



REAL WOMEN!

How's Your Eyes?

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

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It had been a long couple of days. I was at least two weeks overdue with our second child. It was one week before Christmas (the baby was due December 3rd). It was now December 18th). Darryl and I were pioneering a church in Spirit Lake, Idaho, about 45 minutes away from the hospital in which I was scheduled to deliver. It was cold, foggy and snowy. My pains had begun off and on from Friday around noon. It was now @ 7:15 p.m. on Saturday. The resident doctor wandered in and out after deciding yes, I was in "early" labor as he put it—about 3 cm's. I overheard the phone call to my OB, "Oh it will be at least 6 or 7 hours till she delivers". I was trying to figure out how to cope with all the pain I was experiencing for another 6 or 7 hours when he casually walked back in asking, "How's your eyes?"

All I could say, between pains, "How's my eyes?" Pain. Breathe. "Why are you asking about my eyes?" He went on to tell me that they always do an up-to-date health evaluation and a change in normal vision could be an indication of serious problems. Obviously, my focus was not on my eyesight. I was dealing with the intense labor pains of transition, for our dear daughter Elizabeth

was born at 8:22 p.m.! My eyesight was fine, and there were no complications to be overcome.

This story came back to me when God began to talk to me about the importance of healthy, clear emotional as well as spiritual vision. The need to be aware of how we perceive our God, our circumstances, others and ourselves is crucial.

God has so many things He desires us to see. Many of the Greek words translated into English as the word "see" communicate much more than simply possessing the ability to process information through our physical eyeballs. The depth of the word "see" contains the deeper concept that we should have the power of understanding, to be able to discern mentally, observe, perceive, discover and understand something, somebody or some situation. We are not to walk around blind unable to see or understand. God wishes to give us the ability to truly "see".

In John 11 we find Mourning Martha, full of grief and despair. Her brother Lazarus was dead. She knew she would "see" him again in heaven, but she had no hope she would "see" him again on earth. Jesus returns, standing in front of Lazarus' tomb about ready to instruct others to take away the stone sealing

the grave. Poor, practical Martha still doesn't "see" it and interrupts with, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days". Jesus says to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the Glory of God?" In spite of her blindness, she did get to experience an amazing miracle, as Lazarus came forth from that tomb.

God longs for us to see His glory. We live in a world fraught with so many seemingly dead things. But, are they really dead? Can love live again in a seemingly "dead" marriage? Can dead relationships come alive between parents and children? Do we believe that we will "see" the Glory of God in these areas?

Matthew 9 relates the story of two blind men who were so anxious to receive their sight they actually followed Jesus, crying out "Son of David, have mercy on us". Do we have that kind of heart cry? To have such desperation to "see" His Glory and power revealed that we would ask for His mercy? God is stirring up a hunger in His people to see His Glory, to have it openly manifested so all can see. When these two blind men finally had Jesus attention—he asked them "Do you believe that I am able to do

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**Lord, Help
Us See
Clearly**

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this?" They said, "Yes Lord!" And everyone saw that they saw.

How simple. Do you believe God is able to give you sight in any area where blindness has encroached? Mark 8 tells the story of a blind man from Bethsaida. His friends led him to Jesus. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of town, spit on the man's eyes, laid hands on him and ask him "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

²⁵ Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Some of us may be like this man. We see better than totally blind people, but not as clearly as we should. This man continued to listen to Jesus, follow His commands and eventually received clear vision.

2 Peter 1:5 declares: *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increas-*

ing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Becoming men and women who see clearly takes effort on our part. If we do not continue to add the above listed "virtues" we gradually lose our clear vision. Our brothers and sisters in Christ become "they and them" and "those people" rather than those for whom Christ's blood was shed. We begin to function with doubt, unbelief and see no reason to exercise self control, because we become blind to the real purposes of life. Apathy and a "why bother" attitude can creep in.

If you find yourself not seeing clearly, go back to Him, looking up in faith and He will continue the process.

God desires to give us perfect vision in our heart so we can see Him, others and our circumstances from His view point. So many of us are like Elisha's servant who was fearful when he saw the city surrounded by their enemies. *And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And*

behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. They saw the Glory of God that day.

So my friends, I ask, "How are your eyes?" Are they opened to see Him in your job, your boss, and your children? Do you see Him at work in your finances, your ministry, in the depths of your personal issues? You can. Simply join your voice with all the other blind in heart praying: "Lord, we would receive our sight".

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!

Helpful Resources

Grace Based Parenting by Tim Kimmell Are you seeking direction in getting the parenting thing right? In Grace-based Parenting, you'll find a refreshing new look at parenting based on the example of the ultimate child and family expert - God. Rejecting rigid rules and checklists that don't work, Dr. Kimmel recommends a parenting style that mirrors God's love, reflects His forgiveness, and displaces fear as a motivator for behavior. As you embrace the grace God offers, you begin to give it, nurturing your family and creating a solid foundation for growing morally strong and spiritually motivated children.

Revolutionary Parenting by George Barna What are the key factors that will make a difference in the spiritual lives of your children? Barna surveyed thriving adult Christians and discovered the essential steps their parents took to shape childhood character. He reveals surprising information about popular parenting tactics and shows you how to instill a vibrant commitment to Christ in your kids.



Leadership Encouragement

The Blessings of Not Knowing it All!

One of the struggles leaders face is the pressure to “know it all”. People ask all sorts of questions, and we can find ourselves quickly out of our areas of “expertise”. Knowing how to respond to such questions—even if we are the ones asking ourselves is thought provoking.

Not knowing the answer at that immediate moment does not mean that we will never know the answer. Simply saying, “I can help you find out”, “Sister So and So knows quite a bit about that, why don’t you ask her”; “Let’s agree in prayer God will show you”, or finally the humble admission: “I don’t know” are all good answers.

Darryl and I were driving to church and I began to think about the blessing of NOT knowing it all.

Here are the results of my musings!

The Blessings of Not Knowing it All!

1. You get to practice those research skills you learned in High School.
2. It helps the economy: authors, publishers, lumber mills and the rest of the food chain stay employed.
3. It helps librarians hone their skills.
4. It gives someone else the opportunity to share their expertise.
5. It adds to your prayer list.
6. It helps you practice humility.
7. You might learn something.
8. You might learn something that will help you!
9. It is a good example for your children.
10. It frees other people you work with to Not to Have to Know Everything as well.
11. Learning keeps your mind active—works as a deterrent to dementia!

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Real
Women



Building Together Across Generations

Psalm 127:3-5

Sons are a heritage from the Lord, Children a reward from him

Like arrows in the hands of a warrior, Are sons born in one's youth

Blessed the man whose quiver is full of them

*They will **not** be put to shame **when** they **contend** with their enemies in the gate*

Most parents are almost **too** aware of the major enemies their children must face as they leave home. Yet at the same time many seem to be clueless and almost paralyzed on how to prepare their children to contend with these enemies. How comforting to know that our children can be so prepared that when they contend with their enemies in the gate they will not be ashamed. Preparation of their hearts and lives within the sanctuary of their home secures these victories.

One of the clues in this chapter on how children are prepared to contend is the analogy of our children being like “arrows in the hand of a warrior”. The warrior is most aware of his enemies. He fashions and forms his arrows to hit their mark, knowing that it could mean the difference between life and death. He works with a stick, but he does not simply see a “stick”. He sees the arrow that it will become through hard work, time and effort. Each arrow was hand shaped, with its purpose in mind. Would it become an arrow for large game? Small game? Or would it be used in actual combat? The purpose for the arrow was never far from the arrow maker’s mind. They were part of the warrior’s armor for survival.

Children are not born straight, honed and ready to be launched. They need much personal handling to remove extra bumps and blemishes that would prevent them from hitting the target God has planned for them. Instruction, training and working with the “stick” turns the unformed child into an arrow which can be shot with purpose and intention. The arrow maker works with the bent of the stick using the pressure of his hand or some heat to straighten the arrow. This takes time and patience.

God forms and shapes each child in their mothers womb, mysteriously mixing His call and purpose with the two parents genetic material to form a person with destiny. Wise parents begin to pray for insight as they watch to see how their child is “bent”, working with God given personality, talents and dreams. Arrow makers strive to make a well balanced arrow. Parents need to consider the same.

Children need help in all aspects of life. Some seem more practical and some more spiritual. But all are important for a healthy, balanced adult. The areas of learning how to be a good friend, how to make decisions (plus deal with their consequences), as well as helping children learn the value of money all will give them an edge when they face “enemies of the gate”. It is vitally important children are taught how to handle their God-given emotions. Allowing them to acknowledge that God gave them the ability to be happy, sad and even mad, will equip them to succeed in the real world outside the gates of their home. Children, who are trained to control their anger, not let their anger control them will be much more successful in the work place, in marriage and in their life generally.

Help children learn how to make decisions. Help them learn to deal with poor choices and examine the fruit of those choices. This adds value to their lives. Teaching them to face honestly their own strengths and weaknesses with grace is vitally important. Learning how to handle their feelings will help fortify them from the temptation find refuge in drugs, alcohol or sex.

Sound overwhelming? Don’t worry! You have been gifted to do this. We must release our faith that God has placed this child in your life because He knows you can raise them. Effective parenting necessitates a leaning on the Holy Spirit for wisdom, guidance as well as grace. There are many books available to help bring understanding to the different ways children learn, deal with their fears and approach life during the different stages of their development.

What if you feel that some of those areas still need work in your own life? As parents and leaders, we must conquer our own enemies to help our children face theirs. The Holy Spirit is there to do that work in us as well. He will probably use our kids to help us learn those lessons. Because the best teacher is our example, and they are watching.

R.E.A.L.
Women

Encouraging

Entertaining

Edifying

Excellent

Established

*You are important to
us.*

*Share your ideas,
thoughts or
suggestions.*

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