

Wednesday, July 31st

"Hold Tight To the Lord's Hands"

by Dona Hake

I have been sharing with you over the past few days about the work of our Lord's hands. His hands lead us and guide us while we face situations in which we do not know what to do. In those times as His Spirit is watching over us He may warn us by stopping our plans with His loving but firm hand. We may face situations in this life in which we are grieved and overwhelmed and He carries and strengthens us in the midst of it all. We also looked at as we have become new creatures in Him that His loving hands are ever at work to mold us as we remain the "clay" that is pliable and workable in His hands.

Today I want to share about walking with Him and holding his hand. This requires our effort because many times we desire that He walk with us yet we break the hold and run off like a little child because something in this life has distracted us.

I cannot help but think of our youngest granddaughter because she still is at the place of development where she does not understand the dangers of a parking lot or busy street. On top of her wanting to break away from holding my hand this little girl is lighting fast! This requires me to hold her hand with a tight grip and firm words at times.

Even though we may feel we are all grown up in this world in which we live we must remind ourselves that we do not always see the dangers ahead as our Lord foresees. It is of utmost importance that we purpose to hold the loving hand that desires to embrace ours. There may also be times that He too may see need to speak firmly to His by His Word because you are wanting to go your own way.

I have been passing a sign that a church has out front of its property and it has

continued to bless me every time I see it and it well pertains to the devotion I bring you today:

**"The closer I walk with Him,
there's less of a chance
that anything come between us."**

Today I encourage you to hold His hand tightly and allow no distance between you and your Lord. Know that there are many things in this world that are trying to take your attention from Him. Those things that so craftily take your attention will also put distance between you and God.

Be vigilant to watch over your soul and hold His hand and keep your eyes on Him because He never takes His eyes off of you! God bless you!!!



Tuesday, July 30th

"The Work of the Potter's Hand"

by Dona Hake

God so intricately formed us within our mother's wombs. Like a tapestry He purposed to make you extra special and of a unique design. You are the only one ever and your thumb print is the proof of it. As there are no two snowflakes alike, there is not another human being like you on the earth. He created you with a special purpose in mind.

God's greatest desire is that all would come to know Him. As a new believer in

the Lord you are blessed with new life. All that was wrong is forgiven and you have a clean slate. Whether you are a new believer or have been born again many years you must continue to seek the Lord about your life. He is all about wanting to see you continue to grow and move on. He desires to use you on this earth until the moment you take your last breath.

So let us allow Him to form Christ in us. As we allow His loving hand to work in our lives we will become more and more like Jesus. You will begin to see things change in your life that you thought would never change. It is because He is able to do all things according to His power NOT your abilities.

Isaiah 64:8 (VOICE)

" Still, Eternal One, You are our Father.

We are just clay, and You are the potter.

**We are the product of Your creative action, shaped and formed
into something of worth."**

I encourage you today to be mindful that God's hand is at work and He is ever diligent to continue to shape and form you into someone that can do wonderful things for His kingdom. I leave you with the thought that clay can only be molded if it is soft and pliable. Hardened clay cannot be molded into anything. Keep your heart soft and humble before Him because that is the heart that God is well able to do above and beyond all you dare ask or think. Expect from Him today to be at work in your life as you serve Him. God bless you!



Monday, July 29th

"...and One Day God's Hand Formed You"

by Dona Hake

I would like to continue with sharing about the work of God's hands. Today we

will look at scripture as it shows us that God made man as His hands sculpted from the clay of the ground. He carefully molded the very first human and he called him Man. With purpose for every detail inside and out God created every bone, organ, etc... and He breathed from His nostrils Adam's first breath of life. Some may try to argue this point but as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ we know and understand that He is the Creator of everything.

Genesis 2:7

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

We live in time where we are constantly hearing of those that try to discredit the facts of Creation. I found an interesting end note in studying this and I thought it worthy to mention. **"The same essential chemical elements are found in man and animal life that are in the soil. This scientific fact was not known to man until recent times, but God was displaying it as the book of Genesis unfolds the creation of man."** I just thought that was a very awesome fact to share.

I find it also an awesome thought to ponder that God knew me before I was formed in my mother's womb. Knowing this I know that upon my day of conception God was at work with His hands forming every detail of my being in the womb.

Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee..."

I can remember a particular time in my life that I received a great revelation that God's hand was upon me and that was when I was carrying my first son. Due to three different infections in my body I almost miscarried him. I can remember the nurse telling me a week after my initial ultrasound that they decided not to give me images of the ultrasound because they felt that I was definitely losing my baby. I had lost so much blood and they told me the image showed the fetus was exiting my womb.

They say a picture paints a thousand words and that is one I am glad I did not

see. It was hard enough feeling so bad physically and not understanding what was going on in my body. I definitely did not need to see an image that projected such a negative outcome. So I found something in God's Word that gave me a new "picture" to meditate upon...

Psalm 71:6

King James Version (KJV)

"By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee."

I began to see in the Spirit God's mighty hand holding my child up securely in my womb until the appointed day came for him to be born. I had a long road ahead of me but our doctor totally acknowledged that there was definitely a miracle taking place within me! The next ultrasound I had a week later showed our son had moved back up into the proper place for development. I can testify that I had a beautiful pregnancy thereafter and my delivery went so well. Oh to praise Him for the wonderful works of His hands!

We serve a miracle working God and I encourage you to dwell upon the fact that you too were formed within your mother's womb for a very special work for such a time as this! God bless you.



Sunday, July 28th

"Upheld By God's Right Hand"

by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about the works of God's hands in our lives. His hands guide us, warn us, and His hands comfort us in times of pain. Today we will look at the strength of His hand in our lives.

Isaiah 41:10

King James Version (KJV)

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The significance of His right hand being mentioned is because it represents strength and skill. When we feel when can not go on He will lift us up and carry us with His strength. We can rest in His arms knowing that He will hold us tightly until life's storm is over.

There are many times in my life that I can testify of that I simply do not know how I would have made it apart from Him carrying me. Many times when I see people walk through things without Jesus I feel sorry for them because I know it must be so horrible to feel so alone and weak and no one to turn to because they have not allowed Him to be Lord of their life. When one decides that they have no need for God they surely have a rough road ahead of them.

As I was meditating on this devotion I began to think about the "Footprints in the Sand" writing and I felt it appropriate to share today. Footprints in the Sand has been seen in print by people the world over since the late 1940's. All that time no author has been credited with this immortal work, only 'Author Anonymous' has appeared at the bottom.

Footprints in the Sand

One night I had a dream...

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and

Across the sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand;

One belonged to me, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of my life flashed before us,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that many times along the path of my life,
There was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my
life
This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
You would walk with me all the way;
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life,
There is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why in times when I
needed you the most, you should leave me.
The Lord replied, "My precious, precious
child. I love you, and I would never,
never leave you during your times of
trial and suffering.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

Author Anonymous

Let us reflect on times in our lives where we felt there was no more strength yet somehow you carried on and you just knew it was a supernatural strength. God is so good and so faithful. Let us praise Him for the wonderful works of His mighty hands in our lives.

Saturday, July 27th

"The Loving Works of His Hands"

by Dona Hake

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ I can testify of the works of His hands in

my life and I am sure you can as well. His hands work in so many ways. Some days you may see His hand as He has guided you in a tough decision. There will be times that you can exclaim that you see His hand of protection upon your life. There may also be times that you know that His loving hand reached out and stopped you before you made a decision that could have caused you severe consequences. As we look to God and submit to Him we will experience the work of His hands in so many ways.

Psalm 92:4

Amplified Bible

**"For You, O Lord, have made me glad by Your works; at the deeds of
Your hands I joyfully sing."**

The word **hands** in this scripture is translated as a hand that is open and it indicates power and a means of direction. I love this because I know that God desires that His hand be moving in our lives. He desires as He walks with us through our day that we acknowledge our need to be looking to hold His hand. Little children are taught to be safe while walking in a dangerous area to hold on to mommy or daddy's hand. The parent holds it tightly and a good parent will insist on the child holding it. Many times a child may resist because they want to do things their way and they endanger themselves. We too at times think we may not need to hold the Lord's hand because we think we can do things in our own ability. May I say that this is only pride to think you can walk any day in this life without holding tightly to His hand?

God's loving hand desires to lead, guide and be a means of direction every day of your life. Those same hands that direct you are there to comfort you in your times of pain. Allow God to be that comfort you need and do not look for it in other things that this world has to offer. The same hands that offer guidance and comfort will at times offer warning to you. Have you had those times you go to warn a child not to do something and you lovingly shake your index finger at them and you hope they listen? Many times God also will firmly warn us through His Word and we should not frown on it but rather submit to Him as He may be shaking His index finger at you with a firm but loving look on His face. Let us remember that God knows our frame and He knows what is ahead of us and it would do us good to always stop and heed the warnings of the Lord.

Today I encourage you to think about the works of God's hands in your life. Reflect upon the times that had it not been for His loving guidance you could have made a wrong decision. Think about all that He has done for you and be joyful that God is indeed at work on your behalf with His loving hands! Have a wonderful day!



Friday, July 26th

"Lord Please Keep My Heart Clean"

by Dona Hake

The other day I was tidying up around the house and while I was in my family room I grabbed my broom to sweep right inside my door which is the entrance to our backyard. It is one of those areas I could clean three times a day and there is always dirt because our German Shepherd has these four paws that are always tracking dirt in to the house. I swept this neat little pile dirt and grass and it was by the rug and for some reason I stood there and just glanced at the pile of dirt beside my throw rug. The idiom came to my mind that people use and that is "it was just swept under the carpet." I began to think how stupid that would be to just lift the rug and brush it underneath. This just really triggered in me how so many times people really do practice this in their hearts. It is a very sad thing when one just tries to hide a problem or keep a problem secret instead of dealing with it. Let us just say that it is not healthy to pretend like a problem is not there or act as if it is going to go away on its own. Let's read this scripture in light of what I just shared:

Psalm 51:9-10 (The Voice)

"Cover Your face so You will not see my sins,

**and erase my guilt from the record.
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
restore within me a sense of being brand new."**

I love this scripture because it seems that David was so humiliated by his sin that he did not even want God to see what he did. I believe that it is of utmost importance that we desire first and foremost that our hearts be pure before God. It is when you sin and it does not bother you anymore that you are really in a dangerous place. Thank God for conviction! When we are honest and humble before Him we just ask God to cleanse us of our sin, and the sin is simply washed away to be seen no more. If you begin to practice the habit of ignoring your faults and shortcomings you will sadly master being a pretender and you will not be walking close with God like you think you may be.

I can remember many years ago when I was teaching my preschool class a lesson about being cleansed from our sin. The Lord had showed me a little object lesson and to this day I love to think about this for myself and I can still remember how it seemed to really get the message through to them. I took a bowl and created mud from dirt and water before the class started. I took the children outside and we sat on the grass and I explained to them about the importance of a clean heart and when we sinned it was like our hearts were dirty. I stuck my hands into the mud and rubbed the mud all over my hands and arms. I can still see the little boys with these looks on their faces because they could not believe I was doing it. I reached for a pitcher of fresh clean water and began to run the pure water over myself. Gently it cleansed me and there was not a trace of mud on me. I told them to look at the grass and try to find the mud but it disappeared because the ground absorbed it. As the water was causing the mud to run off my arms, I spoke of sin and the cleansing power of confession of sin and forgiveness because of Jesus.

We should all desire that our hearts are totally clean and we should purpose to maintain a pure heart and sense of being brand new. All we have to do is continue to stay in His presence and humble ourselves when we make mistakes. I love how the Lord keeps things so simple for us so we can walk with Him in this sometimes complicated life.

I pray you walk close to Him today. Keep your heart clean and allow Him to speak to you about every area of your life. We serve a merciful and loving

God! God bless you.



Thursday, July 25th

"Walk By Faith and Not By Sight"

by Dona Hake

For the past few days I have been sharing about Peter stepping out of the boat and walking on the water to meet up with Jesus. As I said yesterday we need to remember that Peter did indeed walk on the water. Today I want to share with you how vital it is to stay focused on God and His Word when you step out of the "boat" and walk in faith in an area of your life. The lesson we can learn from Peter is that in a split second his focus went to the wrong thing. The wind and the waves were all there when he stepped out but he was looking at higher things and his eyes were on Jesus. Then in no time at all he fixed his eyes and ears on the wind and the waves and doubt overtook him.

As I was meditating upon keeping focus I started to think about blinders and their use on horses. There is a definite purpose and benefits to do such a thing and that is for the protection of both the horse and the rider. I would like to share some things that I found and I hope they will serve us in an interesting analogy and give us greater understanding in the realm of focus and guarding ourselves from distractions. The blinders cover the rear vision of the horse, forcing it to look only in a forward direction and keeping it on track. Farming horses can be predisposed to distractions and if they are pulling a plow or a wagon they might need blinders to stop them from losing concentration on the direction they are supposed to be headed. Race horses also need blinders to stay focused that they can run a race, stay on course and not be taken by distraction.

In light of sharing about horses and blinders I want to refer to scripture that is all about our faith. Hebrews 11:1-3 is basically summed up in a few words...We walk by faith and not by sight. Many times it is the very things that we see that seem so sure and secure yet those are the things that will hinder us the most from believing God to do the unbelievable. There are those times that we will need to purpose ourselves to look past everything in the natural and see into the Spirit in order that we can stay focused and stay in faith. God's Word can be like blinders in the sense that it keep us from leaning to our own understanding which so many times is the very thing that will bring doubt into the picture.

Let us be reminded that whenever we step out that God is there walking along side of us. As we look to His Word and refuse to be moved by what we see in the natural we will begin to see Him moving in our lives in ways we never have imagined. "...now unto Him who is ABLE to above and beyond all we dare ask or think." Ephesians 3:20

God bless you!



Wednesday, July 24th

"It's Time For Us To Step Out!"

by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about the story in the Bible where Peter stepped out of the boat to walk on the water to meet up with Jesus. I want to emphasize again for you to just think about the courage it must of taken him to get out of the boat. His question to the Lord was, "If that's you, tell me to come." and Jesus proclaimed that yes indeed it was Him. Many times we will ask the same question when we fear stepping out in something bigger than us in this life. God may be speaking to your heart to do something and your prayer has been "Lord if this is you, I will do it."

It is very important to know that when we are purposing to do God's will that we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is Him. Yet there can be those times

that it seems a bit sketchy or too big for you to grasp how it is going to fall together. Getting out of our "boats" in this life could mean different things to each of us. All of us are at different growth levels and Lord is molding and making each of us in His timing. God keeps everything simple for us to do His will in this life. All He needs is our obedience to His Word and to His voice.

I want to remind you today that Jesus is the author and finisher of **YOUR** faith. We must keep reminding ourselves of this and keep it personal. He desires to perfect all that concerns us in this life. He is the one who gives us incentive for our faith and He is the one who completes our faith. He is our example and we must look to that example if we become weak in heart from the discouragement that may come to rob our souls of hope and purpose.

Hebrews 12:2 The Voice

"Now stay focused on Jesus, who designed and perfected our faith. He endured the cross and ignored the shame of that death because He focused on the joy that was set before Him; and now He is seated beside God on the throne, a place of honor."

Getting out of the boat for you may be God speaking to you about changing to a different job, going on a mission's trip, sharing the Word of God with someone...etc. Sometimes getting out of the boat for someone may be the need for courage to face a confrontation. No matter what it is, Jesus is right there on the water with you. He has been there and done it and He will complete that thing that you desire to set your faith upon.

Philippians 3:13 Easy-to-Read Version

"Brothers and sisters, I know that I still have a long way to go. But there is one thing I do: I forget what is in the past and try as hard as I can to reach the goal before me."

Maybe today is the day that you are planning to step out of the boat and do something that requires your faith. If you know that in your heart than **it's time to STEP OUT!!!!** I encourage you to look to Jesus and stay focused upon Him. Do not dwell on the past when you tried and you were moved by the "wind and the waves" of this life. Jesus is there and He will walk with you. God bless you as you walk with Him today!



Tuesday, July 23rd

"Get Out of Your Boat"

by Dona Hake

Over the past few days I have been sharing on facing our future. Today I want to share about doing things that seem impossible. We serve a God that wants to keep our hearts challenged to live by faith. We must dare to step out and serve Him even when it looks to us like we cannot do it in our own ability. Today we will look at a wonderful account of Jesus doing the supernatural and inviting one of His disciples to join Him.

The disciples were in their boat and Jesus had told them to head to the other side because He planned to meet up with them later. Jesus was spending time in prayer as He desired to be alone with his Heavenly Father. Matthew's account of the story is as follows:

Matthew 14:25-31 (Easy to Read Version)

"Between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus' followers were still in the boat. Jesus came to them. He was walking on the water. When they saw him walking on the water, it scared them. "It's a ghost!" they said, screaming in fear. But Jesus quickly spoke to them. He said, "Don't worry! It's me! Don't be afraid." Peter said, "Lord, if that is really you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come, Peter." Then Peter left the

boat and walked on the water to Jesus. But while Peter was walking on the water, he saw the wind and the waves. He was afraid and began sinking into the water. He shouted, "Lord, save me!" Then Jesus caught Peter with his hand. He said, "Your faith is small. Why did you doubt?"

I think there are so many lessons to learn from this portion of scripture. Peter always seems to be remembered for being the dear old soul that was always sticking his foot in his mouth. When I read this story though I felt that even though the disciples were frightened as they saw someone on the water walking towards them, it was only Peter that stepped out in his heart first to find out what was going on. When he asked, "Lord, IF that's you...tell me to come." Peter was at least willing to get out of the boat. I made emphasize on the words "But while Peter was walking on the water..." Let us be reminded here that Peter was doing the exact same miracle that Jesus was. So many read this and place emphasis that he was moved by the wind and the waves and he sunk. Let us focus on the fact that Peter WAS walking on the water. Even if it was only a few steps, he was walking on the water. I find it interesting as well that he was so close to Jesus that all Jesus had to do was reach out and grab his hand.

I want to challenge your heart with this story. Many times Jesus is calling us out of our "boats" and they are our comfort zones. He is calling us to cry out for courage to get out of our comfort zone and walk in a whole different realm. This realm or new task He may be calling you to walk in may challenge your faith like never before. Peter was walking in the miracle yet his reasoning made him sink. Many times it is when you are closest to victory that the devil will try to distract you with anything that will tempt you to reason away your faith. Think about it...simple reasoning of what his eyes saw caused him to go down.

I will leave you with this scripture:

Proverbs 3:5 (NASB)

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding."

As we trust Him, He will give us all that we need to do that which He desires to accomplish in us. We serve a God that is always an arm's reach away from us so let us trust in Him and not be moved by what we see!



Monday, July 22nd

"Entrusting Your Future to Him"

by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about the seasons in our lives. Some seasons are longer than others. Some come with laughter, growth and your heart is sure that you are in the right place. Yet there are some seasons in life that bring pain and even fear if we feel uncertainty about what is going on about us. We must see our future in faith and not allow our hearts to be robbed of the joy of today because we worry about our tomorrows.

I can remember a particular time in my life when as a mother my heart was being tempted to fear and worry. I can still remember the day our youngest son came to us and shared that he felt it to be the will of God that he serve his country. I can still remember how I was taken so off guard. I wanted to support his decision, after all he was an adult and he was feeling a change of direction in his life. As time passed and it drew closer to him leaving for boot camp my husband and I both experienced a peace and I thank God for that. I must admit though I still would be tempted to worry.

Whenever we ever encounter things for the first time it can be very challenging to our minds yet we must remind ourselves that it is God that knows our future and He desires that we put all our trust in Him.

I can remember as if it were yesterday that I was at the mall shopping and I was just passing time and kind of preoccupied with our son being gone. I knew in a matter of weeks our son would be done boot camp and from there he would have a little bit of time before a deployment. There would be times I would battle not feeling as focused because of the worry that was trying to grip my heart. I

would continue to talk to the Lord about it and He beautifully ministered to me right in the mall. As I was walking through a store I passed a decorative sign and it stopped me dead in my tracks. It said:

***"The best thing about the future
is that it comes one day at a time."***

I opened my pocketbook up and got my money out because I just had to have it. That sign spoke volumes to my heart. I cannot tell you how many days I would read that and it would remind me to concern myself only with the day I was living in. I was reminded not to wonder what was in my tomorrow but to let it in the hands of God. I am still amazed how quickly his time serving his country went.

To this day that sign hangs in the one room of my home and it continues to minister to my heart. I can testify that God's hand was on our son everyday that he was gone whether he was on American soil or in Iraq. Entrusting ourselves to Him and entrusting to Him our future, this is what it is to live for Him. Don't worry about tomorrow but place tomorrow into His hands. I encourage you today that if your heart is fretting about your future...just stop...and give it to Jesus. God bless you as you serve Him today and know that He has all of your tomorrows in His hands.



Sunday July 21st

"A Season For Everything"

by Dona Hake

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (AMP)

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven.

A few months ago I had mentioned how I took our granddaughters past a freshly plowed field of corn that was planted. Our oldest granddaughter, Marissa has really been appreciating the value of what rain and sunshine has done for that field of corn. Every week I diligently drive by it and she gets so excited to see how the corn is getting so big! Last week I was able to slow up just enough that she could observe the little ears of corn starting to develop and it was such joy watching her little face light up as she observed the fruit of the sun and rain.

There are areas that do not get to enjoy all four seasons as we do here in Pennsylvania. If you know me well you know that my absolute favorite is the fall. My second is the winter and I have been thinking about how wonderful it would be if we could just have a snow day to interfere with all this extreme heat we have been experiencing. I know too well that this very hot season is not over and I must just make the most of it. Yet you may be able to identify with this in light of times you have walked through "seasons" in your own life. You just wanted them to end, yet you knew that the season you were in was not yet over, and you just had to hang on. Today I want to encourage your heart to hang in there in the midst of those unpleasant seasons in which we all face.

We too must remind ourselves that in this life there will be a variety of "seasons" in which we love, those in which we grow, times of happiness, times of hardship and times of sadness. All of these seasons come to us and within them we can use them as opportunity of growth. Many times people experience seasons of pain or where things seem to be dry and at a stand still. It would not be reality for us to try to wish these seasons away. As we face seasons in which there may be trials and frustration we can hold fast that within that season God has given us all the power we need to grow in spite of it and we can be overcomers as we walk through it.

John 16:33 (AMP)

" I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]"

Let us remind ourselves that seasons come and seasons go. For every matter, for every purpose there is a time for it to begin and a time for it to end. From the time it begins let us see the hand of God at work within our lives. Allow Him to show you His timing and be willing to submit to His wisdom and direction in your life. May God bless you.



Saturday, July 20th

Do Not Focus On Other's Faults

by Dona Hake

I have been sharing on knowing what is in your heart. Our heart speaks alot and we must be careful to tend to our hearts for as the Word of God says "from it proceed the issues of life." I find it sad if an individual occupies themselves with the faults of others. Many times these peoples have particular standards that they have mastered therefore they think everyone around them should do the same.

You can usually tell when a person has a critical spirit because their words give them away. They are inclined to find fault or to judge with severity, often too readily. They just seem to be occupied with or skilled in criticism. Sad thought isn't it...to be skilled in criticism? Yet those same individuals do not see the smallest of faults that they need to deal with. The reason for this many times is that it makes one feel better if you set yourself above another by putting them down with the faults you see. This is not seeing people the way God sees them. Let us look at the scripture from Matthew 7 that addresses this issue:

Matthew 7:3-4 (Amplified)

" Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother's eye but do not become aware of and consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, Let me get the tiny particle out of your eye, when there is the beam of timber in your own eye?"

As I meditated upon this verse I used to think that the **beam** in the critical one's eye was that he had a bigger fault than the one with the small particle. Really the **beam** is the sin of occupying oneself with another's problem. Another aspect of viewing what the **beam** is that you are choosing to view people in a way **God would NEVER** view them. I believe God sees this as big because it is not our business but God's business to deal with the heart of another. Yes, there may be times that God is going to prompt you by the Holy Spirit to maybe help someone. There may also be times that when you observe an individual's problem that God is going to speak to you to pray and that is it!

An individual with a critical spirit will always have a hard time keeping their mouth shut about what they see because they lack in humility. It is so sad to me to see people handle criticism as if God is "showing" them something in Spirit. The source of a critical person is pride and God detests any pride in us.

Today I encourage you to guard your heart when you are tempted to view someone in a critical manner. Look at them and make a decision to pray for them. As you pray for them the Holy Spirit can attempt to deal with them. Pray that individuals that bear a beam in their eye would have people cross their path that they would be receptive to. The most important thing we can do when someone is being critical toward us is purpose to hold fast to God's love that He can keep our hearts right.

God bless you and have a wonderful day!



Friday, July 19th

"But God Sees Your Heart"

by Dona Hake

I have been sharing about seeing what our hearts reflect. Our heart will directly reflect who you are and what you believe. Over the past few days I have been sharing about being honest with ourselves that we can continue to grow as God desires to see us grow. Today I would like you to read with the a portion of scripture about how God sees:

1 Samuel 16:7(ERV)

"... God doesn't look at what people see. People judge by what is on the outside, but the Lord looks at the heart."

and the Voice translation:

1 Samuel 16:7 (VOICE)

"... for the Eternal One does not pay attention to what humans value. Humans only care about the external appearance, but the Eternal considers the inner character."

Today I want you to consider seeing yourself seeing as God sees. Many times we can be guilty of judging a person or situation by the outward appearance. We stop at that and this is so very wrong. The old saying, "Don't judge a book by it's cover." is so very true. Many times we do not give people a chance because of being guilty of this.

I believe as we pray diligently and ask God for His wisdom into every matter He will begin to open our eyes and impart His sight to us. I find it so sad that many times we fall short of being merciful and forgiving because we are just being wise in our own eyes in our judgements of others. Let us be cautious in this matter as we encounter people. Let us seek to see as God sees.

I pray today that you will look to Him and let His mind and the way He sees things rule in your life. I believe as we do this we will begin to see ourselves grow in God's mercy and His forgiveness like never before. So as we see as He sees I believe He will unfold to us the true heart of others and what their inner

character is speaking. Have a blessed day as you serve Him!



Thursday, July 18th

"The Heart Honestly Speaks"

by Dona Hake

Today we will look at honesty again. I shared yesterday that I had a scripture relative to this and today I am going to share it with you.

**Proverbs 27:19 (AMP)
"As in water face answers to
and reflects face, so the
heart of man to man."**

I find this scripture very interesting and it provokes me to think about me and my heart. If I were to stand over a crystal clear pond and look in, my reflection answers back at me or in other words I see myself. When you stand in front of a mirror you can not stand there and say, "this is not me!" Our reflections are speaking to us and telling us exactly what we look like. So it is that my heart speaks of who I am. I know myself by my heart and God sees and knows my heart as well.

As I shared yesterday there may be times as you see your reflection in a mirror that you proceed to make adjustments...make up and hair for the girls and the guys may need to shave and comb to make them most presentable. Whatever you do to make yourself look the best is all based on your judgement. Sometimes people look in the mirror and may just have a "I really do not care what I look like" attitude and they do nothing. Again, so it is with the

heart. It is a very sad thing if one sees what the spiritual condition of their heart is and they just really do not care to make adjustments. I read a fun quote the other day. and it made me grin yet there was a ton of truth in it. It said, . "If only we spent as much time expanding our minds as we do trying to shrink our bodies...." I find it so sad that people are so obsessed with their outward appearance and they are not attending to the condition of their heart. True beauty and life flow from the inward man or woman.

James 1:22-26

Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

"Do what God's teaching says; don't just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves. Hearing God's teaching and doing nothing is like looking at your face in the mirror and doing nothing about what you saw. You go away and immediately forget how bad you looked. But when you look into God's perfect law that sets people free, pay attention to it. If you do what it says, you will have God's blessing. Never just listen to his teaching and forget what you heard."

Let me emphasize the one verse...

"When you ONLY SIT AND LISTEN, you are fooling yourselves..."

Many people go to church and they may hear the Word, and that is it...they only hear it. They may "see" themselves in need of what they have heard and do nothing more than walk away exclaiming that they have been in church and may go as far as to exclaim that they love to hear the Word. You see whenever you sit before the Lord in your personal time or you go to church and hear the Word, this is the time in which you can see where your heart is at. There may be times that your heart is pricked by the Word of God and you know God is dealing with you, and this is truly a good thing. I tell you my friend it is worth more than anything in this world to act on that Word and allow God to deal with you. Many times as we sit and hear the Word our heart is being challenged because it is seeing itself in the face of the Almighty God. As long as we have life and breath in us God wants to continue to mold us, prune us, and be at work in our hearts so that we can serve Him in a mighty way and prosper in all that we put our hand to.

I encourage you to allow the Lord to show you how He sees your

heart. Sometimes He shows us things in bits and pieces because He knows that is all we can handle. That is okay...be obedient to do what He says to do with what He has shown you. Be honest with yourself. Do not deceive yourself and walk away from that which you see in His presence. God is a good God and He has your best interest at His heart. God bless you as you serve Him in obedience.



Wednesday, July 17th

"Let's Be Honest With Ourselves"

by Dona Hake

I would venture to say that all of us look in the mirror first thing in the morning. It is then that we all probably look a bit groggy, our hair is a mess and for us ladies...we are reaching for our favorite creams and make up. I thank God for my mirror because without I would not know what needs attention. Some days some things need more attention than others. The full length mirrors are the best though because you can see it all. Some of you are probably thinking...Ugh!!!!...but that is okay because we need to take care of what we can in the best way we are able to. The point I want to make is that we all have need to make sure our appearance is at it's best and we have done all that we can to be presentable before we leave our home.

I recently read a little comment kind of thing on Facebook and it made me laugh because it was so absolutely true and it made me giggle. It was something to the effect that it is always when you leave the house with no makeup and your hair looks a mess that this is when you see someone you have not seen in a long time and that is the impression of who you are. You apologize with logical explanations of why you look the way you do and not matter how much they maybe laugh it off or they tell you how wonderful you look...they walk away with

their impression. I find it laughable because I have had it happen many times but yet this somewhat reveals a point I want to make today. We should never judge by outward appearances. Many times we see or hear things and our minds run wildly with opinions and we just need to stop. Let's be honest with ourselves how we view people at times and how we see ourselves!

I have been guilty many times of allowing my mind to wonder why an individual might have quietly walked by me after I said "hello" and they did not respond. You never know if someone is dealing with something and they simply did not hear you or they had something heavy on their minds or someone just said something cruel to them and they were preoccupied with how something just affected them.

Many times we judge people's outward actions by how we judge ourselves. If you are hard on yourself in a particular area you may find that to be absolutely needful because of a conviction you received. As an example let us say you are an individual that easily lets things become disorganized and junky around you. The day has come where you have had enough and you begin to get a revelation of how to declutter your home, your office, etc... Sometimes the areas in which you are being dealt with are strictly for you and for **YOU ALONE**.

When God begins to awaken an area in your life in which He is helping you to judge and correct yourself it does not give you a license to begin correcting others in that area. We need to be careful that we do not read into our observations and think that it is God speaking to us to correct others around us. This also applies as well to areas where God is dealing with you personally in your spiritual walk. If you begin to observe faults in others that God is dealing with you this is by no means your right of way to address them. **Always keep your mind open to God and your mouth closed** until He says that you are allowed to speak into anyone's life. Also that individual must be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit and we must know that we are in God's timing whenever we share truth with others relative to a conviction of your own.

Today's devotional is some food for thought for a scripture that I will be referring to over the next few days. I am not going to tell you what that particular scripture is either because I want you to just focus on what I just shared today to prepare your heart. I do hope your day is blessed. Remember to stay focused on God and God alone. Know that He is at work in you and He gives you all the grace you need to live one day at a time. God bless you!



Tuesday, July 16th

"Perfect Love Casts Out Fear"

by Dona Hake

As believers in the Lord we know to acknowledge and continue to confess the truth that His perfect love will always cast out fear yet at times when fear strikes our hearts we can be tempted to be shaken. We know that He walks beside of us yet when fear knocks on the door of our hearts we may feel threatened, helpless and scared.

Sometimes we just need to calm ourselves as we cry out in prayer and return to the truth we know to be true. We indeed know and believe He is with us so as we walk through any trial He holds our hand tightly and assures us that He will take care of us. As we quiet ourselves in His presence we begin to receive the instruction of what we need to do and in His time we see the manifestation of our prayers. Sometimes after we get through circumstances we take a deep breath in the Spirit and ask ourselves why were we so afraid? In light of this let us look at I John 4:18 from the Amplified version:

"There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love [a]turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear [b]brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection]."

Last week I received a little bit better revelation of this scripture as I took our German Shepherd to the vet. As I have said many times before it seems the Lord speaks to me in the everyday happenings of my life and I love it. So today I feel I got a better look at fear verses love through the eyes of my

dog. She is a strong dog, very protective, and as I have said, I know she would lay down her life for me yet she is terrified when she has to go to the vet.

Today I walked her through the office of the vet and the nurse kindly greeted Aasha but she immediately did an about face and pulled me right back out the door. With every bit of strength I had and the use of her choker, I had to drag this 85 pound bundle of fur back into the doctor's office. I had her there for a shot and a nail trim, but for her it was walking into the fear of the unknown! There is one particular vet technician that is so calm, sweet and loving and she totally understands how to handle the German Shepherd breed. She sweetly calmed Aasha and it wasn't long that she was at peace. Aasha totally submitted to this woman yet she kept her eyes locked on me. All her fear seemed to leave as long as she could see me. My presence helped dispel her fears. After the exam, shots and nail trim, it was interesting observing her leaving the doctors office. She pranced out the door looking like, "hey, that wasn't so bad, when can we do this again?" I might also mention that I gave a sigh of relief that I got through it with her and it all turned out okay!

I want to refer back to the scripture in light of this little story. "Perfect love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror!" Next time fear knocks on the "door" of your heart try to remember to keep your eyes on Him and visualize yourself experiencing the power of His love and presence making every trace of fear and terror leave you. As you remind yourself of His love for you it is almost like seeing that "door" where fear has tried to enter being kicked open with God's love. Fear and torment must obey and leave the premises of your mind and soul in Jesus Name.

I pray that this has blessed you. I know I was truly blessed in my heart just meditating on what I learned in the whole experience. You just never know when the Lord is going to take an everyday experience and turn it into something that helps you understand Him in a greater way. God bless you!

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**Monday, July 15th**

**"As Iron Sharpens Iron..."**

by Dona Hake

***Proverbs 27:17 (The Voice)***

***" In the same way that iron sharpens iron, a person sharpens the character of his friend."***

I love this scripture and I love the challenge it brings. I am sure everyone reading this has a friend or maybe you have many friends. Sometimes it is sad that some friendships are very shallow because it is nothing more than just doing things with each other rather than a real relationship. A true friend will keep their eye on you and they will get to know your heart. They will be able to observe by a mere, slight change on your face that something is troubling you. In the event you fail or make a mistake, a true friend will never leave you. A true friendship withstands much hardship and will continue to grow in the midst of it. An individual that loves their friend dearly will desire to share their personal strengths and also draw from the strengths of their friend.

As iron sharpens iron you will purpose to sharpen the countenance and character of your friend. I think in any friendship you will find your friend may be stronger in an area than you are not and there are areas in which you are strong and they are not. If we view our friends in light of this and see it as a positive thing it will save a lot of grief. Many times what happens is two people may become irritated with another's weakness or jealous of their strengths. You have heard the old saying, "that person just rubs me the wrong way sometimes." Well, as I think about this scripture we can probably see even those that are closest to us can rub us the wrong way at times. We could probably see this "rubbing" as part of the sharpening process if we allow it. In those times of our friendship being tested we have a choice to make if we want our friendships to continue to grow. Whenever you have a friendship that you know has been ordained of God you must always purpose to walk in love. As we walk in His love we will be longsuffering and forgiving. We will endure and we will pray for that individual and we will be seeking the voice of the Holy Spirit as to what we are to do or say.

We need to value friends that we have that have stuck by us and have prayed for us in our times of weakness. Thank God for those friends that have not walked away from me when they saw my faults and they purposed to love me instead. We should be so thankful for those friends that love us enough to

speaking God's Word even when we did not want to hear it. Many times our mind and emotions may not want to hear the truth but our hearts should be rejoicing at the voice of godly counsel. We must value it and allow it to minister to us that we can be sharpened by it both in character and in countenance.

**Proverbs 27:9**

***"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."***

I just want to mention too that a good friend will always purpose to see your heart. Sometimes they may see that your heart is not right and you need to repent. We are very rich to have friends that will not compromise the truth they know and they are obedient to confront us in our time of need. Sometimes truth hurts but it is that very truth that will make us stronger than before if we only humble ourselves, listen to it and act upon it.

Today I pray that you are challenged in seeking Him to be a good friend that will always be looking for ways to sharpen those that God has put in your life. I pray that you will recognize strengths in your friends that you have overlooked and draw upon their wisdom that you too can grow in areas that you are weak. Know that God places people in our lives for reasons. I encourage you to be careful not to just draw toward those that are just like you. Be a friend to those that God appoints you to. You will find your obedience in that will be such a blessing to God and to you as well. God bless you!



**Sunday, July 14th**

**"A Friend Loves At All Times"**

by Dona Hake

Our conviction about the truth we hear and receive will truly make us who we are. It will cause us to be unmovable no matter what the circumstances. You will be able to stand in faith because you live and move and have all of your being in Him. It is vital to live by the truth you have believed in every aspect of your life.

Today I would like to share about being a friend that clings to truth uncompromisingly. We need to desire to be the friend that will be truthful and honest at all times. Many times people are very loyal in their relationships and that is a good thing although you must first and foremost be loyal to the truth. Many times an individual is so loyal in a friendship that they fear to speak up and speak truth for fear of losing that relationship.

Today I want to share a quote that I feel is fitting with what I have been sharing about truth.

***"This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man."  
-Shakespeare-Hamlet***

In a friendship the truth in your heart can never be compromised. If you know something to be true in your heart and you do not stand by it, your conscience will make you miserable and to be quite honest...that is a warning that you better heed to. It is like the pain in your body that is speaking on it's behalf letting you know something is wrong. Never water down the truth in you just for the sake of being accepted by someone. I shared with you the other day a quote, "That which you compromise to keep you will ultimately lose." It is a sad thing when one allows a conviction to fall by the wayside just so they can be part of the fun they may feel they are missing. When you live by the truth in your heart that truth will rule your decision making. That truth will be the standard that you live by and you will make wise choices because of that truth.

If you are a friend that desires to be a godly friend you should always seek to speak truth and honestly in a matter. Many times people will view a good friend as someone they merely vent to and then draw sympathy from them. A true friend will speak of the truths that they know that will be of help to you in your situation. That truth will be boldly spoken even if it hurts. The following are two different translations of

***Proverbs 27:6***

***The Voice***

***"Wounds inflicted by the correction of a friend prove he is faithful;  
the abundant kisses of an enemy show his lies."***

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

***"You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice."***

Let me say it this way...many times when we are hurting we can be tempted to want to hear the easy way out of something. Be very cautious if in the midst of a problem you look for people to just vent to and not want to hear good counsel. Something is very wrong if you do not want to hear good counsel in the midst of your problem. Many times that which we need to hear is the hardest to swallow but so are some of those expensive vitamin pills we take! They may be hard going down but the benefits and blessing are worth it all.

I have had encounters with individuals that have sought my counsel and asked me what I have thought and afterwards they said my words "hurt." Proverbs 27:6 says it plainly that wounds inflicted by the correction of a friend prove that he is faithful. Seems contradictory I guess to some but really a good friend will not go against their heart when asked their opinion. That is what being true to yourself is all about.

Today I encourage you to think about the kind of friend you are. Are you willing to speak the truth even if it hurts? I pray that this has given you some food for good thought in this area. God bless you as you serve Him today.



**Saturday, July 13th**

**"Seek His Truth Wholeheartedly"**

by Dona Hake

God has given us the the living Word of God to live by. Our Bibles are full of writings and witnesses of His truth. We have much to continue to learn from His Word no matter how long we have been Christians. There is truth in His Word to apply to any given situation that we face in this life. It is our basis to make every decision and we need not be left in a place of indecisiveness in any given situation we face. Many times we may need to wait upon the Lord for an answer to a prayer in our heart, but deep down we can experience assurance in knowing that His truth never fails.

Today I want to share how truth can define who you are if you seek it wholeheartedly. The world is looking for truth like never before. We must live in such a way that we are living witnesses of the one true and living God. In addition to living truth before a world of those that do not know Him, we need to be living examples among those younger than us in the faith. Therefore, we as believers need to commit ourselves to know that we are walking in the truth that we know that we can be a living testimony of His Word.

The world is putting such a pressure and demand especially on our young people. It is trying to mold their minds to adapt so they can be "cool." They are being convinced that this should be all that they think about until they are consumed with it. Our billboards give visuals to men and women and we can be tempted to define who we are by those visuals. How sad it is that these things have so much power that one tries to define themselves by their demands.

If we allow anything or anyone else to define us we lose our ability to grow genuinely and discover what the Lord has for us as an individual. When we permit such things to define us we are unable to really discern right from wrong. Confusion will run through your mind over the simplest of problems and decision making. We will be tossed about with every wind of change or newest thing which presents itself as beauty, success or an answer to an age old problem.

We need to put our foot down with ourselves and decide to let God define who we are according to His Word and His standards. It is as we seek His truth with every fiber of our being that we will walk in total freedom of the dictates of this world. What freedom to know we are allowing Him to mold us into what He sees as a success and not what the world defines as success.

As you desire truth in your inner being and you really mean business, God is going to begin to challenge you to change some things. When you continue in His Word and you receive greater revelation, God will begin to challenge you to change because we all need to continue to change and grow in the truth we know. There is no need to fret because God will work in you and it is His good pleasure to work in you and bring His will to pass in your life.

***Philippians 2:13 (AMP)***

***"[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while [a]effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and [b]delight."***

We can rest assured that as God is at work in us He will energize within us the desire to do what it takes to make any changes needed. I encourage you today to look to God's truth wholeheartedly in everything you put your hand to. He is faithful and well able to cause your hand to prosper and you will live in the freedom of being who God created you to be! God bless you.

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Friday, July 12th

**"Seeing God's Truth Through the Eyes of a Child"**

Yesterday as I shared upon the word *truth*, the following is one thing that I want to emphasize with you as I begin today's devotional.

**"As believers we should be basing and  
living our lives on  
convictions of the truth we know."**

I thought it would be good to look up what the dictionary says that the word "truth" means. I love looking closely at words because there is so much behind one word. Truth defined:

**\*conformity with fact or reality; verity: the truth of a statement.**

**\*a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like:  
mathematical truths.**

**\*the state or character of being true.**

**\*actuality or actual existence.**

In order for us to base our lives on the Word of God and live according to it uncompromisingly there can be no question in our hearts about it. God's Word must be a foundation of all that proceeds from us.

**Acts 17:28 (KJV)**

**"For in him we live, and move, and have our being;..." and another translation simply states that "It is through him that we are able to live, to do what we do, and to be who we are."**

When we come to the place and stay at this place of this simple yet profound truth much of our questioning will be clear up. I have seen many people trying to rationalize the truth of God's wonders. The Creator's beautiful handiwork cannot just be accepted by the one that feels he has to figure it all out. These are the individuals that arrive at the place where they will one day try to prove that 2+2 does not equal 4 anymore.

God desires us to be a people that simply believe Him to be true no matter how we feel about it. I know that God welcomes our questions that proceed from lack of understand but we must stay humble as we inquire of Him. We live in a world in which those that are trying to figure a great God out with their intelligence rather than simple faith in Him. Jesus spoke of a child's faith and He desires that we remain that way that we may continue in the truth of His kingdom.

**Luke 18:16 (VOICE)**

**" Let the little children come to Me. Never hinder them! Don't you realize—the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children?"**

The Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children! I often walk away from a day with my granddaughters or teaching my preschool class and feel totally exhausted yet energized. Never makes sense to me yet I totally get it. I always tell my husband that hanging out with little children just bring fresh energy back to us that the responsibilities and cares of this world drains us of. I am not talking about physical energy because I am usually exhausted but yet my soul is invigorated by their innocence, their questions, their remarks as they see things. I see their minds as fresh little canvases in which we paint as we answer their many questions. As we respond to them we are molding their beliefs and who they are. We must be so careful that we handle ourselves with the consistency of God and His Word before our precious children for they are looking to us for the truth more than you realize. So it is that as we keep our minds as fresh canvases as we look into God's Word that His truth will continue to mold us into who we are. As we apply God's Word to every area of our lives we are continuing in paint that canvas of our minds with the beauty of His truth.

Whether you are reading this first thing in the morning or not, look to the Lord and ask Him to get rid of thinking that has hindered your mind from receiving His truth. God wants us to renew our minds in His Word according to to Romans 12:-1-2 so that we can do all that is good and right in His will. If we are allowing

opinions or wrong thinking to preside in our minds the truth of God's Word will always be challenged within you. Live out God's truth today as you serve Him and share it with all around you in word and in deed. God bless you as you live and move in the truth of His Word today!



**Thursday, July 11th**

**"Living By Truth"**

by Dona Hake

Today I want to share my heart about maintaining a life that is truthful, honest and upright before the Lord and before man. God is looking for hearts that are pure toward Him. One very important key in maintaining a heart that is pure and upright is the heart that is determined not to compromise the truth that has become real to you. It is as we renew our minds to truth that we will become transformed by God's Word.

**Romans 12:2 (Easy to Read Translation)"Don't change yourselves to be like the people of this world, but let God change you inside with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to understand and accept what God wants for you. You will be able to know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect."**

You may have heard people speak especially of young people that they don't even know who they are let alone know what they are to do with their lives. I can honestly say I felt clueless who I was and why I was even here on this earth until the day I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. It was not like I had all kinds of answers and direction overnight but I felt like my life had new meaning, purpose and I was free to live like I never lived before. As we open our hearts and minds to truth you will always experience an affirmation in your heart from Him because He is at work and He is molding you into someone very special for a very special purpose in this life.

As believers we should be basing and living our lives on convictions of the truth we know. God shows us how to live and handle those convictions before others. I can guarantee you that your convictions will be challenged and this is when people will really see what you are made of. I can remember how the job I worked at as a young person and how my attitudes were transformed because I accepted the Lord Jesus. There were many individuals that I worked with that were taken back as I began to exhibit new behavior and walk in certain convictions. I think the biggest thing I learned even as a young believer that it is absolutely vital that you are surrounding yourself with good counsel and change up the friendships in your life. I also valued reading my Bible, praying and believing that the Lord would give me the wisdom in how to handle myself as a believer among those that did not believe.

As believers we need to maintain the strength of our convictions and stand by them. There can and must be no room for compromise. I heard a wise man once say "That what you compromise to keep you will ultimately lose." Everything we do, every decision we make and every word we speak should proceed from a heart that desires truth and only truth. As you embrace this desire, I believe that if you are even a bit off course that the Spirit of the Lord will cause lack of peace in your heart to warn you that you are straying from your conviction in any particular area. We must learn to be sensitive to these warning signs because they will keep us from mistakes and the consequences of them.

I look forward to expounding more on Friday about the importance of truth and strong convictions in the life of a believer. God bless you as you look to Him and serve Him in Spirit and in truth.

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Wednesday, July 10th

"Cause Me To Hear Your Lovingkindness Lord!"

by Dona Hake

As a young believer of eighteen years of age my youth group assignment was to memorize a scripture and recite it before the group. The following along with one other remains to be one of my two favorite scriptures because they have such personal meaning to me.

Psalm 143:8

King James Version (KJV)

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

I love this because it is a prayer for me. Many times you awaken and the "voices" aka thoughts go off in your head and you become preoccupied with way too much before you even get the chance to greet the Lord. I find this to be a good scripture to go asleep upon and as I awaken I am reminded that He is ready to speak.

We have our plans and obligations of the day but we must always be careful that we are listening as to know the way in which to walk. The Easy to Read version says part of the verse this way, "I trust you. Show me what I should do. I put my life in your hands!" I find the "Put you life in His hands." to have become a mere cliché and this is so sad. When you trust someone to do something important for you that you cannot do, do you ask an irresponsible person to do it? Of course not! We all know that our Creator and the One that sent His Son for us is well able to deal with our affairs, therefore we entrust Him with all that concerns us. When I am overwhelmed I sometimes have to remind myself that it will be okay because the Creator and Heavens and Earth certainly can unfold a plan for my day and all that it encompasses.

I know I have probably said this a handful of times but I will say it again and that is there is not one thing no matter how big or small that God is not interested in. He wants to be in all of our day and in every matter we are dealing with. Many times we get so engrossed in what we are doing that we are clueless how we allow ourselves to be swept into the day in our own ability. Sometimes it is not until things seem to start going downhill that somewhere along the line we stopped hearing His voice and instruction. Remember more times than not He comes in a sweet whisper in your spirit and He will never push nor be obnoxious. It is our responsibility to pause throughout the day as much as possible and just listen to His gentle voice.

I pray that you will hear Him today and know His faithfulness better than you did yesterday. I can testify that it is early morning and I have already experienced His faithfulness and He has been my helper just to create this devotional! Love Him with all our spirit, soul and body and remember to carefully listen as you lift your soul to Him. God bless you!

***** ♥ *****

Tuesday, July 9th

"We Shall Flourish"

Psalm 92:13-15

Amplified Bible (AMP)

"Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God.

[Growing in grace] they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap [of spiritual vitality] and [rich in the] verdure [of trust, love, and contentment].

[They are living memorials] to show that the Lord is upright and faithful to His promises; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

What a beautiful scripture this is to get us to envision ourselves abounding in the will and work of the Lord. As we commit our lives to Him and we uncompromisingly walk in His ways our old man's ways will begin to no longer have a hold on us. As our delight and desires become consumed with pleasing Him we will meditate upon His Word day and night. As a result of our desire to be steadfast we are promised that our lives will become steady and we will not be easily uprooted.

Psalm 1:3 says "And he shall be like a tree firmly planted [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to

maturity]."

It is vital that we have vision for ourselves that as we continue to grow older in this life that we are also continuing to grow spiritually as we as continuing to grow in humility. In Psalm 92:14 it states that as we continue to grow in grace we will still bring forth fruit in our old age, full of sap (spiritual vitality) and continuing to flourish. I find it so sad that many as they grow old they do not continue to have vision to be successful in everything they do up till the moment they take their very last breath. For everything we desire in this life you must have vision for it. You must envision yourself doing that which you want. You must dream about it and expect it to come to pass! It must be something that you are willing to pay the price for.

You may have days you wake up and you do not feel like doing the things you know you are to do. In those times we must call upon God for His grace and strength that we can have the energy to fulfill His purposes. I love the fact that as we do this we can become living memorials to people around us that our God is upright, faithful, and that He is a living God. What memorial are you leaving people after they encounter you. Do your words challenge and encourage their hearts. Does your life exhibit that you serve a God that is upright and faithful to His promises? I hope so because God truly wants to exhibit that in us and through us.

Today as you meet your day I encourage you to see yourself flourishing in those things that He has told you to do no matter how impossible they may seem to you. As I shared yesterday we must trust and obey for there's no other way!!! God is good and He is faithful to complete a good work in you. I pray your day is blessed in your pursuit to flourish in Him!

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**Monday, July 8th**

**"Trust and Obey"**

by Dona Hake

**"...Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. "**

**Chorus to hymn "Trust & Obey" by John H. Sammis, 1846-1919**

This is a very simple chorus to a very old hymn. I can still remember as a little girl when my grandparents would pick me up for Sunday school and I would dread sometimes going to church. I would walk into the room and all the elementary children would gather to sing before we broke up into separate age groups. I can still see the face of the gentlemen that would stand in front and lead all of us in this chorus. I was not raised in a godly home but people like this were godly examples that I was exposed to. His face would glow as he sang with all the children. It would intrigue me as I sang along. Some of these songs are just precious to me because they call to my remembrance a time in my life that He was not in my heart yet. It makes me so thankful to know that because I accepted Him that He forever abides within me. So I continue to trust and obey Him. Sometimes it is easier than others.

Recently I have been thinking about a particular time that I felt so helpless as I was thrown into the hands of my faithful GPS after a long day of shooting. I was photographing a wedding in Gap, PA and I would have never found this place without the help of my GPS. It got me to my bride and her bridesmaids promptly for the big day. I always let a sigh of relief after I arrive promptly in an unfamiliar location. As I said the day was extremely long, and now I was faced almost an hour of driving home. I was shooting for about eleven hours and when I went to leave I was totally exhausted mentally as well as physically. After I loaded all equipment in my car to head back home there were many things that were different. It was raining, pitch dark and on top it was very foggy. I turned on the GPS and just put myself into its hands and believed it would get me home.

For some weird reason the GPS took me home a totally different way than how I went. I was a bit on edge because driving conditions because of the fog were really bad and visibility was not good. After driving for about forty minutes I was growing very alarmed because there were absolutely no road signs. It was nothing but corn fields for miles and miles. I decided to call my husband because I was really getting into anxiety. I told him I had absolutely no clue where I was and he inquired if I had seen any route number signs and strangely enough at that point there were still none to be seen. All I can remember was suddenly my cell phone signal was cut off. Yes, I was getting scared because I

was beginning to imagine all the "what ifs" ...what if I had a flat tire, what if I ran out of gas...ect... I finally got a grip on myself and prayed and just got my peace back. I can remember thinking that I did not care how dark it was, whether there were signs or not, I was going to just do what the GPS said and believe it was going to be okay. I felt a great peace come over me and after about 20 minutes I finally came to a familiar route number sign and I knew I was on the right path. My cell signal was back and I was able to let my husband know I was on the right path.

I was so upset with my GPS thinking and wondering why did it take me that way? After a long day I really did not need this grief. Yet many times in our Christian walk we experience the same thing as God directs us. The path can seem confusing and without an end yet we know deep down He knows what He is doing. Sometimes it seems like there is no end to the tunnel or light up ahead depending on the trial or situation we are walking through. The direction the Lord is taking you may be going totally against your comfort zone and you are screaming in your heart for it to be over. It is times like this that we are tested and we must entrust everything to Him. Sometimes we find out what we are really made of when all our "crutches" are taken away.

I can remember a wonderful Bible teacher, Malcom Smith, saying "many times the inconveniences of this life are simply God's favor upon us." Those delays that make us anxious that we are going to be late are simply keeping us safe and from harm. That evening after the wedding I wondered if I was taken a different way because driving conditions were so dangerous and it was just a safer way home. Sometimes that things that takes longest are simply the exact way God wants to do it. Sometimes situations like this we just never know why it went the way it did. So today I encourage you to "trust and obey for there's no other way!" God bless you!

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Sunday, July 7th

"Your Life Has a Purpose"

by Dona Hake

When is the last time someone told you that you were one of a kind? Each person possesses their right to their very own finger prints and there is not another one like it. I find that so amazing because our God is so amazing. Today I want you to know that you are special and God has a special plan and purpose for you while you are here on this earth.

Many times individuals struggle with why they are here and what are they to do with their life. As people begin to age they may look back on their lives and they need to feel that they have made an impact on someone's life or they desire to know that they have done great accomplishments. Only God can bring out of us all they He created us to be! It is so important to understand that God knew you before your mother gave birth to you. Every stitch and fiber of your being He uniquely knitted together as He was forming your body. Within you He has placed gifts and talents that are an expression of Him. He knew you before you even took your first breath.

Psalm 139:13-15

Amplified Bible (AMP)

"For You did form my inward parts; You did knit me together in my mother's womb.

I will confess and praise You for You are fearful and wonderful and for the awful wonder of my birth! Wonderful are Your works, and that my inner self knows right well.

My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth [a region of darkness and mystery]."

We need to confess and praise Him for how wonderfully He fashioned us for this life. Deep inside you there may be something that needs birthed. It may be a

gift, calling, or some type of creativity that is waiting for it's awakening. I love how verse fifteen says that we were curiously wrought as if embroidered with various colors. I have never embroidered but I have always felt it to look as if it was a tedious craft. So it was with us as we were being formed within our mother's womb. He gave great thought to every part of you and how He fashioned you for the work of your life.

Next time you feel tempted to buy the lie that you have no purpose or you judge yourself as a failure I encourage you to stop and remember that the hand of a loving God formed you for a time and a purpose for such a time as this. As you walk with Him and commit yourself to Him, He will be faithful to lead and guide you and make plain your paths.

Today I encourage you to think about how you are a gift from the hand of God and as you live for Him, confess that He leads and guides you into all truth and He will indeed accomplish much through you as you seek and serve Him. God bless you!



Saturday, July 6th

"Thoughts Can Be the Enemy of Your Soul"

by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about hiding God's Word in your heart. It is vital that we abide in Him and His Word is as a well spring deep within us. We must do all that we know to do to protect it and continue to deposit it so that we can draw upon it in our time of need. Today I will share about our thoughts and how they can be a potential enemy to our soul if we do not deal with them as God would want us to.

First and foremost we have to have it settled within us that God's Word **IS THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY**. If I could underline this one hundred times, I would! No matter what happens in your day and no matter what comes your way, you must be willing to turn your eyes away from what the natural is speaking and turn your

eyes upon Jesus. I am sure that you can relate to the fact that many times situations have loud voices and our thoughts can have loud voices as well. It is what you do with the voice of your thoughts that will make your break you.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (Amplified)

**"[Inasmuch as we] refute arguments
and theories and reasonings
and every proud and lofty thing that sets
itself up against the [true] knowledge of God;
and we lead every thought and purpose
away captive into the obedience of
Christ (the Messiah,
the Anointed One"**

I believe there are so many avenues that the devil is trying to use in our world today where the Word of God is being fought against. Our education system, news media, etc...is trying to prove God's Word to be false and invalid. There are arguments against it like never before. If we do not continue to refresh ourselves in the presence of God and renew our minds with God's Word this will wear us down. When one gets worn down they are on a fast track to being pulled into the deceptive current of this world's thinking. This is so dangerous and we must constantly keep our hearts and minds protected from such things. The world is trying to make God's Word and ways look foolish so that we back away from the truth. The Word of God is the most powerful tool we have to live this life. His Word says in

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

**" For the word of God is living and active
and sharper than any two-edged sword,
and piercing as far as the division of
soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow,**

**and able to judge the thoughts
and intentions of the heart."**

If the Word of God is hidden within us, it will rise up in our time of need. It will cut through the deceptions that are trying to convince you to see things differently and apart from His truth. You will feel your heart being convicted because His Word, as a knife is cutting deeply and dividing the lie from the truth. You will be able to clearly see the choice you have to make in light of seeing both sides and then the decision is yours. God desires that we always choose life but He gives us the choice. If the Word is not hidden in your heart my friend, it will not be there to help you win the battles this world brings and you will heed to the swift currents that sin brings. Choose life, choose to put His Word in you and choose to guard it for from it flow the issues of this life.

God bless you!



Friday, July 7th

"Hiding His Word In Your Heart"

by Dona Hake

When things are precious to us or if they are valuable we keep them in special places. Things that mean something to us should never be left in unsafe places. If we are not careful we could suffer consequences of great loss if we are not careful. When you understand the true value of something and how you can not do what you need to do without it you will go to great lengths to protect it. Today I will be sharing with you about hiding and protect the Word of God within your heart. Many times the things that happen in our everyday experiences help me see things more clearly and I love to parallel them in sharing His Word. Today I will share a little experience with you in which I was negligent in going the extra mile to protect something valuable to me.

As a photographer I have different lenses for my camera. I have favorite lenses

for my camera too and there is one in particular that rarely comes off of my camera body. If I switch up a lens for a particular reason I have a special way of doing so and I am meticulous about doing it as well. I always keep my camera on the kitchen table and extra lens so it is right at an arm's length for me. Many months ago I was watching my granddaughters and the youngest was in exploration mode. I had totally forgotten to move my lens to a higher place or should I say a safe place. She was not yet walking but she was well able to climb and do some pretty interesting maneuvers with her little body. I turned my back for a minute and there she was sitting on top of my dining room table contently playing with my favorite lens. I can laugh now but in that moment I saw all kinds of scenarios in my mind. The interesting thing was because of how she observed me with my lens, she was gently removing the lens cap and examining it. I quietly and slowly walked over and took it from her. The whole time I was walking toward her I was scolding myself for not thinking and being more careful with such a thing of great value. To say the least I could have suffered loss that day and it would have been my own fault because I was not keeping the lens in the safest place.

I would like to take that little life experience of mine and bring it over into what I am sharing with you today. Many times we hear God's Word and we know in our hearts that it is needful for our growth, yet we are not careful in guarding it. We understand how valuable and precious it is yet we are not careful to guard over it as we should. You can go to church and hear the Word and walk away exclaiming what a good Word it was but yet not take hold of it and hide it. In Psalm 119:11 it says:

**"Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
that I might not sin against thee."**

Another translation says that "I have laid up your Word..." The Hebrew translation of the the word *hid* is to reserve or protect. We need to understand that reading our Bibles or going to church is a good thing and it is needful but it is more important that we are acting on what we do with the Word that we read or hear. Many Christians experience disappointment and discouragement in the midst of circumstances because it appears to them that the Word of God is not working. It is not that God's Word is not working, it is because you have not made it yours by taking hold of it and hiding it deep within you. You see when we hide God's Word in us and meditate upon it that Word becomes part of us and it rises up within us in those times that our heads are giving us fits.

Proverbs 4:23

**"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for
out of it are the issues of life."**

Another translation of the the word **hid** in Psalm 119:11 is to hoard. That word could give you a bad picture in light of a certain TV program that strikes some of us as terrible and unbelievable. Yet when I think of that word in light of God's Word I think of the individual that refuses to let go of anything they have received while hearing God's Word. They take it all in and they are determine that there is a place for it and it will be used some day. You see in this life and all the circumstances it presents brings us need of God's life giving promises. Today I encourage you to be diligent to hide and Word and protect it diligently. Tomorrow I will be sharing on hiding God's Word and one of the greatest enemies to your soul. I hope you plan on joining me.

I hope your day is blessed as you continue in His Word!



Thursday, July 4th

"Give to Others What He's Given to You"

by Dona Hake

God is so good to us. Day after day we rise and He is always there. We enjoy all of His benefits and we must never forget one of them. It is so vital that we call ourselves to remembrance to all that He has done. Our minds need to be continually renewed because in the midst of everyday life we can tend to move into our day taking care of the many things we are responsible for and we just forget at times. God understands us inside and out and He the most faithful friend we will ever have.

Today I want you to think about the many times that He has been there for you

in the midst of a problem. Think about the times that you have sinned in your heart yet you turned your face to Him and admitted you were wrong and He forgave you once again. I shared yesterday about the bondage of sin and how it feels to be free. There are many that do not know and understand the freedom you walk in. There are also those believers that do not understand true freedom because they embrace wrong thinking about the character of our Heavenly Father. As we draw upon His mercy, love and all the wonderful things that He has blessed us with, we must be mindful to be able to share it with others. So how do we do this? I want you to look at Colossians 3:12 with me:

***"Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones (His own picked representatives), [who are] purified and holy and well-beloved [by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by] tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, [and] patience [which is tireless and long-suffering, and has the power to endure whatever comes, with good temper]."* (Amplified)**

When you prepare to go somewhere you dress for the occasion. We should want to dress appropriately and look our very best. I know when I am taking care of my granddaughters after I prepare myself for the day I am packing up all kinds of things for those unexpected events that happen with little ones. I have all kinds of things in my bag so I can quickly be part of the solution when things may appear to be falling apart at the seams. We too need to be thinking about how we can live our lives prepared in our hearts and ready to help someone that may need God's love, a word spoken in season, a listening ear, etc...

As we have experienced God giving us answers and comfort in our time of need we need to equip ourselves to be ready and share that same comfort and love with those in need. God does not bless us with all these wonderful and bountiful blessings for us to just talk about and keep to ourselves. He desires we pass them on in our testimony.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (VOICE)

"All praise goes to God, Father of our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One. He is the Father of compassion, the God of all comfort. He consoles us as we endure the pain and hardship of life so that we may draw from His comfort and share it with others in their own struggles."

For me the key thought in this scripture that inspires me to take action is that He

consoles us that we may draw from Him and then share it with others in their struggles. What an instrument of God you can be to be able share the life giving testimonies of your life with someone that is walking through a similar experience and has need of an answer. I thank God for all the times He has been faithful to me and I hope you do as well. Purpose to remind yourself of the many times that God has met you where you are at and be ready to share with others.

Give God the glory today and share what He is doing in your life!



Wednesday, July 3rd

"The Heart That Is Set Free is Free Indeed!"

by Dona Hake

Today I want to share about the freedom that Jesus brought to us. God sent His only Son Jesus Christ. He saw the mess the world was in and He had an ultimate plan to redeem mankind to Himself again. Every human being comes to the place where they must make the decision whether they want to be born again and set free from the condition of their heart. Before you knew Him you were bound to your sin and you just sinned and the consequences of your sin brought you grief. Sometimes the consequences of certain sin can cause guilt that seems impossible to deal with. It is only by Jesus and His forgiveness that we can deal with our sin and it is only by His grace that we can maintain our lives on this earth.

I think back many times of the day in which I received the Lord Jesus Christ and as a brand new believer I can still recall that feeling of a "ball and chain" of heaviness that fell off of me. I felt as if I was taking my real first breath in life and really that was the day I came alive on this earth. It is a good thing to remember the freedom that the Lord Jesus Christ brought you that wonderful day that you ask Him to come and live within your heart. It is always important to

look forward yet we must remember where He brought us from that we can keep our hearts tender and sensitive to a lost and dying world that still has not received this freedom.

Jesus knew we were slaves to our sin and He understood that the will of the Father was to set us free from that. It is interesting how when you are free from something that you cannot understand how someone can be blinded and not seek to be free. Yet we as believers need to walk cautiously in the Word or we too can weaken in our convictions that cause us to walk in the freedoms that we embrace as a believer. We must determine ourselves to remain steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

"If you continue to accept and obey my teaching, you are really my followers. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
John 8:31 (Easy to Read Version) Jesus gave simple instruction in this scripture...

**Continue to accept His teaching
and continue to obey it.**

We live in a day where even common sense is being challenged by stupid ideals and surprisingly people take hold of new ideas and run with them and from there exalt those ideas over the truth. We live in a time in which we as believers need to be extremely cautious and discerning. We need to guard our hearts and minds like never before because the devil is on a mission to rob you of your freedom in the Lord Jesus Christ. He understands what you can do with your freedom and he knows the power behind it.

I love the translation that The Voice translation brings to Galatians 5:16... **"Here's my instruction: walk in the Spirit, and let the Spirit bring order to your life. If you do, you will never give in to your selfish and sinful cravings"**

Each day as our feet hit the floor we must greet our day with resolve that **we**

will live and obey His commands. We must determine that our steps will be ordered of the Lord and as we do that we can entrust ourselves to Him knowing that He will bring order to our lives. Do what is right and He will go before you and show you how to win the battle. Our spiritual freedom is so precious and we must celebrate it daily and guard it diligently. I pray that you will be blessed this day in the Lord as you purpose to walk in His will and in His ways. Praise God that Jesus set you free!!!

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Tuesday, July 2nd

"Live Simply and Simply Live"

by Dona Hake

Yesterday I shared about contentment and counting our blessings. Being content in whatever situation you find yourself can only be done as you are looking to God in faith. Paul spoke of godly contentment when things were going good as well as when things were going bad. He understood how to be content when he was full and when he was hungry. You see, even when things are going good, if you are not content, your thoughts will go toward thinking something has to be better.

Philippians 4:12 "I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am." (The Message)

Today I want to share about the word *simplify*. This is one of my favorite words. I have it on a plaque in my home and it speaks to my heart. There are times when things get so busy and sometimes seem complicated. Sometimes things can get like this and it is totally beyond our control. When I see this word it ministers and challenges my heart to examine all that I am doing. It challenges me to ask myself questions about what I am doing to contribute to maintaining keeping peace in my heart and in my home. If we get slack and lazy about our responsibilities it is our own fault if we fall behind. Falling behind can cause undue stress and there is plenty enough of that let alone we create it.

I think as we meditate upon keeping our lives simple, peaceful and in order we are positioning ourselves in a greater way to be used by God to reach people. Many times we can have our lives so over complicated and busy that we can be tired before we even get started. I hear people at times speak about their lives being over complicated and they are so stretched they can barely get through a

day. I want to say it again that there will be times that "seasons" of busyness can come and it is totally out of your control. These times and seasons that I speak of have nothing to do with what you are doing or not doing it is simply those "Life gets in the way" seasons. We will all face them and God is well able to get you through them and keep your heart strengthened and at peace.

I can remember a particular time in my life when I was teaching and my father was sick and in a nursing home. Our sons were younger and the days were all too short to fit in all the demands but yet I did it. I can honestly say that I was able to do all that I did because by His grace I was strengthened for that season that I walked through. There were days I was so physically exhausted I thought I could not do it another day yet God was faithful to give me what I needed each day. You see when we purpose to stay in faith and remain content even when your strength is small, God is faithful to meet you with His strength and provision.

Let us remind ourselves that His grace is sufficient for all that we walk through. He is able to teach us how to be content in our hearts and in our minds when all is well and everything is falling apart at the seams. God understands our frame and He well knows how to keep us. Keep looking to Him in all that you do. God is good!

Monday, July 1st

"Be Content and Count Your Blessings"

by Dona Hake

Today I am going to share on contentment. Being content is when one is satisfied with what one is or has; not wanting more or anything else. When I hear the word content I immediately think of it as a calming word. If a child is complaining that they do not know what to do and they begin to whine about it this type of behavior can certainly throw a wrench into the peace in a room. Yet when that same child finds something that really intrigues them and they sit quietly and play all by themselves they have become content. There is a calm that has come over them and the whole atmosphere in the room.

There are times in which we observe this behavior in children yet that same behavior will continue in a teenager and also into adulthood if one does not get a handle on enjoying their blessings and the simple things in this life. My heart is so grieved at times to see how there is so much restlessness among young people as well as adults. It is so sad to me to see all the beautiful blessings people have yet it is not good enough or it has to be better. This type thinking

can fall into any category whether it be new clothes, home, car, going places, etc...Happiness is rooted and drawn from happenings but joy comes only from the Lord our God. It is from Him that all blessings and lasting things come from. Let us look at the following scripture in light of what we are focusing on today:

Hebrews 13:5 (Easy-to-Read Version) "Keep your lives free from the love of money. And be satisfied with what you have. God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never run away from you."

Sometimes people look at this scripture and interpret it that we are not to have money. Money is not the problem. Money is the root of the problem if you do not have a handle on it. God knows we certainly need money to exist in this life but He does not want us to serve it. If I desire to bless someone with a gift, I have to have money to purchase it. If it comes into my heart that I have to have a certain something better than anyone else and I wastefully spend my money to obtain it then money is what I am going to begin to look to in order to make such a desire happen.

God desires that we be content in all circumstances.

Philippians 4:12 "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Many times people will quote Philippians 4:19 like it is a magic wand for their selfish desires and not their needs. I think that as we look to the Lord and ask Him to help us see our motives and desires as God sees them then we will stay on track in this area of our life.

As you go throughout your day today I encourage you to stop and think about your blessings. It is so easy at times to get stuck in the rut of just thinking about all we have to do or the problems that surround us. Those things may be very real and they must be dealt with, yet there are certainly things you can thank God for. As you count your blessings I encourage you to go a step further and ask Him how you can be a blessing today. There are so many ways to bless others and might I add words and actions do not cost us one penny. Such things cost us only to step back and think and act from a heart of love.

God bless you as you serve Him today!