

Want It To Go Well With You?



When our sons were young, one of their favorite Golden Books was *Tootle the Train*. It was the story of a baby train who was in school to learn to be a Flyer, but he kept jumping off the track to go play in the meadow. It took all the people in the town

working together to convince him that a train needs to “stay on the rails no matter what.”

For a short while in the book, Tootle buys into the lie that life can be found in the meadow, racing horses and making daisy chains among the buttercups. But if you’re a train and you go off the rails, you don’t have a good time playing in the meadow—you get stuck in the dirt! Ever heard the phrase “train wreck”? It’s what happens when a train doesn’t “stay on the rails no matter what.”

Trains weren’t made to run on grass, they were made to run on rails. Staying on the rails is the only way Tootle could be the train he was designed to be.

This book reminds me that God’s truth and precepts are like the rails on which a good life runs. God *wants* us to have good lives! Six times in the book of Deuteronomy, God tells us that the reason He wants us to obey His commands is *that it may go well with us*:

Deuteronomy 4:40 “So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, **that it may go well with you** and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

Deuteronomy 5:16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the

LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and **that it may go well with you** on the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

Deuteronomy 5:33 “You shall walk in all the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and **that it may be well with you**, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you will possess.”

Deuteronomy 6:3 “O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, **that it may be well with you** and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.”

Deuteronomy 6:18 “You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, **that it may be well with you** and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to give your fathers,”

Deuteronomy 12:28 “Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so **that it may be well with you** and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.”

Do you want it to “be well with you”? Of course you do! We all do!

There’s only one way, and that is to live our lives according to God’s plan and design and purpose for us. And there’s only way to do that: to read and study His word so we can learn His plan and design and purpose for us. There are no shortcuts.

Researchers have determined that when people read their Bibles at least four times a week, life change happens. That’s the tipping point.

Do you want it to go well with you this next year? How about opening your Bible—or Bible app—and reading God’s word at least four times a week?

Bible.org offers several Bible reading plans: bible.org/Daily_Bible_Reading_Plans

Or you can jump on board at Join the Journey as we go “rim to rim,” Genesis to Revelation, this year: www.jointhejourney.com

Let’s go . . . so it will go well with you.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/want_it_to_go_well_with_you
on December 30, 2014

Faith and Charity

Here is an interesting fact. Families in San Francisco give almost exactly the same amount to charity each year as families in South Dakota. Arthur Brooks talked about this in his book, *Who Really Cares?* He went on to explain that these two communities were very different. They were separated by not only geography but by many cultural differences.

Their donations to charity also represented a significant difference due to income. The average San Francisco family made (back when the book was written) nearly twice as much each year as a family in South Dakota. Put another way, an average South Dakota family gave away 75 percent more of its household income each year than the average family in San Francisco. When Brooks asked an executive of a foundation in South Dakota why people in her state gave so much more, she had a simple answer: religion.

People of faith give much more than secular people. In his book, he divides Americans into four groups to show their

differences in giving to charity.

Religious conservatives are the largest group of the four. They represent 24 percent of all Protestants, 19 percent of Catholics, along with a number of other religious groups. This group is most likely to give money to charity and they give away the most money.

Religious liberals are the smallest of the four groups. They are almost as likely to give as religious conservatives. They are a little less likely to volunteer.

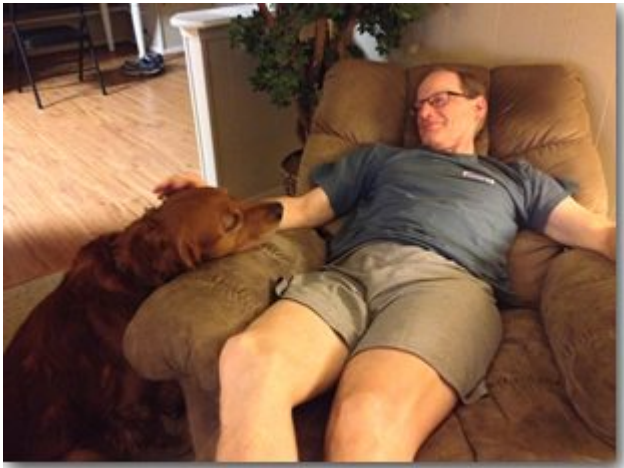
Secular conservatives are much less likely to give to charity. They are also much less likely to volunteer or help people in need. Secular liberals are the second largest group and have the highest average income. Nevertheless they are poor givers, even to secular charities they might be expected to support.

The obvious conclusion is that faith makes a big difference in whether someone gives time or money to a charity.

This blog post originally appeared at pointofview.net/viewpoints/faith-charity/ on December 9, 2014.

Baylor the Lap Dog

This is Baylor, our Golden Retriever. He is a giant sucking funnel of attention and affection. He does not understand the concept of “enough.” And he worships—he ADORES—my husband Ray. His favorite position to do that is in Ray’s lap. But last week, the center of Baylor’s universe had hip replacement surgery. Needless to say, nobody, especially Baylor, is allowed in Ray’s lap.



And Baylor does not understand this.

All he knows is that his lord and master, his sun, moon, and stars, went away for a couple of days and when he came back, he was walking gingerly, leaning on a strange silver contraption to help him walk, and not allowing Baylor in his lap. Not even next to him in his chair. Thus the sad, sad picture.

Watching this heart-wrencher unfold, I am reminded of a major spiritual truth: just as Baylor cannot possibly understand why he is not allowed in Ray's lap, much less the concept of hip replacement surgery, we cannot possibly see the whole picture of any trial or disappointment or suffering we experience.

All we can see, all we can feel, all we can figure out is that we are hurt or angry or both, and it sure doesn't feel fair. That's because all we have is our puny little limited perspective. There is always a much bigger picture we can't see, but God does. He not only sees every detail of the big picture of our situation, He also knows how our situation will play out into the future. He knows how He will redeem our pain and our confusion. He knows why it is essential to trust Him, because He loves us and He knows what He's doing.

As the great theologian Charles Spurgeon said, "God is too good to be unkind, He is too wise to be mistaken, and when you can't trace His hand, that's when you must learn to trust His heart."

When Ray and I look at Baylor, our hearts hurt for the pained misunderstanding on his sweet face. I can't help but wonder if our heavenly Father looks on us with an infinitely greater compassion when we find ourselves in Baylor's shoes—er, paws, overwhelmed by confusion and questions because of what we cannot see and cannot know.

We know that within a couple of weeks, Ray will be healed enough to welcome Baylor back into his chair and into his lap—but we can't communicate that to poor Baylor with his limited doggie mind. But God has communicated a magnificent promise to us, His children: that He is able to make all things work together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).



That means we can trust Him. And, like Ray and Baylor, our heavenly Father will call us into His lap.

This
blog post originally appeared at [Baylor the Lap Dog](#) on
December 2, 2014.

The Euphemism of 'Death With

Dignity'

There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death. (Proverbs 14:12)



Brittany Maynard, a young woman with an incurable brain tumor, recently took her own life rather than suffer through a painful, difficult descent into natural death. She had moved from California to Oregon, which is a “right-to-die” state that allows terminally ill people to be assisted in ending their lives on their terms.

How should we think about this? It depends on your starting point.

If you leave God out of the picture, believing that man is autonomous with the right to make all our own choices independent of any outside source of moral truth, then avoiding needless pain and suffering makes sense. If you leave God out of the picture, then there is nothing particularly special about people as opposed to beloved pets, which we put down when their suffering becomes too great for us. If you leave God out of the picture, and you believe that life ends with your last breath on earth, then ending one’s life is really not much different from turning off a movie before its end because you’re tired and want to go to bed. If you leave God out of the picture, then it makes sense to do whatever you want.

But leaving God out of the picture doesn’t make Him go away.

It just means people are in denial about His existence. About His right to determine life and death because He is the creator of life.

If your starting point is God Himself, who creates people for His pleasure and for His glory (Rev. 4:11, Eph. 1:6), then we are accountable to the Author of Life, and ending one's earthly life is not a choice we have the right to make. If your starting point is God Himself, who made us in His eternal image to live forever, then ending one's earthly life is the doorway to the next life. Not believing in life after death doesn't make it go away. As one character says in the movie *City of Angels*, "Some things are true whether you believe in them or not."

As far as we can tell from what the media presented, Brittany Maynard left God out of the picture in deciding to end her suffering. If she died as she may have lived her life, separated from the God who is created her, then even on her worst days of tumor-induced pain on earth, that was as close to heaven as she was ever going to get. If she remained separated from God as she drank a sedative mixture that allowed her to fall asleep and then die, she made a horrible choice to enter eternity remaining separated from God forever. That means separated from all that is good, from all that is kind, from all life and light and love and joy. Because all these things are found only in God, and if we remain separated from Him, we cut ourselves off from their source. We are left with evil, cruelty, death and darkness and isolation and despair. An eternity of it. There is no dignity in this kind of unending death.

It's possible that she cast herself on God's mercy in her last minutes; I don't know what the state of her soul was as she drew her last breath. I truly hope so.

But the horrific earthly suffering she opted out of, would be nothing compared to the eternal suffering of being cut off from all that is good. I don't mean to make light of the indescribable suffering of those dying from terminal diseases. But it's essential to not leave God out of the picture, and to remember He does great things in people through suffering. Not

just the one with the illness, but the family members and others around them.

Responding to this news about Ms. Maynard, one woman wrote of her husband, “a man who suffered well. It was agony... Watching him suffer. Knowing there was nothing I could do to heal him and little I could do to lessen his suffering. All I could do was hold his hand during biopsies and chemo. During the pain and nausea. I marveled at his strength, his faith, his refusal to give up. I held his hand when the doctor told us there wasn’t anything else they could do. When the morphine caused hallucinations and he forgot we were married. I held his hand and discovered that if you love someone... If you have faith, you can tap unknown reserves of strength, you can endure pain unimaginable. Neither one if us picked the other for the ability to suffer well. But because we truly loved, we were able to put the other person first. That’s love. All the feel good stuff is just romance. It’s nice. It feels good. But it’s small comfort when illness and death come knocking on your door. *I’m so blessed for having had the opportunity to suffer alongside B_____.* He was an amazing man!”

I think that is what true “death with dignity” looks like: being faithful to the end, suffering well, trusting God when the storm rages on.

Speaking of suffering well . . .

Hero to many of us, Joni Eareckson Tada wrote an [open letter](#) to Brittany weeks before she died. Joni has lived longer, and suffered more, than the vast majority of quadriplegics. She knows something of suffering, dealing with a severe handicap plus cancer plus chronic pain. Joni’s voice deserves to be heard above all others, I believe:

“If I could spend a few moments with Brittany before she swallows that prescription she has already filled, I would tell her how I have felt the love of Jesus strengthen and

comfort me through my own cancer, chronic pain and quadriplegia. I would tell her that the saddest thing of all would be for her to wake up on the other side of her tombstone only to face a grim, joyless existence not only without life, but without God.”

This is a deeply sobering, difficult discussion. Please don't leave God out of it.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/the_euphemism_of_death_with_dignity on November 4, 2014.

Gentle and Quiet . . . Whaaaaa???

A lot of women, women like me, have come to a full stop when reading in 1 Peter 3:3-4, where he challenges us:

“Your beauty should not consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold ornaments or fine clothes. Instead, it should consist of what is inside the heart with the imperishable quality of **a gentle and quiet spirit**, which is very valuable in God's eyes.”

A gentle and quiet spirit? Uh-oh.

Some of us have thought, “Oh man. I'm sunk. Is that what it means to be a godly woman? Gentle and quiet?”

Others have wondered, “But God! You made me with a big, loud personality! Why would Your word call me to be something other

than who I am?"

And still others have fretted, "If a gentle and quiet spirit is valuable to God, what does that say about us party girls who love to laugh?"

Good news! A gentle and quiet SPIRIT is different from a gentle and quiet PERSONALITY. The Greek word for spirit is different from the word for soul, or personality. Our spirit is the part of us where God dwells, where He makes His home. A woman can have a dynamic, energetic, live-out-loud personality—and still glorify God in her gentle and quiet spirit.

If you look up the meaning of the words "gentle" and "quiet" in the New Testament's original language, a treasure awaits—especially for us not-so-gentle-and-quiet personalities.

The Greek word translated "gentle" actually means *meekness*. Too bad we have no English word that properly translates this word. Meekness is seen as weakness or mildness. It's not.



It's more like "power wrapped in gentleness." Or "strength wrapped in love." Remember Arnold Schwarzenegger in the movie "Kindergarten Cop"? It's not the actual movie, but the idea behind the title, that I think illustrates meekness: when a big, strong, burly man has to restrain his strength because he is dealing with very small children.

The concept behind meekness is, “Don’t be fooled by this gentle exterior; there is strength and power underneath.”

Meekness is the result of a strong trust in God, when we are able to accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore we do not resist Him or dispute how He deals with us. Meekness is closely linked with humility. It means not fighting against God, and because we trust in God’s goodness, we don’t fight against men either—even evil people.

Meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is a settled, balanced spirit that is neither high on self nor down in the dumps, simply because it’s not occupied with self at all.

There is a picture of a meek woman in Proverbs 31:25 – “She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.” She can laugh because she trusts God and knows He is good, and she doesn’t fight Him as He deals with her.

The greatest example is the Lord Jesus, who said, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.”

And then there’s the matter of a quiet spirit.

This is not about being an [introvert](#) or being a woman of few words, but of a tranquil spirit, where the tranquility arises from within. The root word means “firm, immovable, steadfast.”

A quiet spirit is tranquil because it believes God for who He is. A woman with a tranquil spirit knows how to rest in her trust in God. Many women exuding the beauty of a tranquil spirit are very familiar with Psalm 91, the great antidote for tranquility-stealers.

God says that a gentle and quiet spirit is of “great worth” in His sight. That’s a pretty weak translation. It means VERY precious, of great price. The same word is used of the

spikenard ointment that Mary lavished over Jesus' feet when she anointed Him just before His death. It was worth three years' wages, and it greatly blessed the Lord that she poured it out on Him. A gentle and quiet spirit blesses Him the same way.

A woman with a gentle and quiet spirit is NOT passive, and she is not weak. She has a lot of power inside her because she is yielded to the Lord and takes great joy in trusting Him. She expects that His dealings with her are all good, and it gives her a great peace and tranquility.

One of the best things about a gentle and quiet spirit is that it's contagious. It can whet the appetite of others to trust God in the same way, with the beauty of an intimate love and trust that brings a calming influence to those she touches. Others go away thinking, "everything's going to be okay," because she lives it.

So . . . whew. On behalf of us not-so-gentle-and-quiet personality types. . . It's all good!

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Dumb . . . or Dangerous?

Sue Bohlin blogs about the viral video of Victoria Osteen teaching that we should worship God and do good for ourselves.

The latest video to go viral, at least in the Christian sphere, is a clip of Victoria Osteen at the massive Lakewood Church in Houston, followed immediately by a completely out-of-context (but hilarious) snippet from The (Bill) Cosby Show.

Here is the transcript of her 33-second message:

"I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God—I mean, that's one way to look at it—we're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy this morning. So I want you to know this morning, just do good for your own self. Do good 'cause God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?"

Then we see an incredulous Bill Cosby: "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard in my life!"

I found myself unable to stop thinking about this video, it was so disturbing to me.

Is it true? Does our happiness give God the greatest joy? Should we obey Him and do good so we can be happy? When we go to church and worship God, is it really for and about us?

:::shudder:::

As the apostle Paul was fond of saying, "May it never be!" Or, as Rick Warren said in his opening sentence of the mega-hit *The Purpose Driven Life*, "It's not about you."

The Osteens preach a "gospel of self." Jesus, on the other hand, said, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Denying ourselves means taking ourselves off the throne of our lives and making Jesus Lord, following Him in obedience and submission. The crazy (as in, crazy-beautiful) thing is that when we follow Him by abiding—staying connected and dependent on Him, He flows HIS joy into us: "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:24). Denying ourselves and abiding in

Jesus leads to a supernatural degree of happiness and joy—but it's not the kind of "God wants you to be happy" we see in Mrs. Osteen's teaching.

There is a massive disconnect between a false god who is all about making ME happy and the true God of the Bible. One of the greatest minds in Christianity, A.W. Tozer, wrote about our concept of God:

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . [T]he gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God." (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, New York: HarperCollins, 1961, p.1)

It is dangerous teaching that promotes a god who is all about our happiness. This sets people up for all kinds of disastrous beliefs about the way life really is. And when they expect God to make and keep them happy, they are frustrated and turn away in disbelief because their [expectations](#) were not met—expectations that the true God never promised. A few days ago, Probe Ministries received an email asking for advice from a woman whose life had skidded off the rails, and she was confused because she just *knew* God wanted her to be "happy above all."

Ultimately, that is true in a way: God delights in His children being full of joy and the kind of biblical happiness that is found in every reference to being blessed. (See the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, for starters.) But we find that kind of happiness NOT in ourselves but in intimate connection with the true God. Again, it's not

about us.

Think about what happens when parents indulge their children's every whim because they want them to be happy. Do you get stable, productive people who are others-aware and open to serving them? No! You get spoiled brats! Can you imagine our heavenly Father indulging His children's immature, self-centered ideas of what would make us happy to create a world of spoiled brats? "May it never be!"

God does want us to be happy. By His definition, in His way, in His timing. And it's so much more than the "spoiled brat" concept of happiness, it's about finding our happiness in relationship with Him.

Because it's not about us.

It's about Him.

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1, 2014

Liberated Women and their Daughters

April 21, 2011

Over the last few decades, social commentators have written about the lack of modesty in the current generation and the reasons for it. A recent contribution to the discussion came from an [op-ed](#) by Jennifer Moses entitled "Why Do We Let Them Dress Like That?" She talks about women of a liberated generation who now wrestle with their eager-to-grow-up

daughters and their own pasts.

She attempts to answer a simple question: “Why do so many of us not only permit our teenage daughters to dress like this—like prostitutes, if we’re being honest with ourselves—but pay for them to do it with our AmEx cards?” It’s a good question. When you see a young girl dressed provocatively, you have to wonder who paid for it. After all, a young girl usually doesn’t have the financial means to pay for the outfits she wears. So why does Mom go along with this?

Jennifer Moses has an answer. “We are the first moms in history to have grown up with widely available birth control, the first who didn’t have to worry about getting knocked up. We were also the first not only to be free of old-fashioned fears about our reputation but actually pressured by our peers and the wider culture to find our true womanhood in the bedroom.”

While those experiences could actually be used by moms to warn their daughters of the dangers of a promiscuous lifestyle, they do just the opposite. These feminist don’t want to be considered hypocrites.

And the mothers are conflicted. Jennifer Moses talks about a mother she knows with two mature daughters who said: “If I could do it again, I wouldn’t even have slept with my own husband before marriage.”

The Bible teaches in 1 Timothy 2:9 that “women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control.” Even secular social commentators have talked about a [“return to modesty.”](#)

Jennifer Moses helps us understand why teaching modesty to this generation of young girls have become so difficult for their mothers. It’s time for mothers to stop worrying about being called hypocrites and start acting like mothers. I’m Kerby Anderson, and that’s my point of view.

Luke, I Am Not Your Father

One of the greatest movie lines in history is in *Star Wars*, when the evil Darth Vader reveals the awful truth to our hero Luke Skywalker: “Luke, I am your father.” (Actually, this is a misquote, but it’s become part of our cultural lexicon anyway. Check out this [YouTube video](#) of a four-year-old’s priceless reaction to seeing this scene in *Star Wars* for the first time.)



Luke is understandably traumatized by the revelation that the enemy is actually his daddy.

He’s in good company. Millions—probably billions—of people in human history have sustained “father wounds” because their dads were punitive, abusive, evil, distant, judgmental, absent, unsafe, or just disengaged. We live in a fallen world where our relationships are broken, and where hurt people, hurt people. A father’s role is incredibly powerful, both for good and for evil, and every father makes an indelible impression on his children whether he intends to or not.

Children grow up receiving many messages about what a father is like by watching their dads—and boy, do they watch their dads. The only way a boy can learn how to be a man is by watching and copying men, and a father is the closest man to a child. The way a girl learns the value of being female is by watching how her father treats her mother and herself.

Children can grow up learning that a father is loving and kind, disciplining from a teaching heart that wants them to grow up to be good adults, a man of integrity and honesty. Many of us were blessed to grow up with just such a dad, and with the “heart template” of a father like that, we can become a parent very much like our wonderful dads—and the generational blessings of a good example are handed down through the years.

But children can also grow up learning that a father is a mean bully whose anger is to be feared and avoided. They can learn that a father’s temperament is volatile; they never know if he will embrace them warmly or freeze them out with contempt or indifference. They can learn that a father’s word cannot be trusted, and that he presents himself with one face in the world and the church, but quite another at home. They can learn that a father is non-communicative and authoritarian, a deadly combination. Some children grow up learning that a father is nothing more than a sperm donor who is there to conceive them but disappears forever.

This is bad enough, but it gets worse.

God puts children in families where they learn about Him from the way their parents model parenthood. Our concept of “father” is whatever our own dads looked and acted like. Then, when we discover that God reveals Himself as Father in His Word, we paint the face of our heavenly Father with a brush dipped into the bucket of whatever our own fathers were like.

One of my friends shared with me several hurtful stories of the way her dad related to her in judgment throughout her entire life—including the breathtaking condemnation, “If you disappoint *me* this much, how much more must you disappoint God??” She really struggled with trusting Him. One day I told her, “Sweetie, you don’t know God. He is not a heavenly version of your earthly father. He is who He is. Let’s pray that you will see Him as He really is.” Later, she told me

that being told she didn't know God was the turning point in her relationship with Him, and she started reading the scriptures with an eagerness to find out who He actually is. She started living out Romans 12:2—"be transformed by the renewing of your mind"—and gratefully allowed the Holy Spirit to change the earthly-father filter through which she understood God the Father to be.

One of the kindest things God can tell us is, "Child, I am not your earthly father. I am your heavenly Father. Let Me transform the way you see me through the power of My word." One of the best places to marinate and meditate is Luke 15. Jesus told all three stories in that chapter to reveal to us the heart of His Father. We are most familiar with the third story, the parable commonly called "The Prodigal Son." But it's really about the amazing, grace-filled Father. That story is the best and most accurate filter in the whole Bible for testing our conception of God.

If we see God as vindictive and full of wrath, anxious to blast us with His angry thunderbolts: how does the Father in Luke 15 compare? Where is the judgmental condemnation in that story? It's not there!

If we see God as distant, unapproachable and uncommunicative, what do we do with the picture of the Father out looking every day for His lost child to return, running to meet him when he finally does?

If we see God as stingy and mean-spirited about His wealth, how does Jesus' picture of the Father's generous heart correct our perception?

If Luke Skywalker were real and looking to the Lord, I think he might hear, "Luke, I am NOT your father. I am your Father. Come here and let Me enfold you in My good, loving and safe embrace."

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/luke_i_am_not_your_father

Men With Bibles

September 2, 2011

God works in miraculous ways to get His Word to believers who need it. I thought I might share a story I read years ago in a book entitled *Unsolved Miracles*. John VanDiest of Multnomah Publishers compiled a number of stories, and the following one I think would be of great encouragement to you.

“In a village in the mountains of Iran, a number of new believers heard that they could find out more about Jesus if they could get the book the Christians called the Bible. One night, a man had a dream that if he went down to the highway, some men would come by who would be able to give him a Bible.

“The next day, he gathered a little offering of money from among the believers in the village, and made his way down the mountainside to the highway that ran through the area. He sat on a rock and began to wait.

“Some time later, two men in a car just ‘happened’ to pick up a shipment of Bibles across the border. They were driving along the same highway when the steering on their car suddenly locked. They couldn’t move it more than an inch.

“They finally nudged the steering wheel just enough to get the car over to the side of the road. They got out and put up the hood to figure out what was wrong. A man sitting on a nearby rock called out to them, ‘Are you the men with the Bibles?’

“Stunned that this man should know, they admitted, ‘Well, yes

we do have Bibles.’ The old man gave them all the money he had collected, bought as many Bibles as he could, and made his way back to the village.

“The men with the Bibles then went back to determine what was wrong with their car, but could find nothing. They shrugged their shoulders, got in, and drove away.”

Isn’t that a wonderful story? I believe it is just a glimpse of the wonderful ways God is getting His Word to His people even in remote parts of the earth. I’m Kerby Anderson, and that’s my point of view.

Focus on What’s Fixed

My husband and I recently took an Alaskan cruise. As we settled ourselves for sailaway in front of large windows on one of the highest decks, I heard a little girl ask, “Did we start moving yet? How will we know when we’re moving?” I don’t know what her mother said, but I do know the answer: you fix your gaze on what *isn’t* moving.

I was looking at the building in this picture I took; when the ship starting pushing away from the pier, I knew we were moving because of our view through the window in relation to the stationary building.



And I thought, “Little one, the answer to your question is wisdom for life as well. Stay focused on what is unmovable, unchangeable, what is true for all times and all people in all places. Then you will be able to respond wisely to what moves

and changes in your life and in the world.”

This is true in both the small things and the world-shaking immense ones. Ray and I have been away from home for two and a half weeks, on an itinerary that has meant a lot of shifting and changing locations, unpacking suitcases one week and trying to live out of them the next. We remind ourselves that the inconvenience is temporary because, Lord willing, we’ll be home soon. That is a small, small thing made easier by remaining aware that “this too shall pass,” that the comforting security of home and routine is right around the corner. But on the other end of the scale there are also horrible, horrible things happening in our world, particularly the explosion of Islamic terrorism in Iraq, persecuting Christians who are losing everything up to and including their earthly lives. West Africa is seriously shaken by an Ebola outbreak that is causing instability in everything. If that’s not enough examples for you, Lael Arrington recently blogged here about [“Five Ways to Dispel Dread.”](#)

It can feel like the world is wobbling on its axis. Even our own little worlds. It is crucial to keep our eyes on the One who says, “I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6), on the One who promises, “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5). We need to stay focused on the unchanging Word of God, in which He reveals that He knows how the future will unfold, and has everything under control—even the end-times horrors that appear to be right around the corner.

Later on our cruise, as we were sailing from one port to another, I knew we were moving—apart from feeling it—because I could see the churned-up wake next to the ship. But in order to tell how much we were rolling from side to side, I focused on the horizon which appeared to rise and fall. But since I knew it was unmovable, that meant the rising and falling was happening on the ship. I sat looking out the window, gazing at the horizon that reminded me of God’s unchangeableness. A good and loving God is always, always in control. I am so glad.

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