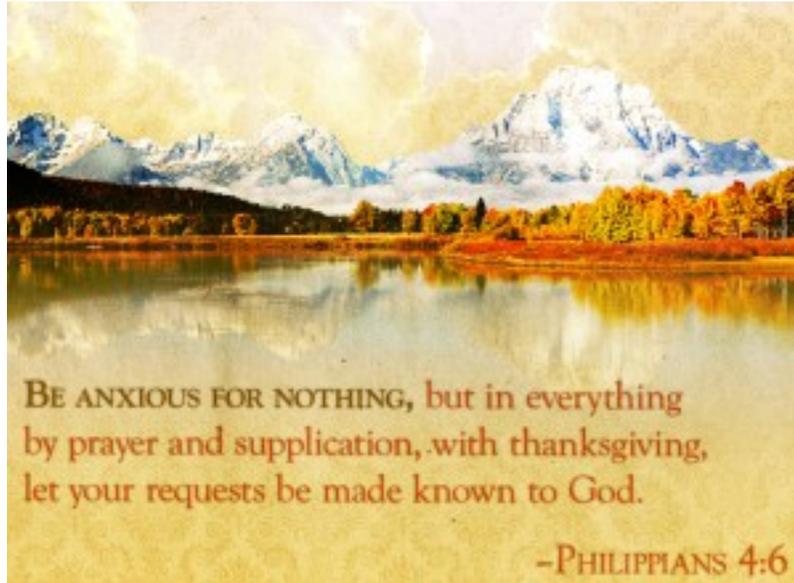


Monday, September 30, 2013

"Worry Is a Choice"

by Dona Hake



Anxious thoughts can be like "butterflies" in the stomach. They have come to visit all of us specific to who we are and what our life is all about.

For as many weddings I have shot over the years I would still experience those "butterflies" and random thoughts that would create scenarios in my mind. "What if this happens or oh my...what will I do if that happens!" I have come to understand that I have to constantly remind myself to be at peace in my heart and mind whenever those thoughts come to visit me.

There are certain things that we have to choose that we will not entertain and that needs is worry. I will put this another way to make it more real. Is it me or don't you just hate when you are exhausted and you have just sat down to a meal in the evening, the phone rings, and sure enough it is a telemarketer! Do you say, "oh my I am so glad you called!" No, if you are like me I quickly end the conversation and get back to enjoying my dinner.

So it is with worry and anxious thoughts. Many times they come to visit us out of nowhere. Many times worry comes within the reason of a problem that you are faced with. It matters not how it comes, what matters is if you decide to let it stay in your mind and you entertain it by allowing it to "hang out" with you.

Philippians 4:6-14 (TLB)

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. "

Today I encourage you to give your anxious thoughts and worries to Him and thank Him for His answers. Do not ponder how you think it should all work out, but watch and wait expectantly as He unfolds the answers in your life. God bless!



Sunday, September 29, 2013

"My God - My Light"

by Dona Hake



We all can relate to times in which you feel you do not know which way to turn. Everything seems dark and your situation has closed in on you. It just seems like you cannot see what's ahead let alone make decisions in light of what you face. This can be a very challenging thing, yet the Lord has promised to illuminate our darkness.

I shared the other day relative to wisdom and those times you just do not know what to do. He can show us how to do the right thing that we understand to be true. Today I want to encourage your heart with the truth that God is a God of all hope! A hope that brings light into the darkest of situations.

I loved the one definition I found on hope...simple but powerful.

**"Hope is a person or thing in which
expectations are centered."**

We can place our hope in a God that promises to be there for us and He promises to provide in our dark times that we face.

**" Lord, you provide the flame for my lamp.
You, God, turn the darkness around me into light."**

Psalm 18:28 Easy-to-Read Version

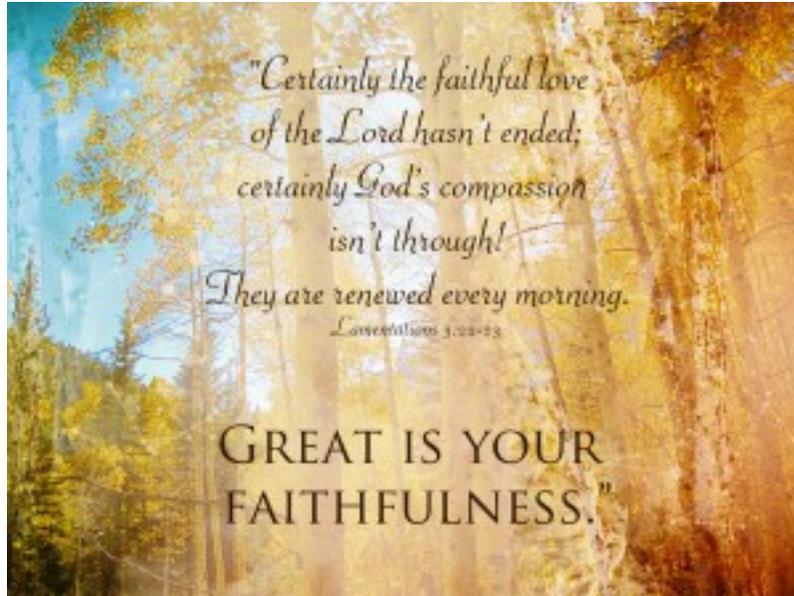
Many times our lamps are just burned out from weariness and we have given in and given up. Isn't it a blessing to know God will provide you the flame for your lamp. He will fuel your heart with fresh hope and determination. He will instruct your heart in the night seasons of your life. He is the God of all hope! Let our expectation be centered on Him!



Saturday, September 28, 2013

"Great Is His Faithfulness"

by Dona Hake



Have you ever had those days that you just run out of patience. You dealt with a handful of people that just tested you one too many times and your thoughts are..."I just cannot handle this any longer!" Only God can help us to deal with tough situations with people and circumstances that test us to the point of exhaustion in our minds and souls.

God does not want us to live our lives like this. One of the secrets to helping us with such things is remembering how patient and loving God is with us when we do not deserve it. I am so glad God has remained patient with me because I know there are days I certainly do not deserve it.

Let us look to Him to help us draw upon His patient ways and His love with others. Remember, every morning you wake up He is seeking new ways to show His love to you. Everything about God begins afresh each day and His compassion is NEVER limited.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (VOICE)

**"How enduring is God's loyal love;
the Eternal has inexhaustible compassion.**

**Here they are, every morning, new!
Your faithfulness, God, is as broad as the day."**



Friday, September 27, 2013

"Just Believe."

by Dona Hake



He sees and totally understands our hearts even when others don't always quite get it right. You know...those times when people read into things or do not perceive your intentions as you meant them to be. He sees your tears. Not the tears you wipe away but the ones that flow within your heart while you wear a smile on your face so everyone thinks it is okay.

We need to just believe this and this in itself will cause you to move toward Him in your time of trouble. He sees you and He hears you.

Psalm 34:17 (NASB)

**"The righteous cry, and the Lord hears
And delivers them out of all their troubles."**

I was recently chatting with someone and this precious woman was sharing how an individual she knew was going through a hard time. This person was asking, "Where is God in all of this?" This woman exclaimed, "He's right there beside you, wanting to help you!"

I find it so sad and it somewhat upsets me when I hear people say such a thing. "Where is God?" when it is all going down bad, and yet when all is good they do not ever give it a thought to acknowledge God either. It really makes no sense at all.

I encourage you today to just believe. Plain and simple...just know that He is always there for you, if only you call upon Him. God bless.



Thursday, September 26, 2013

"Worry..Is It Really Worth It??"

by Dona Hake



Sometimes when the problem is right in your face it can be extremely tempting to worry about it. Yet Jesus told us not to.

Matthew 6:27 (God's Word Translation)

“Can any of you add a single hour to your life by worrying?”

Jesus was basically saying that worry is a waste of time and it is not going to add anything to your life in fact if it does anything it will take away from you. Worry can damage your health, cause the object of your worry to consume your thoughts, negatively affect how you treat those around you, and worst of all it keeps you from trusting Him.

Worry has the ability to just bring you to a standstill. It is totally normal to be concerned about what we face in this life yet we need to remind ourselves that it is Him that will perfect that which concerns us.

Many times we really do invest time in worrying about something that never materializes. We must be ever so careful that we stay in faith and face our lives the way God sees it. I found this quote interesting by Benjamin Franklin..."Do not anticipate trouble or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight." I am thinking he was probably intending his words to cause the reader to be purposed in looking on the bright side of things. Even in the face of negative we need to believe God can turn it inside out and we can be on the victory side!

Let us ask the Lord as we face fears and difficulties for His help and His perspective. Pray that He would give you courage to face your tomorrows and believe that He is indeed walking with you.

1 Peter 5:7

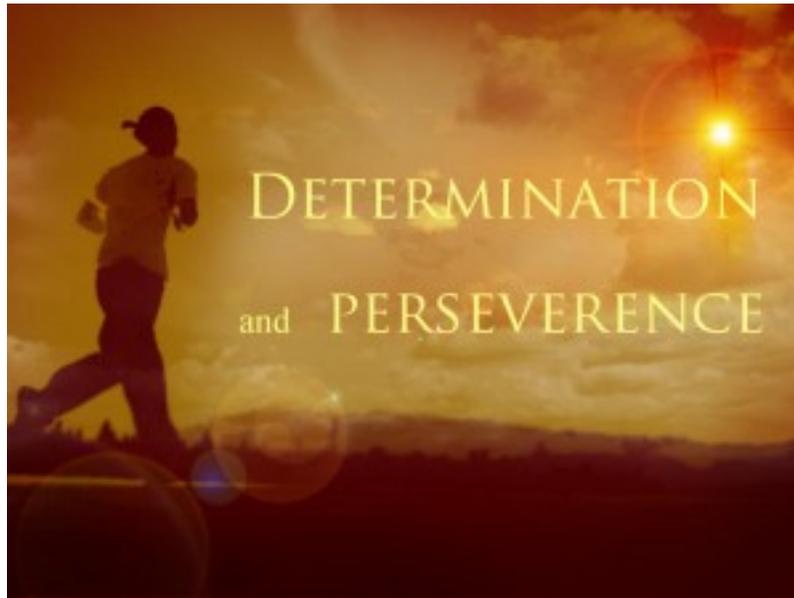
"Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns,once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully."



Wednesday, September 25, 2013

"Determination and Perseverance"

by Dona Hake



Have you ever determined yourself to do something and then "bottomed out" and given up? It happens to all of us. After the decision is made an obstacle or opposition stands before you and you weaken, give up and feel guilty that you did not stick it out.

Any decision you make whether it be to do something or stop doing something must be coupled with determination and perseverance. In this life I guarantee you that there will always be obstacles in our paths. If we seek His wisdom we can begin to see that many times obstacles can just be those "pauses" in which we learn and grow from. No matter how big the obstacle, if you have made a decision to do something, hold fast to the decision to persevere until you have accomplished your desire.

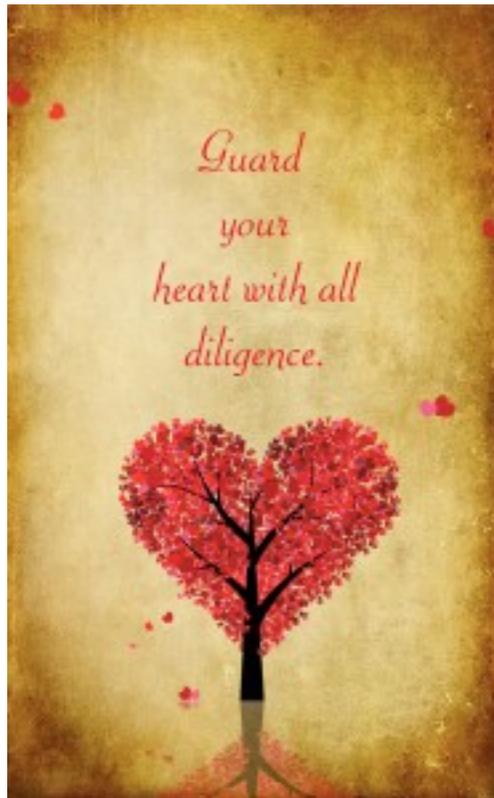
Winston Churchill said it this way, "The nose of the bulldog is slanted backwards so he can continue to breathe without letting go." I love this because many times it is just a matter of not letting go. Dig in, hold fast, and don't let go!!! Do what you have decided to do no matter how tough the fight. Draw upon the strength and wisdom of the Lord for He is well able to help you accomplish that thing you have determined yourself in. God bless you!

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Tuesday, September 24, 2013

"The Beauty of Diligence"

by Dona Hake



I believe that the fruit of diligence guards and protects our peace. The diligent hand proceeds from the heart that desires to live productively in everything they put their hand to. We can all relate to that feeling of purposing to be diligent even when we are tired or do not feel like doing something. It is so wonderful though to experience the fruit of accomplishment after we have done what we know to do.

Many times people want to blame others because things are not going well or as planned and it is simply a lack of their own diligence and foresight. In Ecclesiastes it speaks of everything having a time and a season. I believe we need to know exactly what "season" we are in and do things in their proper time.

As we have been in the harvest season many of you may have been canning or freezing. The fruit of your diligent hands planting are now embracing the fruit of your labor. Now you must be diligent to labor even more to preserve it. This applies to our lives in every area. First you recognize the season and then you apply your heart to diligence to do that which is required of you in that particular time.

I have a little hour glass and as the sand flows through it there is a measure of time that passes. This little hour glass reminds me that once that sand flows through that a particular "time" has passed and I can not get it back. Many times people fail to realize the time they are living and they are missing opportunities because they are doing something else. The time goes and so has the opportunity. Just as harvest comes and it calls for our diligence in a specific time there are also other things in life that require our diligence in order that we reap blessings.

I believe there are many times our hearts are not at peace because of not doing what we should be attending to. The result of this will always be a lack of peace in our hearts. Many times I hear people wanting to call it a work of the devil in their life when it is merely them lacking diligence to do that which the Lord is prompting them to do. I encourage you today to desire the heart and hands of the diligent and be blessed. Guard you time and spend it wisely. Diligence is a good thing and it leads to abundant blessing!

**Proverbs 21:5 Amplified Bible**

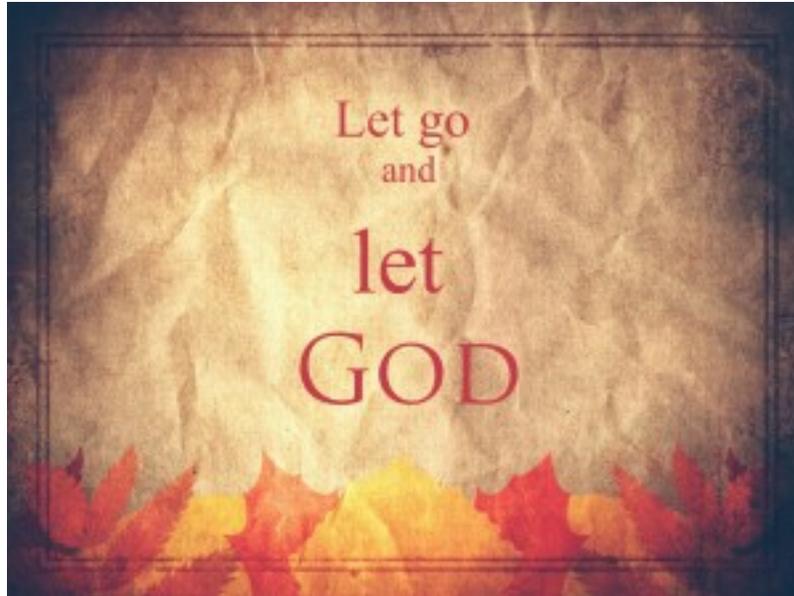
**"The thoughts of the [steadily] diligent  
tend only to plenteousness..."**



Monday, September 23, 2013

"Let God and Let God"

by Dona Hake



God speaks to my heart through the simplest things in my life and it helps me understand His love for me on so many levels.

On Saturday I shot a wedding and one of my last things I did before I was out the door to meet the photographer working with me was put on one of my favorite necklaces. The gold chain is special to me because my husband brought it back from India as a gift. I attached a pendant to it. I purchased this extremely unique handcrafted pendant and every time I wear it people are intrigued by its uniqueness. When I got to the church I noticed as I glanced in the mirror it was gone. My heart just sunk. I could not believe this beautiful chain fell off and something so special to me was lost.

My assisting photographer and I back tracked our steps and we could not find it anywhere. Quite honestly it really troubled me but I knew I just had to get my mind off of it. When we got back to where we met up we both were out in the dark in the pouring down rain with her cell phone flashlight searching around my car. I was disappointed that there were no signs of the necklace. When I got home I searched in the rain and darkness with my flashlight on my street and front yard. Again, it was nowhere to be found.

Even in the morning I went out and searched my yard again. My mind was preoccupied trying to figure out what happened to it, but I can remember the moment I was standing in my kitchen and just made a decision to dismiss even

thinking about it anymore. I just let it go. I might add at this point I just concluded that something materialistic like this should not be robbing me of my peace. Even though I was still bothered I decided to just let it go.

As I was sitting in my car I was thanking the Lord in my heart for the beautiful fall day and once again the necklace returned to my thoughts. This time it was different. This time it was the Lord speaking to my heart. I felt prompted to look down into this deep, dark crevice by my seat. The thought just came out of nowhere. But really it wasn't from nowhere, I believe it was God's help. I glanced down and saw nothing and then I looked closer and the sun from my sunroof caused the gold of the necklace to sparkle in the sun's light! I was ecstatic!

I was so excited and believe me it was a tedious task getting it because it was very hard to reach and take hold of it. What the Lord showed me in this was that He cares about the things that concern our hearts and are special to us. He reached down and touched me heart in a special way yesterday morning.

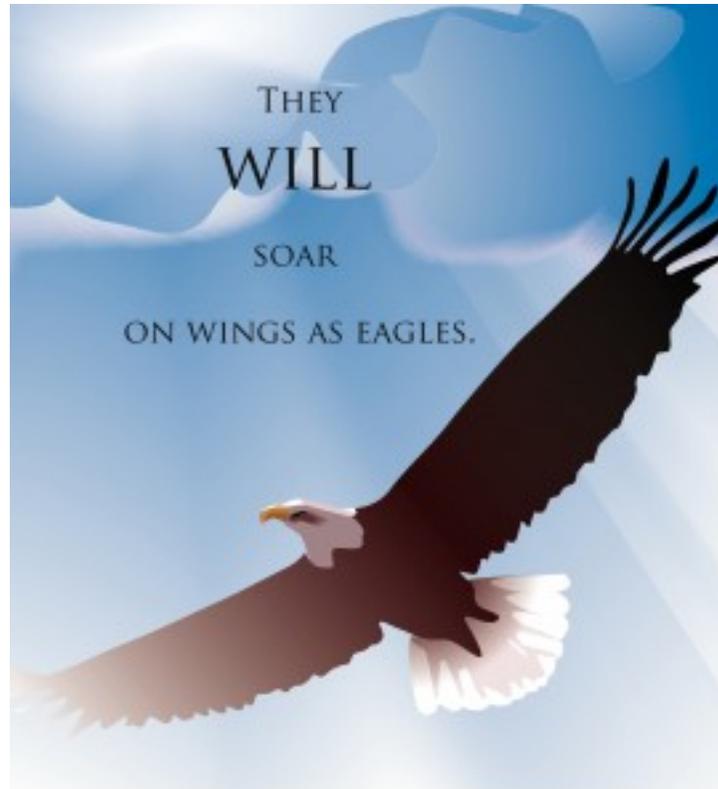
From now on when I wear this I will have a special reminder of the scripture in Psalms that proclaims that He perfects that which concerns me. Once again it reminded me of His presence in my life and how He just shows up and does things to surprise and bless my heart even when I least expect it.



Sunday, September 22, 2013

"Soaring Above the Storm"

By: Dona Hake



**Isaiah 40:31 The Voice**

**"But those who trust in the Eternal One will regain their strength.**

**They will soar on wings as eagles.**

**They will run—never winded, never weary.**

**They will walk—never tired, never faint."**

This scripture is very precious to my heart. Nothing is so majestic as seeing an eagle fly over you. I had the opportunity for the first time ever to see one fly over me while driving a few months ago. I just wanted to pull the car over and watch it.

An eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it arrives. It will search out a high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. He simply soars. He is above the storm, and the storm is beneath him. He is soaring, yet the storm is in progress. Interesting, isn't it?

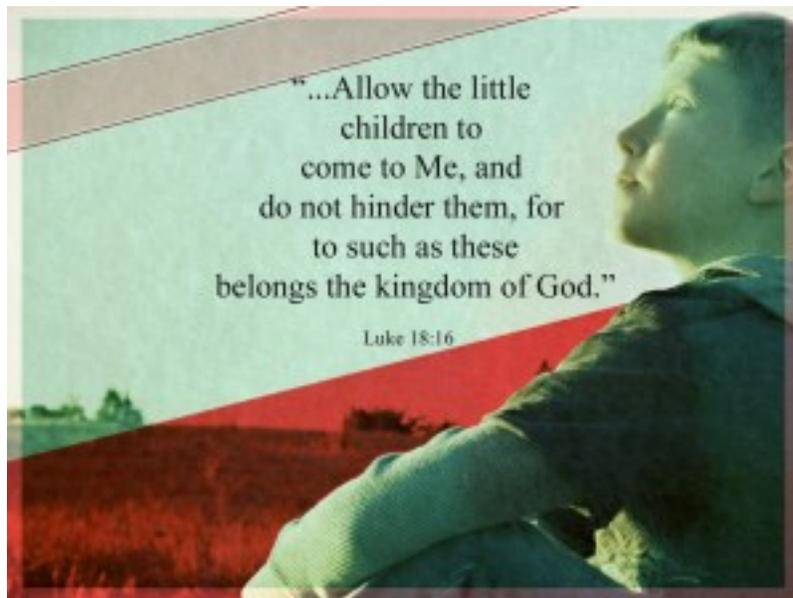
We can learn from the eagle during the storms of our lives. We too can rise above them as we draw upon the strength of the Lord. As we set our sights on God we can ride it out and God can sustain us from being weary. He will keep us that we can continue on, not grow tired and not faint.



Saturday, September 21, 2013

"How Precious Is Childlikeness"

by Dona Hake



The other day while shopping I had a young lady ring up my order and she asked me how I was and I replied, "I'm so blessed!" She answered, "That is great!!" She began to share with me how she went hiking for the first time ever that morning. She went on to say that she just moved here and has never been exposed to anything but a hot climate. Her eyes lit up and she said, "I am so anxious for fall. I have never seen a leaf change and I have never seen snow! Oh my...I cannot wait to see it snow!!!"

This young woman was so precious as she shared this with me. Her eyes just danced with anticipation, joy and excitement. As I walked away I began to think about her childlikeness and how it was so refreshing. I felt lighthearted as I walked away from her and it caused me to think about how refreshing it is to keep childlikeness in our hearts no matter how old we are.

When I think of children I think of innocence, energy, trust, honesty, loving, and forgiving. They are always looking forward to something. How is it the more we grow up that we lose this? I believe the reason Jesus exhorted in Luke 18:16 that none of the children be hindered is because he loved all the attributes that children brought into His presence! In order to live in faith we have to keep it simple.

I know I share this often but it really does minister to my own heart. Keep it simple! Simplify your life. Don't complicate and overbook your life that you have no time to just enjoy the free gifts that are out there for us. God desires that we grow in our trust, stay energetic for Him, forgive, love and always be looking forward to what He is going to do in our lives! God bless you.♥

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Friday, September 20, 2013

"The Power of One Word"

by Dona Hake



A boardwalk fire tore through two Jersey Shore communities destroying dozens of businesses that had barely found their footing after Superstorm Sandy. My

heart was so grieved as I watched people that barely caught their breath after one devastation to yet be hit by another. I kept wondering what caused such a tragedy.

This horrible incident made me think of how there are times in life where people's lives involving their relationships go through horrible storms. Individuals are devastated by their affects and because issues were not dealt with properly they may experience another blow that just levels everything.

As far as the fire on the boardwalk it all began under a build that housed two different boardwalk stands. It was a result of failed electrical equipment and wiring under the boardwalk and subfloor, compromised by Superstorm Sandy's flood waters. During the storm the wiring and it's connections became fully submerged in saltwater, sand and wave action. The wiring could not withstand these things and further down the road this enormous fire began from the wiring that was made faulty.

Amazing to think that wiring, such a small thing could create such a devastation. Small things can create major problems if they are not dealt with. It made me think about how people think they can afford speaking harsh, mean and criticizing words and how damaging they can be to a relationship.

James 3:5-6

"It's just the same with our tongues! It's a small muscle, capable of marvelous undertakings.

And do you know how many forest fires begin with a single ember from a small campfire? The tongue is a blazing fire seeking to ignite an entire world of vices. "

Ask the Lord to help you guard your tongue that you would speak words that are uplifting and not damaging. Life is too short and yet so beautiful to waste it's time on petty thoughts and disagreements. God bless you.



Thursday, September 19, 2013

"Heavenly Wisdom"

By Dona Hake



You see it all over whether you are in a grocery store or watching commercials. All natural this, all natural that... There are those that are in pursuit of eating all natural things. No synthetics, no artificial colors, no additives, etc... I have found that the more I eat all natural products and things that are pure I can hardly stand the taste of artificial additives or enhancements of any kind in foods.

I know that God desires that we take care of ourselves and there is a desire rising up more and more of individuals seeking to live in a more healthy lifestyle. He also desires that the gifts He blesses us with stay pure within us. Today I want to focus again on God's wisdom, the wisdom that comes from above and how it is totally pure. God wants to bestow upon us His pure wisdom. You know we really do need it for every area of our lives. Wisdom that is purely God's thoughts and how He wants things done, not our ways but His.

James 3:17 (The Voice)

"Heavenly wisdom centers on purity, peace, gentleness, deference, mercy, and other good fruits untainted by hypocrisy."

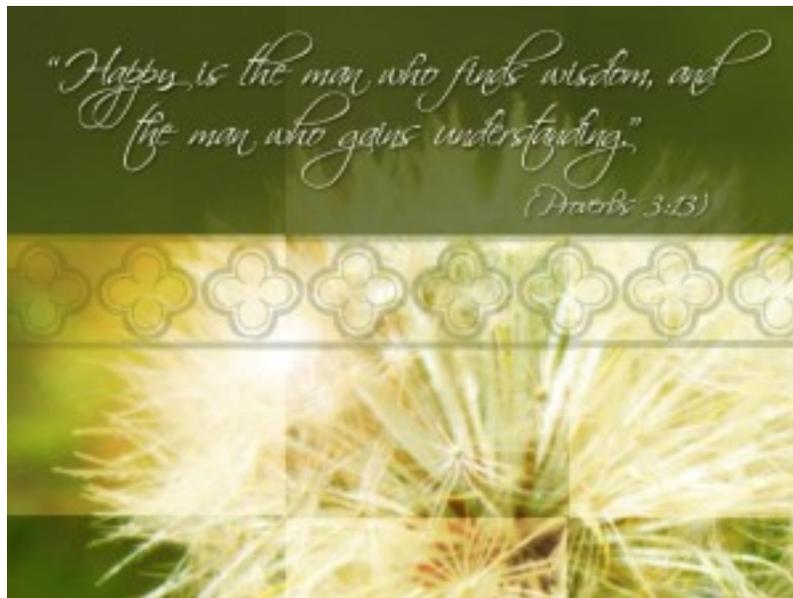
When we ask God for His wisdom He desires to bless us with His pure thoughts and how He sees to do something. He desires to bless us with His good judgments. As I mentioned yesterday there will be those times in which you do not know what to say and what to do. As you ask God for His precious wisdom, believe by faith that it is going to flow into you and flow forth from you as pure fresh living water. This is what people need...not our opinions, not our experiences, but rather the pure wisdom that comes from above. Blessings to you!



Wednesday, September 18, 2013

"Finding Wisdom"

by Dona Hake



Have you ever had those times in which you feel like you want to say something to someone and you just do not know what to say? You may feel helpless if that person is hurting or they are dealing with something that has devastated them. I find these times to be troubling yet it makes you realize that only God can get us through this life and it's challenges. Know this...God wants to give you wisdom.

I always try to remember that when I do not know what to do or say that I just stop myself and try ask God for help. We need to take the pressure off of ourselves that we take on at times, and that is feeling like we have to have an

answer to everything. Many times we can be hasty to do or say things out of feeling we have to have an answer or action in a situation. Wrong words and actions can get us into trouble.

Wisdom is knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action. I believe that what wisdom is coupled with is vitally important that we understand. Many times we understand what the truth is yet we handle it improperly and speak it at the wrong time or the wrong manner. I have heard it said, "Truth spoken in a wrong way is as bad as speaking the wrong thing."

It is a good thing to back up in a situation and as Proverbs says "seek me early and you will find me." What this is saying is to seek wisdom before any task. Within wisdom is discernment and insight into things. Today I encourage you to seek God's wisdom in every thing you do and say for Proverbs 3:13 says we will be happy when we find it! Blessings to you this day.♥



Tuesday, September 17, 2013

"The Clean Heart"

by Dona Hake



I shared yesterday how the Lord sees our hearts and knows them like no one else. We cannot hide from Him, yet we think we can avoid the fact that He sees it all. Many times when we mess up it is our nature to try to avoid dealing with ourselves. A few months ago I can remember sharing the "sweep the dirt under the rug" mentality. Let us seek to be real with ourselves and with others but most importantly with God.

**"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and
renew a right, persevering, and steadfast spirit within me.."**

Psalm 51:10

As we ask for a cleaned up heart we need to truly believe that God can wipe away anything that you have done and throw it into the sea of forgetfulness. I can still remember when I shared with some preschoolers a simple little object lesson about forgiveness. It was precious watching their innocent little faces and their eyes light up as they took hold of the truth.

I took them outside and in my hand was a bowl of mud I mixed up before class. In the other hand I had a pitcher of pure water. I muddied up my hands

and my hands. I love to watch the little boys eyes totally getting into seeing a girl do something they thought only little boys would do! Anyway, I shared with them that the mud was symbolic to our mistakes, our sins, etc.

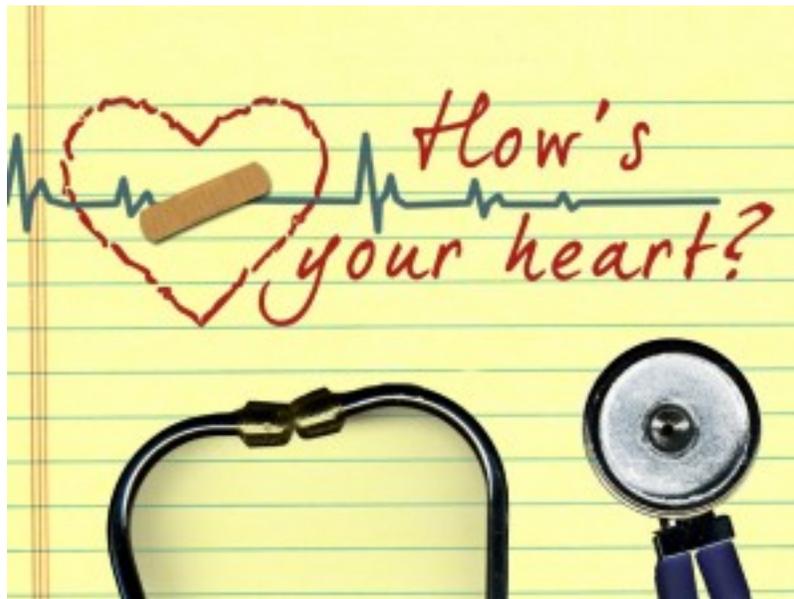
As I poured the pure, clean water over me, the mud totally cleansed my arms and hands, and into the ground the mud was absorbed. "Where is the mud?" I asked them, and the point was made beautifully. It could not be seen anymore and it was gone! This is how it works when we sin, our mistakes, etc...when we ask to be forgiven we are cleansed and those things are no longer remembered. We serve a merciful and loving God. Think about anything that has hindered your steadfastness and strength in Him and ask Him to cleanse it so your heart pure and totally restored. God bless you.



Monday, September 16, 2013

"How Is Your Heart?"

by Dona Hake



Jesus knows the condition of your heart like no one else. He knows your hurts, he knows how it beats inconsistently for Him at times, and He well knows that there are times your heart is not strong. He sees the pain of your heart and He

understands why your heart may be scared from past experiences. He well understands your heart's history and He is the best Physician you will ever see!

I was inspired to share this after hearing my husband share the Word yesterday. He shared how Jesus stands at the door of our hearts. He is a gentleman and He will not push Himself on us. He is not trying to sell anything, He is trying to just give it to you.

I began to think about the famous painting of Jesus standing at the door and knocking. As a little girl that painting always struck me as mysterious for some reason. Most of the paintings of this particular image of Jesus at the door shows one very significant thing missing and that is the door knob.

He stands gently at the door of every man's heart and as He knocks He knows if you are there or not. He knows what is inside. Patiently He knocks and if no one answers, patiently He waits and listens. You see if there were a door knob He would be able to turn it and just walk in. From the beginning He created us with a choice and that is to choose right from wrong. He will not push, and He will not shove Himself upon us.

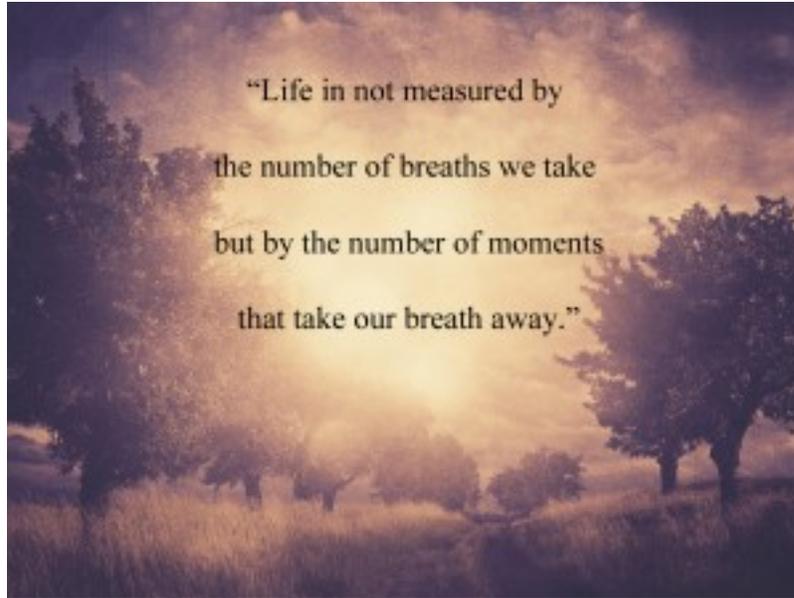
The portrait of Jesus standing at the door depicts His desire to be in fellowship with every man, woman, and child. He desires to shed all of His great mercies in the direction of anyone who wants Him. He desires to wash away all sin and forget it all. Allow Him to come in, be your best Friend and fellowship with you every moment that you can. He desires to examine your heart and speak to you in a special way. God is a God of all good things and He desires to open the windows of Heaven and just pour it in your direction. Blessings to you this day!



Sunday, September 15, 2013

"Life Is Not Measured..."

by Dona Hake



"Life is not measured by the number

of breaths we take

but by the number of moments

that take our breath away."

These are the moments that I count as blessings from God above, because these moments cannot be purchased. You cannot think about these moments as something you reach into your wallet, open it up and purchase them. These moments are the ones that sometimes just blindside you with joy! They just come out of nowhere and then there are those moments that you see coming and you savor every second of that one precious moment. Many times the mere looking back on those moments bring tears of joy to your eyes.

Yesterday as I photographed a wedding I was able to witness a moment that took my breath away. The bride beautifully adorned for her wedding day. There was a special moment planned for the father to see his daughter for the first time in her wedding gown. You could see it and feel it all over the room. The anticipation was rising because each individual was excited to see his reaction. Every person that saw their eyes meet was touched in their own special way. When I am capturing this particular image I am purposed to focus closely on the father's eyes. I saw in his eyes the beauty of one embracing one present moment of joy yet his mind had to be in rewind all the way back to when he held her in his arms after she was born.

I have witnessed this type of moment many times over as I have photographed weddings and quite honestly it can be extremely hard for me to maintain my focus so I can keep the camera focused!

In this life we all well know that there have been those days that are tough and then there are those days that come and go with ease. Today I encourage you to reflect upon the blessings and special moments the Lord has blessed you with. Think about your family and the very special people God has placed in your life. Yes, I know they are not perfect but we need to look beyond faults in imperfections and just appreciate the good we have been blessed with. Our life is full of moments that have blindsided us in a good way, and they cause joy to well up within us. Recall those moments and be thankful for them. God bless you!

Psalm 84:12 (ERV)

**"Lord All-Powerful, great blessings
belong to those who trust in You!**



Saturday, September 14, 2013

"Giving No Footholds To the Devil"

by Dona Hake



I am continuing with the thoughts about avoiding regrets in our lives. God's Word tells us that He makes His beloved to lie down and have sweet sleep yet we can cause that scripture to be ineffective if we make the choice to go to bed upset or angry.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (TLB)

" If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry—get over it quickly; for when you are angry, you give a mighty foothold to the devil"

This translation puts this mighty word of caution in a nutshell. Don't allow anger to remain in your heart or it will cause you major problems in this life. Just get over it and get over it QUICKLY!!! Many times we think we can just back burner our emotions and angry thoughts about things. Truth is if you do not deal with something that makes you mad it does not lie dormant. It grows in the darkness of the negativity you are feeding it by allowing it to run rampant through your mind and heart.

Another truth of the matter regarding this is that **YOU WILL give the devil a foothold into your life.** It is not a matter of maybe it will be. Your peace level will be interrupted and you will begin to feel uneasy in your spirit. When Jesus

died for us, He died for everything that we ever will deal with. There is not one thing that He has not been tempted with. If you think no one understands, this is absolutely not true. Maybe there are no people in your life that understand but Jesus does.

If you are being tempted to nurse a grudge I encourage you to deal with it. Do not allow the devil any footholds into your life. Do not allow anger to linger into the sunsets of your day. God not only wants your sleep to be sweet but He desires that you live a life of sweet peace as well. His desires greatly that you seek Him diligently in every area that you may live your life to its fullest.

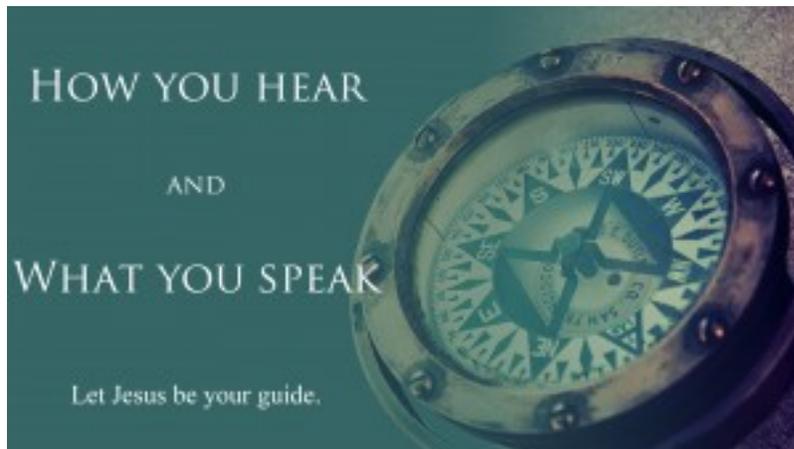
God bless you.



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2013

"Avoiding Regret"

By Dona Hake



Yesterday I shared some thoughts on how we can learn to live without regret. I want to share some things today that can help us all to keep ourselves guarded in this area.

James 1:19 (VOICE)

"Listen, open your ears, harness your desire to speak, and don't get worked up into a rage so easily, my brothers and sisters."

I love translations that give me visuals to help me grasp a truth. The word ***harness*** is excellently used to bring a great visual here. Recently I was in a pet store and this young woman had a wonderfully sweet dog which was a Golden Retriever. She had a harness type muzzle around his mouth. I asked if I may pet him, and she replied, "Oh yes, he's a sweet dog!" I pet him and yes he was very gentle in disposition.

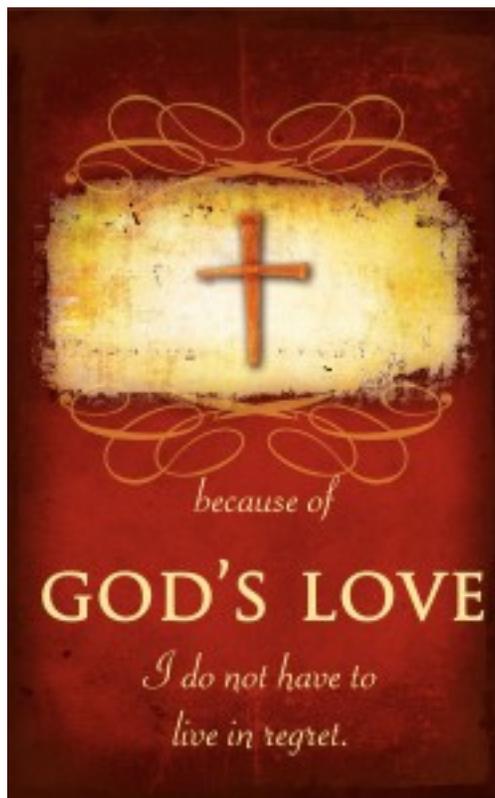
In light of owning a German Shepherd I totally get the thing of understanding what your dog is capable of and you must always keep them guarded in that sense. I understood why she had her Retriever muzzled. She understood what he was capable of if he ended up in a situation that he did not perceive correctly and she knew what the outcome could be. Wise woman! I have been amazed at times how people handle themselves when I am with my Shepherd because they are not wise in their approaches and then my dog can tend to misinterpret the vibes they are giving off. She can flat out get viscous as she is perceiving that I am in danger and she goes into full protection mode.

Sometimes we too need to guard ourselves from ourselves. We need to ask God to harness our mouths because we know all too well what we are capable of when we see or hear certain things. Those things that flip our switch to anger. Oh my...we have probably all been there and done that! Needless to say, this is an area where we can guard ourselves that we not regret the things we say.

Today I encourage you to listen carefully before you speak and guard your heart from the temptation to think things that are not worthy to occupy your mind. This is just one of many ways that we can avoid regret. Have a wonderful, blessed day!



Thursday, September 12, 2013
"...I Do Not Have To Live In Regret"
by Dona Hake



Throughout the day on September 11th I listened to the heart wrenching stories of people that lost loved ones on that dreadful day. It has been on my heart for awhile to share on the subject of avoiding regret in one's life. I think regrets that can never be repaired are absolutely the most painful. Regret is a very sad thing to experience. It is defined by feeling sorrow or remorse for an act, a fault or a disappointment. It is so upsetting when you find you might have spoken something and you regret speaking it. Then there are those regrets of things

you just neglected to do or say.

Today I want to share about the regret one would deal with by choosing not to deal with broken relationships or leaving someone on a wrong note. I will share a story I heard yesterday. It was the morning of September 11th. A teenage girl argued with her father all morning and he leaves for work and she leaves for school. She comes home but he never did. That was the last time she saw him and that is how they left each other. Forever. It cannot be changed and the words cannot be taken back. You see, he worked at the World Trade Center and that was the day he breathed his last breath here on earth. Forever, this young woman will have to live with the fact that she and her father left each other that morning on bad terms.

My heart was so sad as I heard this, yet I wonder how many other stories might have been the same on that day. It is easy to take people for granted. Don't!! Make a decision to always leave people in peace. Seek reconciliation in relationships that are strained. If they refuse to reconcile, at least know that in your heart you have forgiven them because that is all you can do.

Because of God's love we can love people as He loved us. He will enable you to forgive when you cannot find it in your heart to do so. I pray today that you would search your heart and if there be anyone in your life that you need to make things right with that you would be quick to do so. God bless you.



Wednesday, September 11, 2013

"America You ARE Beautiful"

by Dona Hake



Today as I sat with my coffee, I turned on the news so I could listen to the tributes of one of the most horrific days that our country has ever faced. Such days like September 11th will cause most to say, "I can remember where I was when it happened." I know for most when you think about where you were, you would say, "It was a beautiful, crisp fall morning..." I was standing by my kitchen window when our secretary informed me and I was stunned. I stood in front of my TV for days just stunned as I watched the most heart wrenching things. Today my heart is in prayer toward those that lost loved ones that day.

Today on the news they were holding an interview with a gentleman and he said he can remember hearing it said, "This building will NEVER come down." In the next sentence as they discussed September 11th he said, "I saw it come down and it was such a horrific sight."

For me the most outstanding things in my life that marked my mind was prayer being taken out of school, John F. Kennedy's assassination, racial rioting in my area, and September 11th. Much has changed in our country but I still love it and I am thankful I live here. I can still pray for my country and the that leaders govern it. Much is changing in our country **but one thing for sure, we can still pray.**

I was reading the poem that was put to song by Katharine Lee Bates, entitled

"America the Beautiful." I just sat and cried because it touched my heart. I encourage you to continue to love your country no matter what it looks like. Commit yourself to pray for her, because America the beautiful needs our prayers. I will leave you with two of the four verses from this precious poem.

O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties, Above the fruited plain!
America, America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea.

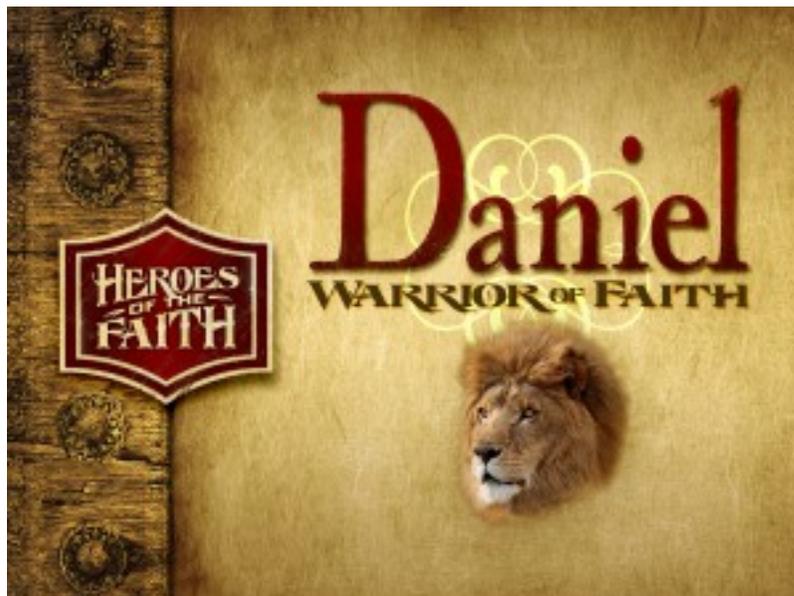
O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam-undimmed by human tears!
America, America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

~~~~~ ♥ ~~~~~

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

"How Did Daniel Do It?"

by Dona Hake



Daniel continued his habit of praying to the Lord his God three times a day even after a law had been made against it. He was a man of uncompromising faith. He would not bow nor pray to any other god. When King Darius heard this, he was greatly distressed because he thought so highly of Daniel; he was determined to rescue Daniel yet he could do nothing because the law could not be changed. Daniel's fate was sealed and he would face the death of being thrown into a lion's den. How did he cope with knowing this is how his life would end?

The king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into lion's den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" The king could not eat that evening nor could he sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king ran to the lion's den. Somehow I just know this king knew that Daniel served a living God! He yelled to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Out of the dark pit Daniel proclaimed, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I done any wrong to you."

The king was overjoyed and gave orders to have Daniel lifted from the den. There was not one wound found on him, because he trusted his God." So my title was, "How Did Daniel Do It?" The answer is tucked within this story of Daniel's experience. The three important and most powerful things in this life of Daniel is that he would not compromise his faith, he served him continually, and he trusted God.

Again I think how I wish I could just go back in time and witness the God of heaven and earth sending an angel to intervene in this impossible situation. I wonder what it was like for Daniel to see the angel embrace the mouth of a lion? I can only imagine how awesome it must have been seeing the glorious light of that angel appearing in the midst of the pitch dark den where lions were roaring and ready to devour him.

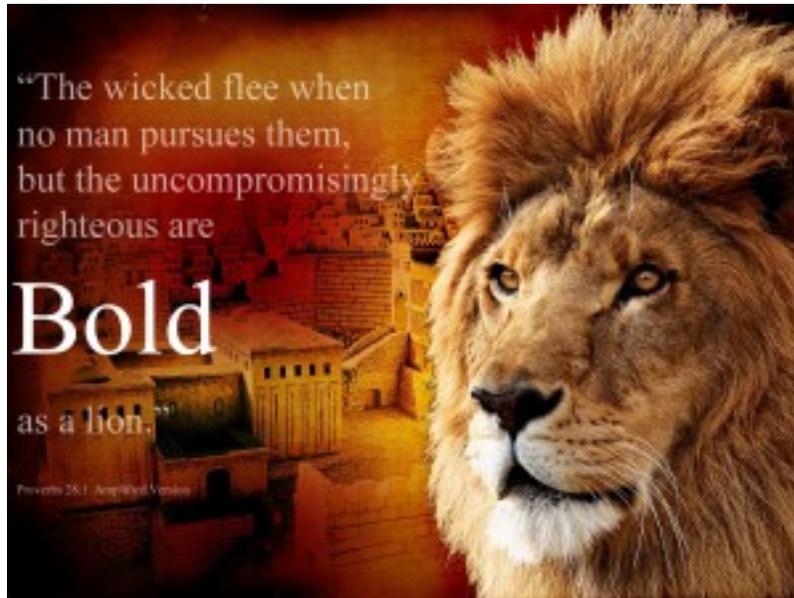
Daniel witnessed God's mighty hand moving through an angel on his behalf. Today let us learn from Daniel's life the importance of never compromising our faith, serving Him continually, and trusting Him.



Monday, September 9, 2013

"...and the Righteous Are Bold As Lions"

by Dona Hake



I have some Bible characters that I love to read about. I love reading about their walk of faith and how they got through some pretty scary things. I love to try to envision what it was really like when it happened. Sometimes I wish I could go back in time and just be a fly on the wall and see how it all went down. I love those stories in the Word that defy all human reasoning and run right over how we process things. Over the next few days I am going to look at Daniel. Oh my...what a man of God and what an example for us to follow!

King Darius was so impressed with Daniel's good character and impressive abilities. He decided to make him to rule over a whole kingdom. When other rulers and satraps heard about this, they grew jealous. Jealousy if left go with will cause people to do the unspeakable. Their jealousy drove them to seek out reasons to accuse Daniel, but they could find nothing wrong with him. Their next plan was to find something to complain about that was connected to the law of Daniel's God. The supervisors and satraps went as a group to the king and proposed a new law. They said, "For the next thirty days, whoever prays to any god or man except you, King, will be thrown into the lions' den!" King Darius made the law and signed it.

You see, Daniel lived a life of consistency, a life of NO compromise, he was a

man of prayer. Three times a day, he bowed down on his knees to pray and praise God. Even though Daniel heard about the new law, he went home and and DID THE SAME THING HE DID ANY OTHER TIME. He prayed. There was a law set in place yet his heart would not allow him to violate his conviction of connecting with the Living God. Living with no compromise is when you refuse to give up, let go, or change what you are doing because you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is the right thing. We must follow our heart and the convictions we embrace.

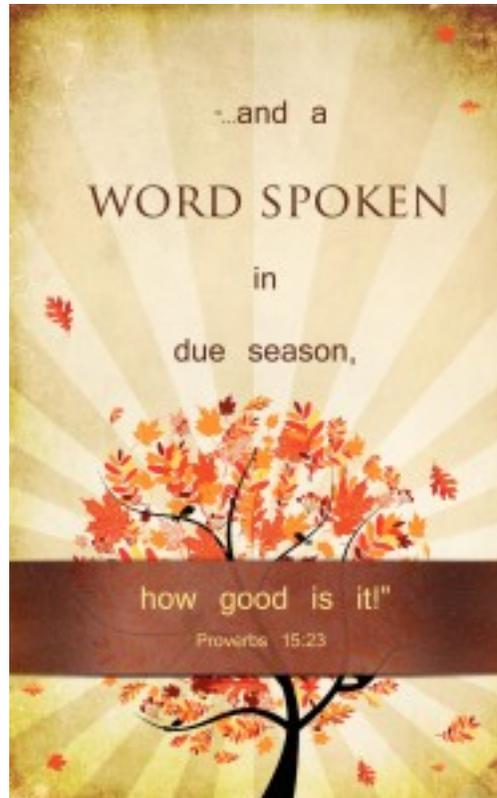
Tomorrow I will continue with Daniel's story. Daniel had a tough consequence to face because he refused to compromise yet His God went before him. An uncompromising heart is not weak, only the bold and steadfast will go forward with a heart that will not compromise. I believe that we too can walk in this place of NO compromise as we steadfastly seek Him every day of our lives. God bless you!

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Sunday, September 8, 2013

"The Power of One Word"

by Dona Hake



Yesterday I shared about facing our giants one at a time. Today I want to share about the importance of being sensitive to those that are walking through a battle or difficult circumstance. There may also be times that someone you love has failed and because they have failed they do not know where they stand with you or those around them. Not only have they failed because of a mistake but they feel they have failed people in their life because they have disappointed them.

"A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success."

Unknown

Oh how important it is to be sensitive in our hearts to speak the right things at the right time when someone you know is walking through a difficult time. I have witnessed in my husband's and my many years of being in ministry that people sometimes shrink back from those that are struggling with something. They feel because they do not know what to say they just act as if the problem does not exist. How lonely one can feel when they are dealing with a giant or an impossible situation and then they feel that they are alone. This ought not to be so. I have always encouraged people that express that they are speechless to

just be there for the person and God will put the words in their mouth to speak. It's called a word in season.

I encourage you today to keep your eyes open to those around you. You know what?....God may have you speak ONE word to someone you do not even know and it may be the ONE word that they need to keep them going another day. Be tender and watchful over your family and friends that you are not missing an opportunity to speak ONE word to lift up their hearts. Be sensitive and mindful because there really are a lot of opportunities all around us to release words of life that we have within us. Remember the word spoken in season is indeed a good word! God bless you!



Saturday, September 7, 2013

"Facing Giants One Battle At a Time"

by Dona Hake



We all have giants that we have faced in our lives. Some are bigger than

others, some of our battles were victories and some were not. If a battle has been lost I always try to look at the experience as a time where I walk away with wisdom from the whole thing. The secret to winning a battle in the spirit is knowing the right thing to do and remaining steadfast. Our courage will be great as we know in our hearts that our God is faithful and He goes before us in the face of our enemy no matter how big it is to us. There is no battle that God views as big because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world!

I would like to share a quote with you that fits with today's devotional.

**"Life shrinks or expands us in proportion
to one's courage."**

Anais Nin

People that walk courageously seem to be able to face anything. They refuse to shrink back in the face of their enemy. Have you ever had those times where you see someone and you know what they are walking through something really big yet they seem at peace and they are embracing a confidence that comes from above? What a testimony of the power of God when one remains in faith.

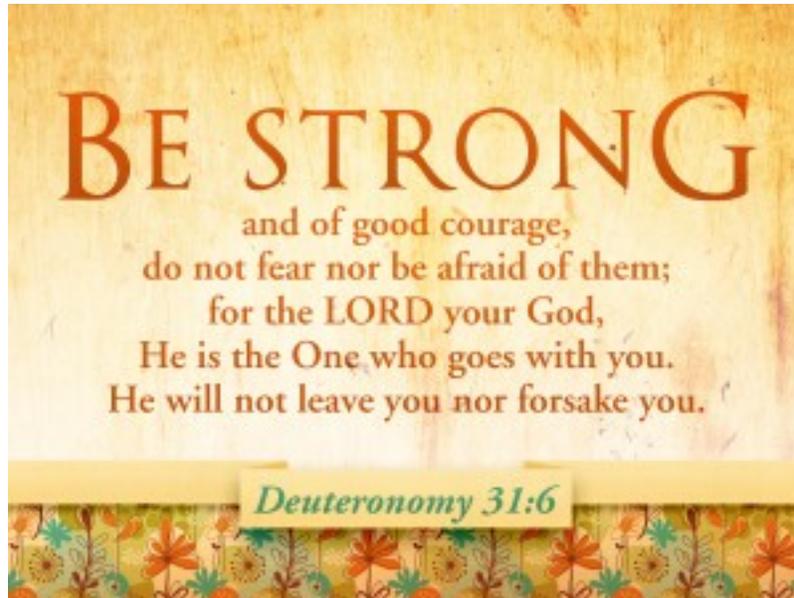
Maybe today you are facing something really big. I want to tell you that if God is on your side, the battle will be won. Let us trust in Him but remember to let Him fight the battle. Let God go before you...don't walk ahead of Him. Let Him decide how the battle will be fought. Lay your ideas aside and cling to the wisdom that He so desires to give you. Look fear in it's face and declare that God is with you and there is nothing that can separate you from God's love. God bless you!

~~~~~ ♥ ~~~~~

Friday, September 6, 2013

"Do Not Fear...Pray!"

by Dona Hake



It is vital that we as believers maintain a strong and courageous heart. It is only the Lord that can give us such confidence. We must never ever try to be fearless, bold, confident or strong in our own ability. It is only the Lord that can infuse us with these things.

Over the past few weeks the news of our world has been extremely troubling to me and I am sure if you have been following the news that you too feel the same. I am feeling in my heart that many just do not know what to think about many serious things that face us as a country right now. I encourage you to not stick your head in the sand. Search out what is going on through excellent sources of news and men and women which speak in integrity and truth. Know this...the Word of God has warned us that in the last days that there would be wars and rumors of wars. Jesus also said, "Do not let your heart be troubled."

The Bible has many examples for us to learn from. There were those godly ones that faced the impossible yet God spoke and told them to be strong and fearless. Let us learn from these examples and remind ourselves that we need not fear the unknown for God will be faithful to give us what we need. When Moses was about to die the Lord had put everything in place and he was encouraging Joshua's heart to go forth without fear. I am sure that Joshua was

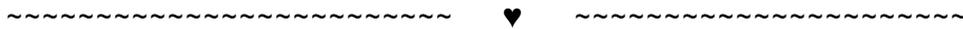
maybe biting his nails over what he was facing yet God through Moses encouraged his heart to not be afraid and move forward.

**Deuteronomy 31:6-7**

**Be strong and be brave. Don't be afraid of those people because the Lord your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you."**

**Then Moses called Joshua. All the Israelites watched while Moses said to Joshua, "Be strong and brave. You will lead these people into the land that the Lord promised to give to their ancestors. You will help the Israelites take that land and divide it among them. 8 The Lord will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid!"**

We must remind ourselves not to worry, not to try to figure things out but rather pray. I encourage you today to pray for the decisions that are "on the table" of our leaders of this Nation right now. Let us pray that our leaders would humble themselves however the Lord sees fit. Believe that laborers would be sent into their paths with the exact words of wisdom that they need to hear for this moment in time. Hearts and decisions can change through the power of prayer. I encourage you to pray in the Holy Spirit for He knows exactly what is going on and He knows exactly how to move the mountains that need to be moved. God bless you and remember it is God that keeps us strong and courageous for every thing that we face in this life. God bless you!



Thursday, September 5, 2013

"Never Be Weary of Doing Good"

by Dona Hake



### **Galatians 6:7-9 The Voice**

**"Make no mistake: God can't be mocked. What you give is what you get. What you sow, you harvest. Those who sow seeds into their flesh will only harvest destruction from their sinful nature. But those who sow seeds into the Spirit shall harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. May we never tire of doing what is good and right before our Lord because in His season we shall bring in a great harvest if we can just persist."**

As this scripture says, "May we never tire of doing what is good and right." The Lord knew that we would be tempted to grow weary or the Spirit would not have led Paul to write such powerful words.

Many times you may purpose in your heart to do the right thing and you make a decision that you are going to keep on doing that good thing, and then it happens. It seems that the devil knows how to bring discouragement our way in what ever manner he can. Unfortunately many times it could come through the words of others. When your heart is right and it is set to do the right thing, life and people can wear you down. Make no mistake: God cannot be mocked!!!! People and circumstances may wear us down but as we renew our strength in Him and keep doing good, we will reap!

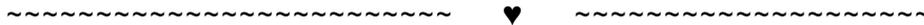
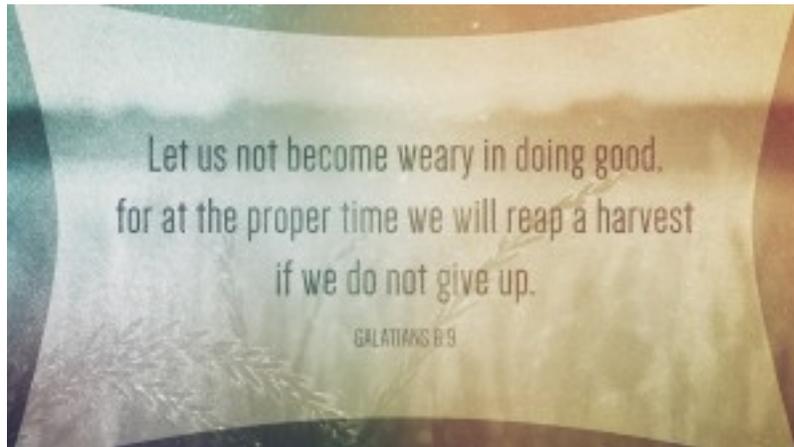
You may be in a situation in your work place where the strife among fellow workers is at an all time high. You purpose to do that which is right and now you are experiencing rejection. You may have someone that has treated you unkindly and you have made a decision to be kind to them and reach out

whatever way you can, and they just continue to ignore your gestures. I could offer different examples but I am very sure that you have your own experiences that you can reference to in your own memory.

God has promised us that as we continue to sow that which is right, no matter how bad things look, we will reap a harvest. When and how is totally up to Him, His ways, and His timing. Our part is to just do the Word no matter if people or situations change or not.

Today I want you to meditate and confess, "May I never tire of doing and saying the right things that are pleasing and in accordance with His Word. I will persist because He has promised that the harvest is coming! I believe He will strengthen my heart as I look to Him in my moments of discouragement. In Jesus Name."

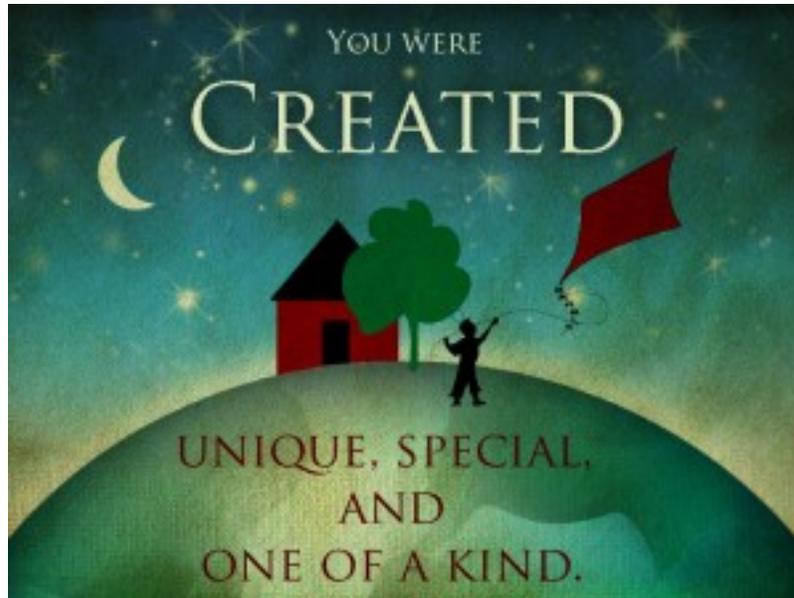
God bless you as you continue to do that which is good for His glory and His kingdom.



Wednesday, September 4, 2013

"No One Else Like You!!!"

by Dona Hake



**Isaiah 44:24**

**Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb,  
I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens  
alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;**

Our God is so awesome! We serve a God that is beyond our comprehension. If we just grasp the thought that there is much He desires that we understand, and yet there are things that we will never figure out. I see this as a good thing because that is what makes Him God.

Today I just want you to stop and ponder that He made you for such a time as this. He called your life into existence the day your mother conceived you and yet He knew you before that moment. Now...try to figure that one out! There are no two finger prints the same because every human being that lives is unique, special and one of a kind. There is no one else that can fill your shoes.

We live in a day where our individuality is being challenged by the pressures of this world. If you do this, you'll look like this and if you wear this you are really cool, etc... All you have to do is jump in your car and head for the nearest highway and you see what the perfect body and face looks like, and after you see that you may be tempted to try to figure out how to conform to that image. Isn't it sad that our world in which we live is dictating such things to us. This world's voice is strong and it shouts at us so loudly that we have forgotten to just live life as an individual. We shrink back at the very thought of

just being ourselves.

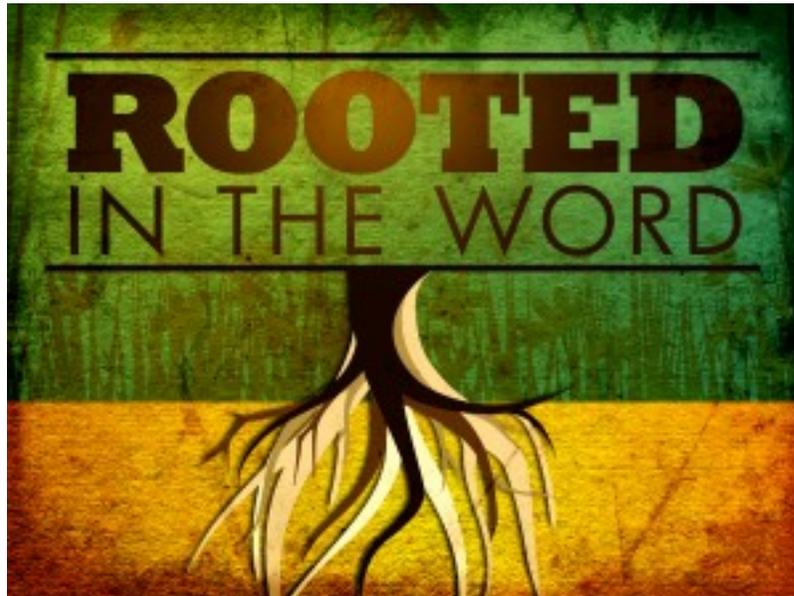
Today I just want you to thank Him for the wonderful plan that He has for you. Thank Him for how special and unique you are. Praise Him that you are an individual that is so special that He made no one else like you. God is good and He makes everything with a special plan and purpose in mind! God bless you!



Tuesday, September 3, 2013

"Rooted in His Word"

by Dona Hake



It is important to always know that we are embracing truth. The devil wants nothing more than to trick us into believing a lie. Anything that will weaken our faith or deceive us is his ultimate goal.

Let us ask God for discerning hearts that we may know that which is true and and that which is a lie. Always remember that the devil will come as an angel of light and quite honestly sometimes it is hard to tell because he so cleverly tries to fool us.

The Word of God must be a priority in your life. What it says absolutely must be more important than anyone's opinion or reasoning in a matter. We must be seekers of His truth and be willing to count the cost. Sometimes we will not be the most popular in the room when we take a stand for that which we feel is our conviction.

### **Colossians 2:8 The Living Bible**

**"Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said."**

I have been amazed already how some believers are just swept away from their convictions they once had. Paul was stating in this scripture to make sure you do not get carried off or become captive to so called philosophy and intellectualism. Amplified Bible translates this also as being vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense). There are human traditions and ideas which are men's ideas of the material rather than that of the spiritual world. I find The Voice's translation of this to be exceptional so I want to share it as well:

### **Colossians 2:8**

#### **The Voice (VOICE)**

**" Make sure no predator makes you his prey through some misleading philosophy and empty deception based on traditions fabricated by mere mortals. These are sourced in the elementary principles originating in this world and not in the Anointed One (so don't let their talks capture you)."**

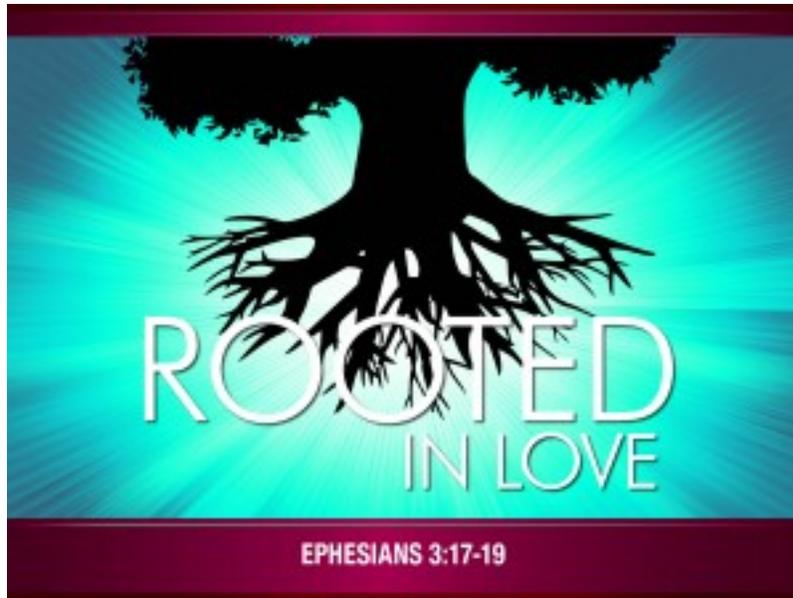
How important it is that we purpose to seek God and His Word. Read His Word and seek how you can strengthen your roots in Him. I pray that the roots of your spiritual life are growing deeper and deeper each day as you commit your life to Him. Believe Him for the discernment that you need to be able to sort truth from lies. Ask Him for the courage and boldness to speak and do that which you know to be true. God bless you!



Monday, September 2, 2013

**"Rooted in His Love"**

by Dona Hake



In a garden, in a forest etc...whatever is above above the ground reveals the strength of what is under the ground. If a root systems is strong and deep the tree or flower will be great and beautiful and withstand just about anything. If it be weak and not cared for it more than likely will not do well in the heat and other elements the weather will bring.

In early spring when I planted my flower garden it seemed like I could have done weeding every day and the weeds still seemed to spring up over night. Without the diligent observance of the condition of my flowers and pulling of the weeds those pretty little flowers never would have made it. Today my garden is full of beautiful tall flowers of all kinds. They stand tall and they are strong and healthy. Quite honestly at this point in the game the weeds have no place to grow.

Our lives speak and reveal what is rooted in our hearts. As we tend to our hearts in all the areas that the Lord commands we will value the fruit of the deeply rooted good things He desires to produce in us. We have got to watch over the condition of our hearts just as you do a garden. When I bought this one particular flower for my garden I never dreamed of it's potential. One little flower probably about 7 inches high just became so huge! As I cared for it and it took root it is literally a bush with tons of beautiful flowers and I am amazed.

Today I want you to think about the love of God in your heart. How well do you

tend it? Can you see that you are growing or at a standstill? Quite honestly no matter how old you are in the Lord, this is a question we should ask ourselves on a regular basis.

### **Ephesians 3:17-20 The Living Bible**

**"And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love; and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so at last you will be filled up with God himself.**

**Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinately beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes."**



May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love!

Seek to know Him more, to love Him more, and to serve

Him in a greater way today.

God bless you!



Sunday, September 1, 2013

"Reaching For God Given Goals"

by Dona Hake



One thing that is for sure and that is we can all learn from our past. What happened yesterday can serve your heart with wisdom from your experiences. In this life we will all have days in which we wish would of gone a bit better but we cannot dwell on that. We serve a God that says His mercies are new every morning and we can wake up each day knowing that those mercies are waiting for us.

Many things that may have happened in your past may be painful and the memories hurt when you think upon them. These type memories can only be dealt with by the comforting ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. He can heal your broken heart and every thing that seems to torment your mind. Some experiences we have absolutely no control over them. We have all made mistakes in our past that we wish we would not have done, yet again let me remind you to look to the tender mercies of the Lord and know that He can

forgive you. He can take those mistakes and turn them around in a way that you can use your experience as a tool to reach people that they do not take the same path.

### **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."**

Today I encourage you to look into your future with fresh hope that God will guide and direct your every step. We must stay in His Word and in His presence. It is there that we will know what He wants us to do. It is there that we will know what direction your life is to be going.

### **Proverbs 3:6 Easy-to-Read Version**

**" With every step you take, think about what he wants, and he will help you go the right way."**

### **Psalm 32:8 The Voice**

**"I will teach you and tell you the way to go and how to get there;  
I will give you good counsel, and I will watch over you."**

The Lord desires that we be resolute and determined to stay focused as we look to fulfill the perfect plan that He has for our lives. Serve Him today with your whole heart and know that He has plans and a wonderful future for you!