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Merry Christmas!

Mission statement of Partners on-line magazine:

- To provide a resource that will encourage, teach, equip, inspire, inform as well as provide tools for evangelism.
- Network and connect ministries and individuals
- To provide a place and opportunity for ministries and individuals to share with others their experiences and what God has been revealing to them.

Laboring Together In the Purposes Of God

Partnering with individuals, churches and ministries in advancing the purposes of God locally, nationally & globally.

The King and His Kingdom

By Maureen Buckingham

Christmas is such a significant time for us as believers to reflect on the precious gift God sent, His Son, who came as a baby to a humble manger. It's a time to reflect on the power of Christ's obedience on the cross and how He rose again victorious. However, in our time of celebration, let's not lose sight of the fact that He came as a King of a Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is basically the rulership and government of God in and among His people. It is a spiritual kingdom that has its own culture and people that surrender to Him as Lord in their personal lives and corporately, living according to the will, purpose and intent of their King and reflecting His glory. Jesus preached this Kingdom as we read in the following verses.

Matthew 4:23 "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Matthew 9:35-38 "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Mark 1:14, 15 "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel." Luke 4:43 "And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."

*Luke 17:21 says "The
Kingdom of God is
within you"*



We too are to preach this kingdom and advance His purposes with the enablement of the Holy Spirit. As our prayer teams have been praying more and more about the Kingdom and asking God to teach us and enable us, He has been faithful to reveal truths, with His Spirit flowing through us according to Kingdom purposes, not through man-made agendas. Let's take a look at some of the important Kingdom principles we can see demonstrated through a few events of the Christmas story.

1. *Jesus came as a child.*

Mark 10:15 “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive and accept and welcome the kingdom of God like a little child [does] positively shall not enter it at all.” Many see the maturity and state of a child as a negative thing as they lack knowledge, wisdom and experience. However, childlikeness is key to accepting and entering the Kingdom.

a. *Children have affection towards their parents and those that care for them.* Children look up to them and admire them. I personally have the awesome privilege of one of my granddaughters living with us at this time. She is so unconditionally loving and has a trust, confidence, security and freedom especially when she can see her mom or myself close by☺. I just see her as such a picture of how we should live loving and knowing our King who is reigning and in control.

b. *Children are curious and ever learning.* We must keep pressing in to know Him and learn about His ways. Children want to know more and so keep asking, copying and attempting to do things so they can figure it out. By doing, they grow just as it is with the Kingdom. It is not about cramming facts but as we walk in the Kingdom and follow Christ’s example, we grow and mature, learning the principles of the Kingdom and knowing the King.

c. *Children are dependent for everything in their lives and are trusting.* We too must look to Christ for everything, trusting Him and His Word.



2. *Jesus came humbly to just a few seemingly insignificant people in the natural.*

We see Jesus continue in this throughout His life on earth. Jesus did not present Himself with pomp and ceremony like we see in many areas of the Christian world today. He did not come in a way to position himself in the eyes of the world for influence and notoriety. Kingdom mentality is humble enough to obey no matter what it is or what it may cost us, even if there is nothing in it for us and even if it is to just one seemingly insignificant person to share the gospel. God has shown us through so many instances, that obedience has a ripple effect even if the obedience had results we could not measure in the natural or could be seen with our natural eyes. The word tells us that the Kingdom of God spreads like leaven. (Matthew 13:33) We see how Jesus alone carried the message and ministered it through His life and it spread from there all over the world.

3. *The shepherds and the wise men were willing to search and find.*

Mark 13:45-46 says “Again the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is a dealer in search of fine and precious pearls, who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it.” To find and attain the Kingdom of God we must search for it as more important than anything else we have. There are so many cares and concerns that can entangle us however Hebrews 12:1 tells us to throw them off and focus on Christ. We need to ever be searching to know Him more. It is easy to reach a certain place in our growth and just camp there as it seems comfortable or good enough. Maybe we are just getting tired of the journey or want to pursue other things. However, we read how the wise men did not stop when they reached Jerusalem and talked with Herod. They kept their hearts set on the goal to find him and be in His presence. Matthew 6:33 “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.”

When we read how Jesus came to earth and how He lived His Kingdom message as an example for us, we need to realign ourselves to be people of His Kingdom not people after patterns of this world. This Christmas let’s remember the baby Jesus, glorify Him as King and advance His Kingdom in us, among us and through us. *(Biblical quotes from the Amplified Bible)*

What Time is it?

By Jewell Clarke

As you speak to many today there is one common denominator that seems to be on everyone’s lips, “I am soooo busy!!” I walk away and ask WHY? Everyone has the same amount of time in their day. We are running here and there with kids, their programs, activities, work and now to top it off CHRISTMAS! In all of this busyness how do you hear the sweet inner voice of the Holy Spirit?

As I look back upon this year that is quickly coming to an end I cannot help but reflect on my contribution to the Kingdom. Am I more involved now or less than the beginning of the year? This has nothing to do with works but with commitment.

Have I done all that my Heavenly Father has asked me to do or have I been too busy to listen? I believe that there has been a subliminal plan orchestrated by our adversary that

keeps us busy, so busy, that we are inactive, standing still. The result is weariness, tiredness and exhaustion. However there is a much more devastating result than our physical and spiritual exhaustion – the expansion in the Kingdom is hindered.

God’s Word gives us direction with regards to the right use of our time. He also gives us a warning. Who is stealing your time? Remember the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Time can be stolen! Psalm 90:12 says “Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom”. We are to be a consistent example before this world. How busy have we become? If we fail to

Eph 5:15 says “Making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil”

spend time in prayer we will have little effect in our families, our workplace or the marketplace. Prayer is a gift given to us by our Heavenly Father to communicate with Him. It is an earthly license for Heavenly interception in every area of our lives. Colossians. 4:5 says: "Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders, make the most of every opportunity." Daniel. 2:21 says "For He changes times and seasons, He sets up kings and disposes them, He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning".

We're in the most stressful season of the year with so many demands and expectations upon us all. Take the time to wait upon the Lord, to hear the still small voice inside. In His stillness He will give you strategies, direction, and supernatural wisdom to bring you through.

In the quiet place you receive your next assignment. It could be to visit the shut in next



door or to call the single mother who is struggling with all the pressures of life. It may be to speak to the one you work with every day. It may be to start a small Bible study. A season of change has begun. We are in it now. Do not miss it because of busyness. There is a cost though, it is your time. The rewards are great as it is for His Kingdom!

We have a promise which in Matthew 6:33 which says" if we seek Him first, His Kingdom (His way of doing things) His righteousness, then All these things shall be added unto you". Every area of your life shall be taken care of.

As we come to the end of another year, it is my prayer that each one will listen, be still and obedient to His leading. What are the results? Kingdom Expansion!!!

It's Time!!

(Biblical quotes from the NIV)

According to God's Word

By Sharry Spong

I believe that there is coming a movement among God's people that will change the face of Christianity forever. I also believe that this move will only be through those who have not hardened their hearts and have embraced the fullness of Jesus Christ rather than systems and programs. I have learned over the last several years that I am not here to advance a church organization but I am called to advance our precious savior's kingdom, of which there is no end. The good news is not about a church, but rather, a kingdom that holds the most amazing life. Today, many of us could miss this next move of God because of preconceived ideas of what it should look like just as the Jewish people missed their Messiah by what they preconceived about Him.

For years I sat under teaching that confined Christ to the church as an organization. If you wanted someone saved or healed, you brought them to a meeting and hopefully, the pastor, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, would convict and move the sinner to repentance and maybe if they had enough faith, God would heal them.

Well, at first I was so excited by the things that God had done for me that I witnessed to quite a few people and was thrilled when they received salvation as well. I would pray first and go, expecting God to do His part, which He did. I would receive amazing words of knowledge and wisdom which confirmed that the Holy Spirit, the "Helper", would "follow" with signs and wonders. Unfortunately, my method did not fit the organizations formula and I was chastised by a pastor who had an idea of how we should have success.



Next, the scriptures themselves came under attack. They were explained away and given convoluted rationales with a host of doctrines and theologies that diminished the power of God's Word. The legitimacy of the literalness of the Word was soon given to excuses as to why the Word of God was true but in most cases did not work the way I was reading it. Soon I came to an understanding that there were a variety of reasons as to why most scriptures were not working and we could always blame someone or something else.

There are even some who with a sense of knowing will say that "yes, that's how it is in those other churches but we have the answer in our church." However, I in my personal search of churches I found similar patterns throughout.

2 Timothy 3:16 says "All scripture is God-breathed"

In fact, there are many teachings today that are polar opposites of what the Bible teaches because of those who claim to have profound revelation and understanding of what the Word of God means. Portions of scripture are being taken out of context and are being perverted in their use. Now obviously I am not an expert in theology and doctrine but I can read and some things just do not add up.

First, the Word is the living Word and it is just as true and powerful today as it was when Jesus used it every time as a rebuttal against Satan and the temptations he offered Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that "All scripture is God-breathed" and is our authority and rule for faith and life. Scripture does not contradict itself. Only when we twist it to suit our own ends and failings does it seem to.

One of many examples is the following. We have been given a prosperity teaching which perverts the very nature of scripture. For those of us who are struggling with finances,

we are told to tithe and offer more. We are held accountable as prosperity doctrines tell us that it is the measuring stick of how much we are walking in the divine will and purpose of God. Give more to get more we are told. God does want us to prosper and walk in abundance but not from a heart of greed and a motivation fixated on wealth first. May I point out the obvious? What happened to the other scriptures that tell us “not to heap up treasures here” and to “be content with what we have” and many scriptures on coveting and greed that we are admonished against? I like what Jesus says in Luke 12:15, “And He said to them, Guard yourselves and keep free from all covetousness (the immoderate desire for wealth, the greedy longing to have more); for a man’s life does not consist in and is not derived from possessing overflowing abundance or that which is over and above his needs.” Then in verse 30 and 31 of the same chapter in Luke, Jesus says “For all the pagan world is (greedily) seeking these things and your Father knows that you need them. Only aim at and strive for and seek His kingdom, and all these things shall be supplied to you also.”

Our heart's motives and agendas must change to conform to the image of Christ as He himself did only that which He saw His Father doing.

The key is that we are to seek His kingdom and not our prosperity. 1 Timothy 6:5-8 says “And protracted wrangling and wearing discussion and perpetual friction among men who are corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, who imagine that godliness or righteousness is a source of profit (a moneymaking business, a means of livelihood). From such withdraw. (And it is indeed a source of immense profit for) godliness accompanied with contentment (that contentment which is a sense of inward sufficiency) is great and abundant gain, for we brought nothing into the world and obviously we cannot take anything out of the world; But if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content (satisfied).” Then too, let’s look at what we are told in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 about the look of the end-time church. “But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble (hard to deal with and hard to bear). For the people will be lovers of self and (utterly) self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate (greedy) desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. (They will be) without natural human affection (callous and inhuman) relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement) (they will be) slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers) intemperate and loose in morals and conduct,

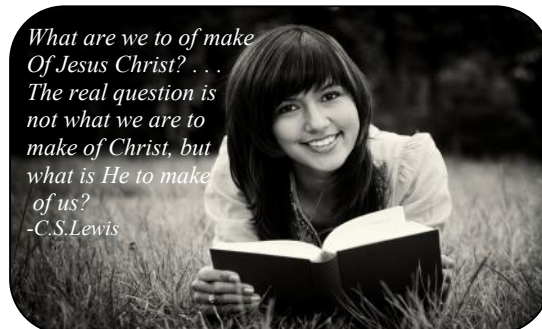
uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good. (They will be) treacherous (betrayers), rash, (and) inflated with self-conceit. (They will be) lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God. For (although) they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it (their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession). Avoid (all) such people (turn away from them).

2 Timothy 4:3&4, “For the time is coming when (people) will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but having ears itching (for something pleasing and gratifying), they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.”

Now I am very aware that God came to give us abundance and blessings but we are currently still hearing a gospel fixated upon wealth and what God can do for us. Because God has blessed me, I am quite sure that He would much rather I give out of that overflow to someone He wants to reveal His mercy to as opposed to another small, newer appliance cluttering up my countertop. We are sons of the Most High God and there is something dreadfully wrong with our focus if that is all we aspire to do with what He has blessed us with.

Appeasing our own selfish greed should be last on a very long list of “to do’s”. Our heart’s motives and agendas must change to conform to the image of Christ as He himself did only that which He saw His Father doing. Good thing it wasn’t just about Him or we all would be in a sinking boat. There are mature Christians who are already “doers of the Word” but I am finding that this false doctrine has infiltrated many in the corporate church and thus we all need to” search our hearts”.

This year, as the Christmas season arrives in which we celebrate the magnificence of what our Father has done for us out of his loving kindness and mercy, let us take time to look around and see those we might bless to glorify our Father. Let’s show them this year what real Christians look like in our own communities. *(Biblical quotes from the amplified Bible)*



What are we to make Of Jesus Christ? . . . The real question is not what we are to make of Christ, but what is He to make of us? -C.S.Lewis

It's November 6, 2011 and OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations) is holding its senior boys cross country championship in Ottawa. Fifteen minutes before start time. Two hundred and forty eight runners are lined up waiting for the gun to go off. The crowd of people cheering is enthusiastic and the atmosphere is charged with excitement. One minute before race time; all ears are tuned and waiting for the sound of the gun. Bang! The 7,230-metre cross country race begins.

My husband, daughter and son are all runners. I am their #1 cheerleader. My son Jeremie is in his last year of high school and has been running since elementary school. It has always been a joy and pleasure to watch him run competitively.

The apostle Paul compared running to our spiritual race. Hebrews 12:1, 2 "Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance and that sin which so readily clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, Looking away to Jesus, Who is the leader and the Source of our Faith and is also its Finisher. He, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God".

Becoming a runner does not start at the sound of the gun. It starts with many months and years of training and discipline prior to race day. There are many challenges a runner will face during preparation. As we look into these challenges, we will see the parallel to our spiritual journey as we move forward in Christ Jesus. These challenges may come in the form of discouragement, or other setbacks such as physical conditions or various trials. To continue the appointed course, we will need determination and perseverance. To persevere is 'a steadfast pursuit of a goal.' We also need endurance which means 'the ability to withstand prolonged strain.' "Therefore my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast) immovable" 1 Corinthians 15:58.

If we are to stay the course and to keep focus, it will require discipline and sacrifice. There may be times we have to give up our enjoyable activities and even our times spent with friends to reach our goal. We need to stay committed even if we are alone, misunderstood or we don't see the immediate results. Don't give up; keep the focus. Don't become sidetracked, derailed or hindered. In running, there is a term 'DQ' which means Disqualified. A runner can be disqualified because of violations of rules such as: taking the wrong way, pushing another runner or taking a banned substance.



We need to stay committed even if we are alone, misunderstood or we don't see the immediate results.

The Message Bible says in 1 Corinthians 9:26, 27 "I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it then missing out myself". The NTL version of 1 Corinthians 9:27 "I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified". We don't want to hear the word "disqualified". There may be times we get off our course. Repent and turn back to God. Turn away from all that will distract us and get back on track. In running, sometimes a pacer will come alongside of you. A pacer is a stronger runner who will run with you for a distance to encourage, to motivate, and to help you to stay strong and finish the race. As believers we have the Holy Spirit who comes alongside of us as our divine pacer to help us keep going strong.

In our spiritual journey, we are required to give all of ourselves to Him. When my son is racing and I ask him what place he thinks he might come in, he says to me it doesn't matter. What is important for him is that he gives it his all and finishes the race. To give my all I say, "Take me Lord, so that there is none of me". A quote from Andrew Murray: "Christ was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him...He said, "it is not I; I am nothing ...I am nothing; the Father is all".

In running, it is important to finish the race. There is a term 'DNF' which means Did Not Finish. A runner starts the race, but never finishes it. To finish, the runner needs to cross over the finish line. Don't stop short! Many believers start well but for whatever reason don't finish well. 2 Timothy 4:8 says "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me, the (victor's) crown of righteousness. On November 6, 2011, at the OFSAA cross country championship in Ottawa, my son Jeremie was presented with a bronze medal.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to us: "Run! Run! Run the race that is set before you. Run the appointed course that I've set before you. Run! Run from youthful lusts. Run from every entanglement of sin. There is one course. Run this race. Run it to the end. Finish the race. Finish the race. Those who endure to the end shall be saved. Run! Run!" (other Biblical quotes from the Amplified Bible)

Hebrews 12:1 says ... "let us run with patience the race that is set before us"

Some lessons are never completely grasped until you walk through it yourself. My eldest son recently went through the basic military training course. He was in Edmonton for a month where he experienced extreme military training. They screamed at the men, told them when they were allowed to sleep, eat, run, play, work and even when to go to the bathroom.

When he returned home, he was wound up like a tightly wound spring, ready to let loose any minute. He was robot like as he did not smile, ate his meals in 10 seconds flat, did not sleep well and had to be told to do everything. He no longer functioned as a human being but like a robot needing instructions for the next step.

I expected that kind of behaviour from him and knew that with love, kindness and lots of prayer he would eventually come back to normal. It was then that I noticed some other disturbing trends occurring. He had met a young lady and she understandably took up most of his time however what concerned me was his lack of personal care.

My son only did what this young lady wanted, when she wanted and how she wanted without any regard to his own needs. He no longer knew how to set boundaries for himself so that he could take care of his basic needs.

It was then that the Lord opened my eyes to see that because his experience had been so overwhelming in the summer, he had been stripped of all boundaries and no longer knew how to put healthy boundaries in place for himself.

This disturbed me greatly as I saw him get sick and not take care of himself. I saw his laundry pile up and many other little things that sent alarm bells off in my head. I cried out to the Lord to help me to help him. I was so worried and concerned for him that it was literally making me feel very anxious and uptight.

In the Bible it teaches us that we need to have self-control and I felt that my son no longer even knew how to have any control, let alone self-control. Proverbs 25:28 says "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control." His walls were broken down and only God could fix them. I couldn't fix anything but I could pray for him and I did.

Now here is where the story takes a turn. As I was seeing all of these things manifest themselves in my son, I was running around like a mad woman. I was "doing this and that and everything else". My quiet time with the Lord was suffering as I was "busy". I had stopped really studying the Word because this needed to be done, or that. I had even stopped writing which I know God has called me to for this season. It seemed that every time I turned around there was something or someone that needed my attention. Then about a month ago I hit a "wall". I was exhausted, miserable, and

overwhelmed. It seemed that anything anyone asked became a huge deal to me. I had pains in my chest and I was feeling the edges of insanity.

It was then that I had cried out to the Lord with all of my woes telling Him how tired I was, that I was not enjoying my life, that my joy had evaporated and I was just plain miserable. It was then that I prayed "Lord throughout the year we had been praying about people and their priorities and boundaries". Yes, I did not even get the word out of my mouth completely before I realized what I was saying. Thankfully the Lord is more gracious than I am smart some days and He gently showed me that what He had revealed to me about my son, his lack of boundaries and not taking care of himself was what, in fact, I had been doing. If I could have taken a stick and hit myself at that moment I would have as I realized that not only had I allowed everyone's agendas, needs and desires to have priority over my life and in the midst of it I was not taking care of myself. I was not cultivating my relationship with the Lord and I had many other things I had allowed to slide all in an effort to be Jesus' hands and feet here on this earth. The Lord reminded me of something that He had taught me years ago that "just because it is a good thing, does not mean it is a God thing".

In other words, just because I could see that something needed to be done, did not mean that it was the thing that God wanted me to do. I needed to stop running ahead of Him and pay attention to what He wanted me to do. I needed to know His priorities for my life as I can go ahead and build "things" but if they are not built on the solid rock of God, His ways, plans and purposes for my life, then one day when those things are tested the Bible says that they will be burnt away like straw.

In essence, there were a couple of lessons that I walked away with from all of this; I needed to stop and ask the Lord what His priorities were for my life and I needed to make sure that I put solid boundaries into my life so that I did not feel like I was being overrun. I needed to do good but make sure that whatever I did put my hand to is what God actually wanted me to do and not live in any kind of guilt because I was not being super mom. Another great lesson I learnt was that if I do my own thing, even if it

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is a good thing, I will be miserable as I am not walking in the perfect will of God.

I now had a deeper empathy for the women I see running around who like me feel like they need to carry the full weight of the world on their shoulders. I can pray with greater clarity now, as I understand what a burden it is, to have your walls broken down and no boundaries in place for your protection.

I praise the Lord for His grace and love that stopped my world from spinning out of control and opened my eyes to see the insanity of my actions. Once He had shown me, I repented immediately as I wanted to be rescued from myself and be put back on the right path, one that is illuminated by God as He walks in front of me and says, "Follow me, and take my yoke upon you, as it is light."

(Biblical quotes from the NIV)



Woman to Woman

Linda's Journal



Incomparable Jesus

By Linda Cornett-Ching

We pulled it off and I'm so proud of us! John's whole family came for a visit. First we served a sit down dinner for 20 people in our tiny dining room. Then after a surprise Star Trek themed birthday party for John we had to find places for 21 people to lay their heads for the night between 2 houses but we did it. There were people everywhere, hardly a spare piece of floor could be found. There was laughter and the constant murmur of voices that at times crescendo into quite a roar....how John misses that sound. It's difficult living far away from such a large family. We do love them and miss them so.

However, we are not perfection and I don't want to give a false impression. We don't all share identical interests or even beliefs for that matter. We are sometimes careless and thoughtless with each other. There was and will always be some

uncomfortable stressful moments when we are together but we overcome it all with love, laughter and sometimes tears. I have been asking the Lord "what is the lesson?"

Christmas is coming...that moment in time when we set aside our own agendas, stresses and strife; when even wars are to pause; to remember a little baby born, the Saviour who came to save man from his sins. "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23.

For a lot of people this is not a good time of the year. It isn't full of peace, good cheer and feelings of warm fuzzy thoughts towards their family. It wasn't always so for me and there are times I am melancholy missing those who are no longer on this earth. To those of you who find this a difficult time of year I am sorry. Again I ask the Lord "what is the lesson here?" In John 13:34 it says "Love one another as I have loved you". These are the words my Heavenly Father whispers into my heart and then, "Forgive one another". Being with each other is all that is important after all.

Maybe the lesson for us is to get out of ourselves and to look at others we can bless at this time of year. Maybe find someone who is down on their luck, perhaps that neighbour who is terminally ill? How about a family that is far away from their loved ones? Perchance we need look no further than our home, our own families. We know in blessing others we ourselves are blessed far more. In getting the focus off of ourselves we can remember how great God is always! 1Chronicles 29:11 says "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things." Perhaps the answer to those difficult times that may come this Christmas season is to serve Christ by serving others. Look around as I'm sure the Lord will bring plenty of opportunities your way if you have eyes to see and a heart to serve. For those that are facing circumstances of a more serious nature and the pain is deep, give it God. Hear Him say "let me carry this for you, I've got you" and then surrender to His peace. It truly does pass all understanding.

*Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift indescribable, inestimable, incomparable inexpressible precious beyond words.
~Lois Lebar*

(Biblical quotes from NLT)

I Want the Bugs to Live in my Hair!

By Tammy Bramfield

I received a '911' call this morning from my sister Teresa as she had found something crawling in her three year old's hair. Yes, you've guessed it. Lice!

If you knew my niece, you would know she loves all creepy crawlies including bugs, snakes and the like! I guess it should have been no surprise that after my sister explained to her that she needed to have her hair washed with a special shampoo to get rid of the bugs, that she started to protest vehemently, crying out in tears; "I want lice, I want the bugs to live in my hair!"

It reminded me of the time my daughter Brooke was about the same age and I took her for a needle. After we arrived at the health unit, it was discovered that she did not need the vaccination for several months. As a result we left without the shot, however, not before Brooke threw herself on the ground in a full blown temper tantrum. She was rolling around on the floor and screaming at the top of her lungs, "I want my needle, I want my needle!!"

Although we can all have a good chuckle at the antics of three year olds, I can only wonder how often I have acted like a tantruming child, clinging on to things in my own life that are unproductive or even painful and demanding my own way. Much like the children above, we often do not understand what is in our best interest. Although lice may appear to be harmless little insects initially, leaving them untreated will inevitably cause severe discomfort, likely lead to secondary infection from scratching and can even evoke social isolation from others.

Similarly, receiving an untimely vaccination can also be problematic and potentially harmful to one's health.

Jeremiah 29:11 states the following: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



Much like the children above, we often do not understand what is in our best interest.

Think about that for a moment. Do we really believe it? If we truly did, would it not revolutionize our thinking and our life? God has promised that He has good plans for us to prosper and to give us a future and hope. Take a closer look with me at the depth of the Father's promise to us even in this single verse of scripture.

According to the dictionary: **Prosper** means: To succeed, thrive, and grow in a vigorous way; to become strong and flourishing; and to succeed in an enterprise or activity.

Hope means: To wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment; to have confidence and trust; a desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment; one that is a source of or reason for hope; and the theological virtue defined as the desire and search for the future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help.

Future is defined as something that will happen in time to come; and a prospective or expected condition, especially one considered with regard to growth, advancement, or development.

Isn't our God simply amazing? In a time of turmoil and uncertainty for so many and in so many parts of the world, may we always hang on to what is true and everlasting; the Word of God and His promises.

Philippians 4:19: But my God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 147:3: He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.

Matthew 6:10 - 11: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

Psalms 34:18: The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (NIV)

*Jeremiah 29:11 says
"For I know the plans
I have for you,
declares the Lord"*



*Although the weather is getting cold, let the snow remind you of God's promise to us in Isaiah 1:18
"Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool." Amp Bible*

The Background: Who would have thought that a lily, so beautiful in itself, could be so destructive in its innocence? Louey must have circled the lily a few times before taking the first bite. He admired the lily with its beautiful long petals and sweet smell...even the leaves looked tasty. He had never seen something like this before. The lily was in the middle and hard to get at with the other beautiful flowers surrounding it but for Louey it would change his life and the life of others around him. This is the story of Louey, my beloved cat.

The Situation: A few days had gone by when I noticed Louey was very weak. He had been hiding in his cat condo a lot. We took Louey to the vet and were shocked to find his vitals were off the chart. The creatinine level had reached the highest point in the test. The vet asked if Louey had contact with anti-freeze or a lily. I said yes, a lily which was consistent with the timing and his symptoms. Apparently, lilies are like antifreeze to a cat, toxic. She explained the odds didn't look good for Louey and the probability of Louey having kidney disease now was high. She explained they could do an aggressive action of pumping fluids in and flushing out for the next 48 hours which hopefully would bring the vitals down. She left us alone to decide what to do.

The Decision: My husband and I shed some tears and prayed together. We believe our animals are a blessing from God and we are the caregivers as God cares for us. It just didn't seem fair for Louey, all because of a lily. We asked God what we should do? We were in agreement to do all we could do for Louey and cast all our cares upon God. 1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. Matthew 19:26 "...With men this is impossible but with God all things are possible." After all, this was a life or death matter and we know Jesus is the author of life. Matthew 21:21 "...So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what

was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done.

The Journey: The next 48 hours were crucial. Every day we visited him, his levels went down. Then I started praying specifically for the level to go down to 250 and the next day it did! I shouted, "Thank you God!" in front of everyone and we took Louey home.

The Lesson: Louey did not respond as we expected so we made another trip to the clinic. You see, I was praying for a level of 250 which I thought was normal but in the end, even 217 is the high end of normal. I heard wrong and in my rush I took Louey home too early. In the spirit I heard God...that I did choose the specific and He did answer my specific. Matthew 21:22 "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." I did ask for 250 & God answered 250. In the night I pondered all this. God was teaching me a lesson, a lesson on His timing and leaving all to Him. I repented and prayed, "Lord, you take over, I leave

*1 Peter 5:7 says
"Casting all your
cares upon Him for He
cares for you."*

How often do we incorporate our own agendas, man's agenda, into our prayers when all that God requires is to leave it all with Him and trust in Him.

Louey in Your hands and Your Will be done." After all, I should have trusted God would bring everything down gradually to Louey's normal, not to man's normal, and certainly not to shock Louey's system. Meanwhile the levels had gone down and I knew God was still in this with me.

How often do we incorporate our own agendas, man's agenda, into our prayers when all that God requires is to leave it all with Him and trust in Him. Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God".

We ought to pray as Jesus taught and prayed.

The End of the Story, Yet a New Beginning: Louey is now home and doing well. Remember God loves us all...he knows our needs before we even ask and He knows what's best. Louey is God's miracle! A testimony! (NKJV)



*If we think of our heart,
rather than our purse,
as the reservoir
of our giving,
we shall find it
full all the time!*
—David Dunn

