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Flo's Thoughts - Reach out and Touch

The Lord has so faithfully journeyed with me since I made a major decision to have extensive spinal surgery on May 14th. I have asked the Lord to help me walk through this trial in a way that honors Him. Nevertheless, on two occasions in the last month, I have wandered into the valleys of fear and misgivings for brief detours. However, last week a most interesting dream reminded me of a spiritual truth.

In 1960 I spent a year at the New York State Rehabilitation Hospital encased in 65 pounds of plaster waiting for a spinal fusion to mend. I took high school classes at the hospital, played piano, and went to therapy, and memorized Scripture. Still, I struggled with homesickness. Since the closest hospital equipped for extended orthopedic stays was about 60 miles from my home, I saw my parents only on weekends.

Despite the hospital's efforts to fill our days, when the ward lights went out at night, I felt my pain and loneliness. Something in my child-adolescent mentality received nightly comfort from stretching my hand through the bars of the bed and envisioning that my mother sat there extending her hand out to hold mine. Oddly enough, and despite the fact that my mother died almost 20 years ago, that bedside vignette composed the dream I experienced last week. Hence, my meandering into one of those valleys of fear occurred. Graciously, the Lord met me there.

"Reach out and touch." a one-time telephone company commercial, sprang to mind. More importantly, what came right behind that thought was the truth of the touch the Lord sent me through His Word, His Spirit and His people.

Deuteronomy 31:8 came to mind: "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Next came snatches of Joshua 1:9. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." The Holy Spirit quickened those verses to me with a comfort that soothed me in a palpable way. Finally the Lord also met me by way of a bookmark Micki had given those of us in her Bible study many years ago:

In time of trouble, say, "first, he brought me here. It is by his will that I am in this strait place; in that I will rest." Next, "He will keep me here in his love, and give me grace in this trial to behave as his child." Then say, "He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons he intends me to learn, working in me the grace he means to bestow." And last, say, "In his good time he can bring me out again. How and when, he knows."

Therefore, say, "I am here, by God's appointment, in his keeping, under his training, for his time. (Andrew Murray)

So whatever lies before you, reach out and touch the Lord; He will meet you. *Flo Wolfe*

Ever been disappointed by a counselor?

Have you ever gone to someone for advice, got good advice and kept going back? Then one day you felt shut out? The relationship was over?

“All of us were born with a natural tendency to attach ourselves to a savior and worship him. We see him high and lifted up. That’s why it had better be Christ. We are safe with no other ...

... No one else can handle the weight. They may try for a while. They may even like it for a while, because when someone looks up to you and depends on you, it can be heady. But sooner or later they will drop the rope. It’s too much to carry. Just like the men who lowered the paralytic through the roof of the home where Jesus was teaching, you finally have to let go of the rope and leave them with Jesus.” (*Get Out of That Pit*, Beth Moore)

Counseling works best when we remember they are only human. Only Jesus can be Jesus. We can’t make another person responsible for our happiness or wholeness. *Micki*

Test of Peacemaking

We were rushing to make our plane—focused on getting through the apparent opening in the line, to our assigned seats. I heard a well-dressed stranger mutter about folks who cut in line. I froze—then stumbled and said I was wrong, please forgive me. He never made eye-contact, but kept remarking on our rudeness.

I didn’t like his failure to acknowledge my apology; my spirit was not gentle, and kindness was not on my tongue as I described quickly the exchange to my husband, a few steps ahead of me in line.

My husband turned to defend me—and then apologize. Conciliation was not quite his tone, either. The person we had offended kept grumbling about our deplorable manners. So, we insisted he go before us, with more passion than grace—and again my hus-

band insisted to be forgiven; the man refused. He said people at my age should not have been so rude. “I would have expected more from someone of your generation.”

It isn't just our failure that weighs on my heart; it is my heart that condemns me—I am embarrassed I got caught being so self-absorbed, that I was rude, and I was thoroughly annoyed the man refused to forgive! My husband said what gets him is he forgot to do what he tells everybody else to do: Stop and ask GOD, “What’s happening here, and what shall I do?”

In the midst of a picayune conflict, we, who knew better, lost sight of the first principle of peacemaking—rely on the Peacemaker. Please learn from our failure when you have been caught, dead to rights: Stop and ask GOD, “What’s happening here, and what shall I do?”

He promises to answer: “Call to me and I will answer you. I’ll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.” (Jeremiah 33:3 from *The Message*)

He’ll give you the grace to apologize, with sincere warmth—and use even a lapse to plant a vital truth in and through even your failure. *BWSmith*

Thots and Things

Shop Smart

Consumer Reports has a new magazine - ShopSmart. The Winter issue included top buys in wood flooring and cookware. It also had 6 ways to shop smarter, chemicals you should avoid in cosmetics and what to do if your dry cleaner uses PERC. Some of the articles are online. They also have a blog with shopping tips.

Caramel Pear Crumble

- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup butter or margarine, melted
- 20 caramels
- 1 TBS milk
- 3 medium pears, peeled and sliced

In a bowl, combine the flour, oats, brown sugar and cinnamon. Stir in butter; mixture will be crumbly; set aside 1 cup; Press the remaining mixture into an ungreased 9-inch square baking dish. In a saucepan over low heat, cook and stir caramels and milk until mixture is smooth. Remove from heat. Arrange pears over the bottom crust; pour caramel mixture over pears; sprinkle with the 1 cup reserved crumb mixture. Bake at 350 degrees or until the pears are tender and top is golden brown. Serve warm. Yield 9-10 servings. It's a rich treat for a morning brunch. *Michele Prince*

A thot about prayer:

“I think sometimes we will be covered with shame when we meet the Lord Jesus and think how blind we were when He brought people around us to pray for and instead of praying we tried to find out what was wrong. We have no business to try and find out what is wrong; our business is to pray so that when the awakening comes, Jesus Christ will be the first they meet.” (Oswald Chambers)

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Flo Wolfe, Director of Women’s Ministry
Micki Parkinson, Editor/Designer

