



REAL WOMEN!

Prepare, Preparing or Prepared?

R. E. A. L.
Women!
R. elevant
E. ncouraging
A. live
● L. ionhearted

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Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed...

¹⁰ *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care...¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*

¹³ ***Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed***

Amazing! Reading the beginning of 1 Peter 1 sets our life in a much bigger context than day to day survival. As I finished read-

ing this section of 1 Peter aloud, I realized that many of my days are not spent as Peter describes. I must admit that if he were to write about my life I am not sure he could describe me, in this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. I am working on it! Trying to become a “greatly rejoicer” in all things, but I haven’t made it yet. However, it has been revealed to me that I am not serving myself but you, and those yet to come behind me. In other words, Peter is encouraging us to live our lives in a larger more expansive manner, understanding that, God, in His great preparation connects our lives to all those who have gone on before us. In order to this, we must prepare our minds for action.

Peter’s charge to prepare our minds for action must be based on our understanding of that the salvation we have been given is part of His Story. He is returning and life as we know it will come to an end. He is encouraging us to prepare our minds to live a life with our eyes on eternal things.

The word prepare is defined as: to make ready beforehand for some purpose, use or activity. Looking through the scriptures we find our God is definitely a “preparer”. He prepared the garden for Adam and Eve and He continues to prepare a place for us in Heaven (John 14:3). God is working and preparing each of us for His kingdom’s sake. As verse 7 declares, *These have come so that your*

faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

We also are called to be preparers. One of the first things we must settle in the preparation of our minds, is that the action that we are preparing for is for ours and others’ benefit. God desires to use everything that touches our life for His glory. He will use all things to work together for good as we walk in the knowledge of His love and grace. The enemy of our soul tries to cause us to lose that focus. We may begin to wonder, “Why is this happening to me?” Dwelling on this question will cause our thoughts to wander away from the Truth. Our mind may actually lead us astray from His plans and purpose when we haven’t prepared our minds to trust in Him.

Another insight into this scripture is found in the King James Version of 1 Peter 1:13 declares: “*wherefore gird up the loins of your mind*”. This instruction was based on the image of the clothing of the day, long flowing robes. When the racer, traveler, warrior, and laborer of the day really wanted to get down to the job at hand they gathered their long flowing garments and tucked them into their belt so the fabric would not get in their way or hinder their work.

We are urged to gird up or tuck



Be Prepared!

(Continued from page 1)

in our thoughts and affections, bring them into submission to our godly calling. I don't know about you, but sometimes my mind seems to be flopping out in the wind, vulnerable to negative thoughts which can trip up my faith, focus, and then my future. I do not want that to happen because Jesus is coming back either for us individually or at the end of the Age and we need to be ready.

He has called each of us to "prepare the way of the Lord". John the Baptist is not the only forerunner called. We prepare the way of the Lord for every non-believer we meet as we are gracious, loving and wise with them. When we treat them as Christ would treat them, we are preparing the way of the Lord. To keep this thought before us, we need to prepare our minds for action.

A Prepared Mind

Focused on Christ: *Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat,*

no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls! Hebrews 12:1-3 The Message

Alert: *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have* 1 Peter 3:15

De-cluttered: *So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech.* 1 Peter 2:1

Out ward and upward looking: *My eyes are always looking to the LORD for help. He will keep me from any traps.* Psalm 25:15

War ready: ¹⁰ *Finally, be strong*

in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ *Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* Ephesians 6:10

Focused on the Positive: ⁸ *And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise* Phil 4:8

These thoughts will be continued in the next issue, as we explore how to overcome hindrances to walking with a prepared mind.

Written by: Martha Rodman

Statement of Faith:

We are becoming Relevant, Encouragers who are Alive to God and His Spirit, even to the point of Being Lion-Hearted!

February is National Celebrate Marriage month.

Here is one idea for marriage enrichment that Jennifer Adkisson, Mrs. Washington, sent to Kathy Norquist, who thought it would be a great idea for all Real Women Readers!

If you're happily married, not so happily married, getting married, rekindling your marriage, or hoping to get married ... This challenge is for you. If you plan on taking the challenge the organizers recommend getting a journal as well. What an awesome way to see God's glory unfold in our homes. These downloads are from the ministry of Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Nancy is the host and teacher for *Revive Our Hearts* and *Seeking Him*, two nationally syndicated radio programs, heard each weekday on nearly 1,000 radio station outlets.

For 30 days only speak positive about and to our husbands, and pray for them every day. The attachments give you scriptural prayer guidelines and ideas for inspiring words and actions.

<http://www.reviveourhearts.com/pdf/30DayChallenge.pdf>

<http://www.reviveourhearts.com/pdf/uploads/31DaysOfPrayingForYourHusband.pdf>

Print out the attachments and begin today or start on February 1st! Invite others to join you.



Leadership Encouragement

The last two issues we have been focusing on "Friendship Matters". This poem reflects the desperate need for godly friendship and is a reminder of the needs of those we have been called to serve.

My Friend

My friend, please hear me -

I want to tell you about the pain in my heart

I want to share it, I want you to know -

I don't want to burden you though.

Sometimes I feel that I might be too much

Weighing you down as I share;

Sometimes I feel you won't want to know -

It's not that I don't think you care.

My friend I'm scared, I'm full of fear,

Afraid that you'll withdraw

Afraid of rejection, adding to pain

I want you as never before.

I'm feeling worthless, useless, empty, nothing.

I'm feeling dirty, guilty, filled with shame.

My friend, please stay near,

While I learn that I'm not to blame.

When out of fear I push you away

Please be patient -

Say I'm doing OK.

I need you my friend.

The ultimate friend we all have is Jesus

I need to draw close to Him -

But will you be His arms and hold me tight?

Will you show His love as I go through

this fight?

My friend, I want something to give back to you

But right now I don't seem to have it.

Tell me you're with me as far as can be

I'll learn to accept that you love me for me.

Reading through this poem, and thinking about the subject 'Friendship Matters', I am reminded of a prophetic word I was given back in 1989. The Lord said two things to me in that word - He said that He would take my heart of fear, and He said that He would always put the right people at my side. I had been ill with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (M.E.) for about 3 years by then, although I was struggling on and living in denial as far as possible! My full and complete healing was to come some 16 years later, on 1st April 2005. As I look back on my journey through illness and disability I see so clearly the fulfilment of that prophecy. God did take my heart of fear (very specifically on the night of 15th December 2003 - that's another story!) but I am thinking more in this context of Him 'putting the right people at my side'.

Friends. Without the right friends - and the right mix of friends too - my journey to healing just would not have happened. God positioned friends who listened, friends who counselled wisely, friends who challenged, friends who did my washing, shopping and housework, friends who fought for me in the medical system, friends who laughed with me, friends who accepted me without judgement, friends who respected me for the little I could give, friends who encouraged, friends who cared in so many ways - and, of course, many praying friends too. Over the 18 years of my illness I moved house and moved area a number of times. God positioned friends who I lived with at times, friends who helped me move house at others. He positioned different friends in different places and for different moments. Some of those friends I had known for many years, some were new. Some have remained firm friends and some were for a season. All were used of God, positioned

by Him for the fulfilling of that word. Without any one of them my journey would have been at best, more difficult than it need have been, at worst, impossible. I thank God for each one and for their availability to God. I thank Him that He knew just what sort of friend I needed at any given time! Most of all I thank Him that He was, is and always will be, the ultimate friend - He is all things at all times, and always there for me. At times I have clung to His friendship, unable to formulate a prayer, but repeating the Name of Jesus in my desperation - He always responded. He is my ultimate best friend.

God is still positioning friends around me. Sometimes, when I get too busy, I hardly notice they're there. Even the writing of this testimony challenges me to appreciate my friends - and to be sure too that I am *being* a friend, as and how God is leading me to be. This is just my story..... it is mind-blowing to think how God is positioning 'friends' to give and receive and to be part of each other's stories of the fulfilling of His purposes, all over the world!

My name is Claire Watts, and I live with my husband Brian on the east coast of England, in a small place called Belton. God has called us to establish a ministry called HeArt Release, seeking to see hearts (both of individuals and of the community) released to receive the blessings of God. We run 'creative release' workshops, support and encourage individuals, and serve the community in the name of Jesus, sometimes using art and craft activities, sometimes simply listening, caring and carrying the fragrance of Jesus to those who don't yet know Him. We give glory to God for His work in our lives!

If anyone desires more information concerning HeArt Release, you can contact them at :
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Building Together Across Generations

The following is the second of a two part article written by Elizabeth Haslet (Darryl and Martha Rodman's daughter) sharing some spiritual parenting lessons and insights she has gleaned since she became a mom January 8, 2007!

Parenting 101 Part 2

Lesson Three: The Power in My Mouth

My dad, especially in the later years of his parenting, has become gifted in this area. And as an adult I have heard him many times share the need for us to speak out life into our future. His favorite saying is, "The best is yet to come!" Once in college my dad flew over to see me in a play. I was having a tough day. And he went out and got me a mug with smiley faces on it, and a card, saying I was going to make it. Both mom and dad's emails and cards were constantly full of, "You can do it! We are so proud of you! You are going to make it! Keep going!" It is thanks to their belief in me that I studied theatre and am now pursuing my destiny in the arts. It was their words of faith that I lean on in times of doubt even to this day.

Words are powerful. Jacob and Esau fought over the spoken blessing Isaac was going to give. Words are prophetic. What you say today will happen tomorrow.

When Jakin was born he was very tiny. 5 lbs 6 ounces. And he dropped down to 5 lbs. And because of the danger of jaundice he had to be in a "box" under the lights. At first he was great at eating, but after being in the box he got used to being "finger fed" and drinking formula. All through those first three weeks that seemed like years, we tried all kinds of things to help him learn to nurse again. Over and over Tim and I would say, "You are a good eater. You are a good nurser. (I know "nurser" is not a word, but we said it!)" Again and again we would say it out loud over Jakin. "You can do it! You can eat! One day you will eat me out of house and home you will be such a good eater!" And in three weeks Jakin became a wonderful "nurser." He is now wearing 12 month clothes and weighs 20 pounds at 9 months. He is a great eater, willing to try all kinds of things.

And so we speak words of life over Jakin: "You are such an obedient child." "You are a helpful boy." "You are so good with people." Even now Tim is giving Jakin his bath and I hear, "I'm so proud of you!" coming from the bathroom door. When I get discouraged or tired with Jakin I begin speaking words of life, "You are such fun to be with!" and suddenly he *is* fun to be with, and we are having a great time!

Lesson 4: Falling in Love with Jesus

The final goal is my number one target. Earlier I mentioned how I looked no farther than my parents to be my example. Growing up as a Pastor's Kid (PK) I had many opportunities to see other PK's in action, acting out against the church because of lack of balance in their parents' lives, or because of unrealistic pressures put upon them by the congregation to be perfect. Being behind the scenes of a church we all saw lots of hypocrisy in the church, experienced church break ups, and the pain our parents received. Many PK's rebel against the impossible requirements placed upon them. But while my parents failed to get any of their children to like coffee they were able to navigate us through the hard times of church and show us the blessing of the Body of Christ through one key. Mom's deep underlying goal (of which she makes no secret) was to get us to love Jesus. She figured that if we love Jesus and get close to His heart that no one on earth, either in the church or outside of it could separate us from His love. And she was right. All three of us are serving our local churches, under great Pastors. It's not because we didn't have opportunities to walk away from the church. When my brother was a senior in high school his youth pastor walked away from ministry, Andrew and the rest of the youth group. This man had been a mentor to Andrew. One day he was there, full of promises. The next he was gone. He chose not to stay the course. He left Andrew betrayed, broken and full of questions. Ultimately Andrew leaned back into his love of Jesus, and Jesus pulled him through.

All of us have experienced the reality of humans in the church. But God chose the church to be His plan for bringing salvation to the world. If we put our faith in people it will be broken. If we put our faith in Jesus He will never fail us. So my aim is to teach Jakin to love Jesus.

"The greatest commandment is this, 'Love the Lord your God with all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.'" If Jesus said this was the greatest commandment, then we can do no less than instill this truth deep in the hearts of our children.

I'm still new to motherhood. But thankfully I've got the best mother's helper in the whole word: the Holy Spirit. And I can access him any time through prayer. He gives me the words to declare over Jakin and teaches me teach him how to love Jesus. And may the Holy Spirit help you do the same! And one day we will see our children fulfill the destiny that God has called them to fulfill.

R.E.A.L.
Women

Elegant

Effervescent

Energetic

Ever ready

Efficient

Sign up for

The Email Version of

Real Women!

Email your request:

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