

This devotional reading is an outreach birthed from the reflections of my heart.

As He leads me.....turning dreams into reality, it is my “soul” purpose to provoke life change and promote healthy living (holy living); to be a visible display of God’s transforming power that is available to us all.

It is my desire to share the love of Jesus by encouraging, comforting, and inspiring those who, with determined purpose, want all that life has to offer them.

For more information concerning sharing in song, testimony, or an enlightening word of encouragement, please contact Val Bolinger.

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***VOICES***

A God-inspired word for your day

In today's society we are bombarded with masses of information....from junk mail to the headlines of daily newspapers, to television commercials, and even pop-ups on our computers. You can't drive down the highway without seeing the mass billboards advertising where to eat, where to vacation, where to buy your insurance and so on. We have become a people 'wired' to process loads of information.

In the constant demand of doing numerous tasks at one time, there have been days while washing the kitchen counter, I remembered to take something out for dinner. As I opened the freezer door with the dishcloth in my hand, the phone rang. After getting off the phone, I wondered where on earth my dishcloth was (probably in the freezer) and altogether forgotten to take something out of the freezer for dinner. That is until about 20 minutes before my husband would be arriving home from work...hungry!) Sound familiar? Or am I the only one who struggles with the demands of the day????

**“So, faith comes by hearing (what is told), and what is heard comes by the preaching (of the message that came from the lips) of Christ (the Messiah Himself) Romans 10:17**

The simplest definition of faith is your belief system. Faith is what we trust in; where our confidence lies. You build faith or a belief system by taking in and processing what you hear. We “hear” through means of the TV, radio, and telephone, etc. There seem to be so many voices. We have so much information within our soul to process.

I've discovered through a season of trial, that there are many voices to be heard....voices of discouragement, doubt, and even despair. In times past I can recall a nagging voice of condemnation for not doing things as perfectly as I thought they should have been done, along with voices of unworthiness and so on.

You name it, the negative voices are there. Isn't it funny how naturally the negative voice or thoughts come rolling in? That's because our soulish realm, (where our mind, will, and emotions lie) is much more surface than our spirit. In order to hear from the Spirit realm we need to dig deep. Many times it does not come natural to reach beyond that surface feeling, (thought) or 'voice.'

Recently, I went for a run. I took a route that I knew would be a little more difficult than usual. As I

started up my *third* hill (with flies trying to use my tongue as a landing pad from it hanging out in exhaustion), my mind began to wander and I heard *plenty* of voices. I heard, 'You're nuts for doing this to yourself! You should've just stayed home in the air conditioning. You're not going to make it. You're going to keel over right here in the ditch and no one will ever find you. Just what are you trying to prove anyway?' At that moment I began to pray, '**Lord, please don't let the pain speak louder than your strength. Through you, I can do this.**' I began to just say, 'thank you Jesus, thank you, Jesus' and before you know it I made it up that last hill. Now, at the top of the hill, the pain did not immediately go away. Although it was the Lord's strength that helped me to endure to the top of that hill, I still felt the affects of the climb. While I was telling the Lord to please not let the pain speak louder than His strength, it occurred to me that many times in our lives we encounter problems or tasks that seem impossible to overcome. The situation may make you feel physically drained, mentally drained, emotionally drained, or all of the above. As you're reaching the peak of overcoming, it may seem you're not going to make it at all. I know I've felt like that. In those moments the negative thoughts or voices scream loud. They just surface naturally. Those are the times when we have to ask our Lord and Savior, the Lover of our souls, not to let the pain speak louder than His strength. We then have to pull up from the depths of our being the Word of God that He has planted in our hearts. It's like digging up a precious gem buried deep within the earth. It's not easy to do. Honestly, it's a choice. Are we going to combat those wrong voices with the voice of Truth?

I confess to you the last two and a half years have been some pretty tough ones personally. And, how ironic that it all started when I took a leap of faith and set out on a vision I believe God has placed in my heart. Man....the voices. I've heard the voices of pain, voices of despair that this pain seemed endless; voices of hopelessness...thinking the dream within me was dying because I couldn't do what the Lord called me to do with this pain and affliction in my body. There were voices of rejection from people who don't share the same vision that God placed in my heart; voices of doubt from well-meaning people cautioning me that I'd better know what I'm doing...or else. There were voices of self distrust...

'was I ready, am I good enough, am I anointed, what if I mess up???'

Folks, the voices overtook me. I was listening to all of those voices and I started reacting to them. How? I fell for all of those lies and distortions of the truth. I became discouraged and fear started to grip me. I kept pressing on, but I was so wounded by people, and words. I lived in a state of confusion. And, where does confusion come from? Not from God!!!!!!

I realized after a very long period of time, I'd been listening to the wrong voices. I'd become passive in my thoughts. I now realize I needed to hear myself state God's promises over me, that He is my healer, and my refuge, a fortress I could run into and be safe. I needed to recite the very words He spoke to me, "fight for the vision; keep the dream alive."

God's word is creative and springs forth new life. I needed to renew my mind by His Word; the truth which is full of hope and promises of deliverance.

In the days in which we live in we are hearing of endless negative reports. And, I don't really think the news is going to get any better. This week along, the people I have encountered have been bearing their hearts to me with what they're dealing with. I stand in awe of the hurt and suffering so many are bearing!!!! We need to take an inventory of our thoughts (or voices, rather) we've been hearing and evaluate how we've been responding to them. It's never too late to turn things around. I believe recognizing there is a problem can be more than 1/2 battle in overcoming. You don't try to fix what you don't realize is broken, right?

Are you facing an uphill climb during this time of your life? If not, I bet you know someone who is. Does it seem impossible to overcome? Do the negative voices seem overwhelming? Does worry seem to grip your thoughts? Remember, Christ is only a prayer away.

I leave you with a little homework. Look up the following scriptures for comfort, peace, and rest. (Actually, you can go to the back of your Bible and look up key words to find scriptures to help you in whatever area you may be dealing with. For example, you can look up the word "hope" or "love" or "help" and you will find a number of scriptures that apply to that topic. It really helps).

**Psalm 91, Psalm 41, Psalm 23, Psalm 25,**