPEAKERS ... *KNOWLEDGE* *KNOWERS*

***... but those who hope is in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.***

Isaiah 40:31 NIV

First, let's identify what "Grace" is. It's a word tossed around in Christian circles. Some just parroting what they have heard ... I know I did. Grace ... Grace ... Grace ... what are you Grace?

I was reading an article about grace and then this ... I am quoting. "Noah, who *'found grace in the eyes of the Lord'* (*Genesis 6:8*); and yet, as the writer of Hebrews shows, the patriarch and his family were saved (rescued) by preparing an ark in obedience to God's instruction. (*Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:22*). Jehovah Jireh, "the Lord our Provider," offered the grace. Noah, by faith, obeyed the Lord, putting that grace into action with his faith ... he and his family had to do a LOT of work once provided with that knowledge. While God extends grace, we must be willing to receive it and act on it. (*II Corinthians 6:1*)."

***By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen,
moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household ...***

Hebrews 11:7 NKJV

***So Noah did these things;
according to everything that God had commanded him, so he did.***

Genesis 6:22 NASB

***And working together with Him,
we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain, for He says,
“At a favorable time I listened to you, and on a day of salvation (rescue) I helped you.”
Behold, now is “a favorable time,” behold, now is “a day of salvation...”***

II Corinthians 6:1-2 NASB

It appears once grace is extended, action must take place for grace to be productive, but grace cannot be earned. Grace excludes merit. In other words, you can't work your way to grace ... you can't earn grace ... but once grace has been extended you work that grace. It is the same with salvation. Works don't save (rescue) a person, but works are a result of salvation (the rescue), because our cups are overflowing.

Here's a picture of grace in action. God extended grace to Noah by giving him the forethought/knowledge of how to prepare for an unknown ... a never-before happening ... a Cosmic event beyond Noah's comprehension.

Noah took that grace, which looked like plans for an alien spaceship, and cut the first timber, pounded the first nail, climbed the highest ladder. It is estimated to have taken 55 to 75 years to build that project of grace. Then add on the necessities needed for a 40 day/night voyage with all those 2 x 2's.

I bet Noah got tired during this project of grace ...

Just a Note:

Noah died 350 years after the flood at the age of 950, the last of the extremely long-lived Antediluvian (between the fall of man and before the Biblical flood) patriarchs. The maximum human lifespan, as depicted by the Bible,

gradually diminishes thereafter, from almost 1,000 years to the 120 years of Moses.

I wonder how many times grace has been extended to me and I just didn't see it through ... gave up ... tossed the bucket ... walked away. Then I think of the times I have recognized grace and built that ark ... being peacefully prepared for what was to come ... having no fear once the storm clouds arrived because my ark was watertight ... that's GRACE. God's grace is not dispensed apart from an instruction that requires both understanding and obedience.

For the grace of God hath appeared ... Instructing us.

Titus 2:11-12 ASV

*Grace and Obedience ... When grace shows
up grab hold and run with it.*

We are to speak grace to others ... extend it. That's what Paul did. In each book of the Bible that we know he wrote, his salutation always included "Grace" to whom he was writing and then he would instruct.

We are God's extenders ... our words speak grace because we are appointed Grace Speakers. How do we do that ... with direction. When we speak grace to another, we also need to provide teaching words as lead by the Holy Spirit. (You can't speak teaching words if you haven't studied the book of Words ... start studying).

The scenario was and is, first “I speak God’s grace to you,” then I *speak* as directed by the Holy Spirit what that grace/knowledge is and then you run with it ... build that ark.

This is what we do for each other. Might be a few words ... might be a lengthy book. Either way, Grace Speakers ... speak/teach to plant the seed of the Ark in another so that they will be prepared for whatever storm comes their way.

***Who saved us (rescued us) and called us to a holy calling,
not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace,
which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.***

II Timothy 1:9 ESV

***But as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness,
and in our love for you ... see that you excel in this act of grace also.***

II Corinthians 8:7 ESV

***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain.
On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them,
though it was not I,
but the grace of God that is with me.***

I Corinthians 15:10 ESV

***Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***

Hebrews 4:16 ESV

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

II Timothy 2:1 ESV

Grace is God given Knowledge.

GENTLE TOUCHERS ... SOUL SOOTHERS

The quality of being kind and careful. A strong hand with a soft touch. It is a tender, compassionate approach toward another's weaknesses and limitations.

A gentle person still speaks truth ... but in doing so guards their tone so the truth can be well received.

I'm going to forewarn you ... Gentleness is one of my favorites and one that I can struggle with. I think gentleness is also one of the most powerful weapons we have against the powers of darkness to maintain our peace.

One of the traits of having Wisdom is being gentle (***But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle....James 3:17***) as we have discussed previously as "Wisdom Walkers" ... it is a seed of the "Fruit of the Spirit" ... awe ... but there is more ... so much more. We have been given an instruction manual to go along with this Seed of Gentleness.

***To speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle,
AND
to show perfect courtesy toward all people.***

Titus 3:2 ESV

I don't know about you, but this scripture is a WHEW! That's some pretty difficult instructions to follow, if not seemingly impossible ... but it is who we have been designed to be. His words are ...

***Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me,
for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
AND
you will find rest for your souls.***

Matthew 11:29 NKJV

... Rest ...

“To speak evil of no one...”

The word “speak no evil” here means not engaging in slander of another, misusing the names of other people, whether spreading falsehoods about them or maligning their character (gossip). It’s the Greek word, *blaspheme*, which is the same verb used to describe blasphemy of God ... great disrespect ... no value of truth.

*Simply stated, we should refrain from
saying the worst about others.*

I have a very short, simple story. My dad used to tell a story about his Grandma Godfrey, my great grandma whom I never met. He told of how she always found something good about others ... all others ... always.

There was this man that lived in their area (country folk) that was not cared for in the community. Evidently he had unpleasant ways that disturbed others ... I really don’t know what they were, certain things weren’t spoken of in front of children.

Anyway, one day the family was sitting on the front porch and coming down the road was the whistling unpleasant man. Some started talking about how much they disliked him, pointing out all his “faults.” Grandma stood up out of her chair and as she walked into the house, she said, “Well, he’s the best

whistler I ever heard.” She saw something good in him ... the other family members got it ... the conversation ceased.

Now, something wicked being pointed out is another story. Confirmed wickedness ... and we know there is wickedness ... modern-day slavery, child abuse ... the list sadly goes on and on ... and ... we do speak against wickedness ... just not in a wicked way.

Repeating ... A gentle person still speaks the truth, sometimes even painful truth, but in doing so guards their tone so the truth can be well received. If someone refuses to listen to the truth, we are to ...

***And whoever does not receive you nor listen to your words,
as you leave that house or city, shake the dust off your feet.***

Matthew 10:14 NASB

I don't read one place in the scripture that Jesus forced anyone to listen ... or to believe. You cannot force belief. He spoke the Truth ... it was theirs for the taking or for the leaving ... their choice ... i.e., the rich young ruler (*Matthew 19:16-22*).

Remember the greatest commandment is love ... it doesn't say that the wicked person is exempt from the love commandment ... ***“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”***

It does specify we are to hate the wicked “way.” Reminder ... the battle is not against flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness.

If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

As Twisted Sisters, we refuse to participate in speaking evil/slander of others ... ALL others. Nip it in the bud when it heads your way ... no spreading of dirty laundry. It will never get clean that way ... IF ... it was actually dirty in the first place. No taking glee in the faults of others.

“...to avoid quarreling...”

I see it everywhere and good grief, it's become a raging epidemic.

I find when I get caught up in a quarrel ... I must choose to back away. Sometimes I am able to do so gracefully and sometimes I just have to shut the conversation down ... no response given.

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

II Timothy 2:23 NIV

Do NOT participate, even if you think you can straighten out the “foolish and stupid.” You will get pulled into the chaos of another ... it will mess with your peace ... add to the chaos ... and accomplish nothing.

***And the Lord's servant MUST NOT be quarrelsome
But MUST BE kind to everyone,
able to teach, not resentful.***

II Timothy 2:24 NIV

When we become angry, our thoughts do not calculate correctly. The anger causes a short in the synopsis of the brain ... bad stuff is said and bad stuff is done.

Quarreling causes chaos ... the only result being anger and more anger ... adding fuel to the fire. I don't know about you, but I don't have the time nor the
available free on Scribd [here](#)

energy for that. Let's do the ... gentle walk away ... not with a huff and a puff ... but with a smile and a hug. We have Kingdom assignments ... some assignments are not ours.

Have you noticed that not one of the seeds in the Fruit of the Spirit includes "good quarreler?"

"...to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy to all people."

Titus 3:2b ESV

We are told to "be gentle." What are the instructions for being gentle? Here are some tools of the trade, that don't seem to be rocket science ... but they do take discipline ... eiiii discipline!

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1 NKJV

Be Soft.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:29-30 NASB

Be Teachable.

Let your gentleness be evident to all...

Philippians 4:5 NIV

Practice makes perfect.

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone
who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have,
but do this with gentleness and respect.*

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

Worship Him (***He inhabits our praises***). Learn His ways (***seek and you will find***).
Be soft to all ... not just those you like ... with due regard for their feelings,
wishes, rights, or traditions.

***To slander no one,
to be peaceable and considerate, and
always to be gentle toward everyone.***

Titus 3:2 NIV

Use your manners. Remember when manners mattered? They still do ...
don't just talk the talk ... walk the walk.

***But you, Timothy, are a man of God, so run from all these evil things.
Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love,
love, perseverance, and gentleness.***

I Timothy 6:11 NLT

Run from disrespecting others (including yourself). Run to serving
willingly. Teach these principles (living them out is the best teacher). Know what
you believe ... make sure it is the Truth ... do not follow the crowd.

***Rather, it should be that of your inner self,
the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.***

I Peter 3:4 NIV

Have you ever met someone that initially was unattractive to you, but once
you got to know them, they became beautiful or handsome? Yea, that unfading
beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. It's works the other way around as well ...
that initial attractive to ugly.

***Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.***

Proverbs 25:15 NIV

Gentle words are powerful ... even toward the enemy.

***He tends His flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart;
He gently leads those that have young.***

Isaiah 40:11 NIV

Are we to share the message of God's saving grace with others? His rescue from the clutches of darkness? Yes, with gentleness and respect.

Are we to argue them into it? NO! If we want to argue with someone we might as well argue with a fencepost because we are not going to argue anyone into Heaven! I can tell you, its never worked for me.

Brow beating is, in my opinion, abusive ... if anything it turns another away. It can and most likely will cause the other's heart to harden. We are to be gentle ... soft, not brutal.

***Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing,
you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness;
each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.***

Galatians 6:1 NASB

I find this to be one of the most NOT followed scriptures by Believers (me included ... one of many) and I will probably spend a little more time on this, although I did address it at the beginning of this writing.

I've observed a lot of stone throwers in my time, and have to admit I have been a participator at one time or the other. To be honest, that "spirit of gentleness" doesn't seem to rest on the many that have assigned themselves as the official Tattlers of Tales. Gleefully shaking the finger and loudly condemning the

SINNER, assuring everyone within listening range of the whispers are well informed concerning the transgression.

People who slipped have become ostracized. The “holier than thou” crap ... yep ... crap! They are raked over the coals ... never to darken the church doors again. It says we are to “*restore that person in a spirit of gentleness.*”

We are going to take that slippery slide occasionally and we had better have those around us that will “*restore*” us with the “*spirit of gentleness.*”

Gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:23 NASB

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Proverbs 15:4 ESV

Our tongue either nourishes the tree of life ... or destroys it.

***But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart
with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which in God’s sight is very precious.***

1 Peter 3:4 ESV

Wonder how precious I am in God’s sight? Just looked up the word “precious” ... costly, valuable ... beloved. Thinking I need to work on that donning a gentle and quiet spirit. I desire to be a “beloved” ... join me.

*Gentleness is like a flying rug ... keeps us
above the chaos, riding the waves of Peace.*

Then there’s that “*perfect courtesy to all people.*” I’m to be courteous to ALL PEOPLE!? I’m trying to read between the lines on this one, but there ain’t

nothing between them. It says exactly what it says. What does perfect courtesy look like? I'm thinking it looks exactly like Jesus Christ.

***You USED to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
But now you must also RID yourselves of all such things as these:
anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from our lips.***

Colossians 3:7-9 NIV

This does not say that God will take these things away from you. It says, "YOU must." He will give the grace/knowledge on the how too, but it's up to us.

Then we lazily say, but God needs to take this "whatever" away from me. (I have that lazy bone.) After all, there is a scripture that says, "*ask and ye shall receive*" but some things are in our ballpark that we must address. He will provide the strength to do so if we are truly sincere, but we must do our part to act upon it.

So how do we do that? Go back to "Train Your Mind" and take a refresher course on the "think on these things." I'm thinking I need to do that right now.

What is the essence of being courteous? Polite and Considerate ... all the time, even to your spouse, children, and family ... go figure.

Practice makes perfect and I'm still practicing. Not sure when I will get a checkmark on this "perfect courtesy" stuff, but I am working on it. Oh girl ... this is a challenge ... but if we are being instructed to do it ... that means it is a reachable goal. Run the race ... reach for that goal.

***Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us,
let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us,
and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us ...***

Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day,
and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

II Timothy 4:7-8 ESV

JOYFUL SUFFERS

*Talk about an oxymoron ... share
the sufferings of Christ ... count it all Joy.*

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you,
which comes upon you for your testing
as though some strange thing were happening to you;
but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ,
keep on rejoicing,
so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

*If you are veiled for the name of Christ,
you are blessed,
because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

*Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer,
or a troublesome meddler;
but if anyone suffers as a Christian, they will not to be ashamed,
but is to glorify God in this name.*

*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God;
and if it begins with us first,
what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

*And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved (rescued),
what will become of the Godless and the sinner?*

I Peter 4:12-18 NASB

Just a Note: Did you notice that murderer, thief, evildoer and “troublesome meddler” are all listed in the same sentence?

I sat under a lot of teachings throughout my life. There was a shift in the late 60’s to early 70’s when the “name it and claim it ... prosperity” teachings started rolling out. Thinking that just looks like a spoiled child demanding their way ... but thankfully the Parent wisely refuses many of our demands ... for our own good. Not everything we desire is beneficial. Not everything we desire counts for Eternity ... let’s make our desires count.

Also included in those types of teachings was that Christians would not suffer. The journey in the Light would be smooth sailing ... no sickness ... no financial issues ... no relationship issues ... happy, happy, happy. What a lie from hell ... a tripping hazard ... a pipe dream. The scriptures clearly speak about the sufferings we endure as a Christian.

***“Join with me in suffering,
like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.***

II Timothy 2:3 NIV

***But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful,
arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents,
ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable,
malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal,
haters of good,
treacherous, reckless, conceited,
lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.***

II Timothy 3:1-4 NASB

I have a dear friend that is the epitome of a Joyful Sufferer. She chooses joy on a day by day basis even though she has suffered great loss ... GREAT LOSS. It's her story ... I'm not going to tell it ... but I guarantee anyone who knows her will know exactly who I'm talking about if they read this. Every morning she chooses JOY ... E.V.E.R.Y. MORNING! I seriously doubt that when she awakens every morning, she *feels* joyful, but she chooses it. She fills her heart and mind with the Word ... puts a smile on her face ... serves others ... ministers to so very many. She is a bright light shining in this dark world. I want to be like her, but I do not want to experience what she has experienced ... a woman of great sorrows ... full of joy ... to be emulated. Then, there's this ...

*Nehemiah said,
"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks,
and send some to those who have nothing prepared.
This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve,
for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

So, the JOY of the Lord is our strength. Joy is the knowledge ... absolute knowing ... a quiet confidence ... a determined choice that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and we are His. Not just a philosophy or ideal ... not a Greek myth. It is a deep-seated pleasure ... a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart ... a gift from God ... we are who He says we are.

His joy is our strength. Reread that scripture again ... “... *the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” “Strength” in this verse means, “a place or means of safety, protection, refuge, or stronghold.

Who are we in Him that provides that sustaining joy ... that place or means of safety, protection, refuge, or stronghold? Following is a not all-inclusive list of who we are:

Keepers of the Earth

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:
and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth and over every
creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him;
male and female created He them.*

Genesis 1:26-27 KJV

Divine Offspring

*See how great a love the Father has given us,
that we would be called children of God; and in fact, we are.*

*For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him.
Beloved, now we are children of God,
And it has not appeared as yet what we will be.
We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because
we will see Him just as He is.*

I John 3:1-2 NASB

*For you are all sons and daughters of God
through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 3:26 NASB

***Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,
through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.***

***Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises,
so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.***

II Peter 1:2-4 NASB

Light Walkers

***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a people for God's own possession,
so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him
who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;***

I Peter 2:9 NASB

***You are the light of the world.
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket,
but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.
Your light must shine before people in such a way
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father who is in heaven.***

Matthew 5:14-16 NASB

Temples

***Do you not know that you are a temple of God
and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?***

I Corinthians 3:16 NASB

***I have been crucified with Christ;
and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith
in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

Galatians 2:20 NASB

Perfect and Wonderful

***For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.
I will give thanks to You, because I am perfectly and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works and my soul knows it very well.***

Psalm 139:13-14 NASB

Rescued

***For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,
so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.
For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world,
but in order that the world might be saved (rescued) through him.***

John 3:16-17 ESV

***In Him we have redemption through His blood,
the forgiveness of our wrongdoings, according to the riches of His grace.***

Ephesians 1:7 NASB

***He has delivered us from the domain of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.***

Colossians 1:13 NASB

***The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom.
To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.***

II Timothy 4:18 NASB

One Spirit

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.

I Corinthians 6:17 NIV

In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 14:20 NASB

*I do not ask for these only,
but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you
that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.*

*The glory that You have given Me, I have given to them,
that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me,
that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me.*

John 17:20-23 NASB

Renewed

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Romans 12:2 NASB

Well, there were quite a few more on this list initially, but will make for a good study ... at another time.

It just excites me to realize what we have been identified as in Christ. I'm thinking that list right there will get us through any suffering with great JOY ... cause we are gonna suffer.

*For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory
far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen,
but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal,
but the things which are not seen are eternal*

II Corinthians 4:17-18 NASB

SOLID STEPPERS ... HINDS FEET ON HIGH PLACES

***The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet,
and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.***

Habakkuk 3:19 KJV

When you get a chance, read the book, “Hinds Feet on High Places,” written in 1955, by Hannah Hurnard. It is a timeless allegory dramatizing the yearning of God’s children to be led to new heights of love, joy, and victory. I do believe, once again, that we have been given instructions to reach those heights.

***Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness;
through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.***

***For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises,
so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.***

***Now for this very reason also ... applying all diligence,
in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,
and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance,
and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness
and in your brotherly kindness, love.***

***For if these qualities are yours and are increasing,
they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***For the one who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted,
having forgotten their purification from former sins.***

***Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling
and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things you will never stumble.***

II Peter 1:2-10 NASB

This scripture is another example of instructions, a map to our destination, to follow. If followed we are promised to never stumble.

Awe, but we are going to stumble cause this ole humanity just hasn’t reached perfection yet ... I still stumble ... just not as often as I used too. We all stumble. In fact, James said, “*For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not* available free on Scribd [here](#)

stumble in what they say, they are perfect, able to rein in the whole body as well.” So, even tho we will continue to stumble, because we are not perfect ... II Peter 1:2-10 is a goal ... becoming stronger and more unified as we grow in Christ. When we understand the importance of the instructions in this passage ... our journey is on solid ground ... not sinking sand. When we don't take these steps, then our solid ground can turn to quicksand in a nano second! Discouragement and lack of confidence/trust can do a job on an individual's stance ... spiritually ... mentally ... physically.

Let's breakdown these instructions/tools of the trade and see how to apply them to mature and become more confident in who we are in Christ. Moral excellence being #1 on the countdown.

Moral Excellence

The quality of doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong, virtue, virtuousness, good, goodness (admirableness).

*And let us not grow weary of doing good,
for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*

Galatians 6:9 ESV

So, what is “doing good?”

Once again ... “good works” do not save anyone. Good works come as a result of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

So, what is the result of our behavior as followers of Jesus Christ? To meet the needs of others, including those that hate you. Serve our enemies without expecting anything in return. There are no exceptions ... this is about what we do ... not what others do.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Matthew 5:44 NIV

But to you who are listening I say:

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who mistreat you.

If someone slaps you on the cheek, turn to them the other also.

If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.

Give to everyone who asked you,

and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Luke 6:27-35 NIV

That's some serious stuff right there!

I've had to read the above scripture over and over ... nope ... no loopholes to be found. I'm going to leave this right here ... this is a mission for the Holy Spirit in our lives ... our mission is to feed our spirit with the Living Word of God so that we pour Living Waters out to those who are thirsty ... to be the light in this dark world ... to walk and not faint.

How does moral excellence lead to knowledge?

Kinda like studying for a test in school, and then having correct answers. Your knowledge has been increased about the subject matter. We have gained knowledge produced by the test of moral excellence with a diploma granted from available free on Scribd [here](#)

the University of Do Gooders. Just an FYI ... I'm still in class and working on earning my diploma. I've had to take this class multiple times. Some of us are slow learners but we are learning!

First stumbling block removed ... IGNORANCE.

KNOWLEDGE

Defined as what is learned, understood or aware of. The fact or state of knowing the perception of Truth.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II Peter 1:8 NIV

What kind of knowledge is being spoken about here?

Having a deep respect, reverence and awe of God's power and authority ...

The fear (respect, awe, submission) of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7 NIV

Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust Your commands.

Psalms 119:66 NIV

So how does knowledge produce self-control?

When we realize/learn that we are a resting place for the Spirit of the Lord ... a vessel of His wisdom and understanding ... guided with a strong hand ... steps ordered by Him. We become agile ... like hind's feet in high places ... Solid Steppers/Sure Footers ...

Second stumbling block removed ... SLIPPERY SLOPES.

SELF-CONTROL

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior in the face of temptations and impulses. A cognitive process that is necessary for regulating one's behavior in order to achieve specific goals.

I'm thinking the opposite of self-control would be willy nilly. Some call it, "going with the flow" ... but many times that flow is going downhill, ending in a mush pit of lies.

Some of us have control issues ... some of us.

We are easily manipulated by all the media out there ... that "quick and easy soul fixin" ... that fast soul food drive thru that goes to our waist and not to our heart ... but ... we have been instilled with knowledge which allows us the assurance that there is absolute Truth ... THE Truth ... comfortably and firmly settled in our spirit.

Self-control falls under the banner of "think on these things." The knowledge of what we are to think on is the tool to use for self-control ... whatever is true (the Word) ... whatever is noble (Love thy neighbor as thyself) ... whatever is right (kindness, compassion, gentleness) ... whatever is pure (goodness) ... whatever is lovely (creation) ... whatever is admirable (honest,

loving, responsible) ... if anything is excellent or praiseworthy (accomplishments, encouraging, thankfulness).

So how does self-control leads to perseverance?

Well, let's see. If I have a goal, and I do ... knowing that there is a goal to be met, my self-control maintains my perseverance to keep moving forward whether I "feel" like it or not ... confidence blossoms.

Third stumbling block removed ... DOUBT.

PERSEVERANCE

The continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition: steadfastness. That ... don't give in and don't give up. I am woman ... hear me roar. Thankful for the ... "*when I am weak, He is strong.*"

We choose Joy ...

*Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters,
when you encounter various trials,
knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
And let endurance have its perfect result,
so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James 1:2-4 NASB

Press on ...

*Brothers and Sisters,
I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:13-14 NASB

Trust ...

***Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering
for He who promised is faithful.***

Hebrews 10:23 NASB

And here we are...how does perseverance lead to godliness?

***Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because,
Having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life
which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.***

James 1:12 NIV

The Crown of Life ... Crowned by God ... an honor ...we will pass each trial
... and there are ongoing be trials ... that's how we learn. Then there is ...

***For you have need of endurance,
so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what was promised.***

Hebrews 10:36 NASB

Go back and check out those promises ... a treasure trove.

Fourth stumbling block removed ... WEAKNESS.

GODLINESS

Conforming to the laws and instructions of God; divine.

Godliness is the culmination of all the above ... reflecting the nature of the
Kingdom of God in our everyday lives.

- Moral Excellence
- Knowledge
- Self-Control
- Perseverance

An “unfeigned love” from a “pure heart”, that extends an unconditional hand of friendship ... that loves when not loved back ... that gives without getting ... and always looks for what is best in others.

Our steps are ordered by Him ... we just need to listen.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL - LOVE

Let's embrace these qualities diligently ... it's what we have been designed and chosen for. Ensuring our steps are firmly planted and our trust is in the knowledge of God ... the Father ... the Son, Jesus Christ ... and the Holy Spirit. These instructions lead to the ultimate goal ... LOVE ... God is love ... so walking this way keeps us in relationship with God/Love.

The entire theme of the Bible is the self-revelation of the God of love.

...for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

1 Peter 1:11 NASB

NOMADS ... MOVERS AND SHAKERS

A member of a group of people who, having no fixed home, move around seasonally in search of food, water and grazing, etc.

Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared, from this we know that this is the last hour.

1 John 2:18 NASB

The “last hour” spoken of here is actually speaking of the “end of a season,” not related to the coming of Christ, but of our changing seasons.

So, there are many last hours for each of us because we each have many seasons. If you have no more seasons ... then ... there is no more you ... at least on this plain. Eternity is the cumulation of all seasons ... no beginning ... no ending.

I wonder what season I’m in right now? What season are you in right now? My season recently changed and I’m still getting my footing.

Nomads ... as we travel through each season of our lives ... and just when things have smoothed out ... we recognize that another season is right around the corner ... change is a coming ... we can feel it in our bones ... we are in our last hour of our current season ... preparation time.

Seems like at the near end of each season things/situations/life start smoothing out ... things are going well ... kinda getting comfy ... a sign that things are gonna change ... probably soon.

For the movers and the shakers, long term ain't gonna happen ... I know ... have had more than a few "seasons" ... more than I can count. Sometimes I gaze back to a season that the leaves have already turned brown ... clinging to something that is no longer part of my today. There are times I long for portions of that past season ... a thought of "what coulda been" ... that ... "if only." Gotta embrace that longing with a fond goodbye ... a season change ... moving and shaking ... time for those dead leaves to come to back to life.

***There is an appointed time for everything.
And there is a time for every event under heaven –***

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NASB

A time to give birth and a time to die.

"To give birth" ... life ... and a time to give up life ... each a new season. The seed to the tree ... the tree to the fruit ... the fruit to the dirt ... the seed to the tree.

The Circle of Life.

A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

I am not a gardener ... I have a purple thumb, but I have a momma that can bring a dead Christmas tree to life in a bucket of dirt. Whether we are dirt stirrers or not we all have an appointed time of seed planting ... watering ... and harvesting the spiritual gardens of these dust bunny bodies.

As we plant the Word in our spirit and water it with praise, the Fruit of the Spirit will blossom, producing an abundance of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control that will spread to fertile ground for the Kingdom's harvest.

Yes, this "plant" and "uproot" can be akin to new life and death, but it can also be our here and now spiritual garden journey where we spread the produce produced by the Fruit of the Spirit seeds.

Seed in the ground or seed in the heart ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to kill and a time to heal;

In this fallen world the time of killing will always be with us, whether it be by disease, war or protection. (Just an FYI ... the Hebrew translation ... "kill" here is not translated "murder." In the Ten Commandments where it says thou shalt not "kill" IS referring to "murder.")

Then that time comes where healing takes place ... a mending ... that sweet Balm of Gilead.

Healing takes time ... The Circle of Life.

A time to tear down and a time to build up.

To breakdown buildings/cities and the walls of them ... to build them back up. In a spiritual sense, tear down to rebuild, repairing the breaches ... to return the Gospel (Good News) to its glory.

Think about it this way ... you ever have a closet that is packed and needs to be cleaned out? Well, the only way it's gonna get done is if you tear it all out ... discard ... organize.

Put back what is worth keeping ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

We are all going to weep ... sorrow ... but ...

***“You keep track of all my sorrows.
You have collected all my tears in your bottle.
You have recorded each one in your book.”***

Psalm 56:8 NLT

He keeps track of what makes our tears flow and knows our heartbreak. He will comfort and heal that heartbreak ... give us a joy that is unique to each one of us.

Then there's that laughter ... deep down belly shaking laughter that cleanses and restores.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22 NIV

Tears to Joy ... The Circle of Life.

A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

We go through a time of mourning with loss ... an emotion that we were created with. We are instilled with the value of a life ... difficult but honors that loss. If of no value, we wouldn't mourn.

Then there's that time to dance ... that time in which God changes hopelessness into hope ... darkness to light ... and slowly ... sometimes seems at a snail's pace ... that mourning begins to turn into a Waltz. Doesn't mean the loss isn't still with us ... it means our steps are directed by God ... a Waltz with movement to the rhythm of Peace.

A Time to Dance

one two three ... one two three ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;

This "throw stones" is describing the clearing of land, NOT the stoning of anyone. It is associated with the beginning of the spiritual building process.

Gathering stones is gathering supplies for the build ... and ... there are times we need to toss certain things in our lives that are weighing us down.

Gather those precious stones to build upon ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.

We all love those times of embracing ... the hugs ... the pats on the back ... the tender touch ... being embraced in a rescue ... or maybe even the rowdy toss in the air and caught in those strong arms. It's that moment of comfort,

warmth and assurance that we are cherished ... supported when needed ... and there sure are times those embraces are needed ... enjoyed ... and appreciated.

But what about that time to shun embracing?

That's a hard one. I'll call us the "fixers" ... we want to embrace every other one's difficulty and fix it ... remove the obstacle that is hindering so they can move on easier ... to fix whatever is broken around us ... and maybe ... just maybe by embracing certain issues of another (fixing it, or trying) we are actually hindering them from personal accomplishment ... negating the need for them to grow in strength and knowledge. Kinda like cutting the apron strings ... teaching them to fly on their own ... to understand that some things are difficult but achievable with work ... enduring the moment to accomplish the task ... to achieve a level of confidence not had prior too.

Knowing when to embrace and when to shun embracing ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to search and a time to give up as lost;

A time to give up as lost ... really!!?? Hmmm ... I get the "search" part but that "give up" part is a bit baffling ... I mean ... isn't it all supposed to be a win win ... all things are possible to those that believe? So, I did a study on this.

Many commentaries I read just didn't make sense to me ... give someone up as lost ... no hope ... and other supposed meanings ... just talking in circles ... nope ... not having it.

Now I'm well aware there are times we are to shake the dust off our feet and move on but that indicates a separation. We don't belong there and they don't want us there ... wherever that "there" is.

Then, I came across a teaching that agreed with my spirit ... it made sense ... a real answer. Here we go ... "...it indicates giving up a search. Or to cease to seek out. To stop turning over rocks, digging for water in a dry hole, even looking for solutions."

A season of letting go and letting God ... a season of trust ... stop trying all together realizing our inability to accomplish the task ... just not within our power ... give up the accomplishment as lost in our ability ... and then ... ***"wait upon the Lord to renew your strength"*** ... to ***"trust in the Lord with all your heart"*** ... to relax because ***"His grace is more than sufficient"*** and I don't have a clue what the limits of His sufficiency are ... more than my mind can wrap around.

*Gonna be surprised what's in that lost and found
...The Circle of Life.*

A time to keep and a time to throw away.

As we grow in the Lord ... as the Holy Spirit ministers to our spirit ... and as our mind grasps the finer things of our relationship with our Lord. There are material things and our own behaviors that once were valued that have become
available free on Scribd [here](#)

non-essential. They are just a weight, holding us down or back from moving forward ... to become more like Christ.

As a babe in the Lord, we need that cradle, that milk, that constant attention to keep us from harm ... but ... as we mature, that cradle becomes too small to contain us (even tho we like it and we are comfortable). That milk isn't enough nourishment (even tho we like it and we are comfortable). We become capable of doing more and more as our knowledge, strength and balance improve.

Yes, there is a time we need that cradle, milk, and constant care ... but there comes a time to shed what we have outgrown ... spread our wings and fly with the breath of God ... skillfully climb those craggy cliffs into the high places. Our abilities increase beyond what we have ever imagined.

***But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary;
and they shall walk, and not faint.***

Isaiah 40:31 KJV

***The Lord God is my strength;
He will make my feet like hinds' feet,
and He will make me to walk upon mine high places ...***

Habakkuk 3:19 KJV

The Holy Spirit beneath our wings ...

The Circle of Life.

A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;

There was a time ... and in some countries that time still exists, when one experienced great loss, part of their expression of grief was to tear their clothing while tearfully wailing about their great loss. The more tears and wailing the more one was grieving ... they were not ashamed of their grief and to hold it in was unthinkable. (Maybe some were just putting on a show ... but ... in essence, it was a traditional/necessary form of expressing grief ... and still is in some places). Then the time came that clothing was to no longer be torn and a time of mending would transpire.

This scripture is referencing grief and then the time that the wound is eventually stitched back together ... always leaves a scar. Even the hands and side of Jesus still bear the scars of our rescue ... *we will know Him by His nail scarred hands.*

A healing process taking place ... a season.

The Circle of Life.

A time to be silent and a time to speak.

Silence is golden. Silence is powerful. Silence is maintaining peace. Silence is a time of reflection. Silence is a time of fear. Silence is cowardice. Silence is destructive.

Ask for Wisdom to know when to be silent and when to break the silence ... then ... believe that you have it. Go back and review the “Wisdom Walkers.”
available free on Scribd [here](#)

Nobody can tell you when to be silent and when to break that silence ... its personal ... and ... don't let anyone bully you into one or the other.

It's a Wisdom thing ... The Circle of Life.

A time to love and a time to hate;

Here we are again! I mean, we all know there is a "time to love" but what is this "time to hate" stuff!!?? I thought we were to never hate. Let's get this clarified.

Let love be without dissimulation (deceit) abhor the evil, cleave to the good.

Romans 12:9 KJV

We don't hate the person but the entrapment of darkness of the soul. We are a part of the rescue team to love ... pray ... that the person is set free and becomes "... ***altogether lovely.***"

Song of Solomon 5:16 NIV

Love the person ... hate the evil that has infested their spirit. There was a time when we were infested as well, and we were rescued by Love.

Once again, remember this ... our battle is not with flesh and blood but with the powers of darkness ... not the person ... that person is bound ... hook, line, and sinker ... just like we were before we were rescued ... let freedom ring for them and the only way that is going to happen is if we love ... even the supposed unlovable.

*I've had some dark seasons ... somebody
loved and prayed me through it.*

But now these three remain; Faith, Hope, and Love; but the greatest of these is love

I Corinthians 13:13 NKJV

Let freedom ring for the entrapped ... Harvest.

The Circle of Life.

A time for war and a time for peace.

First, the Christian's life is in a warfare state with seasons of respite ... living it up close and personal ... engaging in the fight against the enemy ... the powers of darkness.

***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (that's you and I),
so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;
persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus,
so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body.
For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake,
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh ...***

2 Corinthians 4:7-11 NASB

Secondly, there has always been wars and rumors of wars between humanity on this earth. Lotta hate and a lotta of hatchets that are never buried.

In I John 2:18, John was talking to a group that was just a fixin to walk into a new season, a fearful season of tribulation and persecution where false teachers sat on every corner harping their goods ... false accusations are shouted from the roof tops ... bloodshed, martyrdom, and chaos fill the streets.

Hmmm...that's what I am seeing going on in our world right now. Thinking there is another antichrist on the horizon ... the last hour of a season ... or this will be THE last hour for the Eternal Season when ...

***“...And then the sign of the Son of Man (Jesus) will appear in the sky,
and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,
and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.
And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet
and they will gather together His elect from the four winds,
from one end of the sky to the other.”***

Matthew 24:30-31 NASB

We don't know when that will be. People all through history have thought they were living in the last days, albeit, it sure does feel like the last days right now ... and I'm sure it did to those of the past as well. Only the Father knows the time or the hour ... It's gonna be a surprise. The following is what Jesus said ...

***No one knows about that day or hour,
not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.***

Matthew 24:36 BSB

***For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout,
with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God.
First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them,
we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.***

I Thessalonians 4:16-17 NLT

A question was raised to Gregory Fisher, Missionary, as follows, “What will He shout?” and I quote Mr. Fisher's answer ... “ENOUGH. He will shout, ENOUGH! when He returns. ... Enough suffering. Enough starvation. Enough terror. Enough death. Enough indignity. Enough lives trapped in hopelessness. Enough sickness and disease. Enough time. ENOUGH!” The Eternal Season will begin ... and never end.

RESCUE operation complete.

So, back to our Nomadic journey ... the different seasons in our lives.

Sometimes those seasons change overnight ... some take time ... but we can be prepared ... even for those overnights ... well versed in trusting the instructions provided for entrance into and out of the next season ... maybe a little shaken but peacefully prepared ... by the grace of God ... remember Noah.

Either way, we are in a last hour ... the seasons of our lives are consistently changing.

A time of change ... of restoration and renewal ...

The Circle of Life.

WATER WALKERS

Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.

And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea.

When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter said to Him, "Lord if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

And He said, "Come!"

and Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

***But seeing the wind, he became frightened and
beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”***

***Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand
and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”***

***When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.
And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying,
“You are certainly God’s Son!”***

Matthew 14:22-33 NIV

I was thinking of Peter the other day. In fact, I’ve thought of Peter many times when it came to the walking on water happening. He and the other disciples had already seen Jesus calm a storm ... a Cosmos event and now He was walking on water.

All through my life I heard sermons about Peter’s lack of faith ... how if he had only had faith he could have continued to walk on the water to dry ground ... but low and behold, he was a failure for what he surely should have been capable of doing. Most of those sermons were in fact, shaming Peter ... shaming us for not having “enough” faith. That if we had more faith than Peter did, we could walk across the raging oceans with Jesus.

Oh, we can use all kinds of “faith” steps in our lives, correlating with the “idea” of walking on water. The “sea” is used to symbolize chaos and something to be feared ... the chaotic elements of nature ... BUT ... Peter actually took steps ... solid steps ... he walked on the rolling SEA ... ON IT ... walked ON IT!!

Just an FYI, I never saw any of those ministers/teachers walk on water ... not even one float a toe ... yet shame was preached in that encouraging tone ... why aren't you walking on the water?

If I remember correctly, Peter voluntarily stepped outta the boat and took those first steps ... yep, he walked on water to within an arm's reach of Jesus.

Jesus was gliding across the waves right in front of them ... faith wasn't even on the table, Peter saw with his own eyes, along with others on that boat ... so he knew it ... it was right in front of him. Flesh and blood defying the elements ... the laws of nature. WOW, I would have loved to see that!

When it came to Peter and his water walking ... within a nano second his focus switched from Jesus with a side glimpse of where he was ... a very frightening place to be ... engulfed in a raging storm ... you think it's all up to you and YOU know you can't do it ... succumbing to the crashing waves ... down he went ... Blub Blub ... shame on him ... at least that's a lot of what I heard growing up ... or at least the way it was presented, that's how I absorbed it.

I know Jesus rebuked him for having doubt ... I mean, after all, what's one more dry step if you just walked six ... where did his confidence go? Evidently it went down the drain because that's where he was headed ... yet saved by grace ... that outstretched Hand of mercy grabbed hold of him.

Did He carry him ... I don't know ... it seems to indicate Peter didn't walk another step ... but we do know Jesus placed him back in the boat. The bottom line is, no matter how many or few steps he took ... he **WALKED ON WATER**.

Jesus could have been so disappointed in Peter that He just let him drown ... cut him off ... said, "I'm done with this failure. He's witnessed me harness a dastardly storm and put another under my feet" ... but this lesson, Peter had to learn. I'm thinking he at least got a B- on this test ... in my book, he passed with flying colors.

No matter ... NO MATTER how many times we get our eyes off Jesus even though He is right in front of us ... and we start sinking, He's reaches out with that nail scarred hand as we cry out and puts us back on solid ground ... or in a rocking boat.

I'm thinking that our season travels probably consist of the same ... the stretch of faith ... then a few steps ... poof, down we go ... rescued ... learned a lesson ... stronger ... faith fired up ... then more steps ...poof, down we go again ... rescued again ... learned lesson again ... stronger than before ... becoming more like Christ in every step out onto the deep.

*One of these days we are going to tiptoe
thru the waves
like tiptoeing through the tulips.*

UNTOUCHABLES

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine!*

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and thru the rivers, they will not overflow you.*

***When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched.
Nor will the flame burn you.***

For I am the Lord your God....

Isaiah 43:1-3 NASB

Some time ago there was an elderly man who spoke at a service I was attending. Suddenly he turned, pointed at me and repeated the above scripture to me, saying ... “this is for you”.

Oh ... this scripture is for all of us, but to have it directed specifically to you in the middle of a service is a heart stopping moment. There were some fearful times blowing in ... raging storms were on the horizon ... wildfires were being lit ... and I was to be assured that He knew my name and I was in the palm of His hand.

He redeemed me ... purchased me from the shackles of darkness ... regaining possession of what was His to begin with ... me. He paid the stipulated price with His drops of blood ... the sacrificial Lamb (maybe will go into this more later). I had been kidnapped from Him in the Garden ... He regained possession of me on the Cross. He has done the same for you.

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you ...”

He knows me by name because I am His.

Roll call ... Anita ... Present!

He is with me as I pass through the waters.

**Slippery rocks, turbulent waves ... darkness in the depth
and craggy crevices ...**

*He reaches out and takes hold of me ... no
sinking permitted.*

**He is with me as I cross the rushing river and it will not
overflow me.**

He is the lifeguard to assure my safe passage.

**He is with me when I walk through the fire. I will not be
scorched nor will the flame burn me.**

It can't even singe my britches.

He is the Lord my God.

One night I was praying and the words, "You will come through the fire not
even smelling like smoke" was whispered.

Well ... I can tell you there have been a multitude of wildfires as I am sure
you have had as well. There were many times I was not thinking ... *Do not fear,
for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name; you are mine!*

I look back and see that His redemption/rescue covered me like a wet blanket filled with Living Water as each of those wildfires raged thru. A tad singed, playing with my own matches ... an occasional drop and roll along the way (more than a few) ... but here I am today ... not even smelling like smoke.

You know why? Because He promised it ... He foretold it before those fires erupted ... seeding my spirit so I could persevere. I needed that scripture seeded in my heart ... a fire protectant ... whether I felt like it or not.

Yep, persevere and come out on the other side not even smelling like smoke ... it's called mercy.

Remember us speaking about perseverance earlier in **The Thread of Perseverance - Steadfastness**? The effort to do something and keep doing it until the end, even if it's hard.

*Once we know who we are in Christ,
we are of the Untouchables.*

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
nor angels, not principalities,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor any other created thing,
will be able to separate us from the love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:38-39 NASB

It wasn't that long ago that there was a ... well, I'll call it a situation. I was so twisted up ... downright fearful ... stressed outta my mind ... constant dread of

what the next email, text or face to face might bring. Not providing details but trust me it was BAD ... I was overwhelmed with anxiety!

Then ... one day as I was driving down Beltway 8, on my way to an encounter that I could not avoid ... weighted down with stress about what shoe was going to drop next, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and said, “Now Anita, what can ‘so and so’ do to you or your loved one? NOTHING ... absolutely NOTHING!”

At that very moment of realization, a peace came over me that I truly cannot explain. A powerful knowledge bloomed that I had a choice on whether to allow myself to be sucked into someone else’s chaos or not was epic. That person’s chaos could not touch me unless I chose to enter it ... I had a choice to make and suddenly it was a very simple choice. I began not responding at all to this person’s chaos ... not even one word ... it worked.

Now, it did not change that person ... their chaos continued, but my peace was solid. I can guarantee you that I stood straighter and kept on peacefully walking thru that fire, because it was fire ... I was not walking alone thru that inferno of chaotic hate.

At the end of that very long walk (years), I came out on the other side ... not even smelling of smoke.

*Through that “situation” I learned ...
I was untouchable.*

Don't get me wrong, I'm not talking physically ... albeit I'm more than happy to accept that benefit ... I'm talking about spiritually and mentally ... because fear will eventually destroy the body ... rotting from the inside out.

*Now, this message is for you. Read it ...
absorb it ... it is the Truth.*

*... Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine!*

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and thru the rivers, they will not overflow you.*

*When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched.
Nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God ...*

Isaiah 43:1-2 NASB

HIS PRAISE

*For we are God's masterpiece.
He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.*

Ephesians 2:10 NLT

Did you know that we are His Praise? Not just our words and lifted hands, but our whole being. The Creator takes delight in His creation.

Think of it like this ... Michelangelo ... what was his praise? It was in his creation ... the Sistine Chapel ceiling ... Toni Tondo ... Battle of Cascina ... The Crucifixion of St. Peter ... The Torment of Saint Anthony ... The Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Plants ... The Entombment ... and more.

We are the masterpiece of God's creation. Each with the basic unit of life ... intricately knitted cells. He started with supernatural mud (cause He said so) like a potter with clay on the wheel. I see whirls of color as His Hand flows with Living Water, perfecting the clay as it was formed in His likeness ... breathing life into that clay as it flowed and swayed in perfect unison at the Creator's command. Then ... the final stroke of the Master's Hand ... the Breath of Life ... it was finished and He rested ... admiring His masterpiece.

We are ... His Praise.

We stand before the powers of darkness as the Praise of God, pulsating with the power of the Holy Spirit ... shining the Light of Life ... more strength than we can comprehend ... more joy than can be conceived ... more peace than is imaginable ... more love than can be contained ... more wisdom than can be learned.

So, instead of a painting on a canvas or a ceiling ... instead of a sculpture on a pedestal ... we are His walking ... talking ... singing ... applauded by the earth... shining stars ... created PRAISE.

Walking ... Talking ... Singing

Praise the Lord!

***Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens.
Praise Him for his acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness.***

***Praise Him with sounding of the trumpet,
praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with timbrel and dancing,
praise Him with string and pipe, praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with
resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.***

Psalms 150:1-6 NIV

We are encouraged to be loud ... SMILING!

Applauded by the Earth

*For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

Isaiah 55:12 ESV

All creation united in praise.

Shining Stars ...Praise the Lord!

*Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts!
Praise Him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise Him, you highest heavens, and your waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the Lord!
For He commanded and they were created.*

Psalms 148:1-14 NASB

His creation praises Him.

*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God
He created him; male and female He created them.*

Genesis 1:27 NASB

Created in His image.

The Cosmos is a living creation ... His Praise.

*... To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the
glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork*

Psalms 19:1 ESV

It is what we are that proclaims His handiwork. He created each of us in His image. Imma thinking we will continue to be molded until the Portal arrives for us to step over.

*As He was drawing near – already on the way down the Mount of Olives –
the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God
with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying,
“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*

*And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him,
“Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”*

*He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent,
the very stones would cry out.”*

Luke 19:37-40 ESV

*For the stones will cry out from the wall,
and the beam from the woodwork respond.*

Habakkuk 2:11 ESV

INCOGNITO

*Having one's true identity concealed.
In order to observe you have to be incognito.*

Sometimes we are meant to travel “incognito”. The Holy Spirit has been bringing that to my mind over the past week or more. I find I am being quiet ... feeling out my surroundings ... stepping cautiously ... observing. Getting peacefully battle rattle ready for the next round ... cause there's always another

battle on the horizon. Oh, and by the way ... we win. Just thought I would reveal the ending before the story is over, but I digress.

Do you remember the story about Jesus when He said, “Shhhh woman ... I’m still incognito!” Okay, that’s not exactly what He said ... but it is exactly what He meant.

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there;
and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.*

*When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him,
“They have no wine.”*

*And Jesus said to her,
“Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.”*

John 2:1-4 NASB

Evidently Momma was eager to have her son strut his stuff ... and ...
Momma got her way cause that water turned red.

*His mother said to the servants,
“Do whatever he tells you.”
Nearby stood six stone water jars,
the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing,
each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.
Jesus said to the servants,
“Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.*

*Then he told them,
“Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”
They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.
He did not realize where it had come from,
though the servants who had drawn the water knew.
Then he called the bridegroom aside and said,
“Everyone brings out the choice wine first
and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink,
but you have saved the best until now.”*

John 2:5-10 NIV

So, Jesus was incognito for the first 30 years of His life ... awaiting His hour ... the appointed time. The Cosmos had to be in the perfect alignment for His reveal ... perfect timing for the battle plan to be set in motion.

Yep ... the Son of God ... dressed in humanity ... skint knees ... stinky pits ... runny nose ... teenage acne ... growing spurts ... peach fuzz. Average ... blended in ... an average baby, toddler, child, teenager, and average most of his adult life.

Well, His shell of humanity was average. Before His 30th year He didn't make Himself known for Who He truly was. Incognito.

***He had not beauty or majesty to attract us to Him,
nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him.***

Isaiah 53:2 NIV

***He was not that handsome man we see in
paintings or statues. I don't know who that is!***

Several times He would slip through a crowd and not be noticed or found ... nothing specific stood out to make Him noticeable appearance wise ... just another Jew walking the streets.

***And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things;
and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which
their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff.
But passing through their midst, He went His way.***

Luke 4:28-30 NASB

***But the man who was healed did not know who it was,
for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.***

John 5:13 NASB

So, you see, He was seriously incognito for the first 30 years of his life ... average in appearance even during his appointed time (which came a few days early because He honored His mother). Not a handsome Hollywood actor with gorgeous blue eyes ... or any statue or picture hung on a wall.

That average didn't hinder Him one bit when His hour had come. If you think someone should look a certain way to be a Christian ... better do some rethinking.

BUT ... He sure didn't waste that 30 years. He was an avid student ... Honor Roll. We know this because of how He stepped away from His parents at age 12 to sit among the elders in the Temple courts ... to listen ... ask questions ... and ... be asked questions.

Questions asked ... that when He answered, they were amazed at His understanding and His answers. This is the only time we read of His childhood in the Bible but it gives us a picture. A picture of an average boy of 12, boggling the minds of scholars.

Even when He had become famous ... so famous the chief priests wanted him outta the picture ... when Judas betrayed Him the signal for the lynch mob to know who they were to lynch, Judas would kiss Jesus on the cheek. Otherwise, they would have had no idea which average Jew was the cause of all this love thy neighbor stuff.

*That average was God walking among us ...
incognito ... until His "time."*

I believe the same happens for us, times we are incognito ... wisely silent ... watching and waiting ... that moment of Divine appointment(s). Might be years before your “hour,” was for Jesus, but when it was His hour, He was the most sought after average guy in town ... and the most feared by the powers of the air.

*... in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air,
of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*

Ephesians 2:2 NASB

*I'm average ... I know that.
I am also the righteousness of God ...
I know that as well.*

I know that there are many times I am incognito ... you are too, when we walk through a crowd and there is no one that our spirit is attracted too. We then can walk a few steps more and right there will be the one who needs a light shown on them ... hope.

I'll give you an example ... in fact I'll give you several ... I'm sure you have had your own encounters as well ... recognize them.

One Christmas Eve, around 8:00 p.m., I was preparing for the family feast we always have at our house on Christmas Day. I suddenly realized I was missing one key ingredient for one of the required and tasty dishes for the meal. I rushed out of the house, praying a store would be open ... and a tad aggravated with myself. Thankfully, Kroger was open.

As I stepped in line at the checkout with my one needed item, there was a situation taking place at the register.

I could see a young lady with her basket full of bagged goodies for her family's Christmas celebration and she was beside herself ... not being inappropriate ... just very upset and trying to get something resolved.

I asked the rugged looking guy in front of me what was going on. With a shrug he said, she can't remember her pin number.

I asked him to excuse me and walked to the register. I asked the cashier what the problem was, and it turned out this young lady had just gotten her ATM card and had forgotten what her password was ... she was on her cell trying to find someone to help her with tears rolling down her face. All her Christmas was in that basket ... I saw a turkey, potatoes, food makings and a few children's gifts in there as well.

I pulled out my card and told the cashier I would cover it. She looked at me shocked and said, "Are you sure!?" I handed her my card. The young lady fell into my arms sobbing, thanking me from the bottom of her heart. I told her this was God's grace in action ... take it and run with it. She did.

I was incognito to everyone else in that store. I was sent there by the Holy Spirit to be standing in that line ... for that young lady. It was a Merry Christmas.

My hour had arrived ...

Another time I suddenly HAD to go to the Dollar Store. I needed to go right then. You would call it an urgency ... I can't remember what for. As I was standing in line to pay for the whatever, this young mother and her son came walking in. She had a troubled look on her face and asked the cashier if they had found a key. She was told no.

As she walked past me going on a scavenger hunt, I felt a nudge but initially ignored it. As she and her son came back to leave I asked her if she found it. She said no and was very upset and started to walk out the door. I stopped her from leaving and said ... let's go look together.

I asked her to repeat her steps and I would follow. We methodically went down the aisles looking for that key ... and then we came to the toy aisle. I reached up and tipped a box that had some toys displayed in it ... lo and behold ... laying in that box was her key. It had slipped off her keyring when she had reached up for something.

That young momma gave me such a sweet hug and a beautiful smile of relief. She explained that it was her house key. If not found she would have to break a window because her husband was out of town on a job and he had the only other key. I told her this was God's grace in action ... take it and run with it. She did.

I was incognito to everyone else in that store. I was sent there by the Holy Spirit to be standing in that line ... for that young lady.

My hour had arrived ...

I have many more stories ... but listen ... I did not tell these to you to toot my own horn ... and these moments might sound small and insignificant, but they mattered ... they mattered a lot to the person I was sent to intercede for.

TOOT TOOT ... Holy Spirit.

Each time something like this has happened it's been because I was appointed to be at a specific place at a specific time for a specific person. That one person carried that moment with them and I believe it was passed on.

So yes, there are times we are incognito to many ... and will remain incognito until ...

An appointed time ... the Hour.

BATTLE RATTLE READY

**What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light;
and what you hear whispered in your ear,
proclaim upon the housetops.**

Matthew 10:27 NASB

Tonight I was thinking about when Elijah was fed by the ravens at the Brook of Cherith. Let's look at what lead up to that event and what followed, because it's valuable in that the twists and turns God takes us on has a purpose.

Get ready, this is gonna be a long one. Becoming Battle Rattle Ready isn't an overnight Amazon delivery of a shield and a sword or a quick drive thru to be filled and move on.

Being Battle Rattle Ready is:

- To know who we are as part of the Body of Christ with the Helmet of Salvation.
- To stand firm with the Breastplate of Righteousness.
- To have eyes open to see and ears to hear ... observing and listening for the whispers with the Shield of Faith.
- To have those incognito moments - sometimes three years, as we are Girded with the Truth.
- To be quick and powerful with the Sword of the Spirit.
- To be peacefully prepared with our feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

So, there was this king of Judah named Ahab. King Ahab was evil to the bone and married a woman that was the same ... birds of a feather. Her name might sound familiar, Jezebel. Together they brought the worship of Baal into alliance with Judah (God's tribe).

If you don't know about Baal, let me just give you a brief overview of who this god was/is (he still exists) ... and remember, our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness.

Baal is dark ... pitch black ... and useless except to twist the minds and hearts of man into accomplishing his agenda ... an idol of fear.

The ritualistic Baal worship, in sum, looked a little like this: There is a gathering around the alter of Baal ... children/infants are a sacrificial offering to this pitch black idol of stone (you know, like abortions are conducted today) and or adults ... but babies and children seemed to be the murder of choice ... much easier that way. This ritual of convenience was intended to produce economic prosperity by prompting Baal to bring rain for the fertility of “mother earth.”

On to this cosmic event with Elijah ... **I Kings 17 - 19 NASB** (passages that follow unless otherwise noted):

Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab,

*“As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand,
surely there shall be neither dew nor rain during these years,
except by my word.”*

He had been given a decree by the God of Israel ... he carried it out. Then he needed to get outta Dodge. I wonder if he hesitated cause this was gonna stir up some serious trouble ... the kind of trouble leading to a death sentence.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,

*“Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith,
which is east of the Jordan.*

*It will be that you will drink of the brook,
and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.”*

The Lord is telling Elijah to hide until He tells him to move cause Ahab is red in the face and probably thirsty. He wanted this doomsday prophet planted in the parched earth because Baal couldn't get a drop past God's decree.

But, why would Elijah have to hide if God was protecting him? A battle plan ... the missions' objective ... the strategy of action ... tactics developed for the available free on Scribd [here](#)

day-to-day and week-to-week action (weapons, uniforms, equipment, etc.) ... and was gonna take about three years to have all the players in the perfect spot.

Here's an example of a Heavenly Secret Service, set in motion to shatter the darkness with His Sword of Truth. I would equate this to the same Battle Rattle Ready plan that was used to get Jesus to the cross.

***It happened after a while that the brook dried up,
because there was no rain in the land.***

Time to move on ... that place is no longer where he was to be. If you are not being nourished where you are ... God has a plan ... a sure sign of travel plans being made. Get packed ...

***Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,
"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there;
behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.***

There was a rescue needing to take place ... for the giver as well as the receiver ... and Elijah was just the man to handle the job. He was blessed to be a blessing. I mean, after all ... he really didn't have anything planned ... a daily walk, learn, trust and see what the Lord had set in motion.

Off he went into the wild blue yonder. You gotta take that first step of obedience by faith, trusting that what He has commanded will be the perfect solution to an insolvable situation.

Do you realize that God told Elijah He had already commanded the widow to provide for him but doesn't appear she knew anything about His command?

Good chance we don't have a clue what He has in store for us ... no beforehand knowledge. He commands ... we walk by grace into mercy, resulting in grace and mercy extended to those we encounter ... because He commanded it to be so.

*So he arose and went to Zarephath
and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks;
and he called to her and said,
“Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.”
As she was going to get it, he called to her and said,
“Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.”
But she said, “As the Lord our God lives,
I have no bread, only a handful of flour in a bowl and a little oil in the jar;
and behold I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son,
that we may eat it and die.*

No hope ...

Do you realize that He already had this widow and her son on His rescue list when this whole scenario began? Do you realize that your obedient walk just might include an encounter with a widow and her son?

*Then Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go, do as you have said,
but make me a little break cake from it first and bring it out to me,
and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.*

Brazen to say the least ... feed him before feeding her own son?!! You will see what God was doing in just a little bit. Amazing what the power of obedience can accomplish.

*For thus says the Lord God of Israel,
“The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty,
until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.”*

She was given a promise.

***So she went and did according to the word of Elijah,
and she and he and her household ate for many days.
The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty,
according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah.***

One could equate this to manna from heaven ... same concept ... miraculous provision. Can you imagine awakening every morning and finding that the bowl had just enough flour and there was just enough oil in the jar for the next meal ... after being emptied the night before? I'm sure the first couple of days she was in a state of amazed shock. Then, after a few days, I'm thinking she began to peacefully sleep knowing she would be cooking breakfast the next morning and every morning.

The promise was fulfilled.

***Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman,
the mistress of the house, became sick;
and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.
So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God?
You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!"***

You have got to be kidding me!

God sends Elijah to her for her to care for. She is willing and obedient and NOW her son dies ... the question would be, "WHERE IS GOD!" What kind of reward for obedience is that!!!

***He said to her,
"Give me your son."
Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room
where he was living and laid him on his own bed.
He called to the Lord and said,
"O Lord my God,
have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying,
by causing her son to die?"***

Elijah wasn't having it ... but ... it was all in God's plan.

Elijah's faith was being stretched and the widow's faith was being firmly established. Ever wonder what happened to her and her son? I'll ask her when I get to heaven.

Then he stretched himself upon the child three times,

*and called to the Lord and said,
"O Lord my God, I pray You,
let this child's life return to him."*

*The Lord heard the voice of Elijah,
and the life of the child returned to him and he revived.*

He laid his request before the Throne of God. The Lord heard Elijah, and the life of the child was returned to him.

*Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room
into the house and gave him to his mother;
and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive."
Then the woman said to Elijah,
"Now I know that you are a man of God
and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."*

When her son died, she forgot that some time ago ... I'm thinking probably around two years ... that she, her son and her household had been rescued one meal prior to starvation. They had eaten every day from the time Elijah arrived until now. God had supernaturally provided. When her son died, that food for the day meant nothing. She felt cursed from her past, *You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!*"

I wonder ... and this is just me wondering ... if God's plan was to set her free from her guilt of the iniquity that had her gripped in its clutches. When her son was raised from the dead ... that guilt melted away. The fear of punishment

turned to trust. There was no longer a curse from her past. There was no punishment for her past iniquity. She was extended mercy.

So, here we are ... hidden from the evil that is pursuing ... walking into another's need and their need being met ... now the battle plan is ready to be implemented.

*Now it happened after many days
that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying,
“Go, show yourself to Ahab,
and I will send rain on the face of the earth.”*

D-Day had arrived ... Elijah was to move on ... orders ... Hup two three four.

Three years of drought by the word of Elijah and now he's supposed to go face the king that wants him dead. He's been sitting in a pretty good honey hole for these past three years, but that honey hole season is over ... it is Battle Rattle Ready Time.

*So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab.
Now the famine was severe in Samaria.
Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household.
(Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly;
for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the Lord,
Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties
in a cave and provided them with bread and water.)*

There was an undercover/incognito servant of the Lord in the palace. Sometimes it is part of God's plan for you to keep your mouth shut and do what needs to be done.

*Then Ahab said to Obadiah,
“Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys;
perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive,
and not have to kill some of the cattle.”*

*So they divided the land between them to survey it;
Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.*

Pretty obvious that Obadiah was a trusted servant to Ahab and had served him as one would serve the Lord, albeit not bowing down to his evil ways. Remember the scripture,

*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are unreasonable.*

I Peter 2:18 NASB

Even though this scripture is in the New Testament, it applied in the Old Testament. Don't get to thinking the Old and the New do not intertwine ... it is all the Word of God.

*Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him,
and he recognized him and fell on his face and said,
“Is this you, Elijah my master?”
He said to him,
“It is I. Go tell you master, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’”*

This was Elijah's hour.

*He (Obadiah) said, “What sin have I committed,
that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to put me to death?”*

*As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom
where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said,
'He is not here,' he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you.
And NOW you are saying, 'Go, say to your master, Behold, Elijah is here.'
It will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the Lord
will carry you where I do not know;
so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me,
although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.
Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord,
that I hid a hundred prophets of the Lord by fifties in a cave
and provided them with bread and water?*

*And now you are saying, 'Go, say to your master, "Behold, Elijah is here;"'
he will then kill me."*

*Elijah said,
"As the Lord of hosts lives,
before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today."*

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and hold him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Obadiah had put himself in danger by hiding the prophets. Had Ahab discovered this he would have been put to death as a traitor, yet he took the chance because he was not willing to stand idly by and watch them be executed. He had survived this task that he had committed to and now he was being asked to trust Elijah.

He hadn't trusted anyone but himself as he had ministered to the prophets ... secrets are better kept quiet and not shouted from the roof tops. But here he was ... being asked to stretch his neck out on another's word. He had to trust Elijah's word ... he chose to do so.

*When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him,
“Is this you, you troubler of Israel?”*

*He said,
“I have not troubled Israel,
but you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals.*

*Now then send and gather to me all Israel at the Mount Carmen,
together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah,
who eat at Jezebel’s table.”*

Preparing for the battle!!

*So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel
and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.*

Elijah came near to all the people and said,

*“How long will you hesitate between two options?
If the Lord is God, follow Him;
but if Baal, follow him.”*

But the people did not answer him.

Silence ... not golden. He was admonishing them to choose wisely. They were a fixin to see the supernatural power of the Lord God but at that moment, they were terrified. They had King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ready to twist their heads off if they spoke against Baal ... silent fear.

Then Elijah said to the people,

“I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.

*Now let them give us two oxen;
and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up,
and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it;
and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood,
and I will not put a fire under it.*

*Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord,
and the God who answers by fire,
He is God.”*

And all the people said, “That is a good idea.”

Elijah is now Battle Rattle Ready!

*So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal,
“Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many,
and call on the name of your god but put no fire under it.”
Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it
and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying,
“O Baal, answer us.”*

*But there was no voice and no one answered.
And they leaped about the alter which they made.*

I'm thinking they were in a frenzy. If they couldn't make this happen, heads were gonna roll ... but ... Baal was obviously unavailable/unable. A rock god does what it wants, not what you request of it. Just sits on its pedestal, twiddling its thumbs, passing the time away.

*It came about at noon that Elijah mocked them and said,
“Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god;
either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey,
or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.”*

*So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom
with swords and lances until the blood gushed out of them.*

*When midday was past,
they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice;
but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.*

They had picked the wrong rock to worship ... Baal had no “fire” ... only fear.

For our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:29 NASB

*Then Elijah said to all the people,
“Come near to me.”*

So all the people came near to him.

*And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down.
Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob,
to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying,
“Israel shall be your name.”*

*So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord,
and he made a trench around the altar,
large enough to hold two measures of seed.*

Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood.

*And he said,
“Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.”*

*And he said, “Do it a second time,”
and they did it a second time.*

*And he said, “Do it a third time,”
and they did it a third time.*

The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.

Elijah was absolutely sure who he served ... and it wasn't a rock on a pedestal.

*At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,
Elijah the prophet came near and said,
“O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,
today let it be known that You are God in Israel
and that I am Your servant
and I have done all these things at Your word.*

*Answer me, O Lord, answer me,
that this people may know that
You, O Lord, are God,
and that You have turned their heart back again.”*

First, he addressed God with acknowledgement of who He was ... a tribute of honor and praise. Secondly, he attested that he was a servant of God ... a servant does what the Master bids. Thirdly, he asked that hearts would be turned back to God.

*Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering
and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water
that was in the trench.*

*When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces;
and they said,
“The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God.”*

The fire of the Lord is the Holy Spirit. Think forward to the Day of Pentecost when the flames of fire hovered over the heads of those in the Upper Room as they were filled to the brim with the Holy Spirit.

*When the day of Pentecost had come,
they were all together in one place.*

*And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind,
and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

*And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves,
and they rested on each one of them.*

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues,
as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

Acts 2:1-4 NASB

We aren't dealing with a matchstick here.

*Then Elijah said to them,
“Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.”*

*So they seized them;
and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”*

Remember this ... these prophets had profited by the murder of children and adults, abuse to mankind ... thrived on evil. They ruled with fear and tyranny ... the epitome of Baal.

*Now Elijah said to Ahab,
“Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.”
So Ahab went up to eat and drink.*

I'm thinking Ahab was quick to obey Elijah's command ... cause he was downright shaking in his boots. I mean, Elijah had produced the first flame throw and had also killed 450 of Ahab's partying buddies.

*But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel;
and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees.*

*He said to his servant,
“Go up now, look toward the sea.”*

*So he went up and looked and said,
“There is nothing.”*

And he said, “Go back” seven times.

*It came about at the seventh time, that he said,
“Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea.”*

When God makes a promise, the answer might not look like what we think it should look like. It's a wait in faith/knowing that He always fulfills his promises ... His way.

*And he said,
“Go up, say to Ahab,
Prepare your chariot and go down so that the heavy shower does not stop you.”*

*Ready ... Set ... Go ...
Elijah's expectation just became reality.*

And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

Flash flood a coming ... gotta go! He didn't hesitate ... he knew what he had seen at the altar ... and he knew a storm was a brewing.

*Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah,
and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.*

*A supernatural sprint.
And the story continues ... more twists and turns.*

*Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done,
and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.*

*Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying,
"So may the gods do to me and even more,
if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."*

*And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba,
which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.*

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness
and came and sat down under a juniper tree;
and he requested for himself that he might die, and said,
"It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."*

REALLY?!?! He had spoken and the clouds shriveled up ... nourished by ravens and Heavenly Beings ... he has been used by God to feed the starving ... participated in raising a lad from the dead ... provided a safe haven when he was being pursued for the death penalty ... AND he has just seen, with his own eyes, the Holy Spirit do a flame throw onto his doused sacrifice ... extinguished 450 prophets of doom setting the people free from their tyranny ... AND the rain has arrived ... BUT the wrath of a mean-spirited woman has sent him into a tailspin ... hightailing it outta Dodge again!

My first thought is good grief, man! What happened! You've had three years of provision ... three years of knowing God had a plan ... three years of serving and being served. Then you participate in one of the most incredible, supernatural events one could not even imagine was a possibility!!!

Then I started mulling over his past three years.

These three years could not have been easy ... provided for yes ... but he had been hiding out for three LONG years ... in a stranger's home ... in a little room on the rooftop ... AND eating fried flour biscuits every meal for three years.

He has been obedient but let me tell you, there are times when obedience is difficult. Especially if it equates to life or death ... not only for him but for the widow and her son ... and for the Israelites as a Nation. He had some weight on his shoulders. Crap, I find that being obedient in the small things can be exhausting ... especially when I am tired!!

Elijah is exhausted ... physically, mentally, and spiritually ... his tank is on empty ... he's given it all he's got. He was sure once the rain returned and the people saw the power of God, all would be well with the world ... and ... he could finally go home.

I can tell you that's sure what I would have been thinking! After all, we won!

SURPRISE ... it ain't over ... the battle was still on!

*Devastated ... can't hardly put one foot in
front of the other ... brain drain ... physically
whooped ... spirit crackling dry.*

*He lay down and slept under a juniper tree;
and behold, there was an angel touching him,
and he said to him,
"Arise, eat."*

*Then he looked and behold,
there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.
So he ate and drank and lay down again.*

*The angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said,
"Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you."
So he arose and ate and drank,
and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb,
the mountain of God.*

He rested ... ate angel pastries hot off the stones ... hydrated with Heavenly infused water ... rested some more ... then ... off he goes on a FORTY day journey.

Do you notice that he hasn't been told where to go ... or IF he should be going anywhere yet? Thinking his time of rest and restoration was not complete. Have you noticed when you are tired ... fear can set up house and rule the roost.

He took off on his own to a place he hoped to be safe. Yet, we know he was going to be sent on a journey by God. He knew he was going on a journey ... the angel said so. Wonder if he was fearful about where God was going to journey him? It appears to me that he didn't wait around to find out ... run Forrest, run ... he was still in fear mode.
available free on Scribd [here](#)

***Then he came there to a cave and lodged there;
and behold, the word of the Lord came to him,
and He said to him,
“What are you doing here, Elijah?”***

***He said,
“I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts;
for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant,
torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword.
And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”***

It's an “I give up” moment ... it's just too much ... I'm not up for another battle ... when is it going to end ... no matter how many are won ... they just keep coming and coming and coming ... the battlefield is strewn with the remnants of war. I am alone ... I am old ... and I am tired.

Do you think God was surprised that Elijah set up camp in a cave? No, He knew Elijah needed to hear His whisper ... on His mountain ... location ... location ... location. His whisper would infuse Elijah with the strength needed to finish this mission.

This thought just now came to me ... ELIJAH ON THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD ... we are always talking about being on the mountaintop. So, what is the mountaintop? It's where we are finally in the place to recognize His whisper.

God wasn't finished with Elijah. He was a fixin to change the scenery ... the political scenery ... and it wasn't going to be pretty.

***So He (the Lord) said,
“Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord.”***

And behold, the Lord was passing by!

***And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains
and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord;
but the Lord was not in the wind.***

***And after the wind an earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.***

***After the earthquake a fire,
but the Lord was not in the fire;
and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.***

***When Elijah heard it,
he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.***

***And behold, a voice came to him and said,
“What are you doing here Elijah?”***

Once again the Lord shows him His power over the Cosmos ... and ... once again He asked Elijah, What are you doing here? You know My power rules the Cosmos ... and ... you still haven't answered My question ... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!!??

***“I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts;
for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant,
torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword.
And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”***

He wasn't supposed to hide in the cave ... cave dwelling was not his destiny ... he was in fear mode. Imma thinking I have been in that mode many a time ... tired of battle after battle ... wanting to wave the white flag ... hide. Thinking we all do. I've got one folded for now ... I keep it handy. I look at it every now and then and think, nope ... not today, Satan.

Getting to that mountaintop can take many a twist and turn ... sometimes when we finally get there, we are thinking it's hide in a cave time. We are broken and exhausted.

Here Elijah had been provided safe haven with angel food for strength and rest, but he decided he needed a little more protection ... a self-preservation, up front and personal mission with thoughts of, "I'll find a better place to hide, like, oh I don't know ... how about Horeb, the mountain of God ... surely I'll be safe there."

The Lord said to him,

"Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus,

and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram;

and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel;

and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death."

Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal

and every mouth that has not kissed him."

I'm thinking this was the instructions Elijah was to wait on after he was completely rested and nourished ... but even tho he was playing hide and seek ... God found him where he was.

Too often we dismiss the time of rest, where we are given the opportunity for renewal and restoration. After a bit of a nap and a meal we hurriedly try and figure it all out with our own weary mind, becoming despondent, because in actuality; it's not time yet. We have not given ourselves the time needed to become fully renewed and restored.

Elijah was given the instructions on who to set up for the battle plan. He was also given the assurance that his last battle was just over the horizon ... Elisha would be the prophet in training and eventually take up the weight of Elijah's mantle.

The finality of this battle is at hand ... the powers of darkness are just about to get wobbly kneed.

*So he departed from there
and found Elisha the son of Shaphat
while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him,
and he with the twelfth.*

And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him.

*He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said,
“Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.”*

*And he said to him,
“Go back again, for what have I done to you?”*

*So he returned from following him,
and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them
and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen,
and gave it to the people and they ate.*

Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered (served) to him.

Instantaneous change took place in Elisha's mundane life ... the anointing of the mantle became one with him. It was so powerful that he immediately knew ... not one “why me, I need to think about this,” or “hmmmm, wonder what this means” ... he took it and ran with it ... the mantle of grace.

*He had to settle his present to be prepared
for his future.*

He honored his mother and father ... he gave glory to God with his sacrifices
... he fed the people he was leaving. He knew his life would never be the same ...
he was ready and willing to be mentored ... power comes from knowledge.

Oh yes, there is so much more to this history lesson. You will just have to open
your Bible and check it out. Ahab and Jezebel both meet their fate. There are
many more battles. Then the day finally comes for Elijah to rest ... his home
going was an other worldly event.

*When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha,
“Ask me what I should do for you before I am taken from you.”
And Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”
He said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken
from you, it shall be so for you, but if not, it shall not be so.”
And as they were walking along and talking, behold, a chariot of fire appeared
with horses of fire, and they separated the two of them.
Then Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. And Elisha was watching it and he was
crying out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!”
And he did not see Elijah again. Then he took hold of his own clothes
and tore them in two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him,
and he went back and stood by the bank of Jordan.*

2 Kings 2:9-13 NASB

What have we discovered?

That to be Rattle Battle Ready, we must be flexible with the moving of the
Holy Spirit ... waiting on direction ... then moving forward. I don't like waiting
and I don't know many who do, in fact I don't know anyone that likes to wait but
... when we wait on the Lord ... our strength is renewed. Part of our exercise
program.

The journey can and will become difficult at times. We will meet those we
are to minister to along the way of difficult times. I am learning that it's not
about me ... but me will be provided for. There will be times of fear ... resting
available free on Scribd [here](#)

under Juniper trees ... moments of hiding in a cave on the mountain of God ...
that moment of the whisper ... moving on ... peacefully prepared. To trust His
timing ... no knee jerk reactions and ending up in a cave where He asked, "What
are you doing here?"

Many times, we will need to be fed by the ravens and drink from the Brook
of Cherith ... feast on angel pastries and rest under the Juniper tree ... climb to
God's mountaintop ... then He whispers, and we begin our victory march.

When our mission is complete ... rest will come as we are taken by the
chariots of fire into the Holy of Holies.

*The journey ain't over til the journey is over
... but ... when it's over ...
What a Day that will be ... when my
Saviour I shall see.*

LOVERS

*Do not love the world or the things in the world.
If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them.*

*For all that is in the world –
the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life –
is not from the Father but is from the world.*

*And the world is passing away along with its desires,
but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

I John 2:15 NIV

I have to say that this scripture has had me in a quandary when I would read it and of course I heard many a sermon on it throughout my lifetime, but it still wasn't settled in my heart ... my mind just couldn't wrap around it.

There were quite a few teachings that just seem to do the "let's go round the mulberry bush," up down and all around yet never really getting to a clear point which indicated to me that they really didn't know either. If it cannot be explained with understanding ... layperson understanding ... then there will be no understanding ... so I'm going to share what I learned.

I came across a teaching in "Compelling Truth" which simply clarified, and I understood.

This scripture is NOT saying we are not to love the people of the world ... I mean ... we are the people of the world ... set apart, yes ... but we are this people. God clearly commands us to love everyone in the world ... including ... our enemies ... we are even supposed to pray for our enemies. WHEW ... just had to throw that wrench in there. So, there is no way John is speaking of love for one another ... us people.

***But I say to you,
love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you,
and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you...***

Matthew 5:44 NKJV

***The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
There is no other commandment greater than these."***

Mark 12:31 NASB

***"This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you."***

John 15:12 NKJV

This scripture is also not saying that we are to avoid utilizing the good gifts that God has given us in the world.

***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights,
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.***

James 1:17 BLB

He provides us with good things to enjoy ... we receive them with thanksgiving.

***For everything created by God is good,
and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.***

1 Timothy 4:4 ESV

So what's this "not" loving the world actually mean? This is talking about not loving the spirit of the rebellious anti-God attitude of the world. It is a spirit that is set against God and His ways.

***In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,
to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel (good news)
of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV

John makes it clear what he is talking about concerning not loving the world ... what attitudes are sinful and rebellious against God and His will for us. The more desirable counterpart is pleasing God.

...the lust of the flesh

Our earthly nature, dominated by sin and rebellion, is so closely tied to the physical aspect of mankind that it is called "the flesh." An overpowering desire for that which God has forbidden.

...the lust of the eyes

Seeing something visually that causes covetousness, jealousy, or sexual lust.

Covetousness ...

That greedy desire for the material riches and possessions that belong to someone else that is not rightfully the property of the desirer and not rightfully hers to long after.

Jealousy ...

Envious of someone who has something we do not have.

Sexual Lust ...

Don't confuse normal sexual attraction with lust ... leaving this right here for now. I think we all know what "sexual lust" is and if you don't, study it out!

...the pride of life

The desire to be one's own god ... Arrogance ... Self-Promotion ... Greed.

Remember, Jesus was tempted by Satan in all three of these areas ... and with each attempt, Jesus responded with the Living Word of God ... as did Satan ... he knows the scripture, but he skews it to his own benefit and to our destruction.

Satan tempts ... God tests.

If you are confronted with a *temptation* to do a wrong ... even for the supposed "right" reason ... it ain't God. God *tests* us to increase our strength/knowledge.

Being a Lover is the more desirable counterpart ... pleasing God. In other words ... if we follow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, we cannot do the will of God ... the twain do not meet ... there is no love in lust nor pride in self.

I really want to do the will of God ... I want to participate ... I want to be a Lover ... I love being a Lover ... to choose wisely whom I love and serve. I'm sure you have that same desire.

Perfect, we are not, nor will we ever be in this body of dust ... but He knows our heart ... who we truly are ... and we do know how to ask His forgiveness ... He then forgives (and He gives us the ability to forgive ourselves).

It will free your soul ... where love abides.

ROPE HOLDERS

“I will go down if you will hold the ropes. I will go into places where you will never go, but you must hold the ropes. I’ll go down into the caves if you’ll hold on. I’ll go as long as you’re here holding fast, holding tight.”

William Carey, Missionary to India

I love the stories of sleuth and intrigue in the Bible. Here are two that piqued my interest concerning Rope Holders.

Rahab the Harlot

First...just to get your visual going.

The meaning of the name Rahab: “Ra,” was the name of an Egyptian god (little “g”). As an Amorite, Rahab belonged to an idolatrous people, and had a name meaning “insolence,” “fierceness,” or ‘broad,” “spaciousness” and she was identified as a harlot. No matter how you define Rahab’s name, she takes up a lot of space and people stepped outta her way.

The rope that turned into a scarlet thread.

*Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying,
“Go, view the land, especially Jericho.”*

So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.

*It was told the king of Jericho, saying,
“Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.”*

*And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying,
“Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house,
for they have come to search out all the land.”*

*But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said,
“Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.
It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out;
I do not know where the men went, pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.”*

*But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax
which she had laid in order on the roof.*

*So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords;
and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.*

Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men,

*“I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us,
and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.*

*For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea
before you when you came out of Egypt,
and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan,
to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashanb who was in Ashtaroth,
whom you utterly destroyed.*

*When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage
remained in any man any longer because of you;
for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.*

*Now therefore, please swear to me by the Lord, since I have dealt kindly with you,
that you also will deal kindly with my father's household,
and give me a pledge of truth, and spare my father and my mother
and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them,
and deliver our lives from death."*

*So the men said to her,
"Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours;
and it shall come about when the Lord gives us the land
that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."*

The Promise to Rahab

*Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall,
so that she was living on the wall.*

*She said to them,
"Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you,
and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return.
Then afterward you may go on your way."*

*The men said to her,
"We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear,
unless, when we come into the land,
you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down,
and gather to yourself into the house
your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household.*

*It shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street,
his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free;
but anyone who is with you in the house,
his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.*

***But if you tell this business of ours,
then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.”***

***She said,
“According to your words, so be it.”***

So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Joshua 2:1-21 NASB

This woman was something else! But you know what, didn't matter she was a harlot ... God placed her right there, living on the wall, for such a time as this ... impacting eternity.

Just to let you know, the walls of Jericho were destroyed all except the portion that Rahab's home sat on with that scarlet thread dangling out the window.

She risked her life and the lives of her family to protect and help the spies of the land shimmy down a rope to safety resulting in favor over her entire family. I wonder if she had a clue what her lineage had in store?

In the Royal genealogy of Jesus, Rahab is referred to as being the wife of Salmon, one of the two spies she sheltered. In turn, she became the mother of Boaz, who married Ruth from whose son, Obed fathered Jesse, who fathered David (King David), through whose line Jesus was born.

Check this out ... Salmon was a prince of the house of Judah, and thus Rahab, the one-time heathen harlot, married into the royalty of Israel, becoming an ancestress of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*What a plan the Dynamic Trio had laid out
... mind boggling.*

There were prophecies of the Old Testament that the Messiah, or Christ (Greek term for Messiah) would be a descendant of David (I Chronicles 17:11-14; Psalm 89; 132; Isaiah 9:6-7). Jeremiah called the Messiah a “branch of David.” Rahab took part in the root of that branch.

She was a Rope Holder.

Just an FYI, Joseph was the one in this lineage as the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16). Goes to show you how important adoptive fathers are.

Paul who was Saul

Before Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee ... became Paul the Apostle, considered the greatest of Christian missionaries ... he was a zealous persecutor and leading participant in the extermination of those lawless Jews who had become Followers of the Way.

The rock throwing crowd had his full approval when stoning Stephen to death ... the first Christian martyr. Saul guarded their cloaks as they pummeled Stephen with stones.

*When they had driven him out of the city,
they began stoning him;
and the witnesses laid aside their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

*And they went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said,
“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”*

*Then he fell on his knees and cried out with a loud voice,
“Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”
Having said this, he fell asleep.*

Acts 7:58-60 NASB

Saul was a man after the heart of rules and regulations. Jews were to be Jews ... to be otherwise was unacceptable and down-right dangerous. Know this, Saul had been raised to hate anything that did not fall under the Jewish law ... that square box of rules and regulations.

The square box of toe the line.

But ... he was chosen ... here's the story. We must read the whole to understand the importance of some individuals behind the scene ... those Rope Holders.

*Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,
went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus,
so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women,
he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

*As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus,
and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;
and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him,
“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”*

*And he said,
“Who are You, Lord?”*

*And He said,
“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city,
and it will be told you what you must do.”*

*The men who traveled with him stood speechless,
hearing the voice but seeing no one.*

*Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing;
and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.*

And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

*Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias;
and the Lord said to him in a vision,
“Ananias.”*

And he said, “Here I am Lord.”

*And the Lord said to him,
“Get up and go to the street called Straight,
and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul,
for he is praying,
and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay hands on him,
so that he might regain his sight.”*

*But Ananias answered,
“Lord, I have heard from many about this man,
how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;
and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”*

*But the Lord said to him,
“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine,
to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;
for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”*

*So Ananias departed and entered the house,
and after laying hands on him said,
“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,
who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming,
has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

*And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales,
and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;
and he took food and was strengthened.*

*Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,
and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying,
“He is the Son of God.”*

*All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying,
‘Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name,
and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?’*

*But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus
by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

*When many days had elapsed,
the Jews plotted together to do away with him,
but their plot became known to Saul.*

*They were also watching the gates day and night
so that they might put him to death;
but his disciples took him by night
and let him down through an opening in the wall,
lowering him in a large basket.*

Acts 9:1-25 NASB

Rope Holders

For clarification sake ... Saul is Paul. The names are interchangeable ... *"Saul, who also is called Paul."*

If it hadn't been for the willingness of these disciples to "hold the rope" Paul would have probably been the second known Christian martyr and the New Testament would be missing some vital direction. (Stephen being the first.)

His disciples, those who were listening and serving Paul, were a rescue team put together by the Holy Spirit.

Hold On ... There's a Rescue in Progress!
Rope Holders at Work!

There are times when we are in need of a Rope Holder and there are times when we are the Rope Holder.

*Those holding the rope impact Eternity ...
equally with those being held.*

WATCHMEN ON THE WALL

*Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.
Whenever you hear a word from My mouth, you shall give them warning from me.*

*If I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die," and you give them no warning,
nor speak to warn the wicked from their wicked way,
in order to save their life, that wicked person shall die for their iniquity,
but their blood I will require at your hand.*

*But if you warn the wicked, and they do not turn from their wickedness,
or from their wicked way, they shall die for their iniquity,
but you will have delivered your soul.*

Ezekiel 3:17-19 ESV

A spiritual watchman is one who has been uniquely equipped by God with the capacity to know the enemy, even when it's in camouflage.

The powers of darkness come disguised in many different dress codes, zip codes, and downloads but a spiritual watchman sees the approaching danger ... blowing the trumpet ... sounding the alarm to take up arms and ready for battle ... given spiritual eyes to see the darkness is slipping in with the intent to cause turmoil, dissension, and conflict ... chaos...evil.

A watchman doesn't just observe but must blow the trumpet at a certain pitch to identify whether the darkness is approaching ... *High Alert* ... or it has already slipped in ... *Battle Time*.

In history the Watchman carried the safety of the entire city on their shoulders. Can you imagine that ... being the one responsible for keeping an entire city safe? Each Watchman assigned a wall ... working in unison ... a hedge of protection. A huge responsibility.

*The city could sleep at night, knowing the
watchman was on the wall.*

A spiritual Watchman on the Wall holds in their words life and death (physically, mentally or spiritually) ... to sound the trumpet or choose not to ... I mean after all ... people will think you've lost your marbles ... BUT... there are those that will listen and prepare.

Watchmen have been equipped with fine-tuned intuition ... that nudge/ impression/whisper/urgency ... when to blow the horn of warning ... a call on the prayer warriors to assemble ... or to take up arms.

A responsibility/calling that I have never actually thought in depth about until now. Kinda wish I hadn't to be honest with you ... it's an assignment one wouldn't exactly volunteer for and quite a job description.

The other day there was a search going on for a 6 yr. old, red headed, twinkling blue eyed little girl who disappeared out of her own yard only to be found in the neighborhood, dead ... used, abused and her life snuffed out for pleasure.

Darkness slipped right in like a Trojan Horse and took the last breath of this baby girl. Our children being sacrificed on the alters of Baal. You know this if you follow any news at all. Children, teenagers ... boys and girls, disappearing, being misused and abused and then thrown away like trash ... staggering numbers everyday...EVERYDAY!

My heart just spiraled into great sorrow ... is it ever going to end. Then I remembered stories of the past ... long past ... this darkness has always been here ... these acts of atrocity have been happening since the fall from grace ... the evil just isn't hiding in a back alley anymore. An uncontrollable pandemic of evil ... and of course we have become callous to hearing about the ever-growing abortion numbers (which make any other cause of death numbers pale in comparison).

I have been deeply troubled. The darkness has not only slipped in but has set up house and partying in the streets. HOW!

With great sorrow I started mediating on this and questioning the why and the how? Then my thoughts went into overdrive.

What if ... what if none of this would be happening if the assigned Watchmen on the Wall had been standing watch? What if the horrors that are happening are going to be on the hands of the Watchmen on the Wall at the judgement?

What if those nights when the assigned Watchman is unable to sleep are really times of being alerted to the approach of darkness ... there's a trumpet that needs to be sounded ... and at what pitch? And then maybe, just maybe there have been those blowing the horn from High Alert to Ready for War but it has gone unheeded ... scoffed at as nonsense ... few have taken it seriously.

Did you know there is more slavery today in the world than any time in history? Sex slaves, labor slaves, domestic slaves...the list goes on and on and the numbers are astronomical... TODAY.

There is a scripture which identifies the responsibilities of the Watchman on the Wall. Get ready, this one is like way out there on the spectrum of responsibility ... Universal/Cosmos responsibility ... superpowers. I'm trying to come up with the words that I can visualize the meaning ... read on and we will come to a vision/clarity of what this means shortly.

“Son of man” is referring to Jesus Christ ... *Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel...* but remember this ... we are in the trenches ... boots on the ground here on this earth. By following His instructions ... His ways ... we are to do exactly what He does ... His blood runs thru our veins.

***But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet,
so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them,
that person is taken away in his iniquity,
but his/her blood I will require the watchman's hand.***

Ezekiel 33:6 ESV

***For WE do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***

Ephesians 6:12 ESV

***His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge;
they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.***

Isaiah 56:10 ESV

I don't think this is talking about carrying a sign on a sidewalk that says REPENT OR GO TO HELL ... but if nudged by the Holy Spirit to blow that particular trumpet, it needs to sound ... it must.

For me, and for many, I think it's speaking of one in tune with the whispers, nudges, taps, sleepless nights, burdened hearts, tears shed ... and being obedient to act with gentle wisdom and love. Whether others listen or not ... falls on them ... oh but we don't want it to fall on them ... it's urgent ... it's eternal life or death.

So, who is a Watchman on the Wall? Are you one? Is it time to stake a claim to your assigned wall? Your first assignment would more than likely be your family, then the Holy Spirit will bless you and enlarge your territory. I have a wall to watch ... and a territory which is constantly being enlarged. The Holy Spirit made this very clear to me some time ago.

My territory is my family ... my friends ... my Twisted Sisters ... that person that the Holy Spirit places in front of me ... assigned to me ... our home is an assigned safe haven. My wall assignment is observing ... praying ... listening ... warning ... shining ... encouraging ... teaching ... loving ... spreading the love of Christ.

There are times that I am the Listener. Not my wall, but my territory...we don't all watch the same wall. The Cosmos is our collective territory ... we are to have our ears perked for the pitch of the trumpet, to give the alert with confidence. Is it time to take up arms (Battle Rattle Ready) or be silent?

We are all to be ... prayer warriors, truth speakers, praise lifters, snake shakers, rope holders, gap fillers, seventh sensors, lamp burners, and truth defenders.

I'll ask again, are you a Watchman on the Wall? I can't answer that question for you ... any calling is between you and the Holy Spirit. As I have said before ... if someone else came to me and told me God told them I was to be or do such and such, I pray about it, asking God to speak to me about it. I mean if He can speak to them about me, surely, He can speak to me about me. It's called confirmation.

Let's pray and meditate (feed our spirit ... feed our soul/mind), read the Word, study the Word, absorb the Word and be available for when we are assigned a wall to watch ... cause we will.

This calling will take place as we mature in the Word ... in the Lord ... with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is quite the journey we are being led on. Some of us have not listened well and blew the trumpet out of fear. FEAR is not of God...remember that...and remember it well!

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

II Timothy 1:7 NKJV

***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged,
for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.***

Joshua 1:9 NASB

***Then He placed His right hand on me and said,
“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”***

Revelation 1:17 NIV

Then you might come back and say, well, the Bible speaks of fearing God. Here is a simple answer to that ... with the gift of the fear of the Lord, one is made aware of the glory and majesty of God.

I'm not Catholic but the description of this gift by Saint Thomas Aquinas nails it as a fear of separating oneself from God. He describes the gift as a “filial fear,” like a child’s fear of offending his/her father, rather than a “servile fear,” that is, a fear of punishment. So add that to your bag of knowledge ... I just did.

And there have been times no trumpet was blown ... no warning given ... the Watchman asleep on the wall.

Remember ... not everyone will listen ...

you can't make them ...

but there will be those that do.

Part VI
A Momentary
Conclusion

A MOMENTARY CONCLUSION

I am so honored to be called your friend and Sister in Christ, bound together in the Body of One, truly Twisted Sisters ... part of the Golden Cord ... seekers of heavenly communion which lights up the darkness of the soul ... not only for ourselves but being the light that shines forth from our overflowing cups of Living Water, targeting the path of truth which others may follow without fear of darkness.

I have been on this Twisted Sisters journey for many years now and I hope you have enjoyed walking through this as we seek the truth.

Should the Holy Spirit nudge me, there will eventually be a Twisted Sisters in Christ II. This didn't even scratch the surface of what I was given but I don't think I'm to wait another nine years. Who knows what He has in store ... we shall see.

I pray my ramblings have ministered to your heart ... made you think ... using that brain for what God created it to do ... eyes to see and ears to hear ... if not but in small ways.

The Holy Spirit has taught me one thing in particular over the past few years ... EVERY little thing is BIG.

***Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father
and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.***

2 John 1:3 ASV

BEAUTIFUL...

*May my teaching drop as the rain,
my words descend like the dew,
like gentle rain upon the tender grass,
and like showers upon the herb.*

Deuteronomy 32:2 ESV

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anita Yvonne Schneider is a Follower of the Way, Daughter of the Faithful, Wife of the Honored, Mother of the Strong, Deemaw of the Precious. Lover of the broken, the lost, and the found. Called to be the Light in the darkness, to share His Truth and Hope for the hopeless. To stand with Wisdom as a standard against the wiles of the evil one ... for our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. Her greatest accomplishment is knowing who she is in Christ ... and in Christ alone.

"I've known Anita for most of my life. We were twisted sisters before we knew what that meant. We had adventures together, shared the Lord and many friends together growing up. We were both blessed to have believers for parents who taught us fundamental biblical principals. One thing not mentioned in the book is that she could sing "Amazing Grace" like no one else! This book is for everyone, at any phase of life. It is so unique, so Anita, so important, and so fun. It is profoundly simple and flowing too. It is indeed a conversation with her, but our prayer is that it will spark a life long conversation between you and our Heavenly Father through Yahshua(His Son)"

Sandra Crosnoe, Editor in Chief and a Twisted Sister for Life

(PS the punctuation is all hers!)