

Saturday, August 31, 2013

"Don't Run, Don't Hide...SOAR!!!!"



by Dona Hake

Nothing makes my heart so sad as to hear when in the face of adversity a believer just runs. Runs where you ask? They run away instead of standing still and facing the problem or circumstance. As believers we have Jesus Christ dwelling within us with all the resurrection power to get us through anything yet there are times His children just run the opposite direction. Today I want to share about seeing the salvation of the Lord in your life. He desires that we rise up, not run and hide from the problems we face.

Yesterday I shared about the importance of calming our soul with the peace of God in the face of adversity. Jesus spoke some pretty powerful words in John 16:33...

"...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have OVERCOME the world."

Yet back in John 14 27 Jesus said "Peace I leave with you, MY PEACE I give unto you: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, give I unto you...." We can gather from this scripture that Jesus was well aware that there are lots of wonderful

things in this world that will bring our hearts peace yet He in this statement was warning us to keep our eyes on His peace. Today there are many things that the world offers us in dealing with keeping ourselves at peace. It may be different ways to meditate and relax or drugs that may help calm you. The world will tell you that if you do this or that, you will be a better person. The world will show you ways to make you feel like you are in control of a situation yet if it is not based in the Word of God it will never stand in the face of the pressures that this world can bring.

Many times people will escape to places thinking that if they just leave their problems they will be refreshed. God desires that we enjoy the beauty of His creation and our favorite quiet places yet if we are not seeking Him in those quiet places, we will return to the problem. We we return we face dread because we are still not knowing how to cope. When we try to escape we will always return that which you tried to escape from and it will be even worse.

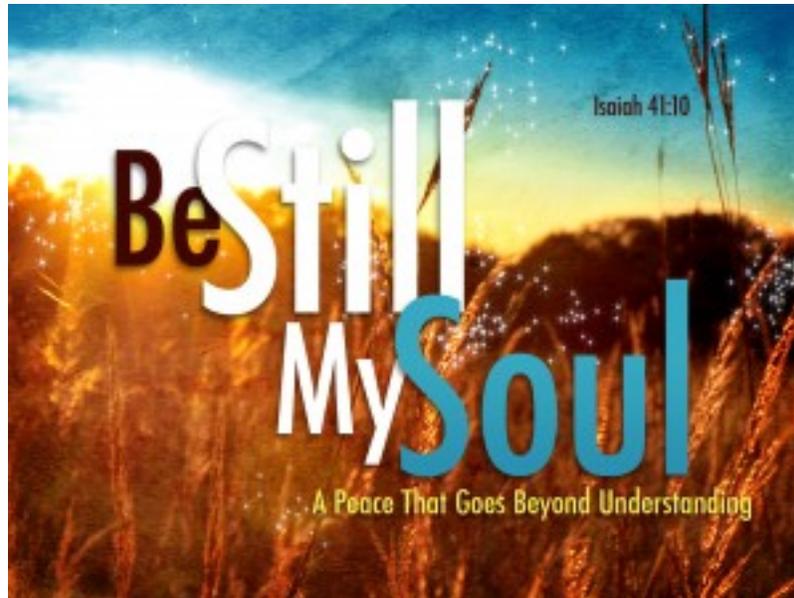
God has called us not to run, not to hide but to soar above the problems and things this world throws in our path. No, this life will never be a "bed of roses" and do not let anyone lead you to believe such a lie. Jesus said, there will be tribulations, but be of good cheer! He who was raised from the dead is alive and well within you. He dwells to ever live to speak counsel, provide strength, comfort and the leading of His Spirit for you. As believers we need to rise up and soar in Jesus Name!



Friday, August 30, 2013

"Holding Fast To God's Peace"

By: Dona Hake



Many times in this life we need to speak to our own souls "shhhhhhhh....be still." In the midst of all that goes on in our lives, our souls can be pulled and tugged by the noise of this world. If we do not attend to making sure our heart is at peace we will surely be pulled into the negativity that the pressures of this everyday life can bring. So I ask you today, is your heart at peace?

I can remember the day when my one son was about eight years old and we were sitting in our kitchen. Outside it was a crisp fall day and rather windy. He was rather upset over something and I began to share the Word with him about what happens when we lose our peace. Sometimes when a child is younger you especially have to use stories or analogies to help them embrace a truth. Then again, I rather enjoy stories myself to help me understand certain things in the Word of God too!

I began to explain to him how important it was to seek peace. After explaining the seeking aspect I proceeded to share about pursuing it. He looked at me with a big question mark on his face. I began to share something to help him embrace what pursue meant. I ask him what would he do if he saw a beautiful fall leaf outside that he really wanted and right when he reached for it the wind picked up and that beautiful leaf kept blowing away. I had him envision himself chasing that leaf all over the yard until he finally took hold of it. I then told him that this is what pursue meant...you go after it until you take hold of it. When you want something bad enough, you go after it, and you take hold of it firmly. Because you wanted it so badly you then make a decision that no one or anything is going to take it from you.

Once you have something you must do everything in your power to hold fast to it. I began to share with him that you must guard what you have pursued, protect it and keep it safe. So it is with the peace of God in our hearts. Many times we need to make a decision in the midst of everything swirling around us that we need to seek God's peace, take hold of it and determine ourselves to not let it go.

A smile came over his face and a look of "okay! I got it." He understood from that little analogy about seeking, pursuing, and holding fast to the peace of God. Today, if you are not experiencing the peace of God I encourage you to seek Him. He is the giver to the most wonderful peace ever. Make a decision that you will pursue His peace at all times and then hold fast to it.

Below are three different translations of the scripture that I created this devotional from and each one is excellent as it sheds light on holding fast to the peace of our Lord.

Psalm 34:14 Amplified Bible

"Depart from evil and do good; seek, inquire for, and crave peace and pursue (go after) it!"

Psalm 34:14 (VOICE)

" Walk away from the evil things of the world, and always seek peace and pursue it."

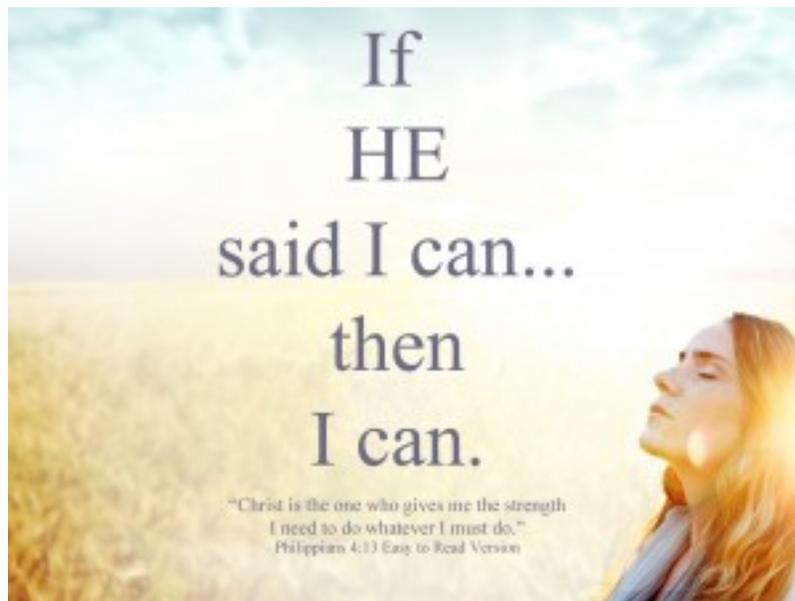
Psalm 34:14 (TLB)

"Turn from all known sin and spend your time in doing good. Try to live in peace with everyone; work hard at it."



August 28, 2013

"If He Said I Can..."



by Dona Hake

Philippians 4:13 Easy-to-Read Version

"Christ is the one who gives me the strength I need to do whatever I must do."

Yesterday I shared with you on this scripture. We looked at the importance of contentment in whatever state we are in. Whether things are going good and not so good, we need to learn contentment that we can continue to serve Him and draw from His grace.

Today I want to take a bit of a different direction with this scripture. Many times we may need a confidence boost. We feel deep down we are to do something yet we lack the confidence we need because we are so focused on our inability and where we are lacking.

As I was meditating upon preparing for this devotional the Lord brought a particular incident back to my memory. For many years I taught art to students of all ages. The one thing I always loved in particular was teaching children the basic skills of drawing. I can remember standing behind a student that seemed to be frustrated before he even tried. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had artistic ability. I could just see it. He threw his pencil down and looked up at me and said, "I can't do it!!" He almost seemed angry with himself. I firmly looked at him and said, "Never say you can't, say I will try to do my best." I will always tell children that they are not allowed to say, "I can't."

After he allowed me to show him some simple techniques I walked away and came back and he was grinning from ear to ear as he showed me what he created with some simple drawing techniques. I must say that there are so many children I have witnessed feeling awkward about their artistic skills to discover that they really did have some abilities. I might add at this point that the main thing that always comes before break through of feeling you cannot do something is humbling yourself and getting the help you need.

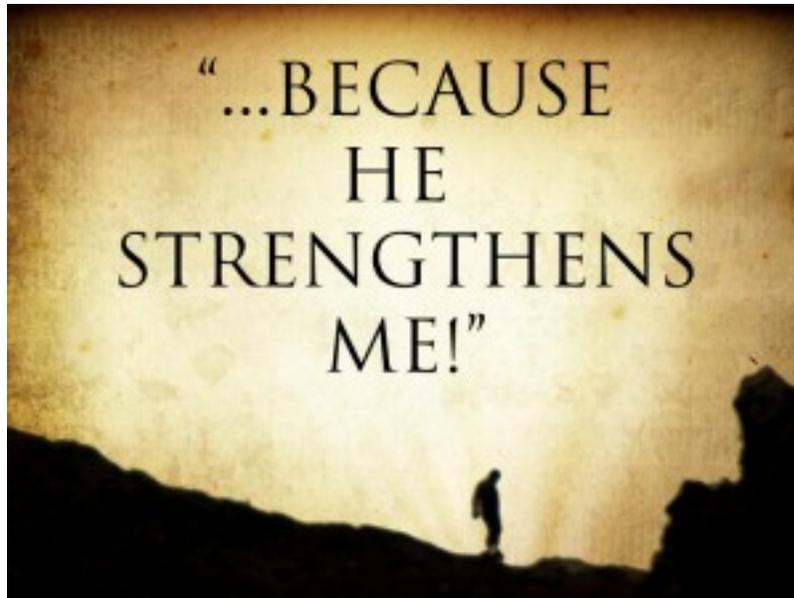
So it is with the Lord and us. He knows what we are capable of and many times He has to listen to us put ourselves down and proclaim our weaknesses and inabilities. In saying this I realize that there are certain things that we are not cut out to do yet we need to be open to those that can help develop us in areas of possibilities. It never hurts to try!

I could share testimony after testimony of my own life of the many things I thought I could not do yet God told me to step out. After encouragement from those that love me and the Lord's help I am a living testimony of pushing beyond my inabilities. If you know that God is prompting you to step out in an area I encourage you to trust Him. He is well able to help you do whatever it is. Next time you find yourself saying you cannot do something maybe you need to stop yourself and say, "If He said I can...then I can!"

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Wednesday, August 28, 2013

**"...because He Strengthens Me"**



by Dona Hake

### Philippians 4:13 Amplified Bible

**" I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]."**

Before this portion of scripture Paul wrote that he had learned the secret of being content. I love how this version that I was reading (NIV) used the word **secret**. Being content is a beautiful way to live. The dictionary defines **secret** being used in this context as a method, formula, plan, etc., **known only to the initiated or the few: the secret of happiness; a trade secret.**

If you are a believer you are one of **"the few."** We can say that by the strength of the Lord we can be content no matter what is going on around us. Paul understood this and he spoke with the authority as well. He said, "...for **I have learned** to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned** the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want...I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

I think it is important to note that Paul said two times here that he had **learned** contentment. Contentment does not just fall on your lap like a ripe apple from a tree. Contentment is developed through decision making in times of crisis or problems you face.

It is when you learn the secret of contentment that you can look to the Lord and proclaim "I CAN DO everything through Him who strengthens me. Sometimes when we face needs in this life and we decide to be content until the manifestation, God can work in us and also on our behalf. It is those times that we realize after we get through the trial that the situation gave us new insights and we became stronger because of it.

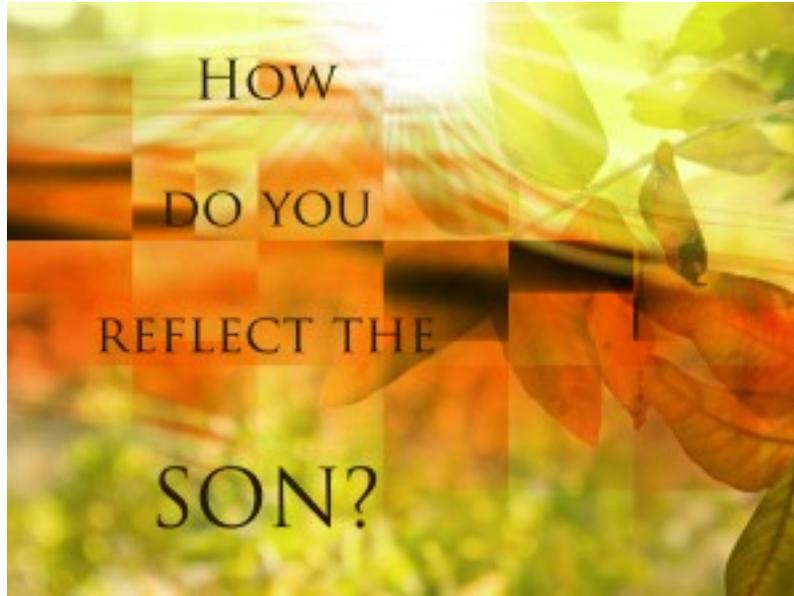
Let us **not** call upon His strength to just escape and run away from our needs but rather to be strengthened to walk through them. Let us bare the testimony that Paul wrote " **I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me.**" It is as we do this that we can truly say that we can do all through Him who strengthens us!



Tuesday, August 27, 2013

"How Do You Reflect the Son?"

by Dona Hake



Once again I was on my way home and one of the many churches I drive by had another interesting and inspiring quote on their announcement board. "How Do You Reflect the Son?" It was another one of those "selah" moments and great words that gave me a picture that challenged my heart. The more I thought about it, the more it inspired me to share with you what He showed me.

You know that God wants to use us to reflect the light of His light, life and love in this very dark world. There are many that claim they do not need them. That's okay if they want to claim that but we can still bounce light in their direction can't we? Of course we can...and we should!

God has commanded us to live as Jesus lived.

**1 John 2: 6 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**"Whoever says he abides in Him ought as a personal debt to walk and conduct himself in the same way in which He walked and conducted Himself."**

We must remember that when someone is in darkness they do not realize that their world is without light. They do not realize what they do not see.

Recently I purchased a light reflector to use while photographing my clients. Many times in brightly lit situations there can be shadows on a client's

face and this tool will help me bounce the light from behind them onto them, therefore illuminating what needs to be illuminated. You see when I am photographing an individual I am not just shooting a picture, I am trying to study the light that is or is not in the image.

When we engage with people we need to be ever conscience to be studying where they may be open to the light of God's Word. God wants to us use to reflect His light into their lives that they can experience Him. You see as one experiences His love, light, or wisdom as a result of you sharing, you are helping them to see it is Him that they truly need to fill those voids in their lives.

Ask Him today to use you to reflect the light of His Son as you walk in the path of others. There are so many people that need Him. Ask Him for courage to speak boldly and to speak with His love. God desires that you be a reflection of Jesus Christ in this dark world that needs the hope that only we can give. God bless you!



Monday, August 26, 2013

"There's Change and Then There Is Change"

by Dona Hake



I hear it all the time. "People hate change." It is true. I have heard that over 67% of people hate any kind of change. This percentage loves to have things planned out and they do not want their "apple cart" upset. There are certain reasons people do not like change and that is because they do not like the feeling of uncertainty. They want the security of knowing ahead of what is going to happen. The other percentage are those that engage in looking forward to constant change and new adventures that life brings them. You can probably identify which person you are but today I want to share about a different kind of change.

Today I desire to share about the change that every believer should embrace and desire. That change is to be more and more like Him as you live out the will of God in your life. This kind of change is when you can mark in your life the stepping stones of the Spirit of God at work in you!

### **2 Corinthians 3:18 The Voice**

**Now all of us, with our faces unveiled, reflect the glory of the Lord as if we**

**are mirrors; and so we are being transformed, metamorphosed, into His same image from one radiance of glory to another, just as the Spirit of the Lord accomplishes it.**

When we purpose in our hearts that we desire to see change in our hearts and in our minds we will do whatever it takes along with His help to make it happen. When you desire change, you seek Him with your whole heart. Change does not happen by itself, it happens by your faith in Him, sincerely seeking His Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

When one has a change of heart and mind, you begin to observe it. The fruit of your change will begin to "speak" on your behalf. True fruit that is sincerely the work of the Holy Spirit will begin to speak because it is genuinely born of Him. It has been developed and it will continue to grow.

As we serve God let us be reminded that He desires to continue to change us. No matter how young or old you are, God desires to continue to change you for good and for His glory. It is His desire that you become more and more like Him and less of you evident in your thoughts, words and actions.

**John 3:30 KJV**

**He must increase, but I must decrease.**

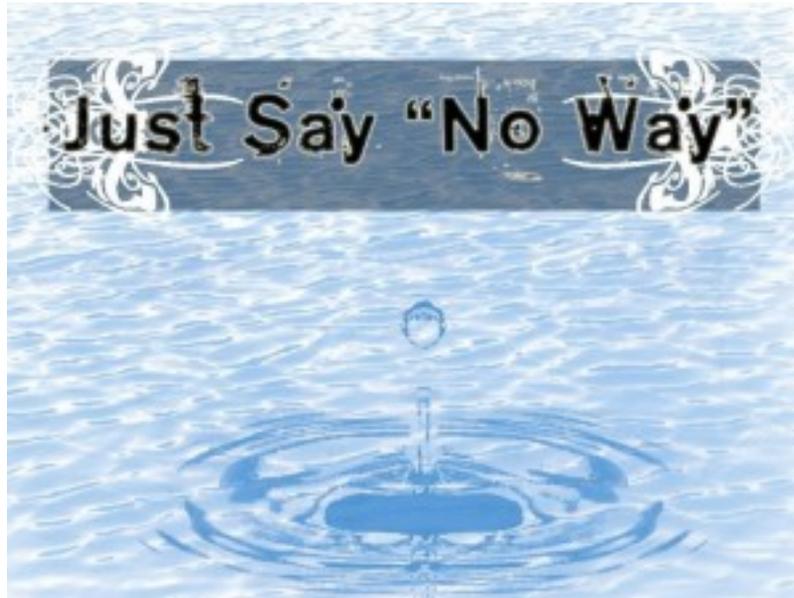
Today as you think about the word change I encourage you to desire it. Maybe you do not like the changes that are going on all around you, but know that it is a good thing that God desires to continue to work and change things up inside of you. He desires to see you going forward, ever changing so He can use you as an instrument of righteousness and for the glory of His kingdom!



Sunday, August 25, 2013

"Just Say...No Way!!!"

by Dona Hake



**Psalm 17:3 ( The Voice )**

**"You have searched me—my heart and soul—awakened me from dreaming  
and tested me.**

**You've found nothing against me.**

**I have resolved not to sin in what I say."**

This Psalm was written by David when he was being falsely accused and persecuted by Saul. While I was working on yesterday's devotional I had my Bible opened on my desk and my eyes traveled to something I had underlined and it was this particular Psalm. My version says "...I have resolved that my mouth will not sin." I thought to myself, "wow, that's a good one to meditate on!"

As I looked closer at this and saw that David spoke this when he had much coming against him. Sometimes it is easy to keep your mouth shut, but when you know you are innocent or you have done no wrong, it can be hard to be quiet. Today I want to encourage you to ask God to help guard your mouth when you are tempted to justify or defend yourself. Just say, "No way am I letting my mouth get me into sin!" I think it is always important that we ask the Lord to control our tongue at all times. Words can make or break a situation. Sometimes it is better to pray over a situation and have the Lord order the time in which you are to speak.

There are those times we say things we should not out of defense of ourselves. If we know that our heart is right we must remain at rest knowing God sees our heart. When you know God is on your side that is all that matters. Our own minds can ponder something over and over, and you begin to meditate on how something is not fair. At this point you can talk yourself into defending yourself even when the Lord is prompting you to remain silent.

David went on to write in this Psalm...

**Psalm 17:4-9 (VOICE)**

**"The path violent men have followed,**

**I will not travel. Violence is not my way.**

**Your ways and Your voice now guide my journey.**

**I will press on—moving steadfastly forward along Your path.**

**I will not look back. I will not stumble.**

**I am crying aloud to You, O True God, for I long to know Your answer.**

**Hear me, O God. Hear my plea. Hear my prayer for help.**

**Put Your marvelous love on display for all to see.**

**Liberator of those who long for shelter beside You,**

**set them safely away from their enemies, ever welcomed by grace.**

**Keep close watch over me as the apple of Your eye;**

**shelter me in the shadow of Your wings.**

**Protect me from the wicked who are poised to attack,**

**from the enemies swarming around me and closing in quickly."**

Today I want you to meditate upon the fact that it is the Lord that defends us. It is the Lord that we need to take refuge in. It is the Lord who will keep our hearts pure that we can stand before Him with a conscience that is right. Know that it is His ways and His voice that now guide your journey!



Saturday, August 24, 2013

"The God of Inexhaustible Compassion"

by Dona Hake



**Lamentations 3:22-25 The Voice**

**"How enduring is God's loyal love;**

**the Eternal has inexhaustible compassion.**

**Here they are, every morning, new!**

**Your faithfulness, God, is as broad as the day.**

**Have courage, for the Eternal is all that I will need.**

**My soul boasts, "Hope in God; just wait."**

**It is good. The Eternal One is good to those who expect Him,**

**to those who seek Him wholeheartedly."**

As I have been sharing about our journey in this life I have been stressing God is always with us. Every day we awaken we need to remind ourselves that He is right there in our midst. I shared yesterday we can sometimes have things planned and they simply go up in smoke. Sometimes our day goes all so wonderfully and your walk in the Lord throughout your day was a breeze. Thank God for those days for we all need times where we can just lay down in the green pastures and enjoy the rest He brings to our souls.

There may be those days that you are awakening with the troubles of yesterday

on your mind. You may be reminding yourself of the words you spoke or mistakes you made that you know you are forgiven of yet you are troubled. Today I encourage you to ponder the scripture I have shared with you in Lamentations. No matter how exhausted, weary, or guilty you feel, God's compassion is inexhaustible. Know that His faithfulness is as long and broad as the day. When He forgives, it is removed from us as far as the east is to the west!

I want to continue to remind you that there will be those days that may have included in them a test that you must face. Jesus said it would happen. Plan time to invest in building your faith by renewing your mind with His Word that you may face anything. Pray and spend time conversing with Him throughout your day.

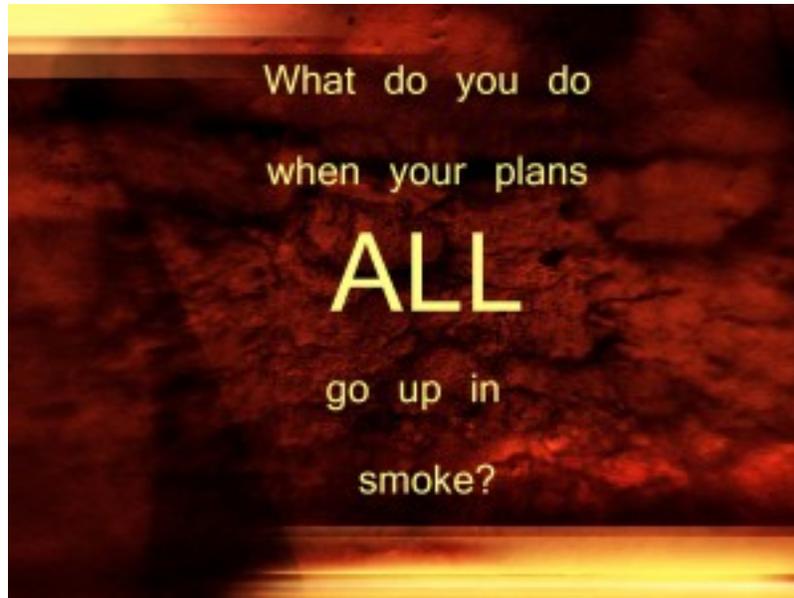
Today set your heart to expect of Him and trust Him wholeheartedly. God is good! Praise God that His mercies are new every morning; great and abundant is His stability and faithfulness.



Friday, August 23, 2013

**"When Things Go Up In Smoke"**

by Dona Hake



Today I would like to continue with "How Do You Face Obstacles?" If you were not able to read yesterday's devotional, I would recommend you scroll down below this one and read it. Today's word will be building upon what I shared yesterday.

An obstacle is simply something that obstructs or hinders progress. We can probably all relate to the times in which we are to be somewhere at a specific time and you leave your home plenty early and sure enough you encounter road construction and the person holding the STOP sign and directing you through the construction seem to maybe fallen asleep. Things like this even though really are no big deal can bring us anxiety.

There are also those times that you worked so hard to do something and it all falls apart. I want to make it very clear that I do not believe God makes bad things happen to teach us although when bad things or things that bring inconvenience happen we can learn from it if we are open to the Holy Spirit. As I said yesterday, Jesus said we will have trials and tests in this world. So welcome aboard! We simply need to continue to grow in our faith and glean from our experiences and seek the Lord that He would bring wisdom to our hearts.

#### **Romans 8:28 The Voice**

**"We are confident that God is able to orchestrate everything to work toward something good and beautiful when we love Him and accept His invitation**

## **to live according to His plan."**

I love this because it brings me to a place of asking myself, "Am I living according to His plan or my plans?" We can make all kinds of plans and they can seem so wonderful and organized yet it is not how God is seeing it. God's way is always better and it would just do us good to purpose to flow with Him and how He sees His will for your life.

Many years ago I can remember shooting a beautiful wedding. The bride just had to be one of the the most organized people I have ever met. This is truly the photographer's dream! For me to go into a bride and groom's day with lack of organization is just a potential nightmare going somewhere to happen.

Two weeks prior to the wedding I receiving in the mail a schedule for the whole day. It was like watching a hurricane forecast on the Weather channel. Every fifteen minutes (literally) it told me what was going to happen and to be quite honest it made me extremely nervous. Why was I nervous? I was nervous because planning is good but let's have some breathing room here. The day was thought out to the point that I worried I would have a chance to slip away to the restroom. The funny thing was I spoke with the groom and he was even nervous about the schedule of the forecast for his day.

The day arrived and I showed up and this wedding was absolute beauty and extravagance in every way, shape, form and fashion! There was only one problem...I was not there all but thirty minutes and ALL plans simply went up in smoke! I mean...UP IN SMOKE! The wedding cake showed up without the top of the cake, people that were supposed to show at certain times did not show up...on and on I could go.

The beauty to the whole day was as soon as the bride saw it was all wrong, she glanced at me and said, "you know that schedule I sent you?...it all just went up in smoke?" And she cracked up laughing and we calmly flowed together for the entire day and it was a beautiful success. I love to look back on these kind of things because we can learn from other people's experiences as well as our own. I have seen brides fall apart over the tiniest of things and it almost ruined their entire day.

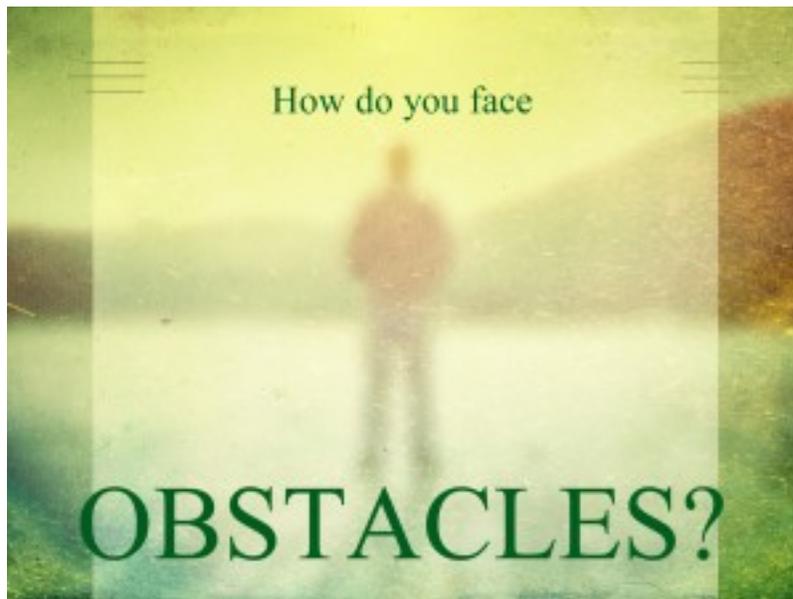
When our plans seem to go up "in smoke", we need to back up and look up to

Him and find out how to walk through what you are going through. Quite honestly I think there are times our plans do need to go up in smoke so we can do things in God's way and walk the way He planned it to go from the beginning. Seek Him early before every task and know that He will show you all that you need to know for the journey.

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Thursday, August 22, 2013

"How Do You Face Obstacles?" by Dona Hake



**"It helps to remember
that within every obstacle there is
a treasure to behold."**

I think these kind of quotes are challenging and they are good for the soul. They cause us to stop and quietly ponder our own soul and how we feel about what we just read. One could walk away and say "Yea, right...I hate anything that gets in the way of MY plans." or "You know what? that obstacle that I faced actually made me see things differently and now I am a stronger

person because of it."

The second reaction is the individual that found and embraced the treasure. The first reaction is the one that probably tries to live by controlling their own life and will not allow anything to get in their way. Jesus told us very plainly that in this world we are going to walk through tribulations and for anyone to think that just because they are a Christian that life is a bed of roses is very deceived. This is the bunch that blames God for all misfortune, yet when good is happening in their life there is no acknowledgement of God at work.

When you are in the midst of the flood you must have a supply of faith and the power of your mind being renewed so you can face it and learn from it. When we make the decision to learn, grow and draw every bit of wisdom from a problem, we will be a strong people.

I had several little life experiences I was going to share with you today and I had to pick just one. The Lord had other plans for what I was to share. As I went to prepare this devotional I felt the Lord had drawn my eyes to a little snapshot I had taken several years ago. This little snapshot is of a moment that made me giggle when I did not even feel like smiling. One morning I woke up with the most painful headache. I rarely get headaches and I just cannot focus. As I sat in front of my oatmeal and coffee, I put my head in both my hands and was in so much pain I could not even think to pray. (Just being honest here :) My "obstacle" was extreme pain and I could not even think straight to pray... when I opened my eyes the cap from my milk jug was "looking" at me and I just started to crack up laughing. Maybe you do not see it, but my view was a little smiley face looking me straight in my face of pain! It made me smile when I really wanted to cry.



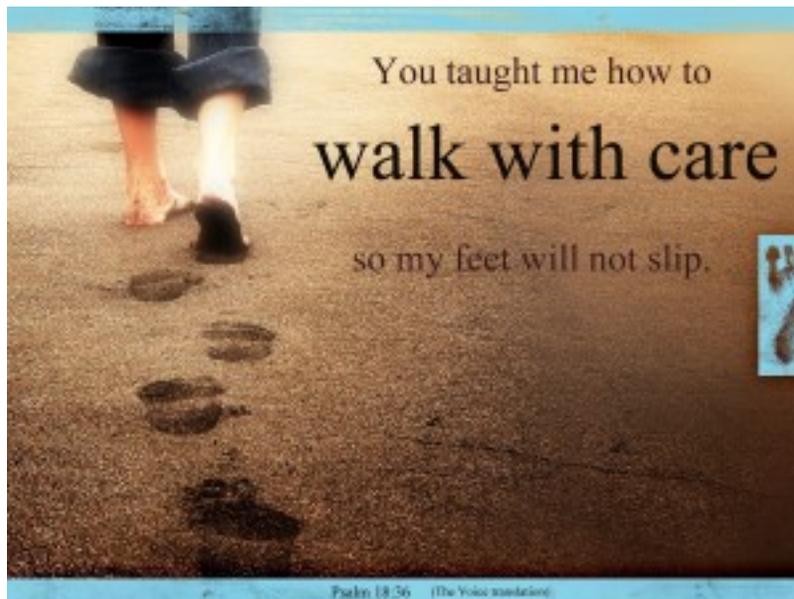
The treasure I learned from my morning with the **obstacle** of pain is sometimes you have to smile, giggle or bust up laughing even when you do not feel like it. I cannot begin to tell you how many times I felt physically rough and laughter brought healing to me. The Word of God says that "A merry heart does good like a medicine." There was a time that I was so disturbed about something I had heard and my heart was just sick over it. My parrot did something extremely funny and I laughed so hard and I could not stop laughing. I could not believe what laughter did for my heart and soul! The Lord has blessed us with fun things in this life that are pure fun and they are intended to make us pause and just laugh.

Let us make the decision to face obstacles with an attitude of learning and gleaning from what you are walking through. I know I say this over and over but we must walk in the revelation that Jesus is walking along side of us. He absolutely understands our hardships, our pain, our inconveniences. How do you view your obstacles in this life? I hope this causes you to be challenged and I pray that you find the treasure of learning and greater wisdom from God in each obstacle you face. God bless you!

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Wednesday, August 21, 2013

**"Watch Your Step!!!"**



by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared how the Lord will walk with us and illuminate our path. Did you ever have the electricity go down in your home during a storm and on your way to the place where you have all your flashlights, candles, etc... you stub your toe because you cannot see two feet in front of you? The truth is that in this world it is totally dark and we need the Lord by our side at all times to teach us the way that we not stumble and get ourselves into unnecessary trouble.

I want to interject something at this point for you to keep in mind during this devotion. God is our Father and we are His children. A child must obey his parent that all goes well. They must show respect for his word whether he agrees or not. I can remember when our first son was born how my husband would share together about how it helped us understand the Father's heart in a much deeper way. Many times we come to realize as we continue to "grow up" that God's ways are not our ways and it would do us good to just listen to Him the first time around.

Now that we are grandparents it seems that there is even a deeper appreciation of seeing little ones developing and growing because it is a whole different experience. Needless to say it is such a blessing to watch them grow and mature as we see them from one time to the next. You know you can learn a lot from children if you just stay tuned to the things they say and do. I love to hear

things they say through the eyes of innocence and trust.

Our four year old granddaughter is very independent and tries to be very helpful with me. She loves the little jobs I assign to her while she is here with us. One of her very special jobs is to feed my fish at our pond. In order for her to get the food to the fish she has to stand on some of the rocks. The problem with this is the rocks are a bit unstable so she has agreed to allow me to hold her firmly around her waste while she throws the food in. I have seen fear come over her face as the rocks wobble a bit under her feet, yet when I say "Marissa, it's okay, I am holding you and you will not fall...now have fun and feed the fish!"

**Psalm 18:36 The Voice**

**"You taught me how to walk with care  
so my feet will not slip."**

Her real problem at first was not the willingness to do the special "chore" of feeding the fish but rather she wants to do it all by herself. She had it in her mind that she did not need me to help her at all. Sometimes we are the same way because we are willing to do what the Lord asks yet wants we step out, and we want to do it our own way. Marissa learned very quickly that she did not like the feeling of instability under her feet and she preferred my firm embrace to secure her safety. Did that make the rocks firm? No, indeed it did not. It made her steps firm and she just knows because she is trusting me to hold her that she is not going to slip.

As we follow the Lord and walk with Him, there will be days where things seem shaky under our feet. As we trust Him and know that He is teaching us and firmly securing us our feet will not slip. I am going to leave you with a handful of translations of Psalm 18:36. They all bring a little different perspective of the same truth. God bless you!

**Psalm 18:36 KJV**

**"Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip."**

**Psalm 18:36 Amplified Bible**

**"You have given plenty of room for my steps under me, that my feet would not slip."**

**Psalm 18:36 Easy-to-Read Version**

**"You cleared a path for my feet  
so that I could walk without stumbling."**



Tuesday, August 20, 2013

**"Walk With Him"**



by Dona Hake

**Psalm 89:15 The Voice translation**

**"How happy are those who have learned how to praise You;  
those who journey through life by the light of Your face."**

I just loved the translation of this particular scripture. It makes me think more about how my life here on this earth is a journey. Some days the journey is smooth and some days the journey is just full unexpected things that try to hinder me. The important thing about the journey is knowing that He has promised to be right there beside us and He would never leave us.

Sometimes when the journey gets rough we have to purpose to keep our perspective. These are the days you may not feel like praising Him, and you have to command your soul to rise up from hopelessness and be encouraged. When you do this, you begin to praise Him regardless of what is going on around you. Therefore you are truly happy because you have **learned** how to praise Him even when circumstances are not conducive and you would rather be depressed.

We serve a God that is absolute light, life and love. As we stay in His presence there will be a fullness of joy. As we walk closely beside Him we can have absolute confidence that even though this world is dark, our journey will be illuminated by Him as He goes before us.

**"The closer you walk with God,  
the less anything can get  
between you and Him."**

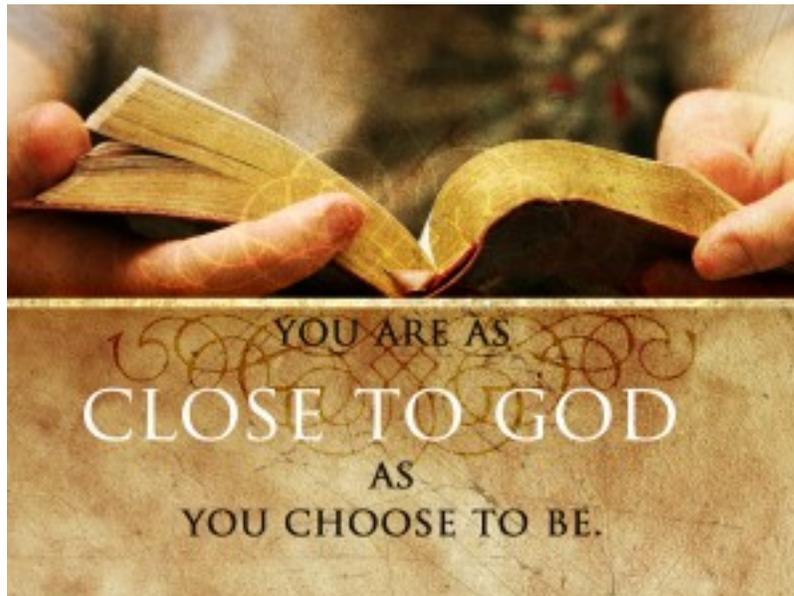
This little saying makes me ponder as well that the closer we walk beside Him we can keep our selves out of a whole lot of trouble. I have to think of my little two year old granddaughter when I think of holding someone's hand tightly and sticking close by them. She is at the age that she still does not perceive all the dangers around her, so I hold her hand very tightly when we are out and about doing things together. Exploration mode goes off in her little brain and she is just full of new ideas! She has this fascination right now with wanting to get in my driver's seat and pretend. As soon as I get her out of her car seat she darts to jump in the front seat behind my steering wheel. It makes me giggle yet it makes me think how the Lord must feel at times when we just want to dart off and do our own thing. We can be clueless of what a bad mistake we could be making...so He firmly takes our hand and leads us in the right direction.

So today, walk close beside Him. Hold His hand tightly because you need to. Allow the light of His countenance to illuminate your journey, and walk in expectancy of all the good things He desires to do for you today!!!



Monday, August 19, 2013

**"It's Your Choice"**



by Dona Hake

Almost everyday I pass a church on my way home and they have thought provoking sayings on their lawn sign. Today I pulled my car to the side of the road and wrote it word for word...

**"You are as close to  
God as you choose to be"**

I absolutely love things like this that really make you stop and examine your heart. There is so much truth in this handful of words. These are "*heart check-up*" sentences. We live in a time where there are tests for this and tests for that

to maintain optimal health because we want to live long, healthy lives. This is a good thing, yet we need to do check ups on our spiritual health as well! The Lord desires that we live strong prosperous lives while we live here but we have choices and responsibilities to do so.

It all boils down to the fact that we have choices in this life. Today I am sharing about your choice and how closely you walk with Him. Think about it...you choose your friends. Some friends are mere acquaintances, but there are those that you desire to know them in a closer way. You touch base with them often and you make sure you are communicating on a regular basis. You are as close to people as you choose to be. So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ...you are as close to Him as you choose to be.

If you know Jesus it should be important to you that you know His heart, and He wants you to know His thoughts. When He speaks to you through His Word or in prayer, it should make you feel closer. The closer we walk with Him, we will desire for that closeness to grow even stronger.

Jesus desires to be our friend all the time, not just when problems arise. I love knowing that Jesus is always with me. You know we need to remind ourselves of this because He lives and dwells within us if we are a believer. I just know it probably thrills Him to know we are purposing to be conscious of His presence.

I am going to throw a thought out to you to ponder. If you were to invite a very important person into your home you may want to go to every extreme to make your home look nice inside and out. You may cook a very nice meal and go all out making them feel welcome. I hope you would also make every effort to treat them with kindness and courtesy. Your speech would be thought out before you spoke a word because you would not want to be offensive in any way. You would want them to feel welcome and received.

As believers the Lord Jesus should always be treated as a guest of great honor in our homes. When you are in your home you need to remember that He is present and in your midst. He should also be honored and respected as He dwells within you. Remember, you are the temple that He dwells within. As we live and move and have our being, we should be moving closer to Him. We need to make wise choices over our speech, our conduct, and every decision we make. Remember...you are as close to God as you choose to be.

**Psalm 73:28**

**But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.**

**James 4:8 The Voice**

**Come close to the one true God, and He will draw close to you.**



**Sunday, August 18, 2013**

*"ONLY ONE THING IS IMPORTANT"*

by Dona Hake



## **Matthew 6:33**

### **Easy-to-Read Version**

**"What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need."**

In this portion of scripture Jesus is teaching what should be most important to your walk with Him. He was teaching what we should all desire more than anything. He well understands how things in this world can occupy our hearts and minds and cause to lose site of the important thing.

Prior to Him sharing this He spoke about worrying about being clothed. He spoke of the lilies of the field and how they grow without care and they thrive. How much more will He take care of us? Yet we worry. In the life in which we live it always seems to be something to be tempted to pick up care about.

Jesus understands our weaknesses and our human nature yet He commands us to cast our care and wants us to do the most important thing and that is to just seek Him first. He had to correct Martha on this matter.

## **Luke 10:38-42**

### **Easy-to-Read Version**

**While Jesus and his followers were traveling, he went into a town, and a woman named Martha let him stay at her house. She had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him teach. But her sister Martha was busy doing all the work that had to be done. Martha went in and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"**

**But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things.**

**Only one thing is important.**

**Mary has made the right choice, and it will never be taken away from her."**

I do not believe Martha was wrong for wanting to serve, what was wrong was that her attitude was that of carrying care about all that needed to be done. After all, someone had to do it. It is just that it was the wrong time. It was time to sit at Jesus' feet and Mary made the right choice. Right choices are seizing opportunities to do the right thing at the right time.

I am sure it was Martha's heart to do her very best in all of her serving and as she was sweating it all out Jesus turns His head and calmly said, "Mary you just need to chill and stop getting yourself all worked up about the trivial things and just enjoy my presence for now!" (my translation!)

Remember in your walk with Him that there is ONLY ONE THING THAT IS IMPORTANT and that is to seek Him first and He will provide everything you need. Sometimes we just need to turn our minds off and just sit at His feet and then turn and face our days with that peace and knowing in our hearts that He is in control.



*Saturday, August 17, 2013*

"God Will Fill Your Hands With What You Need"



by Dona Hake

Today we will look at the heart of a woman that was a widow. She had very little to live on yet her heart was toward God in her giving. In this portion of scripture we will see that Jesus perceived her heart as he observed the others' giving.

**Luke 21:1-4 (AMP)**

**” Looking up, [Jesus] saw the rich people putting their gifts into the treasury.**

**And He saw also a poor widow putting in two mites (copper coins).**

**And He said, Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them;**

**For they all gave out of their abundance (their surplus); but she has contributed out of her lack and her want, putting in all that she had on which to live.”**

As I pondered this scripture from this particular version my eyes were drawn to how Jesus observed how there were some that gave out of the abundance or their surplus. Surplus is something that remains above what is used or needed. Many times people may be guilty of giving only the required amount of what they feel is expected of them whether it be their money, their time or their talents. Then there are those that have so much and their giving is drawn from the abundance of leftovers or surplus.

Jesus perceived this as grievous because many times this type of giving is really not from the heart, it is merely being done out of obligation. As Jesus observed this precious widow's giving He determined her gift to be greater than the sum of all that gave out of surplus.

Let us remember that anything we have been blessed with whether it be our talent, money, good job, etc...is a gift from God and we need to live in a place of giving all. Giving all is an attitude of the heart that the Lord desires that we embrace.

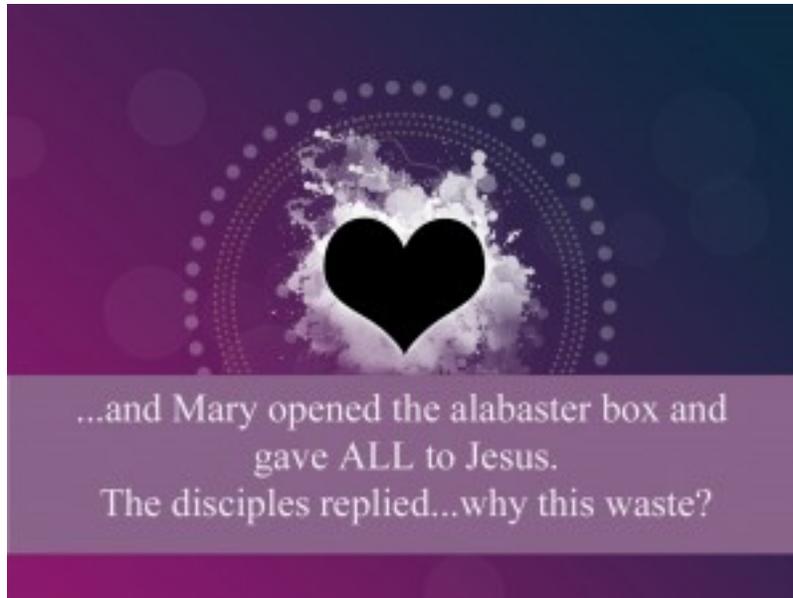
As the widow placed all that she had she knew very well what she was doing. She was purposing in her heart to give all because she understood she would be blessed. As individuals we need to know that we too are giving our very best. We need to constantly be checking our hearts that we are not being guilty of giving what is left over.

God may call upon you to do something and when you look at your time it seems impossible to accomplish. Know this...if you believe in your heart that it is the will of God, He will provide time. If God is speaking to you to give money and it is hard to imagine how you can do it...believe Him and He will fill your hands with that offering or gift for you to give. God provides. Plain and simple. When you believe, God provides.



Friday, August 16, 2013

"Giving Unto the Lord"



by Dona Hake

Today I want to share about giving unto the Lord and those around you. The Lord desires that we give our very best in every area. He looks at our hearts as we give. He sees our motives and He is blessed as we give purely as unto Him. Even good intentions can get you in trouble if you are not seeing your giving correctly.

Today we will look at two different views of giving from the Bible. Mary's heart and the disciples heart is clearly spelled out in the following story found in the book of Matthew.

**Matthew 26:6-13 (VOICE)**

**"Meanwhile Jesus was at Bethany staying at the home of Simon the leper. While He was at Simon's house, a woman came to see Him. She had an alabaster flask of very valuable ointment with her, and as Jesus reclined at the table, she poured the ointment on His head. The disciples, seeing this scene, were furious.**

***Disciples:* This is an absolute waste! The woman could have sold that ointment for lots of money, and then she could have given it to the poor.**

**Jesus knew what the disciples were saying among themselves, so He took**

them to task.

**Jesus: Why don't you leave this woman alone? She has done a good thing. It is good that you are concerned about the poor, but the poor will always be with you—I will not be. In pouring this ointment on My body, she has prepared Me for My burial. I tell you this: the good news of the kingdom of God will be spread all over the world, and wherever the good news travels, people will tell the story of this woman and her good discipleship. And people will remember her.**

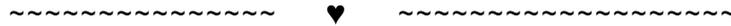
So after reading this I ask you, how do you remember Mary? The disciples' first reaction was one of being a bit indignant and appalled as she did such a thing. Maybe they really felt a bit embarrassed that they did not think of giving to Jesus in such a special and unique way. (just my opinion) The voice of jealousy can speak in many ways. They immediately reacted from what seemed to be practical yet Jesus challenged their thinking. He basically told them to back off and let her alone. I love the fact that Jesus defended her heart as she so beautifully gave to Him.

The disciples saw what she did as a waste of something valuable. To them the contents of the alabaster box was used in a fashion which brought no profit. What's wrong with Mary? Can't she see the money in that alabaster box? Can't she see that she could bless poor people? We too can be guilty of being so practical that we reason away opportunities the Lord has for us.

Mary simply seized an opportunity to give to Jesus because she understood there would be no opportunity to prepare His body after His death. She believed and understood that He would be resurrected. She gave to Him at the proper time. She also was blessing the heart of her Lord in her actions. She gave something precious knowing she would never see the contents of the alabaster box again. Again, the disciples saw it as spending uselessly.

Mary gave without restraint and she gave generously to Jesus. Many times we can fail to just give that which the Lord is speaking about in our lives. It may be your money, your time, your love, etc... You instead hold onto it. You reason it away through practicality in your own mind and you just hold onto it. Many times we need to face that we do not want to let go of the "beautiful and special" things we possess. We must always be willing to let go of anything God asks us to.

Let us look at Mary as an example of giving without restraint. Give your very best. As we are obedient to the voice of the Lord in our giving, it will bless His heart as you open your heart and allow the good things to flow from within you to people around you. Give when He speaks to you about giving and pray that He will help you understand obedience in this area. It is way to easy to reason away God's giving all in the name of common sense. Let us remember Mary and **"... tell the story of this woman and her good discipleship. "**



**Thursday, August 15, 2013**

**"Remember To Thank Him"**



by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about looking to Him from whom all blessings flow. Let us never forget to return our praise and thanksgiving to Him as He touches our lives in so many ways.

We live in a day where the common courtesy of saying "thank you" for the simple things is slowly fading. I am amazed at times how common courtesies of all kinds seem to be not so common any more. How sad it is that we see a society growing weak in areas of communicating thanks and just being courteous in public and to one another in our homes.

One of my pet peeves is when I am in a long line of traffic and it is bumper to bumper and I see someone trying to get in the flow of traffic. That is not my pet peeve...it is when I leave them in and they do not even consider any gesture of thanks after I just saved them the grief of maybe having to sit for a long time. Sometimes people just do not consider such small favors can be such a huge blessing.

We all have little things like this that may bother us. But let us look at how Jesus experienced a lack of thankfulness in a great measure. I can hardly imagine what Jesus had to deal with when He so graciously healed ten lepers

and only one thought enough to turn around and come back and express and grateful "thank you!!!"

**Luke 17:11-17 Easy-to-Read Version**

**Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem. He went from Galilee to Samaria. He came into a small town, and ten men met him there. They did not come close to him, because they all had leprosy. But the men shouted, "Jesus! Master! Please help us!" When Jesus saw the men, he said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."**

**While the ten men were going to the priests, they were healed. When one of them saw that he was healed, he went back to Jesus. He praised God loudly. He bowed down at Jesus' feet and thanked him. (He was a Samaritan.) Jesus said, "Ten men were healed; where are the other nine?"**

People that had the horrible disease called leprosy were required to stay away from everyone. They stood afar off to announce their presence. There were times that leprosy would go into remission and if a leper thought that it went away he was supposed to present himself to a priest who could declare him clean.

Jesus healed all ten lepers, but only one returned to say thank you. You see it is possible to receive a wonderful gift that will change your life forever and forget to thank Him for it. God does not demand our thanks but it surely touches and blesses His heart.

I believe that as you live with a thankful heart your outlook and value of everything around you will change. As you live with a thankful heart your outlook and value of everything around you will change. As I said yesterday, there are so many things we take for granted. Today as you ponder your blessings I remind you to stop, look up, worship Him who is the source of all your blessings, and thank Him!



Wednesday, August 14, 2013

"The Blessing and the One That Has Blessed"



by Dona Hake

I hear it so much..."I'm so blessed", "I'm so thankful"...yet I wonder at times, do we forget to return to the One that has blessed us as much as we should. Are we acknowledging Him in our hearts in a genuine way or are we just speaking mere words?

Don't get me wrong, it is important that we be confessing that we are blessed. Our life should be such a testimony of it being so rich with abundant blessings both spiritual and natural, and God Himself is blessed as we proclaim it. It is so easy though to take things for granted and we must always be checking our hearts that we are viewing things correctly, and our hearts are truly full of thanks to the giver and not just what we have been given.

Sometimes words with great significance and power can turn cliché because they are spoken without conviction within the heart. They just become mere words without substance. These type words spoken are referred to as becoming a

cliche. Today as I was meditating on this I turned to the dictionary to read about this word **cliche** and how it has been defined. I think it will provoke your thinking as it did mine.

**Cliche: (defined):- a trite, stereotyped expression; a sentence or phrase, usually expressing a popular or common thought or idea, that has lost originality, ingenuity, and impact by long overuse.**

I encourage you today to thank Him for the smallest of your blessings, the ones that are so easily taken for granted. Thank Him with a freshness and renewed heart of thanksgiving to Him. Really think about all the different things He has blessed you with and the people He has put in your life that are living blessings as well.

As far as things that I think of being a blessing I think often about fresh drinking water. As my husband travels all over the world he sees people that do not experience this blessing as we do. Many fall sick and even die because of sickness and disease from their water. If they are able to dig a well that provides them fresh, clean drinking water they will cherish the blessing as they drink it. The thankful one that holds that cup of cool, clean drinking water will look to the well and give thanks in their heart that they can return to it in their thirst again.

Today I just want to put the challenge out that we always humbly return to Him and live in a place that our eyes are on the Him from whom all blessings flow. As we proclaim what has been done for us, let us always turn our face toward Him and praise Him and thank Him from the bottom of our hearts.

**John 4:14**

**Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**14 But whoever takes a drink of the water that I will give him shall never, no never, be thirsty any more. But the water that I will give him shall become a spring of water welling up (flowing, bubbling) [continually] within him unto (into, for) eternal life.**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow and return to Him often!



**Tuesday, August 13, 2013**  
**"Amazing God-Amazing Grace"**



Over the past days I have been sharing about second chances and how our loving God is the God of abundant grace. Today is the last day I will be sharing on this. I encourage you to read the devotionals that have come over the past few days. They are all about God giving second chances.

In Proverbs it says to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." When a God loving, God fearing person becomes a parent this scripture becomes very real to them. Each day they are purposed within their hearts to put the Word of God into their child's heart and as the Word goes in as a seed they are trusting that someday that seed will become great fruit in their lives. What joy it is to see children grow and live in the ways

in which they were raised.

Sometimes though many diligent, godly parents have put the Word in their children's lives to have to bear the pain of seeing them make wrong choices. Many times they have to see their children walk away from the truth they have been brought up in and they suffer consequences as the result of their wrong choices. But the truly godly mother and father will continue to diligently pray for them. Then there may be some that have prayed for their children and they never lived long enough to see the fruit of their prayers.

Today I will share with you about a mother that was a godly, praying woman and she instilled the Word of God into her little son. When the little boy was age six she died and therefore, she never lived to see the fruit of her prayers.

As a little boy without a mother he set sail with his daddy who was a sea captain. Later when he became a young man he joined the British Navy but he was a very rebellious sailor and deserted the navy. When he was caught he was put in irons and publicly beaten. The interesting thing is that later in his life he became a captain of a slave ship.

During one of his voyages his life would be changed forever. Although he had had some early religious instruction from his godly mother, he had long since given up any religious convictions. However, on a homeward voyage, while he was attempting to steer the ship through a violent storm, he experienced what he was to refer to later as his "great deliverance." He recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, he exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us." Later in his cabin he reflected on what he had said and began to believe that God had addressed him through the storm and that grace had begun to work for him.

I am sure the words of his mother spoken to him as a little boy returned and spoke to his heart in his time of need or may I say his time in which he cried out for a second chance? As he reflected on his experience, God spoke to this young man in a divine way and from his experience of deliverance from a violent storm at sea the following words were written and now one of the most popular hymns of all time.

**Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)**

That sav'd a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears reliev'd;  
How precious did that grace appear,  
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promis'd good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be,  
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease;  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who call'd me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

I am sure John Newton's experience of receiving God's grace has impacted so many people through this song. "Amazing Grace" written by John Newton as a result of his glorious experience of receiving a second chance as he called upon the Living God for help in his time of need. How beautiful is this testimony? We serve a God of amazing grace!

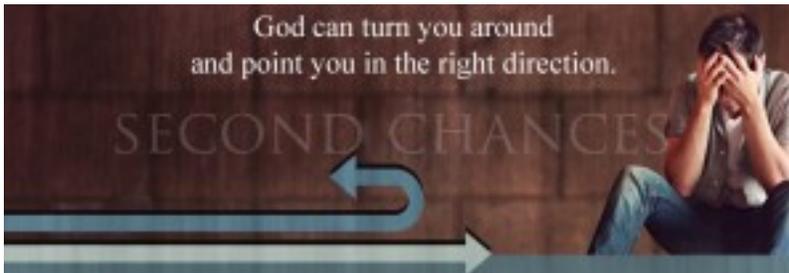
**Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of**

**yourselves: it is the gift of God:"**



Monday, August 12, 2013

**"I Would Never Do That!!!!**



by Dona Hake

*I am sure you have heard it said, " I would never do that!!!!!" or "If I were in his/her shoes this is what I would have done!" or "I cannot believe they let that happen to themselves!"*

*Oh how easy it is to say what you would do or not do. Many times people end up in problems because of their own lack of doing what they knew to be the right thing. There may be times that the strength was not there to endure. The truth of the matter is that we find out what we are really made of when the pressure is on. It is may be easy to say what you would do in another's circumstance but we need to be careful of such words.*

*Yesterday we looked at Peter in the scriptures and today we will look at another incident in his life. He followed Jesus yet he had the reputation of the one with*

the "shoe shaped" mouth.

Jesus warned Peter before leaving the Upper Room that he was about to face a test.

**"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32, NLT).**

*I cannot imagine how Peter must have felt hearing these words coming from Jesus. "...but Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you." Luke 22:33*

**But Jesus said, "Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me." (v. 34)**

*Peter faced the reality of Jesus words as the rooster crowed in the morning. It was at that point he denied Jesus for the third time as he said "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" after hearing someone insist that he was one of them.*

*Peter fled and was so ashamed of his betrayal of Jesus. Plain and simple...Peter failed but the greater word here is that Jesus forgave Peter. Peter repented and strengthened his brothers just as Jesus said it would all happen.*

*Peter experienced the blessing and opportunity of a second chance all because he received something he did not deserve. He received the Lord's cleansing power of forgiveness and Peter pulled up his boot straps and purposed to fulfill God's will. Although Jesus' heart must have been broken as He experienced betrayal and Peter's heart must have been broken as he denied Him, Peter got a second chance!*

*How many times do you feel you have failed Jesus because you have done what you have sworn you would never do? Know today that God is always there to listen. He desires that you just humble yourself and ask for forgiveness. Don't waste anytime, He wants to use you while you are here because there is so much to do. We have a greater work to do as Jesus said we would do.*

*Praise God we serve a God of all abundant grace that is always willing to give that second chance!*

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Sunday, August 11, 2013

"Forgive How Many Times Lord????"



The love of our Heavenly Father is always available to us. All we have to do is just stay in His presence and walk with Him. We are so blessed as we have been given so much unconditional love. He is the God of a second chance. I am sure we can all share a time in our lives where after we came to know Him we were given a second chance at something.

Today I want to share with you to be mindful of giving second chances to others in your life. The giving of forgiveness is that second chance. When someone offends us, it is us that has a decision to make. We can let it go and forgive or

hold something against the individual.

It is only by the power of God's love at work within us that we can give someone a second chance by releasing them of the offense they have caused you.

One day the subject of forgiveness came up between the Lord and His disciples and Peter popped a question. I guess in Peter's mind maybe he was willing to give even more than a second chance but a seventh chance. I am sure Peter was taken back by the Jesus' answer to his question.

Matthew 18:21-22

The Voice

Peter: "Lord, when someone has sinned against me, how many times ought I forgive him? Once? Twice? As many as seven times?"

Jesus: "You must forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven."

Many times we are just like Peter. We want to feel as if we are so full of love, but you see our love has limitations. God's love has no limitations.

Today I encourage you to draw upon the love of the God in the midst of your day. Maybe you will get through your day and have no opportunities in which you are called upon to forgive. Know that if you are that God desires you to draw upon His heart that you can freely forgive as many times as you have to. Continue to draw on and grow in God's love that you may be able to freely give that which He has given you.

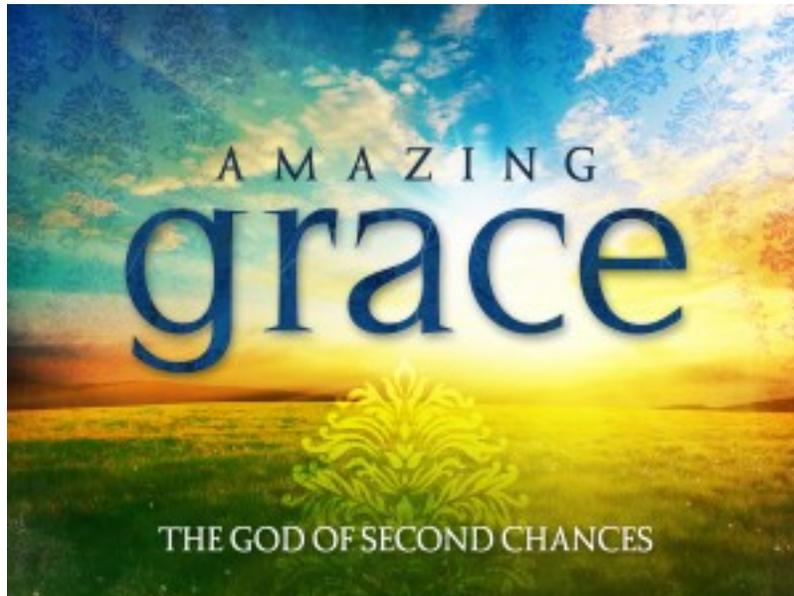
**"Love is a fruit in season at all times, and
within the reach of every hand."**

Mother Teresa

~~~~~ ♥ ~~~~~

Saturday, August 10, 2013

"Amazing Isn't It???"



by Dona Hake

I want you to visualize with me what it must have been like to be present during the crucifixion of Jesus. I cannot even imagine the pain and sorrow of those that followed Him. It must have be so horrible for those that loved Him to stand by see the one they loved agonizing in His death. There were those that heard what was spoken from His cross. As one point while Jesus was agonizing in his torture and suffering He looked down and said "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Amazing, isn't it? I think of the horrible pain and suffering His body was experiencing and He still found it in His heart to speak that which was pleasing.

Two criminals hung on each side of Jesus dying a death they both deserved and this was their conversation:

**One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are**

**under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:39-43 (NASB)**

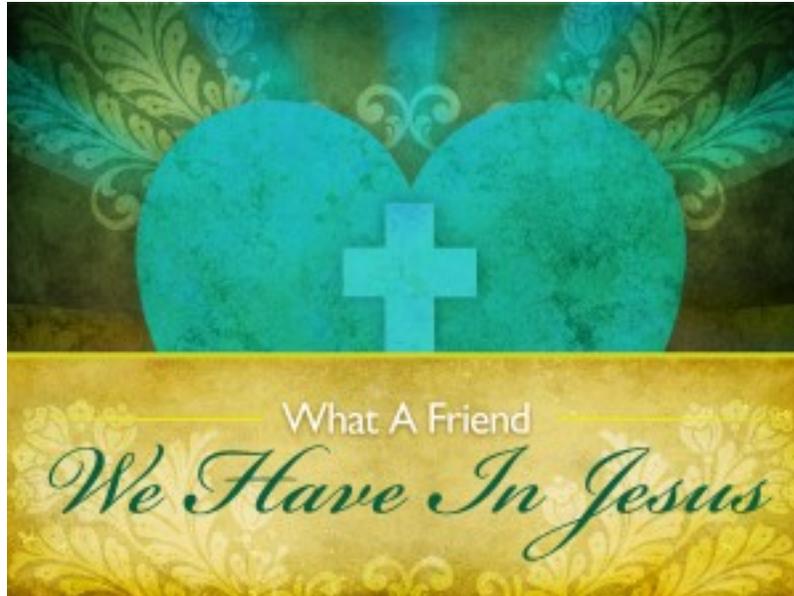
"Amazing isn't it??...that a man was being crucified for his crime and until his last breath he found enough strength to mock the Living Son of God ? The other one that was dying on his cross looked in Jesus' direction and believed He was the Son of God. One of this man's last words was a question to Jesus. "Will you remember me?" He believed that Jesus was who He claimed that He was and this man's last hope and prayer was for Jesus to remember him. Amazing isn't it???..." that Jesus assured this man by giving him a second chance. This criminal was breathing his last painful breaths yet he was asking a question that would change his life forever. This would not be a second chance to do his life over again but rather him have the chance to live eternally with Him.

The grace brought to us by the Lord is amazing isn't it? He gives us all second chances in this life every time He forgives us. When we humble ourselves to Him in our sin He simply forgives us and wipes the slate of our heart clean. Amazing isn't it...He gives us something so precious and we do not have to work for it because His Son did it all at the cross. The man on the cross did not deserve a second chance in the eyes of man and the cross was his punishment. You see, this man's heart was truly repentant, therefore he was with Jesus from that moment on.

Maybe you feel you have done some things and you do not deserve a second chance. Today may I stir your heart to think about what Jesus did on the cross for any sin you have ever done. There is no sin that His love and forgiveness will not cover. If you need a second chance I encourage you to look in His direction and ask Him. He is faithful to forgive and bless you with new beginnings. Amazing isn't it?



**Friday, August 9, 2013**  
**"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"**



by Dona Hake

It is so wonderful when you have a close friend that you can totally be yourself with. Friends like this are the ones that know you inside and out. It seems that you can hide nothing from them. Someone that knows you all too well can tell by the slightest expression change on your face that something is wrong within you. We may have times in which we do not even want to talk about our problems but they always have a way of getting us to lay all the cards out on the table and we find ourselves sitting and finally being honest with ourselves.

A good friend will stop whatever they are doing and make time for you and they will stick by you no matter what. When they see your heart is troubled they will seek to bring words of comfort to your heart, and in some cases they may say things you may not want to hear but deep down inside you know you need it.

Today I want to bring a fresh reminder to you that Jesus is there for you and He knows you better than any best friend on this earth. He understands you better than any earthly friend you will ever be blessed with. He knew you before you were ever formed and He was there when your heart beat the very first time. have been blessed with a unique personality, gifts etc...yet you have weaknesses and struggles within you that only He understands.

**Psalm 94:18-19 New Living Translation**

***I cried out, "I am slipping!"  
but your unfailing love, O Lord, supported me.  
When doubts filled my mind,  
your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.***

I encourage you today to be mindful that we have a wonderful friend in Jesus. He understands when our steps are beginning to slip and He is always an arm's reach away to support you. Even if you fall He is faithful to lift you up with the strength of His hand and cause you to be strong again. Know that when anxiety tries to flood your mind that He is there to calm your anxious thoughts and help you regain focus. Many times we fall into the trap of trying to be strong within our own ability and this is when we are denying Him full reign in our lives. He is concerned about the slightest things that bother you. Corrie Ten Boom said it this way:

**"Any concern too small to be turned  
into a prayer is too small  
to be made into a burden "**

Jesus wants to be your very best friend. He desires you bear nothing that He has already taken to the cross for you. Look to Him today and allow Him to be everything you need Him to be.

**As the old hymn goes...**

**"What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!"**



Thursday, August 8, 2013  
"Guard the Moment"



by Dona Hake

The other day I was in my car driving to pick up my granddaughters and I began to just think about all I needed to do over the next few days. The "to do" list in my mind is somewhat of an ongoing thing for me. Right in the middle of all my thoughts the Lord impressed a simple thought to me and I just could not stop thinking about it and I wanted to make sure I wrote it down. I have found that things I absolutely do not want to forget must be written down so as I sat at the next red light I realized I had no paper so I grabbed a napkin I found and penned out what I had heard. Those words were

**"Guard the moment in which you are living."**

The Lord began to impress upon me how I need to just live by faith in the

moment I am presently in, and be careful to guard all that is in that moment. You see many times I may be experiencing such precious peace or joy but I allow it to slip away because I do not hold fast to it and purpose to carry that in to my day.

How guilty we all are at times of just thinking too far ahead and not enjoying the people in our lives and most importantly the Lord's presence. How precious it would be if we just took one moment at a time and enjoyed each one to it's fullest. How blessed it would make the Lord's heart if we purposed to live every moment knowing we are doing His will. So many days are hectic before they even get started and we can get swept up in the duties of our day. I believe there are many times we worry simply because we are anxious about moments that we may never face. There is no grace from Him for worrying about the future or trying to figure out how things are going to happen.

Many times our thoughts will take us into the past. We say to ourselves, "oh, I wish I would not have done that." Our thoughts can then take us to the future and worry takes a front seat and begins to speak to you about the "what if this happens?" Oh the peace of living in the moment in which you are with the Lord. As we live by faith in the confines of the moment we can remain quiet in our souls and hear His sweet whispers and His gentle direction that we need.

I think of what a hindrance we are to ourselves as our mind races backward and forward and we miss the sweetest little things this life has to offer. The other evening I was sitting in my office creating a devotional and I had my window opened with some instrumental music playing and outside I could hear the waterfalls and the song of the crickets and other busy night bugs. It was just sweet and peaceful and it called me to remembrance to just appreciate the little things the Lord has so wonderfully blessed me with.

I also love the time I spend with my little granddaughters for they remind me to slow down and enjoy their honesty and silly things they say and do. They are so carefree and they again are little reminders to me to be a child again in my heart because this complicated world can sometimes weigh my heart down. They have their own special way of making my world come to a stand still in a very special way and I love every minute of it!

There are so many precious moments in this life and we do not want to miss them. Let us not live in regret because we have been too busy to appreciate

special moments that come and go so swiftly. Yes, I know there are a lot of negative moments and things that happen, but let us dwell on the moments that are just sweet to us. Let us purpose to just enjoy the life the Lord has blessed us with and stop thinking about the negative that is swirling around us.

I love the thought of living in the moment with Jesus. Of course we must plan for our days ahead but let us be careful to not be so caught up in the planning that we miss the sweet moments where special little things happen and they go unnoticed. There is a precious quote and it is:

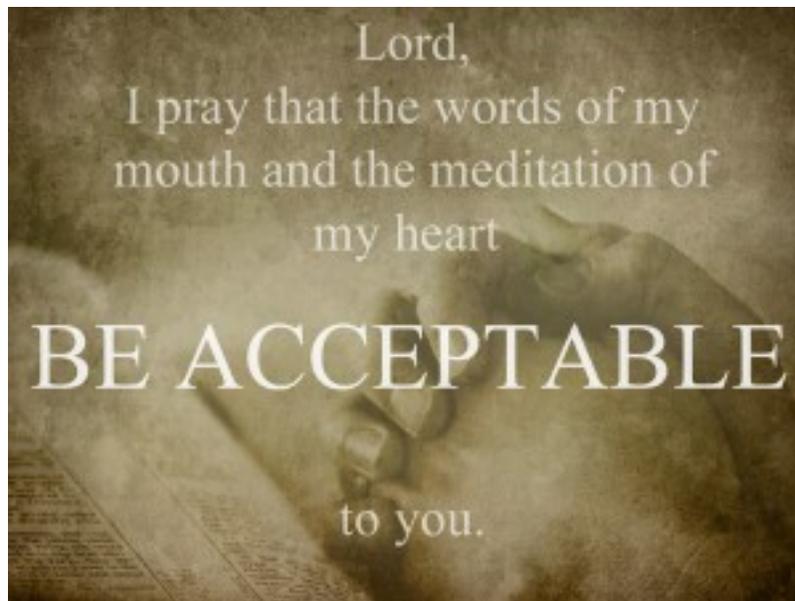
**"Life's not the breaths you take but the moments that take your breath away."**

So today I encourage you to first of all just live one moment at a time and partake of His grace to do so. Guard the moments that have been extra special to you and cherish them. There are special times in your life that are milestones and testimonies of His great works in your life...remind yourself of them when the not so happy moments happen. These are the moments that live on in our memories and serve to remind us that we serve a good God and we have been blessed with a good life.

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Wednesday, August 7, 2013

"The Words of My Mouth and the Meditation of My Heart"



by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared from James relative to the words which proceed from our mouths. James addresses one fountain with both fresh and salt water proceeding from it. As James said, "this ought not to be so!" We need to continue to grow and become so tender to the Spirit of God that anything that is not of Him dwelling within us just needs to go. We need to seek God daily that He would create in us a clean heart. As our desire grows in wanting a clean heart we must purpose to do what He requires of us.

Psalm 1:1-2 Amplified Bible

1 Blessed (happy, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather.

2 But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night.(A)

This translation is a bit wordy but I feel it is an excellent representation of some really important words in these verses. I love to dissect scripture and dig out every bit of meaning I can because it enables me to grasp everything it has for me. The Psalmist is clearly stating the joys of being obedient to the Word of God and refusing to listen to anyone that would discredit the Word of God. If you do not make a stand in your heart to live within the counsel of the godly you will fall prey to the lies and deception of those that are out to ridicule your God and His ways.

We need to ask God for the strength and wisdom to sort and discern everything we hear as we are among those that are either unbelievers or those that are not believing according to the Word of God. It is very sad when a believer submits themselves to teaching that is not in accordance to the Word of God. Sadly, this is the believer that will be very double minded in their faith and speak two different things. We must be very careful about our associations.

It is vital that we meditate upon His Word every chance that we get. As we keep our minds full of His truth we will be ready to combat negative thoughts and influences that would try to pull us down. As you meditate upon His Word then we need to ask Him how to apply it to the situations within our life. If we want to do God's Word we must first of all know what His Word says.

God's Word has been tried and proven and it will stand any test in this life. Anything that we ever face in this life our Lord has an answer for. As we become full of His Word and purpose to walk close to Him, His Word will be proven in our lives.

Psalm 12:6

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

Know that there is no problem too big for Him and know that His Word will keep you and sustain you because it is one hundred percent pure and it has been tried!

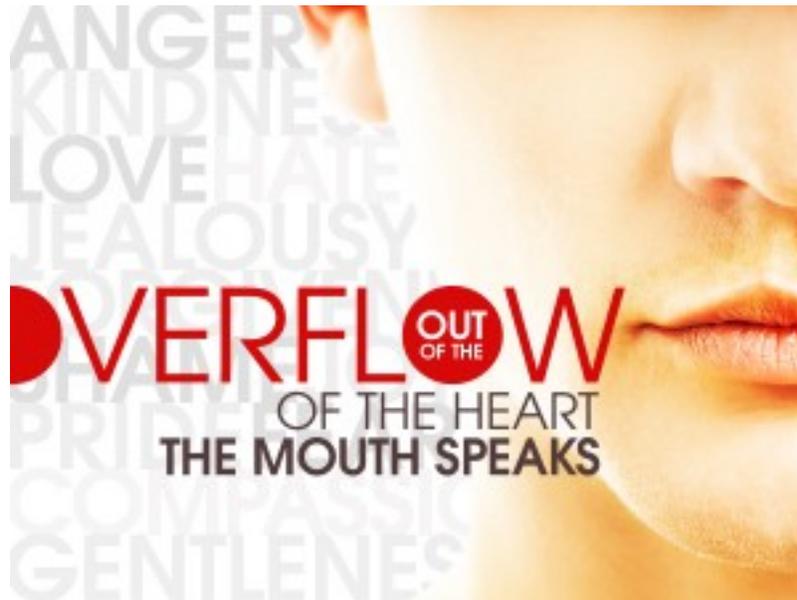
Today I leave this scripture for you to meditate upon. As you are meditating upon His Words, your words will begin to change and you will begin to see

greater consistency in your thought patterns. God does not want us to be as a spring that brings forth both salty and fresh water. God desires that Living Water proceed from you as a result of your meditation upon His Word.

Psalm 19:14

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

God bless you!



Monday, August 5, 2013

"From the Heart The Mouth Speaks"

by Dona Hake

Think about it...what we speak is from the overflow of our hearts. If it is in the

heart it is going to come out in the words we speak. Good bad, happy, sad, angry.... how careful we must be to guard our hearts for from it flow the issues of life. A word from one's mouth can be the spark that could ignite anger in an individual, yet a good word could create hope in the one that was ready to give up.

I have said often how a person could hear a day's full of encouraging words and one negative word in their direction will bring them down. It is as we realize how powerful words are that our revelation of guarding our hearts will hold great value to us.

Luke 6:45 (The Voice)

"A person full of goodness in his heart produces good things; a person with an evil reservoir in his heart pours out evil things. The heart overflows in the words a person speaks; your words reveal what's within your heart."

One thing we must remember is that just because we have accepted Christ does not mean that we cannot think and speak evil things. It is our responsibility to seek God and keep His Word fresh in our hearts that we do not allow evil thoughts to enter in thus having evil proceed from our mouths.

James 3:9-12

"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water"

We need to keep an awareness within us that it is not normal as a to be trying to think two different ways as a believer. God wants us to think His thoughts and He desires to help us do so. As we stay in pursuit of all God desires for us we will find ourselves promptly sorting wrong thoughts from good thoughts and there should be quick repentance if we are entertaining evil within us.

James 1:21

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

As we humble ourselves and receive God's Word with meekness we will have a reservoir of life giving words that flow from our hearts. I encourage you to believe the Lord for discernment over your thoughts. Ask Him to help you sort through them and deal with them quickly. The Lord desires that our hearts be full of good things that He can accomplish great things through our lives. Love Him today with your thoughts, your words and your deeds. God bless you!

A good man
out of the good treasure of his heart
brings forth good;

and an evil man
out of the evil treasure of his heart
brings forth evil.

For out of the abundance of the heart
his mouth speaks.

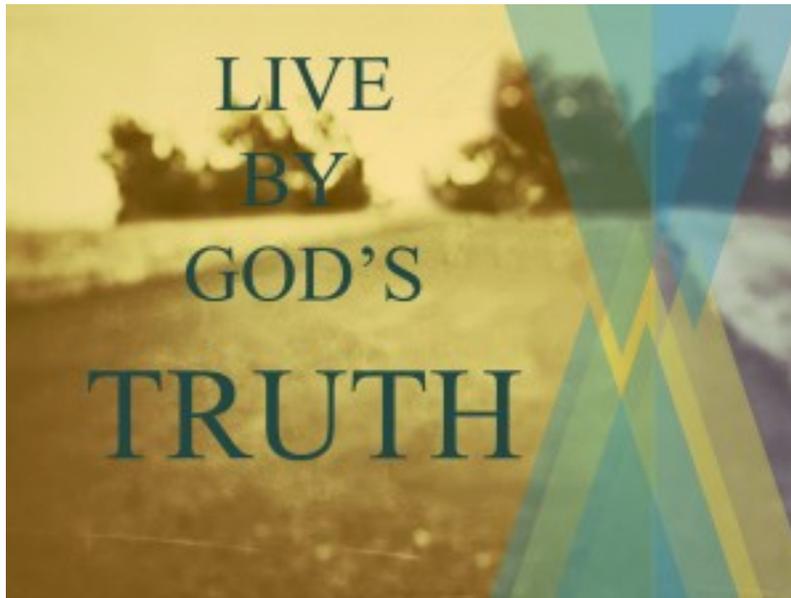
LUKE 6:45



Sunday, August 4th

"THE TRUTH THAT SETS YOU FREE AND KEEPS YOU FREE"

by Dona Hake



**John 8:31-32
Amplified Bible**

"So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples.

And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

Jesus Himself is the truth that sets us free and He is the source of ALL truth. Jesus is the perfect standard of what is right and He frees us from the consequences of sin. When we choose life, we choose truth, and when we choose truth we will be steered away from wrong paths. You see when you love truth you will begin to hate that which is evil. You will be able to see more clearly all that is evil and you will flee from anything that would keep you from abiding in Him.

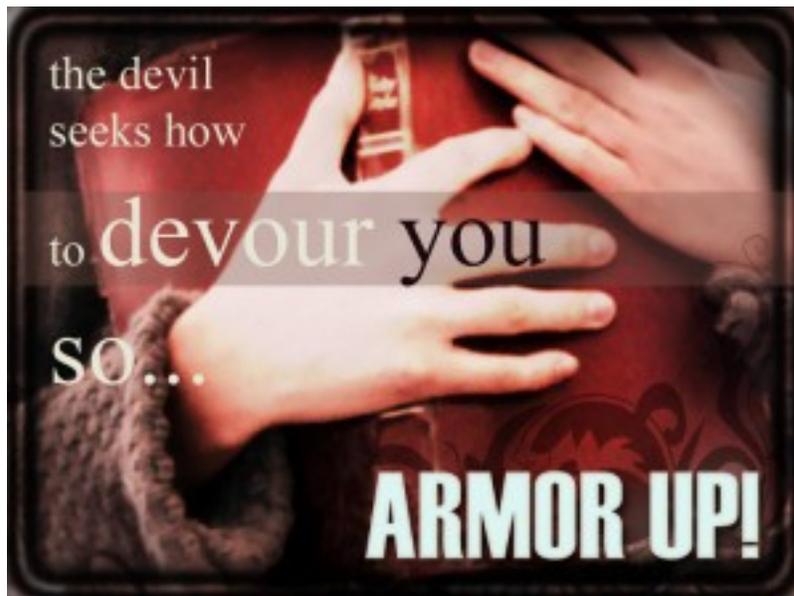
Jesus has promised to show us exactly the right thing to do. There is only total truth not half truths when it comes to God. He is all about absolute life, light, love and truth!

When you accepted Jesus you were set free from being enslaved to sin. You were set free to live free. You were not set free to live a two different set of rules. Jesus was speaking to the Jews here of holding fast to His teachings and living in accordance to them. We need to constantly remind ourselves that sin will enslave us, control us, and dictate our actions. His truth can keep us free from the slavery that keeps us from being all that He created us to be.

Psalm 91:4

**"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:
his *truth* shall be thy shield and buckler."**

Praise God that we can stand behind His shield of truth and know that it surrounds us as well. Let us live according to His truth and make a decision to never turn away from it. Praise Him today that your life is surrounded by His light, life, love and truth. Praise Him that you can indeed know a truth from a lie and that He will always show you the path that leads to truth. God bless you!!



"Stand Strong and Stay Alert"

Saturday, August 3rd

Yesterday I shared with you the importance of staying humble and under the mighty hand of our God. We looked at 1 Peter 5 and in this particular portion of scripture Peter was addressing leaders young and old how to lead and the importance of humility. The principles of these scriptures are for all believers to live by. We learn from them to be submissive to our authorities over us, stay clothed in humility, and cast all of your care.

As we live by grace we experience strength and many good things that come from God's hand alone. I am sure many times you can testify that apart from the grace of God you would not be where you are today. As we purpose to remain humble He will lift us up yet Peter followed this statement by saying to cast all of your care upon the Lord for He cares for you. He then begins to stress the importance of being self-controlled and alert.

With the everyday demands and experiences we will all have times where we are pulled and tugged and we may feel tempted to pick up care. I am sure you would agree when you are in the state of mind where you are preoccupied with worry that you are not as alert about other things going on in your life.

Peter proceeds to warn us that our enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Let us observe the nature and skills of a lion. Lions attack the sick and young. They choose victims who are alone or not alert. Peter warns us to watch out for Satan when we are in the midst of a situation in which we are weak spiritually. When one feels alone, weak, or helpless, and focused on troubles they can forget to watch for danger and are especially vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

This warning underscores the importance that we absolutely must be in fellowship with other believers and a part of a local church. It is in those times that you are feeling weak that you need those around you to lift up your arms and pray with you and stand with you.

I can remember a precious woman that spoke to me once while I was walking through a difficult time and my faith was weak. What she said went into my

heart and remains to remind me of the importance to draw on the power of agreement in prayer when I am weak. She said, "Dona, you have an 850 watt problem and presently your faith is only 450 watt. Let us agree and pray!" Sometimes we just have to admit that we are faith is low, we are weak and we need someone to stand with us.

I encourage you today to value those that call themselves your friend in the faith. Stay faithful to your fellowship with the Lord and your prayer time with Him. I pray that God will bless your day as you serve Him!!!



Friday, August 2nd

"Living Under God's Mighty Hand"

Do you remember when you were in grade school and during gym class you would have two relay teams and one relay captain for each? One by one they would pick who was on their side. Names would be called and teams would be formed and the team with the most skilled was the team that won. Most children stand and wait to hear their name called and in the back of their mind they are hoping to be on what they perceive to be the winning one.

As a believer we too need to know that we are on God's side of things in every aspect of life. If we choose to do things our own way and by our own ability we have chosen to more than likely have a hard time and possibly lose in whatever we are trying to accomplish.

The Word of God says in Romans "if God be for us then who can be against us?" When we know God is fighting with us we absolutely know and stand that we will win. The following is a quote that is one that I love.

"Sir, my concern is NOT whether God is on our side, my greatest concern is to be on God's side for God is ALWAYS right."

Abraham Lincoln

As I have been sharing about God's hand over the past days I want to share again today about His hand being the mighty one.

1 Peter 5:6 Amplified Bible

"For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful)—[and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], but gives grace (favor, blessing) to the humble.

Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you,..."

To be on God's side you must live under His mighty hand by staying humble. Plain and simply...do NOT boast, do NOT be overbearing, do NOT be proud because God hates it. He not only hates pride but He sets Himself against it. The way I see it, we do not stand a chance at any race without God and if you feel you cannot let go of pride you stand no chance of God being on your side.

Let us value the importance of keeping watch over our hearts that no pride enter in. I am talking about a vigilant watch because we just cannot afford our God not being on our side. Remember if God be for you , who can be against you? Pride is the enemy of God and it serves to keep us on the losing side of life. Thank God that He gives us the discernment and we can be overcomers as we decide to live humbly before Him.



Thursday, August 1st

"Knock and the Door Will Be Opened"

by Dona Hake

God's loving hands are so willing to reach out and touch us in our time of need. We have been learning over the past few days the many ways His hands desire to touch our lives. Today we will look at the importance of our asking Him what we desire so that He may touch our lives with answered prayer. We may ask Him yet there are times that our faith wavers and our determination weakens. God desires to see us be a determined people. He does not want to see us give up but rather press in and keep on keeping on!

Jesus addressed prayer as He spoke about asking and receiving. In the scripture I am about to share one of the things Jesus stressed was "Keep on knocking , and the door will be opened to you." Again I want to say that God desires to see us resolute and determined as we ask for something. Let us read Matthew 7:7-11 from the New Living Translation

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find.

Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

"You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

As a parent you may have experienced your child asking you for something and you greatly desired to bless them with their request. The joy that comes to your heart when you give gifts to your children is simply priceless. How much more our God must be so joyful in His heart when He opens His hand and blesses us as we have asked and believed Him for something that we desired.

Our Heavenly Father understands and loves us more than any earthly parents. He desires to open His mighty hand and pour forth good gifts into your life for His glory.

**He desires your voice in the asking,
your eyes of faith in the seeking and
the hands of your heart to keep on knocking
until the door is opened!**

Praise Him today for all the wonderful gifts He has brought into your life. God bless you!